Exhibit 1

Affirmation of Hannah Chang, Esq.

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
COUNTY OF ALBANY
----------X
In the Matter of the Application of

ADIRONDACK WILD: FRIENDS OF THE FOREST PRESERVE, and PROTECT THE ADIRONDACKS! INC.,

Petitioners/Plaintiffs,

for Judgment Pursuant to Article 78 of the New York Civil Practice Law and Rules, Declaratory Judgment, and Injunctive Relief

AFFIRMATION OF HANNAH CHANG, ESQ.

Index No. _____

-against-

NEW YORK STATE ADIRONDACK PARK AGENCY; LEILANI ULRICH, in her capacity as Chairperson of the New York State Adirondack Park Agency; NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION; and BASIL SEGGOS, in his capacity as Acting Commissioner of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation,

Respondents/Defendants.
----------X

HANNAH CHANG, an attorney duly admitted to practice before the courts of the State of New York, hereby affirms under the penalties of perjury that the following is true:

1. I am an attorney with the non-profit law firm Earthjustice, counsel for Petitioners/Plaintiffs in the above-captioned proceeding. I am fully familiar with the facts set forth in this affirmation.

2. Annexed as Exhibit 2 to the Verified Petition/Complaint is a true and correct copy of the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex Unit Management Plan ("Essex Chain UMP") that is the most recently available public version of the document, dated November 10, 2015, and available at http://apa.ny.gov/Mailing/2015/11/stateLand.htm (click on link for "Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex Proposed Final Plan-Redline Version (revised 11-10-

2015)”). On information and belief, ten pages of this November 10, 2015 version of the UMP were altered on November 12, 2015, prior to the November 13, 2015 vote by Respondent/Defendant Adirondack Park Agency (“APA”) to approve the November 12, 2015 Essex Chain UMP. On information and belief, none of the changes made to the Essex Chain UMP on November 12, 2015 are relevant to the substance of Petitioners’ claims in this proceeding.

3. Annexed as Exhibit 3 to the Verified Petition/Complaint is a true and correct copy of page vii of the Essex Chain UMP, which is an “Overview Map” of the Essex Chain Lakes Complex.

4. Annexed as Exhibit 4 to the Verified Petition/Complaint is the Affidavit of Daniel Plumley, sworn to on January 6, 2016.

5. Annexed as Exhibit 5 to the Verified Petition/Complaint is the Affidavit of David Gibson, sworn to on January 6, 2016.

6. Annexed as Exhibit 6 to the Verified Petition/Complaint is the Affidavit of Peter Bauer, sworn to on January 6, 2016.

7. Annexed as Exhibit 7 to the Verified Petition/Complaint is the Affidavit of Lorraine Duvall, sworn to on January 6, 2016.

8. Annexed as Exhibit 8 to the Verified Petition/Complaint is a true and correct copy of the November 13, 2015 resolution adopted by APA approving the Essex Chain UMP (“Conformance Determination”).

9. Annexed as Exhibit 9 to the Verified Petition/Complaint is a true and correct copy of excerpts from the January 1986 Final Environmental Impact Statement prepared by

Respondent/Defendant Department of Environmental Conservation ("DEC") for New York's Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act regulations ("Part 666") rulemaking.

10. Annexed as Exhibit 10 to the Verified Petition/Complaint is a true and correct copy of DEC's summary of the Part 666 rulemaking dated January 27, 1993.

11. Annexed as Exhibit 11 to the Verified Petition/Complaint is a true and correct copy of excerpts from the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan.

12. Annexed as Exhibit 12 to the Verified Petition/Complaint is a true and correct copy of the 2009 Memorandum of Understanding between APA and DEC entitled "Management Guidance: Snowmobile Trail Siting, Construction and Maintenance on Forest Preserve Lands in the Adirondack Park" ("Snowmobile Guidance").

13. Annexed as Exhibit 13 to the Verified Petition/Complaint is the Affidavit of John Collins, sworn to on January 6, 2016.

14. Annexed as Exhibit 14 to the Verified Petition/Complaint is a true and correct copy of a 1992 permit issued by APA to Finch, Pruyn and Company, Inc. ("Finch Pruyn"), which was provided by DEC in response to an Earthjustice Freedom of Information Law request.

15. Annexed as Exhibit 15 to the Verified Petition/Complaint is a true and correct copy of a permit issued by DEC to Finch Pruyn, dated August 20, 1991, including a cover letter from DEC dated August 19, 1991, which was provided by DEC in response to an Earthjustice Freedom of Information Law request.

16. Annexed as Exhibit 16 to the Verified Petition/Complaint is a true and correct copy of a document dated September 27, 2013, and entitled "Leaseholder Update: how leases will be managed on The Nature Conservancy lands once these are transferred to New York State:

Gooley and Polaris Clubs," which was provided by DEC in response to an Earthjustice Freedom of Information Law request.

17. Annexed as Exhibit 17 to the Verified Petition/Complaint is a true and correct copy of a lease agreement between The Nature Conservancy and Polaris Mountain Club, Inc., which was provided by DEC in response to an Earthjustice Freedom of Information Law request.

18. Annexed as Exhibit 18 to the Verified Petition/Complaint is a true and correct copy of a lease agreement between The Nature Conservancy and Gooley Club Inc., which was provided by DEC in response to an Earthjustice Freedom of Information Law request.

19. Annexed as Exhibit 19 to the Verified Petition/Complaint is the Affirmation of Robert C. Glennon, dated January 6, 2016.

Dated: New York, New York
January 8, 2016

Hannah Chang

Exhibit 2

Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex Unit Management Plan ("UMP")

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY | Department of Environmental Conservation

Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex Proposed Final Plan

Proposed Final Unit Management Plans

for the

Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area
Pine Lake Primitive Area

Proposed Final Unit Management Plan Amendments

to the

1995 Blue Mountain Wild Forest Unit Management Plan
2005 Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest Unit Management Plan

Final Environmental Impact Statement

River Area Management Plans

for the

Hudson River and **Cedar River**

Towns of Newcomb and Minerva – Essex County

Town of Indian Lake – Hamilton County

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

BASIL SEGGOS
Acting Commissioner

November 2015

Lead Agency:
NYS DEC
625 Broadway, 5th Floor
Albany, NY 12233-4254

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Walt Linck	Natural Resources Planner, Adirondack Park Agency

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Draft Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex Plan (Complex Plan) has been prepared in order for the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to allow for appropriate public access to the lands within the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex Area (Complex Area) and to protect natural resources. Executive Law §816 requires the DEC to develop, in consultation with the Adirondack Park Agency (APA), UMPs for land under DEC's jurisdiction.

The Complex Area contains prominent watercourses classified under the Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers System Act (WSRRS Act) including the Rock River (Scenic), the Cedar River (sections of Scenic and Wild), the Hudson River (sections of Scenic and Wild), and the Indian River (Recreational.) It also features several small coldwater and warmwater beaver flowages and streams.

The Complex Plan also serves as a River Area Management Plan in accordance with the WSRRS Act, and its implementing regulations found in Part 666 of Title 6 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York (6 NYCRR.) The construction of Complex Area trails and public access facilities within designated rivers areas may require the DEC to issue permits to allow for activities to occur within classified river corridors.

A permit will be issued if the proposed land use is consistent with the purposes of the WSRRS Act, the river resources are protected, the proposed activity will not have an undue adverse environmental impact, and no reasonable alternative exists for modifying or locating the proposed activity outside of the designated river area, among others. DEC staff have proposed the location of the facilities in the river corridor areas that minimizes the potential for adverse environmental impacts by locating the trails within existing travel corridors, limiting the number of trees cut, avoiding wetlands and minimizing stream crossings.

This Complex Plan addresses the development of potential future public uses and facilities such as bicycling, creation of additional recreational opportunities for people with disabilities, additional primitive tent sites along the Hudson River, construction of a bridge over the Cedar River for recreational access north and south through the Complex Area, the disposition of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge over the Hudson River when the Gooley and Polaris Club leases expire in 2018 and analysis of alternatives for a snowmobile trail to connect the communities of Indian Lake and Minerva.

Proposed management actions in this Complex Plan include:

- Establishing bicyclist and equestrian use opportunities within the Complex Area in conformance with the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan ("APSLMP");
- Extending the Upper Hudson Ski Loop to the Ord Road and ultimately to the Town of Newcomb;
- Designating routes for public motor vehicle access, including parking;
- Establishing a community connection, multiple use trail which connects Indian Lake to Minerva;

- Construction of a bridge over the Cedar River, in conformance with the APSLMP, to provide a route for four season recreation including hiking, biking, horse riding, snowmobiling, cross country skiing and snowshoeing;
- Providing access for persons with disabilities, in conformance with the APSLMP, to a tent site and fishing and waterway access site at Fifth Lake and additional designated tent sites along Complex Area roads;
- Enhancing paddling opportunities, including providing additional canoe carries between the Essex Chain Lakes and along the Hudson River;
- Designation of additional camping opportunities including the placement of lean-tos within the Complex Area;
- Managing continued floatplane use and designated tent sites on First and Pine Lakes;
- Maintaining 2.5 miles of additional public motor vehicle roads for access and camping during big game hunting season; and
- A proposal to maintain the historic farmhouse at the Outer Gooley and evaluate potential future administrative uses until a final disposition for the structure is determined.

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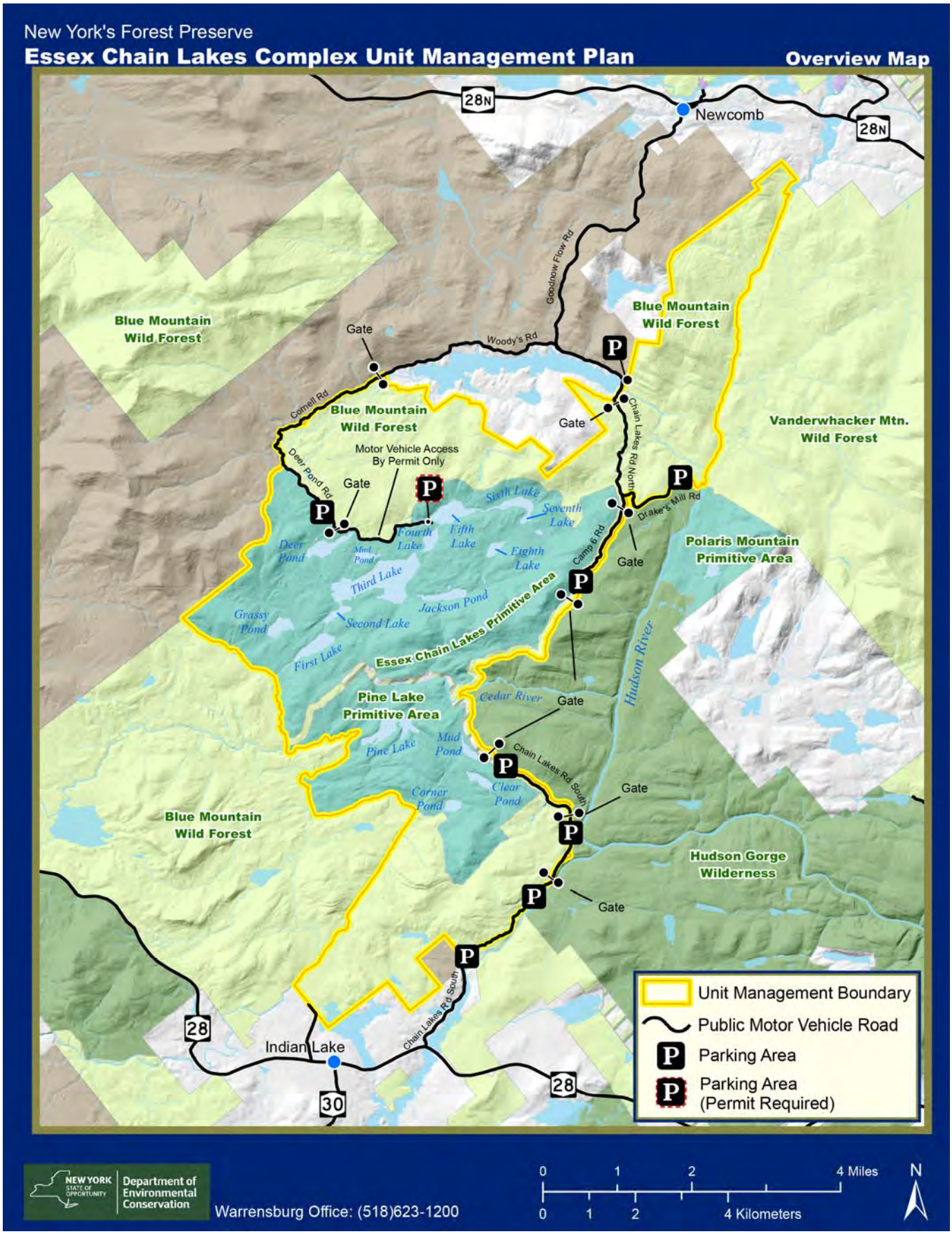
New York's Forest Preserve
Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan
Overview Map
Newcomb
28N
Goodnow Flow Rd
Woody's Rd
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
Gate
Comell Rd
Deer Pond Rd
Motor Vehicle Access By permit Only
Chain Lakes Rd North
Vanderwhacker Mtn. Wild Forest
Drake's Mill Rd
Camp 6 Rd
Polaris Mountain Primitive Area
Sixth Lake
Seventh Lake
Fourth Lake
Fifth Lake
Eighth Lake
Deer Pond
Mud Pond
Third Lake
Jackson Pond
Grassy Pond
Second Lake
First Lake
Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area
Hudson River
Pine Lake Primitive Area
Cedar River
Pine Lake
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Clear Pond
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Chain Lakes Rd South
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Indian Lake
28
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Unit Management Boundary
Public Motor Vehicle Road
Parking Area
Parking Area (Permit Required)
NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY
Department of Environmental Conservation
Warrensburg Office: (518)623-1200
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I. INTRODUCTION

This Essex Chain Lakes Complex Plan (Complex Plan) enables the DEC to provide for appropriate public access within the Essex Chain Lakes Complex Area (Complex Area.) The management actions outlined in the Complex Plan are specific to what is being called the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex (Complex Area.) The Complex Area contains includes the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area (ECLPA), the Pine Lakes Primitive Area (PLPA) and portions of the Blue Mountain Wild Forest (BMWF) and the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest (VMWF.) These management actions will serve to protect natural resources through a series of protective measures and administrative and management practices as well as set the stage for how these areas will be accessed and used by the public into the future.

The Complex Area contains a spectacular variety of ecologically significant resources, including numerous pristine lakes and ponds, large wetland complexes and scenic stretches of the Cedar and Hudson Rivers. The Area affords a variety of recreational opportunities as part of a larger recreational complex in the central Adirondack Park. Although the public has travelled through these lands throughout history and individuals have had recreational access to these lands with permission of the landowner (through leases and other types of agreements), the general public has not had unfettered use of portions of the Complex Area in over one hundred years. Limited public access facilities were established following the acquisition of the former Essex Chain and Indian River Tracts pursuant to an Interim Access Plan in the fall of 2013. The influx of visitors and users during this time reflected the high level of interest in the Complex Area.

A. Location and Access

Public motor vehicle access to the Essex Chain Lakes and surrounding waterbodies currently exists via the Cornell Road, off of the Goodnow Flow Road in the Town of Newcomb. The existing Deer Pond parking area is located approximately 9.4 miles from Newcomb, 0.25 miles from Deer Pond. Public motor vehicle access also currently exists off of the Goodnow Flow Road in the Town of Newcomb, entering the Blue Mountain Wild Forest onto the Chain Lakes Road (North). From this point public motor vehicle access is allowed to a parking area 0.3 miles from the Hudson River on the Drake's Mill Road in the vicinity of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge. Motorized access from the south currently exists via the Chain Lakes Road (South) in the Town of Indian Lake. An existing parking area is located at the former Outer Gooley farmhouse site, 2.7 miles south of the Cedar River.

Note: The road name "Chain Lakes Road (North)" refers to that road north of the Cedar River, accessed from the Town of Newcomb. The road name "Chain Lakes Road (South)" refers to that road south of the Cedar River, accessed from the Town of Indian Lake.

B. Planning and Classification Timeline of the Area

1995 Blue Mountain Wild Forest UMP

Of the 37,800 acres covered in the 1995 UMP, 5,560 acres are included in the current planning effort for the Complex Area. The 1995 UMP covered the full suite of actions usually contemplated in a UMP, including trail designations for all uses.

Spring 2013 Interim Access Plan

In early 2013 the State acquired the 18,100-acre Essex Chain Lakes Tract and the 960-acre Indian River Tract from The Nature Conservancy. In order to facilitate immediate public access of the area, the DEC designated two access points with parking—one along the Chain Lakes Road (South) just outside the Indian River Tract, and one at an existing clearing on the Chain Lakes Road (North)—for those wishing to access the property before the development of any official facilities. At the time of the Interim Access Plan, much of the property was still subject to exclusive leases and closed to the public.

Fall 2013 Interim Access Plan

The exclusive leases that applied to most of the recently acquired lands expired in September 2013. On October 1, 2013, the exclusive leases shrank to a one-acre parcel around camp buildings. In order to facilitate appropriate public use of these new lands, the DEC released a second Interim Access Plan in the fall of 2013. This plan proposed the establishment of a parking area just north of Deer Pond for recreational access to the Essex Chain Lakes, established a paddling/rafting takeout near the Iron (Polaris) Bridge, and designated several canoe carries to facilitate access between the Essex Chain Lakes.

2014 Land Classification

As mentioned in the Introduction, the recently acquired lands were classified in early 2014. In addition, existing Forest Preserve lands were re-classified, contributing to the current configuration in place today and laying the groundwork for future recreational use of the area.

Summer 2014 Draft UMP

Upon classification of the lands within the Complex Area, the DEC was then able to develop a Draft UMP proposing recreational uses and facilities consistent with both the land's classifications and its ability to withstand such uses. The completion of the UMP was driven by the need to appropriately locate public uses and facilities in response to the high public interest in these newly acquired lands. Certain uses, in particular snowmobiling and mountain biking, required additional planning before being proposed in the Complex Area and were therefore not included in the Draft UMP. The nature of public comment received on the Draft Plan led the DEC to initiate a revision to the Draft Plan in order to fully analyze alternatives for all recreational uses, including snowmobiling and bicycling.

Fall 2014 Stewardship Plan

In order to facilitate appropriate public access and natural resource protection of the Complex Area prior to the release of a Complex Plan, the DEC released a Stewardship Plan authorizing the implementation of certain recreational uses and facilities. These included the creation of primitive tent sites, designation of equestrian trails and facilities, seasonal hunting access on portions of the Chain Lakes Road (South) and Camp Six Road, designation of parking at the former Outer Gooley clearing, and motorized access to the "Tube" (between Fourth and Fifth Lakes) for people with disabilities by permit.

Public access and use prior to the adoption of a Unit Management Plan (UMP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) required the DEC to undertake specific actions to guide public use in order to protect the ecological resources within the Complex Area. After acquisition of these lands, public visitation necessitated issuance of an "Interim Access Plan" (issued in September, 2013) which limited public access to protect the resource. The DEC then issued the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex Stewardship Plan in December 2014 which superseded the 2013 Interim Access Plan.

The Stewardship Plan outlined interim management actions which were intended to protect the natural resources and set the stage for how the Complex Area will be accessed by the public pending adoption of the Complex Plan.

Examples of the management actions within the Complex Area pursuant to the Stewardship Plan and prior to the adoption of a Complex Plan included:

- Public motor vehicle access into the Essex Chain Lakes and surrounding waterbodies via the Cornell Road to the Deer Pond Road;
- Designation of a parking area in the vicinity of Deer Pond, one side of the lot for day use (10 cars) and the other side for overnight use (15 cars);
- Motorized access to the Hudson River via the Chain Lakes Road (North) to the Drakes Mill Road, off of the Goodnow Flow Road;
- Designation of a parking area located on Drake's Mill Road at a point approximately 0.3 miles west of the Hudson River near the Iron (Polaris) Bridge;
- Seasonal access to primitive tent sites and parking during big game hunting season along Camp Six Road and Chain Lakes Road (South);
- Designation of a parking area for 6 cars within a pre-existing parking area at Outer Gooley;
- Identification, designation and establishment of 13 primitive tent sites (11 waterfront) on and around the Essex Chain Lakes and related waterbodies; access to these sites requires a permit administered in partnership with the Adirondack Interpretive Center in Newcomb;
- Posting of signs prohibiting fires within 500 feet of the waterbodies and at all permit-only tent sites;
- Creation and posting of signs indicating "Camping at designated sites only within the Essex Chain and Pine Lake Primitive Areas";
- Identification, designation and establishment of primitive tent sites throughout the remaining Complex Area including: 4 primitive tent sites along Camp Six Road, 4 primitive tent sites along Chain Lakes Road (South), 2 primitive tent sites along the Cornell Road within the Blue Mountain

Wild Forest, 2 primitive tent sites in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area to be located more than 500 feet from waterbodies and one primitive tent site on Pine Lake in a current location;
- Designation and establishment of canoe carries;
- Motorized access by CP-3 permit for people with disabilities to the Essex Chain Lakes at the "Tube" between Fourth and Fifth Lakes, including parking, camping, and waterway access;
- Additional camping opportunities for people with disabilities along Complex Area roads;
- Designation and marking of trails (former all-season roads) open for horses;
- Establishment of a horse trailer parking/turnaround/staging area with room for 5 horse trailers;
- Posting of signs prohibiting horses on canoe carries; and
- Posting of signs prohibiting the use of bicycles within the Essex Chain and Pine Lakes Primitive areas.

Summer 2015 Stewardship Plan Amendment

In July of 2015 the Stewardship Plan was amended to identify administrative roads in the Complex Area and designate a subset of those roads as open for bicycle use.

Summer 2015 Community Connector Trail Plan

In May of 2015 the DEC put forth a Proposed Final Community Connector Trail Plan (Trail Plan) for consideration of APSLMP compliance by APA. As approved, the Trail Plan also acts as an amendment to the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest UMP. The Trail Plan establishes a series of community connector multiple-use trails between the communities of Newcomb, Minerva, and North Hudson. The Draft version of this Plan, which was released for public comment in June 2014, contained a trail segment between the Polaris Bridge and Route 28N in Minerva. The proposal for that trail segment was removed from the Trail Plan and has been put forth as a proposal in this Complex Plan.

C. Environmental Review

The environmental review of UMP's and River Management Plans is conducted in accordance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR.) DEC fully integrates the planning and environmental review processes. This Complex Plan is accompanied by a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) which provides that review and compliance with SEQR.

D. State Historic Preservation Act of 1980

As required by the section 14.09 of the New York State Historic Preservation Act of 1980, the Department consulted with the of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) regarding the treatment of the Outer Gooley Club Farmhouse and the Inner Gooley Club buildings. OPRHP requested that the Department enter into ongoing consultation with that Office regarding the re-purposing of the Outer Gooley Club Farmhouse. The Department agrees to this and will continue to consult with OPRHP as detailed plans for the adaptation and use Outer Gooley Club

Farmhouse are developed and implemented. In regard to the removal of the Inner Gooley Club buildings, OPRHP requested that the Department record these buildings prior to demolition and consider relocating one or more of the structures to the site of the Outer Gooley Club in order to assure long term preservation. Further discussion of compliance with the New York State Historic Preservation Act of 1980 can be found in section *IV. HISTORICAL RESOURCES*.

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II. NATURAL RESOURCES

A. Geology

Approximately 1.3 billion years ago the Adirondack region was generally flat and covered by sedimentary rock at depths up to 30 kilometers. Extreme heat and pressure at these depths resulted in a layer of metamorphic granite gneiss. Massive domal uplifting followed by the erosion of the soft sedimentary layer left the Adirondack region much higher than the surrounding area. This geologic region, known as the Central Highlands, is part of the Grenville Province, a large area of bedrock which extends along the Appalachian Mountains from Labrador to Mexico. (Isachsen, 1991) The arrival of the Pleistocene epoch or "ice age" began approximately 1.6 million years ago. During this time, climates cooled and large glacial ice sheets covered the region. These sheets repeatedly advanced across the region and then retreated north. The last glaciation of the region began around 21,750 years ago and is known as the Wisconsian stage. The Laurentide ice sheet, which covered the region with up to 2 kilometers of ice, retreated around 10,000 years ago. The result of glacial activity is the Adirondack Mountains we know today. Characteristics of this area include gently curved ridges and valleys, long winding eskers, numerous lakes and ponds and radial drainage patterns. (Clarke, 1904.)

Notable geologic features of the Essex Chain Lakes Complex Area include several Grenville marble limestone outcrops that occur along the Hudson and Cedar Rivers. These areas are of scenic beauty and support a variety of plant and moss species that require limestone sites.

B. Soils

Soils are formed by the chemical and physical breakdown of parent material. In the Complex Area, soil composition is vastly different from the bedrock beneath. Soil characteristics are quite variable and fluctuate widely from location to location. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), under the U.S. Department of Agriculture, provides a publicly accessible Web Soil Survey that is searchable and provides detailed soil inventory/characteristic data.
(http://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm.)

The predominant soils on the Complex Area are Tunbridge, Lyman, and Becket series, which are found mostly on middle elevation areas formed in glacial till. Soil series descriptions paint an overall picture of the broadly-occurring soil conditions in the area, but soil conditions vary widely throughout smaller landscapes. All planning and implementation, including locations and types of human use, should (and will) consider soils and associated capacity to withstand use on a finer scale.

C. Topography

The areas surrounding the Essex Chain Lakes, and the Cedar and Hudson River stretches are low-lying and provide contrast to the peaks of Cedar Mountain (2,554 feet) and Sixth Lake Mountain (2,396 feet.)

There is also an east-west oriented ridgeline, located south of the Chain Lakes that includes five unnamed peaks over 2,000 feet in elevation.

D. Water Resources

The surface waters of the Complex Area are located in the Upper Hudson River watershed. The Essex Chain Lakes and surrounding waterbodies are located in the approximate center of the unit. In all, 18 lakes and ponds occur within, or border the unit. All of these surface waters are shown on the current U.S.G.S. 7.5-minute topographic maps. Surface waters are dispersed throughout the planning unit, and range in size from 3-acre Chub Pond to Third Lake with a surface area of 262 acres. Pond narratives for the Complex Area can be found in Appendix D.

Watercourses

The area contains prominent watercourses classified under the Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers System Act (WSRR Act) including the Rock River (Scenic), the Cedar River (sections of Scenic and Wild), the Hudson River (sections of Scenic and Wild), and the Indian River (Recreational.) It also features several small coldwater and warmwater beaver flows and streams.

Wetlands

There are several significant wetland types within the management area, including emergent marsh and deepwater marsh wetlands. The most valuable wetland areas are in the vicinity of the Essex Chain Lakes.

"The channels connecting Third Lake to Fourth Lake, Fourth Lake to Fifth Lake, and Fifth Lake to Sixth Lake are large (greater than 20 acres) emergent marsh and deepwater marsh wetlands. Due to their size, wetland covertypes present, diversity and abundance of aquatic macrophytes, and hydraulic connection to the main waterbodies, they have the highest rating of 1 as defined in NYCRR Part 578. Emergent marsh is the most valuable individual covertype and one of the highest in biological productivity. These wetlands provide nesting habitat, food and cover for wildlife, and capacity to stabilize lake sediment and cycle large quantities of nutrients. Deepwater marsh wetlands provide valuable fish spawning and nursery habitat and are a food source for waterfowl and other wildlife." (APA FSEIS p. 33.)

These valuable wetland communities require special attention for protection against overuse/degradation, and all proposed recreational management actions will reflect this objective. See the Recreational Resources and Public Use section for more information.

E. Vegetation

General Inventory

The vegetation of the unit has been shaped over the years through the effects of wind, fire, logging, and settlement, and influenced by soils, elevation, aspect, hydrological regimes, and many other processes.

The historical management of this area for a sustainable supply of timber is apparent throughout. The vast majority of the Complex Area is covered by varying successional stages of northern hardwood forest.

The area lies in the ecological transition zone between the temperate deciduous forest and the true boreal forest. The predominant, broad naturally occurring vegetative types include northern hardwood forests, hardwood-dominated mixed forests, conifer forests (mostly near waterbodies), and spruce flats. The influence of past logging has visible effects on the vegetative cover, and forest stands in a spectrum of (mostly hardwood) successional stages can be found throughout the Complex Area.

All plants on State Land are protected by the General State Land Use Regulations (6 NYCRR § 190.8) which state that:

> *"No person shall deface, remove, destroy or otherwise injure in any manner whatsoever any tree, flower, shrub, fern, moss, or other plant, rock, fossil or mineral or object of archaeological or paleontological interest found or growing on State land, except for personal consumption or under permit from the Commissioner of Environmental Conservation and the Commissioner of Education, pursuant to section 233 of the Education Law."*

Rare Plants and Ecological Communities

Notable Aquatic Communities

DEC and APA staff and Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP) staff visited the Essex Chain Lakes twice during the summer of 2013. These visits found a diverse wetland community, including the following species: watershield *(Brasenia schreberi),* bladderwort (*Utricularia spp.*), naiad (*najas spp.*), Farwell's milfoil (*Myriophyllum farwellii)*, Robbins pondweed (*Potamogeton robinsii*), Largeleaf pondweed (*Potamogeton amplifolius),* water marigold (*Bidens beckii*), white-stemmed pondweed *(Potamogeton praelongus),* bur reed (*Sparganium sp*), pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*), white water lily (*Nymphaea odorata*), yellow-lily (*Nuphar variegata*), pipewort (*Eriocaulon aquaticum*), threeway sedge *(Dulichium arundinaceum*),and rush *(Juncus spp.)*

Notable Terrestrial Communities

In 2000-2001, scientist Jerry Jenkins was commissioned by The Nature Conservancy for the Finch Pruyn Company to complete a biological survey (mainly flora) on Finch-owned lands in the Adirondack Park. Many wetland sites adjacent to waterbodies within the Complex Area were surveyed as part of this effort. These areas, while mostly absent of rare vegetation, provide significant ecological value when considering the natural resources of the Complex Area.

One site where species of interest were found is on the marble ledges along the Chain Lakes Road (South) in the former Indian River Tract (now Blue Mountain Wild Forest), just south of the Outer Gooley farmhouse. These are small, low marble ledges with a very high diversity hardwood stand below them. Species of interest found at this site include: leatherwood (*Dirca palustris*), Goldie's woodfern (*Dryopteris goldiana*), hairy honeysuckle (*Lonicera hirsute*), dropseed grass (*Milium effusum*), and

Braun's holly fern (*Polystichum braunii*.) There were also 48 species of mosses on or near the ledge bases[1].

Alluvial forest stands occur along the north shore of the Cedar River, and the open structure may be maintained by flooding, beaver activity, or a combination of the two. These attractive, open alluvial hardwood glades are comprised of fairly large sugar maple, red maple, and yellow birch.

Invasive Species

The negative impacts of invasive species on natural forest and aquatic communities are well documented. Colonization and unrestrained growth of invasive species can cause the loss of biodiversity, interruption of normal hydrology, suppression of native vegetation, and significant aesthetic, human safety and economic impacts. Terrestrial and aquatic invasive species have been identified at increasing rates of colonization along roadsides in campgrounds, and in water bodies of the Forest Preserve. Some of these species have the potential to colonize backcountry lands, lakes and ponds and degrade natural resources of the Forest Preserve.

The DEC Invasive Species Coordination Unit, within the Division of Lands and Forests, works with various universities, State agencies and non-profit groups in developing and coordinating a comprehensive framework to address invasive species. The DEC is a partner and will continue to collaborate with other partners of the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP) (Adirondack Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management [PRISM]) to support education, outreach, inventory, monitoring, citizen science, best management practices, and control of invasive species. iMap Invasives is an online invasive species database and mapping system that tracks invasive species populations and management efforts in the State (http://www.nyimapinvasives.org.) Partnerships like APIPP and tools like iMap Invasives help the DEC to inventory and analyze the current distribution of invasive species on Forest Preserve lands, which provides the basis for long term decision making.

In 2012 the DEC and the APA developed Inter-Agency Guidelines for Implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) for the Control of Terrestrial and Aquatic Invasive Species on Forest Preserve Lands in the Adirondack Park (see Appendix C.) These guidelines provide a template for the process through which terrestrial and aquatic invasive species management will take place on Forest Preserve lands in the Adirondack Park. Under the Guidelines and any future revisions thereto, the DEC shall be responsible for management of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species on Forest Preserve lands while the APA will be responsible for providing review of and advice on APSLMP compliance and permit jurisdiction.

Adoption of the guidelines and implementation through the Plan and site specific work planning process gives the DEC the basic tools needed to preserve, protect and restore the native ecosystems of the Forest Preserve.

[1] 2001. J. Jenkins, Finch-Pruyn Biological Survey: Summary of Results & Summary of Study Sites and Significant Species.

Efforts will be made to protect the native ecological communities in the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex through early detection and appropriate response efforts to eradicate or control any potentially existing or newly identified invasive species populations.

Invasive Insects

The invasive insects of most concern in New York State are: Emerald Ash Borer, Asian Longhorned Beetle, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, Gypsy Moth, and the Sirex Woodwasp. If allowed to spread to the Forest Preserve, these species could bring devastating effects. The Emerald Ash Borer has current regulations and quarantines in place to slow its spread, and specific information can be found at: http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7253.html. The movement of firewood has proven the most common and destructive vector of invasive insect movement in New York State, and visitors to the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex Area should be aware of the current firewood regulations, which can be found at: http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/28722.html. Bringing in locally sourced wood, or kiln dried firewood also reduces vegetation loss from the gathering of firewood on the Forest Preserve. While fires are not allowed at primitive tent sites within 500 feet of waterbodies in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area, they are allowed at other primitive tent sites in the Complex Area.

Invasive Plants

No aquatic invasive plant species were detected in the Essex Chain Lakes during field surveys. One small infestation of Japanese knotweed was found along the Chain Lakes Road (North), south of Fourth Lake, by Nature Conservancy staff prior to State ownership. Together with APIPP, this infestation was treated and determined to be eradicated prior to addition of the area to the Forest Preserve. Otherwise, no terrestrial invasive species have been detected in the Complex Area.

Regulations

In 2014 the DEC adopted new regulations which apply to all sites from which a watercraft can be launched that are under the jurisdiction of the DEC.

The following actions are prohibited:

- Launching, or attempting to launch a watercraft from a State boat launching site, a fishing access site, or any other site from which a watercraft may be launched, or leaving from these sites with any plant or animal, or parts thereof, visible to the human eye, in, on, or attached to any part of the watercraft, including livewells and bilges, the motor, rudder, anchor or other appurtenants; any equipment or gear; or the trailer or any other device used to transport or launch a watercraft that may come into contact with the water, unless a written permit is obtained from the DEC.

- No person shall launch, or attempt to launch a watercraft from a State boat launching site, a fishing access site, or any other site from which a watercraft may be launched, or leave from these sites without draining the watercraft, including bilge areas, livewells, bait wells and ballast tanks, unless a written permit is obtained from the DEC.

The waters within the Complex Area are motor-less (with the exception of lessees until 2018), but canoes, kayaks, and other human-powered watercraft are part of this regulation, because they may spread invasive species as readily as motorized watercraft.

In 2014, the DEC also adopted regulations intended to slow the spread of invasive plants and animals through trade, resulting in New York's first lists of prohibited and regulated invasive species. The list of prohibited species includes garlic mustard (*Allaria petiolata*), common reed (*Phragmites australis*), and purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*.) Under the new regulations, prohibited species may not be possessed with the intent to import, purchase, transport, or introduce them and may not be sold, imported, purchased, transported, or propagated except under special permit. Possession for the purposes of control, management, identification, or disposal is allowed; however reasonable precautions must be taken to avoid introduction.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Allow natural processes to play out their roles to ensure that the succession of plant communities is not further altered by human impacts.
- Enhance programs to identify and map rare species.
- Increase public awareness and advocacy for the spread prevention and early identification of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species.

Action Steps

- Support scientific research projects in the Complex Area that will not have impacts that are inconsistent with the management intent of the Forest Preserve. Research projects are typically handled through the issuance of Temporary Revocable Permits (TRPs.)
- Enforce existing policies and regulations that protect Forest Preserve (terrestrial and aquatic) vegetation.
- Utilize partnerships, where appropriate, to continue surveys to produce a more complete inventory of Rare, Threatened, and Endangered species.
- Ecological inventorying and mapping will be correlated with recreation and fish and wildlife project plans to prevent unintended and undesirable impacts to Rare, Threatened, and Endangered species.
- Minimum impact techniques will be used to revegetate sites where concentrated use may destroy natural vegetation. Native seedlings, trees, shrubs and grasses will be planted to accelerate return to natural conditions when necessary.
- Provide educational information about invasive species spread prevention at all trailheads and access points.
- Control any infestations of invasive species using Best Management Practices (BMPs), which can be found in Appendix C.
- Practice spread prevention techniques including the cleaning of all tools prior to beginning a project.
- Use straw, not hay, when stabilizing areas during construction.

F. Wildlife

Existing Conditions

Wildlife communities in the unit reflect those species commonly associated with northern hardwood and mixed hardwood/softwood forests that are transitional to the boreal forests of higher latitudes. . In particular, the ECLMC is dominated by deciduous forest with elevations ranging from approximately 1600-2500 ft. Terrestrial fauna are represented by a variety of bird, mammal, and invertebrate species. Amphibians and reptiles also occur on the unit, although species diversity is relatively low as compared with other vertebrates. The distribution and abundance of wildlife species on the unit is determined by physical (e.g., elevation, topography, climate), biological (e.g., forest composition, structure, and disturbance regimes, available habitat, population dynamics, species' habitat requirements), and social factors (e.g., land use.) It is important to note that wildlife populations occurring on the unit do not exist in isolation from other forest preserve units or private lands. The physical, biological, social, and historical factors that exist on these other lands can and do influence the abundance and distribution of wildlife species in the Complex Area.

With the exception of New York Natural Heritage Program (NYNHP) surveys, comprehensive field inventories of wildlife species have not focused specifically on the Complex Area, or Forest Preserve units in general. Statewide wildlife survey efforts conducted by the DEC have included two Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA) projects (1980-1985 and 2000-2005) and the New York State Amphibian and Reptile Atlas Project (1990-1999.) It is important to note that survey blocks (i.e., the sampling unit) for both atlas projects overlap and extend beyond the land boundary of the Complex Area. Therefore, these data do not necessarily reflect what is found on the unit, but on the survey blocks. However, these data should provide a good indication of the species found throughout the Complex Area and adjacent region. Additionally, the Bureau of Wildlife collects harvest data on a number of game species (those that are hunted or trapped.) Harvest data is not collected specific to Forest Preserve units, but rather on a town, county, and wildlife management unit (WMU) basis. Harvest data can provide some indication of wildlife distribution and abundance and is sometimes the only source of data on mammals.

This unit has a rich history of forest management, with a spectrum of habitat types, ranging from regenerating clearcuts to mature forests. The character of the unit's vegetation has a significant effect in determining the occurrence and abundance of wildlife species. This Complex Area is adjacent to forests of long-held Forest Preserve lands, which provide habitat for species that require complex forest structure. This Complex Area, now managed as Forest Preserve, will provide a range of habitats that will change with the passage of time. Additionally, adjacent working forest conservation easement lands provides habitat for species that prefer early successional habitats, depending on the silvicultural practices conducted.

Birds

The first and second NYS Breeding Bird Atlas identified 132 species (113 and 108 species, respectively; within or adjacent to the Complex Area. Of these species, 89 were common to both atlas periods.

Game birds include upland species such as turkey, ruffed grouse and woodcock, as well as a variety of waterfowl. Ruffed grouse and woodcock prefer early successional habitats which can be found throughout the unit due to the history of timber harvesting. Waterfowl are fairly common along the waterways and marshes and provide hunting opportunities.

Amphibians and Reptiles

The New York State Amphibian and Reptile Atlas Project (1990-1999) confirmed the presence of 23 species of reptiles and amphibians in USGS Quadrangles that overlapped the Complex Area. These included 2 species of turtles, 4 species of snakes, 9 species of frogs and toads, and 8 species of salamanders (Table 1.) These species are classified as protected wildlife and some may be harvested during open hunting seasons. Of the confirmed species, 1 special concern species (Jefferson salamander) was documented within a survey block (Newcomb quadrangle.)

Table 1. Amphibian and reptile species recorded in USGS Quadrangles overlapping the Complex Area during the New York State Amphibian and Reptile Atlas Project, 1990-1999.

Common Name	Scientific Name
Jefferson Salamander[1]	*Ambystoma jeffersonianum*
Spotted Salamander	*Ambystoma maculatum*
Red-spotted Newt	*Notophthalmus v. viridescens*
Northern Dusky Salamander	*Desmognathus fuscus*
Allegheny Dusky Salamander	*Desmognathus ochrophaeus*
Northern Spring Salamander	*Gyrinophilus p. porphyriticus*
Northern Two-lined Salamander	*Eurycea bislineata*
Northern Redback Salamander	*Plethodon cinereus*
Eastern American Toad	*Bufo a. americanus*
Northern Spring Peeper	*Pseudacris c. crucifer*
Gray Treefrog	*Hyla versicolor*
Bullfrog	*Rana catesbeiana*
Green Frog	*Rana clamitans melanota*
Mink Frog	*Rana septentrionalis*
Wood Frog	*Rana sylvatica*
Northern Leopard Frog	*Rana pipiens*
Pickerel Frog	*Rana palustris*
Common Snapping Turtle	*Chelydra s. serpentina*
Painted Turtle	*Chrysemys picta*
Northern Redbelly Snake	*Storeria o. occiptomaculata*
Common Garter Snake	*Thamnophis sirtalis*
Northern Ringneck Snake	*Diadophis punctatus edwardsi*
Smooth Green Snake	*Liochlorophis vernalis*

[1]Special Concern species.

Mammals

Large and medium-sized mammals known to occur in the central Adirondacks are also believed to be common inhabitants of the Complex Area and include white-tailed deer, moose, black bear, coyote, raccoon, red fox, gray fox, bobcat, fisher, American marten, river otter, mink, striped skunk, long-tailed weasel, short-tailed weasel, beaver, muskrat, porcupine, and snowshoe hare (Saunders, 1988.) Of these species, white-tailed deer, black bear, coyote, raccoon, red fox, gray fox, long-tailed weasel, short-tailed weasel, bobcat, and snowshoe hare can be hunted. Additionally, fisher, American marten, mink, muskrat, beaver, and river otter can be trapped. Hunting and trapping activities are highly regulated by NYSDEC, and the DEC Bureau of Wildlife collects annual harvest data on many of these species.

Deer

Important big game species within the area include white-tailed deer and black bear. Generally, white-tailed deer can be found throughout the Complex Area. From early spring (April) to late fall (November), deer are distributed generally on their "summer range". When snow accumulates to depths of 20 inches or more, deer travel to their traditional wintering areas. This winter range is characteristically composed of lowland spruce-fir, cedar or hemlock forests, and to a lesser degree, a combination of mixed deciduous and coniferous cover types. Often found at lower elevations along water courses, this habitat provides deer with protective cover from adverse weather and easier mobility in deep snows. A GIS model of potential deer wintering habitat (S. McNulty, Adirondack Ecological Center, unpublished data) suggest scattered areas of potential deer wintering habitat primarily within 3 general locations: the area between Mud, Clear, and Corner ponds and extending southeast to the complex boundary, an area between Eighth Lake, the Goodnow River and the Hudson River, and the region around First Lake and Grassy and Little Grassy ponds.

Bears

Black bears are essentially solitary animals and tend to be dispersed throughout the unit. The Adirondack region supports the largest black bear population in New York State (4,000 to 5,000 bears.) Hikers and campers in this region are likely to encounter a bear, and negative interactions between black bears and humans, mainly related to bears stealing food from humans, have been a fairly common occurrence in the Adirondack High Peaks for at least twenty years. In 2005 a new regulation was enacted, requiring all overnight campers in the Eastern High Peaks Wilderness Area to use bear-resistant canisters for food, toiletries, and garbage. In other areas of the Adirondacks, the DEC recommends the voluntary use of bear resistant canisters as well.

Moose

Moose entered the State on a continuous basis beginning in 1980, after having been absent since the 1860's. Currently, the moose population in New York State is estimated to be approximately 800-1,000 animals (Ed Reed, DEC, personal communication.) In the northeastern United States, moose use seasonal habitats within boreal and mixed coniferous/deciduous forests. The southern distribution of moose is limited by summer temperatures that make the regulation of body temperature difficult. Moose select habitat primarily for the most abundant and highest quality forage (Peek 1997.) Disturbances such as wind, fire, logging, tree diseases, and insects create openings in the forest that result in regeneration of important hardwood browse species such as white birch, aspen, red maple, and

red oak. Typical patterns in moose habitat selection during the summer include the use of open upland and aquatic areas in early summer followed by the use of more closed canopy areas (such as upland stands of mature aspen and white birch) that provide higher quality forage in late summer and early autumn. After the fall rut and into winter, moose intensively use open areas again where the highest biomass of woody browse exists (i.e., dormant shrubs.) In late winter when browse quantity and quality are lowest, moose will use closed canopy areas that represent the best cover available within the range (e.g., closed canopy conifers in boreal forest.) From late spring through fall, moose commonly are associated with aquatic habitats such as lakes, ponds, and streams. However, use of aquatic habitats can vary geographically over their range. It is believed that moose use aquatic habitats primarily to forage on highly palatable plants; however, moose may also use these areas for relief from insects and high temperatures.

Bats

On April 1, 2015 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the northern long-eared bat as a threatened species. Following is an update on bat species and their status in New York. It is unlikely that all of these species are present on the project site, but it is possible. Note that the nearest proposed trail to a known bat hibernaculum is approximately seven miles away.

Cave Bats

All six species of New York's cave bats spend the winter hibernating in caves and mines where they live off stored fat reserves. However, during the summer they live in a variety of places, including bridges, buildings, rock crevices, beneath loose bark, or in cracks or crevices in trees. Cave bats are identified by the lack of fur on their tail membranes and their rather plain brownish coloring. Indiana bats are more greyish and Pipistrelle bats can be nearly reddish yellow. Cave bats in New York have been devastated by White Nose Syndrome.

Northern long-eared Bat *(Myotis septentrionalis)*

- Federally threatened (4d)
- Once widely distributed in NY
- Population has declined 98-99% because of White Nose Syndrome (WNS)

Little Brown Bat *(Myotis lucifugus)*

- Severely affected by WNS
- Less than 10% of the population from pre-WNS time is left

Indiana Bat *(Myotis sodalist)*

- Federally endangered
- State of NY endangered
- Severely affected by WNS with less than 10% of the population left in NY

Eastern Pipistrelle (*Perimyotis subflavus)*

- Population has declined by 98-99% in New York due to WNS
- Potential to be listed as threatened or endangered in NYS

Small-footed Bat (*Myotis leibii)*

- Was proposed to be listed by USFWS as either threatened or endangered but listing was determined to be not warranted
- New York State population has not declined like it has in other northeastern States
- Therefore, New York is the only State in Northeast not to list this species

Big Brown Bat *(Eptesicus fuscus)*

- Largest and now the most common cave bat in NY
- Rarely show signs of WNS
- Increasing population trend

Tree Bats

As the name suggests, tree bats live year round in trees. They are more colorful than the generally brown cave bats, and red bats and hoary bats have distinct dark and tan wing membranes. Tree bats have fully furred tail membranes which they can curl up around their bodies like a blanket. Because tree bats do not typically enter caves or mines or form large colonies, these species are harder to study. It is known that red bats and hoary bats roost alone from branches, hiding among leaves, and silver-haired bats form small colonies and use crevices and hollows in trees. While most cave bats have one young per year, hoary bats and silver-haired bats typically have two; red bats as many as three or four. All three species fly south in winter to where warmer temperatures make finding a meal more reliable. Tree, or migratory, bats don't seem to be affected by WNS. DEC has seen no declines in these species over the last four years of monitoring.

Red Bat *(Lasiurus borealis)*

- Uncommon in New York
- More common in warmer southern States

Hoary Bat (*Lasiurus cinereus)*

- Uncommon in New York
- Most abundant in Adirondacks

Silver-haired Bat *(Lasyionicterius noctivagans)*

- Least common bat in NY and the northeast

Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species

New York has classified species at risk into three categories, endangered, threatened, and species of special concern (6 NYCRR §182.)The following section indicates the protective status of some vertebrates that may be in the unit:

Endangered: Any species that is either native and in imminent danger of extirpation or extinction in New York; or is listed as endangered by the US Department of Interior.

Threatened: Any species that is either native or likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future in New York; or is listed as threatened by the US Department of the Interior.

Special Concern: Native species not yet recognized as endangered or threatened, but for which documented concern exists for their continued welfare in New York. Unlike the first two categories, they receive no additional legal protection under the Environmental Conservation Law; but, they could become endangered or threatened in the future and should be closely monitored.

The following table lists those species that are classified as endangered, threatened, or special concern within the Complex Area.

Table 2. New York State listed endangered, threatened, and special concern species documented in survey blocks within, or partially within the Complex Area. Bird data were collected during the 1980-1985 and 2000-2005 Breeding Bird Atlas projects. Amphibian and reptile data were collected during the 1990-1999 Amphibian and Reptile Atlas Project. Additional data provided by the New York Natural Heritage Program (NYNHP.)

		Breeding Bird Atlas Project	
Common Name	Scientific Name	1980-1985	2000-2005
Birds			
Threatened			
Bald Eagle[1]	*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*		✓
Least Bittern	*Ixobrychus exilis*	✓	
Special Concern			
American Bittern	*Botaurus lentiginosus*	✓	
Common Loon[2]	*Gavia immer*	✓	✓
Cooper's Hawk	*Accipiter cooperii*		✓
Osprey	*Pandion haliaetus*	✓	✓
Red-shouldered Hawk	*Buteo lineatus*	✓	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	*Accipiter striatus*	✓	✓
Northern Goshawk	*Accipiter gentilis*		✓
Red-headed Woodpecker	*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*	✓	
Amphibians and Reptiles			
Special Concern			
Jefferson Salamander	*Ambystoma jeffersonianum*		

[1]Listed as endangered by the Federal Government.
[2]Also documented by NYNHP.

Wildlife Management Guidelines

The legal foundation for wildlife and fisheries management in New York State is embodied in Article 11 of the Environmental Conservation Law. Article 11 authorizes DEC to insure the perpetuation of fish and wildlife species and their habitats and to regulate hunting and trapping through the issuance of licenses,

the establishment of hunting and trapping seasons and manner of taking, and the setting of harvest limits. Game species will continue to be managed by appropriate regional or statewide hunting or trapping seasons.

Proposed Management

While all of the objectives and management actions outlined below are important, a management priority should be placed on increasing our understanding of the occurrence and distribution of many wildlife species and their habitats within the Complex Area. This priority is reflected under the list of potential management action projects outlined below.

Objectives

- To perpetuate, support, and expand a variety of wildlife recreational opportunities, including sustainable hunting and trapping and wildlife observation and photography as desirable uses of wildlife resources.
- To assure that wildlife populations are of appropriate size to meet the demands placed on them, including consumptive and non-consumptive uses.
- To increase our understanding of the occurrence, distribution, and ecology of game and nongame wildlife species and their habitats.
- To minimize wildlife damage and nuisance problems.
- To meet the public's desire for information about wildlife and its conservation, use, and enjoyment.

Action Steps

- Manage and protect wildlife through enforcement of the Environmental Conservation Law and applicable Rules and Regulations.
- Support traditional use of the unit's wildlife resources, particularly activities designed to perpetuate hunting and trapping programs and education efforts.
- Continue to monitor and inventory wildlife populations and their habitats, particularly game species and species classified as threatened, endangered or special concern.
- Conduct targeted surveys for threatened and special concern bird, reptile, and amphibian species.
- Follow standard guidelines for protecting deer wintering yards.
- Conduct surveys for American marten to better understand distribution and habitat use in the central Adirondacks.
- Monitor existing radio-collared moose and continue to collar new individuals on an opportunistic basis and as pertinent research questions arise.
- Support future state-wide survey efforts that increase our understanding of the occurrence and distribution of flora, fauna, and significant ecological communities (e.g., Breeding Bird Atlas, New York Natural Heritage Program surveys.)
- Active management of wildlife populations will be accomplished primarily through hunting and trapping regulations developed by the DEC Bureau of Wildlife for individual or aggregate Wildlife

Management Units. Continued input from Citizen Advisory Committees will be considered in determining desirable levels of wildlife.

- Re-establish, to the extent possible, self-sustaining wildlife populations of species that are extirpated, endangered, threatened or of special concern in habitats where their existence will be compatible with other elements of the ecosystem and human use of the area.
- Provide information, advice and assistance to individuals, groups, organizations and agencies interested in wildlife whose activities and actions may affect, or are affected by, the wildlife resources or the users of wildlife.
- Provide information, advice and/or direct assistance to requests for relief from, or solutions to reduce or alleviate problems with nuisance wildlife.
- Provide information to user groups on avoiding problems associated with black bears. Encourage the voluntary use of bear-resistant food canisters.
- Work cooperatively to assess problems associated with beaver-flooded trails and roads. Work with area trappers and encourage trapping at nuisance sites during the open beaver trapping season.

G. Fisheries

Fish Community Changes

A variety of nonnative species were distributed into the Adirondack uplands via stocking efforts described by George (1980) as "nearly maniacal". He notes that many species were " ... almost endlessly dumped upon the Adirondack upland." Nonnative species were introduced and the ranges of native species, which previously had limited distributions, were extended. The result has been a homogenization of fish communities. Certain native species, notably brook trout and round whitefish, have declined due to the introduction of other fishes. Other natives, brown bullhead and creek chubs, for example, are presently much more abundant than historically, having been spread to many waters where previously absent. Native-but-widely-introduced (NBWI) species often were introduced concurrently with the nonnatives. NBWI species are just as unnatural as nonnative introductions, and due to the lack of early surveys, it is often unknown which NBWI fishes were actually native to a pond or if they have been introduced.

Consequently, fish populations in the majority of waters in today's Adirondack wilderness areas have been substantially altered by the activities of mankind. Indeed, of the 1,123 Adirondack ecological zone waters surveyed by the Adirondack Lakes Survey Corporation (ALSC), 65% contained known nonnative species.

Barriers, high stream gradients, low stream fertilities, and rigorous climatic conditions following retreat of the glacier resulted in low species diversity for fishes in most Adirondack waters. Low diversity allowed the brook trout to occur in large areas of the Adirondack upland.

Past Management

The ponds in the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex have been under private ownership for nearly 150 years. Prior to 1948, the land had individual camps and homes and was managed for timber, agriculture, and recreation. In 1948, the Outer Gooley Club was formed, which included Pine Lake and Clear, Mud and Corner Ponds. In 1950 the Essex Chain Lakes was added and dubbed the Inner Gooley Club. Both club lease areas were owned by Finch, Pruyn & Co. and leased to the club. The first DEC surveys of these private waters began in 1952, during which time the first bass stocking request was denied by DEC. From the 1960's to today, the waters have been privately managed and stocked.

Fisheries Management Guidelines

DEC angling regulations are designed to conserve fish populations in individual waters by preventing overexploitation. The issuance of fishing licenses allows DEC to regulate fishing efforts and seasons/harvest limits for the perpetuation of fisheries. DEC monitors the effectiveness of angling regulations, stocking policies, and impacts of other management activities by conducting periodic biological and chemical surveys. Based on analysis of biological survey results, angling regulations may be changed as necessary to protect the fish populations of the management area. Statewide angling and special angling regulations provide the protection necessary to sustain or enhance natural reproduction where it occurs.

Fish stocking projects must be in compliance with the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Fish Species Management Activities of the Department of Environmental Conservation, dated December 1979.

Pond reclamation projects must comply with the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Fish Species Management Activities of the Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Fish and Wildlife, dated June 1980 as well as the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Undesirable Fish Removal by the Use of Pesticides Under Permit Issued by the Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Lands and Forests, Bureau of Pesticides Management, dated March 1981.

Liming projects must comply with the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement on the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Program of Liming Selected Acidified Waters, dated October 1990 as well as the Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources liming policy.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Restore native fish communities with emphasis on native species that have declined due to man's influences. This goal is consistent with the primary wilderness management guideline in the APSLMP. Implementation may include reclamations, liming, stocking and other activities as per the "Fishery Management Policy in Wilderness, Primitive, and Canoe Areas."

- Due to the impacts resulting from invasive species and climate change, every effort should be made to make suitable habitat available for native strains of fish historic to the Adirondacks.
- Protect native fish communities from the addition of undesirable non-native fishes. This goal is also consistent with the primary wilderness management guideline in the APSLMP.
- Maintain Adirondack brook trout populations in Eighth Lake, Jackson Pond, Deer Pond, Mud Pond, Grassy Pond, Little Grassy Pond and Pine Pond.
- Maintain the diversity of coldwater fish populations in the Complex Area.
- Encourage and promote angler use of the waters in the unit through routine fish management practices including on-line information, correspondence and contact with the public by DEC staff.

Action Steps

- Amend this Complex Plan if or when reclamation projects are deemed necessary. Concurrent with this shall be the revision of the pond narrative to reflect new survey data.
- Previously constructed fish barrier dams may be rebuilt if said structures will protect Adirondack brook trout populations from other non-native or other fish species. The Complex Plan will be amended when these projects are deemed necessary.
- Conduct biological surveys of waters within the unit as needed.
- Continue and monitor current stocking policies until further fisheries survey information warrants otherwise.

III. RECREATIONAL RESOURCES & PUBLIC USE

A. General Guidelines and Objectives for Management of the Complex Area

- Prepare a Work Plan for each construction or major maintenance project.
- Consult the APA in accordance with the current DEC/APA Memorandum of Understanding.
- Comply with the requirements of all applicable laws, regulations, and policies.
- Develop long-term partnerships with communities and other stakeholders for the stewardship of the Complex Area.
- Complete an inventory of structures and improvements within the Complex Area.
- Monitor for recreational impacts to natural resources within the Complex Area.

B. Partnerships & Volunteers

Temporary Revocable Permits

The DEC issues Temporary Revocable Permits (TRP) in its sole discretion for the temporary use of state lands and conservation easement lands for activities that have negligible or no permanent impact on the environment. Historically, TRP's have been issued for lean-to construction, cross country races, forest insect research, wildlife research, town road maintenance and utility line right-of-way work among many other purposes. Through the TRP review process, DEC avoids conflicting uses of State land and situations that could threaten health, public safety, or integrity of natural resources. TRP authorization does not provide exemption to any existing State laws and regulations. To hold any event, a sponsoring organization must request permission in writing at least 30 days in advance of the date of the proposed activity. The TRP applicant or sponsoring organization must provide proof of liability insurance. TRPs often have specific stipulations pertinent to the activity in question and TRPs are authorized by DEC policy.

Volunteer Stewardship Agreements

Many great things are accomplished on State lands through the volunteering of individuals and groups. There are instances where coordinating work through the DEC proves challenging due to logistics, staffing, or funding levels. In some of these instances, great work is able to be accomplished through the generosity of these volunteers.

The current DEC procedure that facilitates the use of volunteers to carry out work on State land is called a Volunteer Stewardship Agreement (VSA.) When a work project seems to be a good fit for volunteers and there is an individual or group willing to take on this project the Land Manager will help the potential volunteers through the VSA process, which consists of an application and then the final Agreement. This process is necessary, as it lays out the details of the project to make sure that the final

project is true to the intent of management of the area. The VSA also provides volunteers with liability and workers compensation insurance coverage while they are working on State land.

Student Conservation Association

DEC has an ongoing partnership with the Student Conservation Association (SCA) for trail crews and backcountry stewards. SCA trail crews provide labor to complete implementation of projects on State lands, including: trail construction, primitive tent site construction, bridge work, rehabilitation and maintenance of facilities, and much more. These crews allow DEC to accomplish a large amount of work. The backcountry stewards spend their time traversing the backcountry, protecting resources, monitoring usage, and providing public outreach. Both of these programs are indispensable in helping the DEC to accomplish its management objectives.

C. General Motorized Access and Parking

History

Before being acquired by the State, much of this Complex Area had been used by the public to access the remote wilderness areas, and later for timber production by Finch Pruyn Company who also provided access for recreation by lessees, licensees, invitees and the public. The local towns created and maintained a road network for public travel and recreation, and was later maintained by Finch Pruyn to facilitate access within and through the property. Use of these roads predates and continued regularly after the enactment of the WSRRS Act. Therefore, the operation of motor vehicles, including snowmobiles, is considered an existing land use on the roads within the Complex Area River Areas, and is permitted to continue by statute and regulation. Sections of the existing road system will remain accessible to lessees via car, truck, ATV and snowmobiles (during DEC-designated times of year) through September 30, 2018. Refer to Use Reservations section for lessee use reservations.

The DEC intends to limit motor vehicle use throughout the Complex Area in relation to the historical use of the existing road network.

Existing Conditions

Deer Pond Parking and Access Point

Public motor vehicle access to the Essex Chain Lakes and surrounding waterbodies is from the northwestern border of the Complex Area using Cornell Road and Deer Pond Road. The Cornell Road divides the Essex Chain Lakes Forest Preserve and Chain Lakes Conservation Easement tracts, and a portion serves as a snowmobile trail in the winter. The Chain Lakes Conservation Easement tract is a working forest conservation easement land. To reach the designated parking area near Deer Pond, travel south from NYS Route 28N in Newcomb on Goodnow Flow Road, turn right onto Woody's Road, left onto the Cornell Road, and left onto the Deer Pond Road.

This parking area, where there is an informational Type I kiosk and register box, is located 0.25 miles north of Deer Pond. The west side of the lot is marked for day-use parking only (10 cars), and the east side for overnight use only (15 cars.) The site was chosen because of its previous use for parking, size, slope, proximity to Deer Pond and appropriateness for gate installation. Improvements have had a minimal impact on the existing resources.

Hudson River and Iron (Polaris) Bridge Parking & Access Point

Public motor vehicle access to the Hudson River and Iron (Polaris) Bridge is from the northeastern border of the Complex Area using the Goodnow Flow Road and Chain Lakes Road (North). To reach the designated parking area near the Hudson River, travel south from Route 28N in Newcomb along the Goodnow Flow Road and turn left onto Chain Lakes Road (North), continuing 2.2 miles to the parking area.

The 6-car parking area is located at an existing log landing clearing, approximately 0.3 miles from the Iron (Polaris) Bridge over the Hudson River. There is also an informational Type I kiosk with a register box at the parking area. This site was selected because of its proximity to the Hudson River. It is close enough to provide reasonable access, but not so close as to adversely impact any river resources. The area has been continually used for parking, and the site required little modification to be designated as a parking area. At this location, the Hudson River is designated as a Scenic River pursuant to the WSRRS Act, and consistent with that Act and its implementing regulations, water access parking areas are allowed pursuant to a DEC issued permit (*See* section 666.13[J]1] of Title 6 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York (6 NYCRR)). Motor vehicle access to the Polaris Bridge predates, and continued regularly, after the enactment of the WSRRS Act, therefore continued motor vehicle use on this road within the Scenic River Area is authorized by statute and regulation. The APA and DEC permits do not impose any conditions of future use or disposition of the bridge.

Outer Gooley Parking and Access Point

Public motor vehicle access to the Complex Area in the vicinity of the confluence of the Hudson and Indian Rivers is from the southern end of the unit, using the Chain Lakes Road (South) to an area known as the former Outer Gooley clearing. The DEC research of historical documents, including local town records, and review of testimony from individuals with personal knowledge of the area, indicate that motor vehicle use of the Chain Lakes Road (South) and, seasonally, along this road through the Wild Forest Corridor north of this point, predates, and continued regularly after the enactment of the WSRRS Act. Compliance with the WSRRS Act is required because a portion of the Chain Lakes Road (South) proceeds within one half mile of the Hudson River near the Outer Gooley clearing. The Hudson River at this location is classified as a Wild River under the WSRRS Act. The WSRRS Act, and its implementing regulations, both recognize that existing land uses within classified river areas that are not altered or expanded may continue. (*See* Environmental Conservation Law (ECL) section 15-2709.2 and 6 NYCRR section 666.13[A][1]). Therefore, the DEC has determined that continued motor vehicle use on this road within the Wild River Area is an existing land use that is authorized to continue by statute and regulation. This existing land use, however, will be constrained by measures adopted by DEC in order to limit public motor vehicle access, and restrict parking to designated areas.

The 6-car parking area is located where motor vehicles have historically parked in the vicinity of the Outer Gooley farmhouse, along the Chain Lakes Road (South), approximately 3.9 miles north of State Route 28.

Upper Hudson Ski Loop Parking and Access Point

Public parking near the Upper Hudson Ski Loop Trail is located off of the Goodnow Flow Road, near the Goodnow Flow outfall dam and bridge. This small, 3-car lot is located in a formerly cleared landing on private lands and subject to a conservation easement held by the State. These conservation easement lands are not covered by this Complex Plan, but this parking area provides access to lands on the Forest Preserve subject to this Complex Plan. This previously cleared lot required no additional manipulation (except snow plowing) to make useable for a winter parking site.

General Winter Parking & Access Points

The Chain Lakes Road (South) is plowed in the winter up to the large parking area near the whitewater rafting put-in, approximately 1.4 miles north of State Route 28. The Town allows the public to park here during winter and mud season to access the Complex Area.

There is currently a designated public parking area along the Goodnow Flow Road, near the intersection with the Chain Lakes Road (North) on Blue Mountain Wild Forest land. Note: this lot may be full periodically until October 1, 2018, because lessees park here for winter and mud season access to their camps.

Parking near Fifth Lake

As described below under Proposed Management, and as approved in the 2014 Stewardship Plan, this Plan proposes a six-car parking area approximately 250 feet west of the “Tube” in conformance with the APSLMP.

Motorized access for persons with disabilities is discussed in more detail in the Recreational Access for Persons with Disabilities section.

Note: Seasonal hunting motorized access along the Camp Six Road and Chain Lakes Road (South) is discussed in the Hunting & Seasonal Hunting Access section.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Provide an adequate configuration of access points to the Area for people of all ages and abilities, with adequate parking areas and facilities that accommodate visitor needs while protecting the natural resources.
- Maintain safe public motorized access to designated parking areas, in compliance with requirements of all applicable laws, regulations, and policies.

Action Steps

- Maintain the existing designated parking areas and associated infrastructure to facilitate safe and orderly public access to the Complex Area.
- Encourage and engage in partnerships with local governments and outside volunteers to maintain and snowplow (if applicable) trailhead parking facilities.
- If allowed by the easement terms, expand the Upper Hudson Ski Loop parking area to accommodate 6 cars and allow year-round use.
- Encourage general winter parking for the northern end of the Complex Area at an existing parking lot near the intersection of the Chain Lakes Road (North)/Goodnow Flow Road intersection. However, this lot is currently shared with hunting camp lessees, who park there during winter and mud season to access their camps via snowmobile and ATV.
- Install a DEC gate on the road just north of the "Tube" between Fourth and Fifth Lakes. This gate will prevent vehicles from continuing past any designated parking area. Horse and wagon will be allowed through this gate to access the accessible Fifth Lake primitive tent site.
- Install a DEC gate on the north side of the Deer Pond Circle, where it loops west towards the gravel pit. There will be no public motorized access on the Deer Pond Circle. Adequate space will be left for recreation users to access the Deer Pond Circle road as a trail, in conformance with the APSLMP. The use of a gate here, instead of barrier rocks, will allow for administrative motorized access to the gravel pit for gravel extraction. When the gravel pit is deemed exhausted and reclaimed, the DEC may choose to replace this gate with barrier rocks.
- Place barrier rocks on the eastern end of the Deer Pond Circle, to prevent those driving to the "Tube" parking areas from driving on the Deer Pond Circle. Again, adequate space will be left so multiple user groups can use the Deer Pond Circle as a trail.
- Designate a six-car parking area west of the "Tube" in conformance with the APSLMP. This parking will be for day or overnight use (with a camping permit for a designated site.)

D. Roads

Existing Conditions

There are approximately 53 miles of former woods roads throughout the Complex Area. Some of these roads were all-season roads and some were winter use only roads.

Public Motor Vehicle Roads

Motor vehicle use in and of itself is not a program offered by the DEC. However, the public is authorized to travel by motor vehicle on approximately 10 miles of designated public motor vehicle roads within the Complex Area to provide access to recreation.

The Gooley Club's lease expires on September 30, 2018, and they have motorized access to their camp complex (within in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area) until that time. An additional year of motorized access is allowed by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in order to remove the camp buildings and other affiliated structures.

Administrative Use Roads (State Truck Trails)

Of the approximate 53 miles of former woods roads (all-season and winter roads) which exist within the Complex Area, approximately 30 miles are within the sections classified as Wild Forest or currently unclassified. Approximately .65 miles of the former all-season roads are designated as administrative roads within these sections of the Complex Area.

These administrative roads (see map in Appendix I) are from the gravel pit north of Deer Pond to the junction with Deer Pond Road and the Drake's Mill Road between the eastern-most parking area and the Polaris Bridge.

NOTE: This Plan supersedes the Stewardship Plan (as amended July 2015), which identified additional road segments as administrative.

The "Tube"

The "Tube" is the large culvert between Fourth and Fifth Lakes, located under the road connecting land north and south of the lakes, and is large enough for boats to paddle through. The section of road connecting the two shores is approximately 175 feet and constructed with fill. As such, the hydrology between the two lakes was greatly modified when the road was constructed.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Continue to provide public motorized use of designated roads in Wild Forest to accommodate access for recreational opportunities consistent with the APSLMP requirements.
- Provide for adequate maintenance of former all-season roads which are designated for non-motorized recreational trail use in compliance with the APSLMP.
- Prevent illegal motor vehicle use.
- Continue and/or develop partnerships with local municipalities to help maintain public and administrative roads.
- Restore the natural hydrology between Fourth and Fifth Lakes.

Action Steps

- Periodically maintain public and administrative roads using proper materials, tools, and techniques in a manner consistent with the APSLMP.
- Maintain former all-season roads which are designated as non-motorized recreational trails within the Essex Chain and Pine Lake Primitive Areas in a manner consistent with the APSLMP.
- Remove the "Tube" and replace with a bridge that can accommodate proposed recreational uses, including horse and wagon. This replacement bridge will be designed and installed in consultation with DEC programs, APA, and any other applicable jurisdictional agencies. See Bridges section for more information.
- Maintain gates, barriers, and associated signage that prevent motor vehicle trespass onto adjacent private lands or unauthorized areas.

- Gates that are part of the snowmobile trail system will be opened at the onset of winter and closed for mud season.

E. Bridges

History

Cedar River Bridge

The Chain Lakes Road (North) and the Chain Lakes Road (South) have been in existence since the mid to late 1800's. It became a Town Highway sometime near the turn of the 20th century. Initially, barges were used to cross the Cedar River and, later, bridges were constructed. In 1978 the last bridge collapsed from river ice buildup and was never replaced, although the Chain Lakes Road (North and South) on either side of the river—where bridges had been historically located—continued to be used until the land was purchased by the State in 2013. Snowmobiles, driven by both the public and the lessees, have continuously crossed the Cedar River since the last bridge collapsed in the vicinity of these earlier bridge locations.

Iron (Polaris) Bridge

The 1950's records indicate that a bridge was constructed at the current site of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge in order to provide motorized access to the east side of the Hudson River. That bridge was washed away after a few years. When the Polaris Club was established in the early 1960's, they accessed their camps by crossing a low point in the Hudson River. Finch Pruyn received permits to construct a bridge in 1983, but due to a change in timber harvest plans the bridge was not built at that time. Subsequently, permits were issued by DEC and the APA to Finch Pruyn and the current bridge was built in 1992. This bridge permitted motor vehicle access, including snowmobiles, to the east side of the Hudson River for timber harvesting and recreational activities.

Existing Conditions

Cedar River

There is currently no bridge crossing the Cedar River in the Complex Area. The 2014 classification of lands within the Complex Area contemplated the possibility of a bridge crossing in the vicinity of the previous bridge (where the Chain Lakes Road (North) and Chain Lakes Road (South) meet.)

There is an existing bridge over the Cedar River approximately 9 river miles from the proposed Cedar River Bridge in this Complex Plan. This multiple use recreational trail bridge was permitted by DEC and APA in 2001. The DEC permit (#5-2026-00103/00001) describes its purpose:

"The proposed multiple use recreational trail bridge will span a segment of the Cedar River designated "recreational" under the WSRRA. The bridge will link the hamlet of Indian Lake with the trail system of the Blue Mountain Wild Forest. It will provide direct access to an existing trail, whose main purpose is snowmobiling, which leads towards the hamlet of Blue Mountain Lake. Eventually the trail may be extended to connect with the hamlet of Long Lake."

Hudson River

The distance along the Hudson River between Route 28N in Newcomb and Route 28N in North Creek is 28 miles, and the Iron (Polaris) Bridge is the only crossing within this stretch. Currently the bridge serves as a motor vehicle crossing to the east side of the Hudson River.

The "Tube"

The "Tube" is the culvert between Fourth and Fifth Lakes, located under the road connecting land north and south of the lakes. It is large enough for boats to paddle through.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Continue to provide recreational access to State lands on the east side of the Hudson River.
- Re-establish a recreational link across the Cedar River, allowing for a multiple use, community connection trail between Indian Lake and Minerva.
- Eliminate the "Tube" culvert and re-establish a more natural hydrology between Fourth and Fifth Lakes.

Action Steps

- Continue maintenance of the existing Iron (Polaris) Bridge for recreational access to the east side of the Hudson River. No public motor vehicles, except for snowmobiles, will be allowed to cross the Iron (Polaris) Bridge. Establishing ADA accessible facilities on the east side of the Hudson River will be addressed in a future amendment to the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest UMP (see page 37.)
- Construct a new bridge over the Cedar River in the vicinity of a river crossing established in the early 1900's. The bridge will be built in conformance with the WSRRS Act and APSLMP, and be designed and installed in consultation with DEC, APA, and any other applicable jurisdictional agencies. No public motor vehicles, except for snowmobiles, will be allowed to cross the Cedar River Bridge. (Refer to Appendix E for an analysis of bridge location alternatives)
- Remove the "Tube" and replace with a bridge that can accommodate the proposed recreational uses, including horse and wagon. This replacement bridge will be designed and installed in consultation with DEC programs, APA, and any other applicable jurisdictional agencies.

F. Camping

History

The Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex became open to the public on October 1, 2013 for day use. At that time, there weren't any DEC-designated primitive tent sites in the areas surrounding the small lakes and ponds.

Prior to July 1, 2014, the area—the shoreline in particular—was inventoried for appropriate primitive tent site locations. There are significant amounts of undisturbed, emergent wetlands along the shorelines of the Chain Lakes and surrounding waterbodies, so the selection of sites in locations with the capacity to withstand use was critical to minimize natural resource impacts. Sites were located to be APSLMP compliant and the area became open to overnight use on July 1, 2014.

Existing Conditions

General

There are a total of 31 designated primitive tent sites in the Complex Area:

Primitive tent sites which currently require a permit:

- 11 sites dispersed throughout the Essex Chain Lakes vicinity (First through Eighth Lakes, Deer Pond, Jackson Pond, Mud Pond, Grassy Pond, Little Grassy Pond)

Primitive tent sites which do not require a permit:

- 6 sites along the Cornell Road and Deer Pond Road
- 1 site along the Boots to Cornell road approx. 0.2 mi south of the "Tube"
- 1 site on the northwest side of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge
- 4 sites along the Camp Six Road
- 1 site on Pine Lake (not including the floatplane site)
- 4 sites along the Chain Lakes Road (South), between the Outer Gooley parking area and the Cedar River

There are also 3 sites in the Complex Area that have been historically used by floatplane visitors and will continue to only be used by floatplane visitors. Two of these sites are located on First Lake, and one on Pine Lake. They are signed "Reserved for floatplane use only." See Proposed Facilities map in Appendix I.

Camping is allowed at designated sites only within the ECLPA. In order to protect the ecologically sensitive areas around the Chain Lakes and surrounding waterbodies, a camping permit is required for designated sites within 500 feet of the Essex Chain Lakes and surrounding lakes/ponds. This includes First through Eighth Lakes, Little Grassy Pond, Grassy Pond, Mud Pond, Deer Pond, and Jackson Pond. Fires are prohibited at these permitted sites, and are signed accordingly. Other designated sites within the Primitive Area do not require a permit, and are subject to general State Land backcountry camping regulations and allow fires.

Camping on public land outside of the ECLPA is subject to general State Land backcountry camping regulations, which allows at-large camping at least 150 feet from a road, trail, or water and also allow fires.

Camping Permit System

The Adirondack Interpretive Center (AIC), a SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry facility located off of Route 28N in Newcomb, is the location where camping permits are issued (during AIC business hours) for camping at the 11 designated primitive tent sites in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area which require a permit. The maximum length of stay at the same primitive tent site is 3 nights. The maximum overnight group size is 8 people. Permits are required and are issued by AIC staff between May 15 and October 15 each year. Outside of this time window, the maximum length of stay will still be 3 nights at the same primitive tent site, but use will not be subject to a permitting system. Reservations may be made up to 10 days in advance (based on a 10-day weather forecast window.) Visitors with a reservation permit may arrive after AIC hours, but must notify staff ahead of time, and arrange to receive their permit and area map.

Year 2014 was the first year that the public was allowed to camp in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area, and use levels were documented via the camping permit system records and the Deer Pond parking area kiosk. A total of 77 camping permits were issued between July 1 and October 15, 2014. The total number of overnight visitors was 216, with 453 total user nights. September was the month with the highest percent occupancy (14 %.) These use statistics suggest a lesser demand for camping than was anticipated. However, almost 1,000 day-users signed in at the Deer Pond parking area kiosk during that same time frame. Although the specific use numbers were not captured, visitors were found to have enjoyed roadside camping along the Cornell and Deer Pond Roads. The majority of users in the Complex Area were day users paddling the lakes.

Campfires

In other areas of the Forest Preserve, the number of visitors using portable gas stoves instead of campfires is increasing. The proliferation of fire blackened rocks, charcoal, and partially burned garbage, melted and broken glass, hacked trees, and litter has and continues to scar many primitive tent sites. In addition, campfires are improperly built in parking lots, in the middle of trails, inside lean-tos and trailhead registration shelters, and along shorelines of rivers, lakes and ponds. “There is no question that campfires have substantial environmental impacts” (Cole, Dalle-Moll 1982.)

Overall, there are currently few DEC rules and regulations that address fire use. Although actual fire sites are usually quite small, a more serious aspect involves firewood gathering, which by itself causes widespread and often severe impacts. This activity greatly increases the area of disturbance around primitive tent sites and it is common that the disturbed area can be 10-20 times greater in size than the actual primitive tent site zone. Campfires consume wood which would otherwise decompose and replenish soil nutrients. Excessive firewood gathering has resulted in the removal of all dead and down material and fostered the cutting of live and standing dead trees in many popular areas. The latter are habitats to many birds and insects and pulling off limbs scars primitive tent sites for other users. For example, in the Eastern High Peaks Wilderness Area, more than ¼ of the standing trees were cut for firewood around Marcy Dam, before fires were prohibited in the Eastern High Peaks management zone (HPWA UMP 1999.) Unburned refuse left in fire rings has attracted wildlife in search of food and leads to increased human/wildlife conflicts, especially with bears.

The lakes and ponds of the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area occupy only a small geographic area, and are surrounded in many places by emergent wetlands and pristine shorelines. APA has described many of these wetland areas as highly sensitive Class I wetlands, which require the highest degree of protection.

Due to the above considerations, fires are prohibited at all sites that require a permit in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area, which are the sites within 500 feet of a lake/pond (First through Eighth Lakes, Deer Pond, Jackson Pond, Mud Pond, Grassy Pond, and Little Grassy Pond.) Fires are allowed at the two floatplane primitive tent sites on First Lake. Fires are allowed within the Pine Lake Primitive Area and Blue Mountain Wild Forest areas, subject to general State land regulations.

There is currently a tentsite on the east side of the former all-season road 0.2 mi south of the "Tube" between Fourth and Fifth Lakes where fires are allowed. Visitors may paddle to Fourth/Fifth Lakes, exit the water at the "Tube", and carry along the former all-season road to access the tent site.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Reduce, eliminate, or mitigate any adverse impacts of camping on natural resources.
- Comply with the APSLMP primitive tent site and lean-to guidelines.
- Improve and enhance camping opportunities in the Complex Area.
- Direct the public to designated camping locations by providing information in publications, on webpages, and at trailheads.

Action Steps

- Designate one to two primitive tent sites in the vicinity of the north shore of the Cedar River, within the ECLPA.
- Designate one to two primitive tent sites along the west side of the Hudson River, between the Route 28N Bridge and the Iron (Polaris) Bridge.
- Upgrade the existing primitive tent site on the northwest side of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge to make accessible for persons with disabilities and equestrian users. This will incorporate an accessible privy, picnic table, fire ring, and horse mounting platform.
- Install a lean-to in the vicinity of Inner Gooley clearing – after the camp buildings are removed. This will incorporate accessible features, including a privy, access to the water's edge, and a mounting platform.
- Designated primitive tent sites may be closed temporarily because of overuse or other emergency or environmental reasons by the posting of "No Camping" signs. Site relocations and new site establishment will be done through the DEC work planning process, in consultation with APA, and in compliance with the APSLMP.
- If use levels remain similar to 2014, then the DEC may consider eliminating the permit system after year 2018, and manage the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area as "camping at designated sites only." Other management actions will also be considered as part of this decision-making

process, including the continuation of partnering with the AIC to remain an informational hub for the recreational opportunities within the Complex Area.

- Designate additional primitive tent sites in the ELCPA that are accessible from the waterbodies and located more than 500 feet from a lake/pond. These sites will not require a permit, and campfires will be allowed. They will be monitored, and fires may be discontinued or the sites closed if negative impacts are observed. A maximum of six sites will be designated.
- Monitor impacts of campfires and firewood gathering to identify potential degradation. Sites will be observed to ensure that fires only occur within designated fire rings, and that only dead and down wood is used for fuel.
- Monitor primitive tent site use. If sites remain unused, close or relocate them to other roadside locations.

- **Proposed Regulation**

  Statutory authority for regulatory change is found in ECL §9-0105(3) and ECL §9-0105(3) § 816.1 through 816.3. Section 816.3 of the Executive Law (APA Act) directs DEC to develop rules and regulations necessary to implement the APSLMP. Existing regulations relating to public use of State lands under the jurisdiction of the DEC are found in 6 NYCRR Part 190. These proposed regulations constitute the minimum level of direct regulation necessary to assure APSLMP compliance and directly influence visitor behavior to protect resources and the experiences of visitors.

  Currently, the no-fire provision will be managed and regulated pursuant to DEC regulations[2] which states that *"No person shall set, light, use or maintain a fire or campfire of any kind on State lands which are posted or designated by the department to prohibit campfires. Under no circumstances are campfires allowed on any forest access road, truck trail, road, trail or parking area on State lands."*

  Through this Complex Plan, the promulgation of a new regulation is proposed to prohibit fires within 500 feet of the Essex Chain Lakes and surrounding waterbodies, including: First – Eighth Lakes, Deer Pond, Jackson Pond, Mud Pond, Grassy Pond, and Little Grassy Pond. Fires are allowed at the two First Lake floatplane primitive tent sites.

G. Canoe Carries

Existing Conditions

Canoe carries allow paddlers to portage between adjacent lakes/ponds, or around rapid sections of watercourses. There are four existing canoe carries in the Complex Area, which are marked with yellow DEC "Canoe Carry" trail markers:

1. Deer Pond Parking Area to Deer Pond shore (0.25 mi)

[2] Section 190.8[v] of Title 6 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York.

2. Deer Pond shore to Third Lake shore (0.50 mi)

3. Second Lake shore to First Lake shore (0.10 mi)

4. First Lake shore to Grassy Pond shore (0.40 mi)

Paddlers park at the Deer Pond Parking Area. After signing in at the kiosk, it is a 0.25 carry along the former all-season road to the shore of Deer Pond. Stone steps lead to the edge of Deer Pond. Paddlers then may cross Deer Pond, and take out for a 0.50 mi carry along another former all-season road to the shore of Third Lake. If a wheeled canoe carrier is being used, it may be more convenient to skip Deer Pond and carry to Third Lake or to the "Tube" between 4th and 5th Lakes. Continuing along the former all-season road, instead of taking the stone steps to Deer Pond, a canoe may be wheeled on the former all-season road around the eastern end of Deer Pond, to Third Lake or to the "Tube" between 4th and 5th Lakes. The distance from the Deer Pond Parking Area to the shore of Third Lake or the "Tube" between 4th and 5th, via road and avoiding Deer Pond, is approximately 1.2 miles. This information will be provided on the parking area kiosk and via appropriate signage.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Facilitate safe public access between nearby waterbodies that are not connected via waterway.
- Allow for safe traverse around two rapid sections on the Hudson River between the Town of Newcomb (Lake Harris) and the Iron (Polaris) Bridge.
- Design and locate any new trail markers and trail signs in accordance with the unified system developed for Forest Preserve lands.
- Locate new canoe carries in sites that can withstand use to minimize the impact on natural resources.

Action Steps

- Maintain the existing canoe carries, which includes: maintaining signage/trail markers, removal of blowdown, and brush clearing.
- The APA will be consulted in any significant canoe carry management or construction activities in wetlands and in areas adjacent to wetlands to determine if an APA wetlands permit is required.
- Formalize and mark two pre-existing carries on the Hudson River, between Lake Harris and the Iron (Polaris) Bridge. The carry around Long Rapids is 0.30 miles, and the carry around Ord Falls is 0.50 miles. These carries are already flagged and utilized by the public, but will be marked with yellow DEC "canoe carry" trail markers, blowdown removed, and brushed out.
- Site and construct a canoe carry to Eighth Lake.
- Site and construct a canoe carry from Third Lake to Jackson Pond that does not enter the Inner Gooley Club's exclusive use envelope, or wait until 2018 to designate this carry, and use the landing at the Inner Gooley Club's current location. These options will be considered, and the route with the best balance of directness and capacity to withstand use will be selected and constructed.

- Relocate the beginning of the canoe carry from First Lake to Grassy Pond around the floatplane-only primitive tent site. Remove markers and brush in the relocated portion.
- Sign portions of canoe carry trails that do not follow former all-season roads as closed to horse and bicycle use. This will prevent both damage to the smaller carry trails and erosion at the water's edge.

H. Recreational Opportunities for People with Disabilities

History and Guidance

Application of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), along with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Title V, Section 504, have had a profound effect on the manner by which people with disabilities are afforded equality in their recreational pursuits. The ADA is a comprehensive law prohibiting discrimination against people with disabilities in employment practices, use of public transportation, use of telecommunication facilities and use of public accommodations. Title II of the ADA requires, in part, that reasonable modifications must be made to the services and programs of public entities, so that when those services and programs are viewed in their entirety, they are readily accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. This must be done unless such modification would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of the service, program or activity or an undue financial or administrative burden.

Title II also requires that new facilities, and parts of facilities that are newly constructed for public use, are to be accessible to people with disabilities. In rare circumstances where accessibility is determined to be structurally impracticable due to terrain, the facility, or part of facility is to be accessible to the greatest extent possible and to people with various types of disabilities.

Consistent with ADA requirements, the DEC incorporates accessibility for people with disabilities into the planning, construction and alteration of recreational facilities and assets supporting them. This Complex Plan incorporates an inventory of all the recreational facilities or assets supporting the programs and services available on the unit, and an assessment of the programs, services and facilities on the unit to determine the level of accessibility provided. In conducting this assessment, DEC employs guidelines which ensure that programs are accessible, including buildings, facilities, and vehicles, in terms of architecture and design, transportation and communication to individuals with disabilities.

Any new facilities, assets and accessibility improvements to existing facilities or assets proposed in this Complex Plan are identified in the section containing proposed action steps.

The DEC is not required to make each of its existing facilities and assets accessible as long as the DEC programs, taken as a whole, are accessible.

For copies of any of the above mentioned laws or guidelines relating to accessibility, contact the DEC Universal Access Program Coordinator at 518-402-9428 or UniversalAccessProgram@dec.ny.gov.

Universal Trail Assessment Process

The Universal Trail Assessment Process (UTAP) is an objective method of measuring such site conditions as average and maximum grade, minimum trail width, cross slope, trail length, and surface type. These variables can then be presented to the user at the trailhead to allow them to make an informed decision about whether they would like to use the facility or not.

Facilities

The 2014 Stewardship Plan for the Complex Area described recreational opportunities to be implemented, prior to formal Complex Plan adoption, to accommodate people with disabilities. This included: motorized access to camping and waterway access to Fifth Lake, and accessible roadside camping opportunities at three separate locations throughout the Complex Area. Although this UMP supersedes the Stewardship Plan, construction of these facilities will be completed in concurrence with the Stewardship Plan, and are therefore listed here as previously approved facilities.

Camping & Waterway Access at Fifth Lake

Pursuant to the Stewardship Plan and in conformance with the APSLMP, motor vehicle access will be provided for people with disabilities near the "Tube."

There is a primitive tent site located on Fifth Lake (north of the "Tube") that can be reserved using the existing camping permit system (see Camping section for more details.) The site will be made accessible for people with disabilities by offering designated parking, hardened access routes and camping surface, and an accessible privy. This site will be usable by the general public, but those without a disability are encouraged to use other sites, and leave this site for those that require accessible features. Monitoring use and satisfaction of users will occur to assess and determine long term management of this site.

The waterway access site is on the south side of the "Tube", and can be used by campers or day-users. It has a gradually sloping sandy shore, with a path from the road that will be widened and hardened.

Roadside Primitive Tentsites

Accessible camping opportunities will be provided at three additional locations throughout the Complex Area adjacent to publicly-accessible portions of public roads. Camping at these sites will be managed according to general State land backcountry camping regulations. The locations of accessible roadside tent sites will be carefully chosen, in order to provide attractive facilities in areas that can withstand use. These locations will have stable surfaces and include parking, hardened tent location, a privy, and a hardened access route to the accessible privy, and comply with the APSLMP. These sites will be located in appropriate locations along the Cornell Road, Deer Pond Road, Camp Six Road, Drake's Mill Road, Chain Lakes Road (South), or Chain Lakes Road (North). Exact locations of these sites will be provided on maps, at trailheads, on the DEC website and through other appropriate informational pathways. Monitoring use and satisfaction of users will occur to assess and determine long term management of these sites.

Proposed Management

Objective

- Maintain existing (and increase as appropriate) access opportunities for people with disabilities where such development does not alter the fundamental nature of existing programs, is compliant with DEC regulation and policy, and any improvements are conforming under the guidelines of the APSLMP.

Action Steps

- Maintain existing recreational access opportunities for people with disabilities, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.
- Publicize the locations and details of existing accessible facilities on DEC's public website and through other appropriate informational pathways.
- Create a day-use area in the vicinity of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge, which will include a picnic table.
- Construct accessible camping facilities and a horse mounting platform at the existing primitive tent site on the northwest side of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge, on BMWF land. Construct a 0.3 mi hardened accessible path from the Iron (Polaris) Bridge Parking Area to the camping facilities near the bridge. This path will comply with ADA standards, and be a path mostly through the woods that will provide people with disabilities a desirable trail experience.
- Establish accessible facilities on the east side of the Hudson River, in the Vanderwhacker Mountain WF. This may include: fishing access, waterway access, day-use or camping opportunities – depending on site conditions and feasibility. A future amendment to the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest UMP will be necessary for these facilities to be developed.
- Install an accessible lean-to in the vicinity of the Inner Gooley complex site. This site will include a mounting platform, accessible privy, and access for the public to the water's edge. Construct an accessible fishing and waterway access site south of the "Tube."
- Perform a UTAP assessment of the Deer Pond Circle and the primitive tent site at Deer Pond. Identify and carry through any additional opportunities to perform the UTAP process in the Complex Area.
- Provide accessible fishing opportunities on the bridge that will replace the "Tube." This will be evaluated and committed to through the design of the bridge.
- Construct an accessible fishing and waterway access site south of the "Tube."
- Construct a six-car parking area near the "Tube" in conformance with the APSLMP.

I. Fishing

Existing Conditions

Regulations

DEC angling regulations are designed to conserve fish populations in individual waters by preventing overexploitation. Angling regulations effectively control impacts of angler use. DEC monitors the effectiveness of angling regulations, stocking policies and other management activities by conducting

periodic biological and chemical surveys. Based on analysis of biological survey results, angling regulations may be changed as necessary to protect the fish populations of the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex Area. Statewide angling and special angling regulations provide the protection necessary to sustain or enhance natural reproduction where it occurs.

In addition to angling regulations, factors at work in the unit which serve to limit use include the relative remoteness of some waterbodies/waterways from roads, the seasonal nature of angling in coldwater ponds, and seasonal road closures.

Current fishing regulations prohibit the use or possession of baitfish in all Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area lakes and ponds.

The use of motorized watercraft (with the exception of the lessees until September 30, 2018) is prohibited. See the Use Reservations section for more lessee information.

Proposed Management

Objective

- Maintain and enforce regulations that prohibit the use of fish as bait in the Primitive Area lakes/ponds. The use of fish as bait is a potentially significant vector for introductions of disruptive non-native fish species.

Action Step

- Enforce current applicable Statewide and special fishing regulations in Complex Area waters.

J. Hunting and Seasonal Access

Existing Conditions

Regulations and Use

The Complex Area provides an opportunity for a variety of wildlife related recreational pursuits. These include hunting, trapping, bird watching and wildlife photography. A number of mammals and birds may be hunted or trapped during seasons set annually by the DEC. These species are identified in the Environmental Conservation Law (ECL), Section 11-0903 and 11-0908. The DEC has the authority to set hunting and trapping season dates and bag limits by regulation for all game species. The Complex Area is located within Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) 5H.

Wildlife related usage has historically centered around big game hunting, primarily for deer, although bear hunting, small game hunting and furbearer trapping are also prominent. Since the State took ownership of the area, white-tailed deer hunting during the regular big game season has been popular. Several seasonal hunting camp permits have been issued by local Forest Rangers since the addition of the land to the Forest Preserve.

Seasonal Motorized Access

Segments of two roads, one accessed from the Town of Newcomb and one accessed from the Town of Indian Lake, will be open for additional fall seasonal motorized access that coincides with regular big game hunting season. The gates on both the Camp Six Road in Newcomb and the Chain Lakes Road (South) in Indian Lake will be opened from October 1 until the first Sunday in December (road conditions and weather permitting.) This encompasses muzzle loading, archery, and rifle deer seasons. Holders of seasonal hunting camp permits (issued by the local Forest Ranger), may have pre-arranged access to remove their seasonal hunting camps until the second weekend in December.

Camp Six Road Seasonal Access

The gate at the beginning of the Camp Six Road will be open during big game season for motor vehicle use for an extended one mile to a small parking and turnaround area. There are currently four primitive tent sites located along this section of road.

The Camp Six Road is accessed from the Town of Newcomb. Turn south on the Goodnow Flow Road from Route 28N, and left onto the Chain Lakes Road (North). Continue left past the first closed yellow gate. The Camp Six Road is the second yellow gate, and will be opened during the fall regular big game season.

Chain Lakes Road (South) Seasonal Access

The gate at the Outer Gooley public parking area, along the Chain Lakes Road (South), will be open during big game season for motor vehicle use for an extended 1.5 miles to a small parking and turnaround area. There are currently 3 primitive tent sites located along this section of road, one further along the road, and one on the east side of Pine Lake. There is also a primitive tent site on the west side of Pine Lake that is used by those traveling by floatplane.

The Chain Lakes Road (South) is accessed from the Town of Indian Lake. Turn north onto the Chain Lakes Road (South) from Route 28, just east of the village. Continue along the Chain Lakes Road (South) (past the Lake Abanakee dam and the rafting put-in) to the Outer Gooley public parking area. The gate along the road after the parking area will be opened during fall regular big game season.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Maintain up-to-date public information regarding hunting and trapping opportunities and any associated regulation changes.
- Continue to provide additional fall seasonal access to the area during big game hunting season.

Action Steps

- Open segments of two roads, one accessed from the Town of Newcomb and one accessed from the Town of Indian Lake, to provide seasonal motorized access that coincides with regular big game hunting season.

- Support educational opportunities related to hunting and trapping, and enforce hunting and trapping regulations.
- Evaluate the primitive tent sites along both seasonal access routes. Those sites that see little use may be moved to more desirable roadside locations. For relocated sites on either road, motor vehicle pull offs may be constructed if site conditions warrant. In order to accommodate relocated sites, seasonal access along the Chain Lakes Road (South) may be extended up to an additional ½ mile north.
- Assess use levels of both seasonal access routes. If use levels remain relatively low then the option of discontinuing either one of these access routes will be explored and executed.
- Maintain seasonal access routes, signage, gates, and parking to an appropriate and usable standard.

K. Trails - General

Trail management involves not just the trail itself, but also the corridor it occupies. Trails are not self-sustaining. Once developed, all trails must receive a degree of maintenance; otherwise non-maintained trails will deteriorate and cause resource problems. The degree of maintenance a trail receives varies greatly depending on the designated use of that trail. Snowmobile and ski trails may require pruning of branches to a greater height to accommodate the snow pack. Horse trails also require greater pruning heights as riders are generally 6-8 feet or more above ground level. Maintenance of all trails should be conducted in a manner that is adequate for the desired use and has minimal impact on the character of the trail. DEC faces a backlog of unmet trail maintenance and reconstruction on Forest Preserve trails and relies on volunteers and trail contractors to close the gap. See the Partnerships and Volunteers section for more information.

L. Hiking, Cross-Country Ski & Snowshoe Trails

Existing Conditions

Existing former all-season roads are spread throughout the Complex Area, and serve as a network of unofficial hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoe trails.

There is one designated and marked cross-country ski/snowshoe loop in the Complex Area, known as the Upper Hudson Ski Loop. It is located on Blue Mountain Wild Forest land north of the Goodnow River. This loop is a “lollipop” layout trail, beginning and ending at the same location. The trail begins across the road from the Goodnow Flow outfall dam, off of the Goodnow Flow Road. A small 3 car parking area was designated in the winter of 2014/15, in a previously cleared area on private conservation easement land adjacent to the Forest Preserve.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Design and locate all trails in accordance with DEC guidance and trail best management practices that minimize environmental impacts.
- Design and locate all trail markers and signs in accordance with the unified system developed for Forest Preserve lands.
- Maintain current trail information on the DEC website and disseminate through other appropriate sources.
- Maintain trails to appropriate standards, which minimize resource degradation and provide safe public access.
- Add and enhance hiking, cross-country ski, and snowshoe trail opportunities as appropriate throughout the Complex Area.

Action Steps

- Evaluate existing and desired use of the Upper Hudson Ski Loop trail and parking area. Consult with the private landowner to upgrade the parking area to make useable for non-winter use and expand to accommodate 6 vehicles, while minimizing natural resource impacts.
- If approved by the private landowner, allow for bicycles to cross the very small distance of private land to access the BMWF and designate the Upper Hudson Ski Loop as a bicycle trail.
- Extend the Upper Hudson Ski Loop Trail. An existing, unmarked trail on Forest Preserve extends past the northern end of the existing loop trail (on the west side of the Hudson River) for approx. 3.5 miles to the Ord Road. The trail will then follow the Ord Road west to the Forest Preserve boundary, and cross the Chain Lakes conservation easement to reach the Goodnow Flow Road. Parking in the vicinity of the Ord Road will be approved and established before this will be opened to the public. Reroutes may be necessary where former all season roads are no longer suitable.
- Extend this same non-motorized trail further, directly to the Town of Newcomb. This existing, unmarked trail continues north from Ord Road approximately 2.5 miles to a gate near the Newcomb Transfer Station. However, the northernmost section crosses private land. Parking will be assessed through Forest Preserve work planning and any private land crossings will only be established with permission of the private landowners.
- Allow for (and encourage) hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing on appropriately designated multiple use trails in the Complex Area.
- Maintenance and construction will conform to trail best management practices.
- Collect recreational use data through register information.

M. Bicycle Trails

History

In 1993, APA and DEC signed an addendum to the APA/DEC MOU which addresses use of bicycles on wild forest classified lands, while prohibiting bicycling on all wilderness areas. The addendum adopted

was partly in response to the tourism, bicycling and regional planning interests which identified the economic and recreational potential for mountain bicycling in the Adirondack Park.

The APSLMP guidelines for wild forest areas (page 36) allow "all terrain bicycles" (bicycles) *"on roads legally open to the public and on state truck trails, foot trails, snowmobile trails and horse trails deemed suitable for such use as specified in individual unit management plans*."

The character of the former woods road network provides a more family-friendly bicycling experience, in comparison to a typical single track bicycle experience, which is what DEC understands that the public is seeking in the Complex Area.

Existing Conditions

In July 2015, the DEC amended the Stewardship Plan to allow for bicycling to occur on a subset of administrative roads in the Complex Area. Within the Essex Chain and Pine Lakes Primitive Areas, the Stewardship Plan allowed for bicycling to occur on the entire Chain Lakes Road (North), the road connecting the Chain Lakes Road (North) to the Deer Pond Parking Area, the Deer Pond Circle and the trails to Jackson Pond and Pine Lake. Within the Wild Forest, the Stewardship Plan allowed for bicycling on the Drake's Mill Rd to the Iron (Polaris) Bridge and the Chain Lakes Road (South).

NOTE: This Complex Plan supersedes the Stewardship Plan (as amended July 2015.)

Multiple-Use Trails & Etiquette

The literature suggests that the majority of shared use concerns stem from horses coming into contact with bicycles. Since horses are prey animals, they can sometimes perceive the unknown as a potential threat.

There are existing trail etiquette standards that guide multiple use, especially when pertaining to horses and bicycles. The main way to reduce the potential for conflict is to provide user awareness about what other uses they are likely to encounter on the trail. This information will be posted at parking areas/trailheads.

The US Forest Service (USFS), the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA), and other organizations have published trail etiquette guidance. Bicycles should always yield to horses. Motor vehicles and ATVs can be heard from afar, and usually won't startle a horse. Bikes are quieter and can startle a horse and rider. When approaching, and depending on the situation, bicyclists should slow down, verbally make their presence known, and (depending on the situation) dismount to allow the equestrian trail riders to pass by. Providing a verbal announcement not only alerts the rider that you are there, but lets the horse know that you are a human – which prevents startling them. The sign (below) is an example of signage that shows the proper right-of-ways for multiple use trails.

Example of Right-Of-Way Signage

Assessment of Trails

This Complex Plan calls for an assessment of future horse and bicycle use. This assessment will be conducted in a variety of ways, and will allow DEC to better understand use, potential problems and public desires. The DEC, in consultation with APA, will assess the condition of non-motorized recreational trails used by equestrians and bicyclists to measure the impact these activities have on natural resources.

It is understood that the public desires to have "family style" bicycling experiences throughout the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex Area. There are many factors, that when combined, result in an overall user experience. The assessment called for in this Complex Plan will attempt to measure these factors in a way that captures the overall public use as well as more subjective measurements. These subjective measurements will deal with: aspects of the trails that users find enjoyable or memorable and describe positive or negative interactions.

Methods used to conduct this assessment will utilize DEC staff, including SCA Backcountry Stewards, Forest Rangers, and Foresters, as well as DEC partners, including Towns, volunteers, colleges, and contractors. The assessment will likely provide use estimates through a combination of trail registers, trail counters, and observation. The assessment will also involve interviews with users in an attempt to capture more "experience" based information, to define what is important to individual users of the area.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Continue bicycling opportunities pursuant to the APSLMP.
- Maintain trails to an appropriate standard in order to minimize resource impacts and preserve recreational usability.
- Educate recreational users about respectful multiple use trail etiquette.
- Evaluate bicycling use and impacts.

Action Steps

- Designate approximately 9 miles of former all-season roads in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areain conformance with the APSLMP.
- Designate approximately 7 miles of bicycle trails on Wild Forest lands within the Complex Area, this will include trails on a portion of the Chain Lakes Roads (North), Chain Lakes Road (South), Deer Pond Road, and Drake's Mill Road to the Iron (Polaris) Bridge.
- Assess trail use and experiences using methods and criteria described above.
- Identify any potential additional bike trails, if appropriate, in Wild Forest areas of this Complex Area and propose their formal designation in a UMP Amendment.
- Install up-to-date trail maps at kiosks/register boxes.
- Install multiple use trail etiquette signage at all Complex Area parking areas/trailheads.
- Install signage where bicycling is not allowed within the Complex Area. This includes the smaller canoe carry trails that lead directly to the water's edge.
- Maintain trails to their existing character, in conformance with the APSLMP, using appropriate materials, tools, and techniques.
- Place and sign trail registers in a manner that encourages all user groups to register. Accurate trail register data is an indispensable tool for DEC to appropriately manage the area.
- Encourage and support partnerships that evaluate use of the Complex Area.

N. Equestrian Facilities and Trails

History

Prior to addition into the Adirondack Forest Preserve, almost all of the land in the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex Area was historically owned by Finch Pruyn, and primarily managed for a sustainable timber supply. A network of all-season roads was used for access throughout the property. This network provides a unique opportunity for multiple use trails, including equestrian use. Equestrian trail riding provides a broad range of visitors with the opportunity to experience the Complex Area in an interesting way.

Facilities

Equestrian Parking & Staging Area – on Chain Lakes Road (North)

A parking and staging area, designed for five correctly-parked trucks/trailers, has been sited along the Chain Lakes Road (North), 0.25 miles from the Goodnow Flow Road intersection (see map in Appendix I.) This former log landing was chosen because it is already cleared, is reasonably level, and can accommodate the necessary space for this type of parking situation. Additionally, designating this site specifically for equestrian parking limits any parking conflicts with the public and adjacent landowners, and minimizes the distance that horse trailers must be driven on narrow gravel roads. Establishment of this parking area will require surface leveling and hardening to withstand the weight of trucks and large trailers. This parking area will also include a horse mounting platform and informational kiosk with a trail map. Horse mounting platforms will be installed near the Iron (Polaris) Bridge, at the accessible primitive

tent site at Fifth Lake, and, in consultation with APA, any other sites deemed necessary. Mounting platforms located at points of interest allow the area to be more accessible to a wider spectrum of recreationists. People will be able to dismount from their horse to use a privy and take in the scenic vistas. A preferable option for manure disposal will also be chosen and implemented.

The addition of a pull-in lane on the north side of the equestrian parking area will allow for a greater turning radius for trucks entering with trailers, and more room in the parking area itself. This was contemplated, but not proposed in the 2014 Stewardship Plan, and is being proposed as part of this UMP. This additional lane will require surface hardening and some tree cutting on Blue Mountain Wild Forest land adjacent to the Chain Lakes Road (North). Several trees bordering the Chain Lakes Road (North) will not be cut, in order to preserve naturalness of the site and guide use of the pull-in lane.

Equestrian Trail Opportunities

Approximately 21 miles of former all-season roads within the Complex Area will be designated as horse trails (see map in Appendix I.) Consideration for trail designation includes: capacity to withstand use, scenic vistas, loop trails, and long-term maintenance considerations. Designated trails will be marked with standard DEC trail markers. The Camp Six Rd corridor is not being proposed for horses at this time. While appropriate for winter use, the rocky and seasonally wet nature of the road makes it unusable for horses – without significant tread and drainage work.

All of the trails designated for horse use in the Complex Area allow for saddle horse use. Horse and wagon use will, however, be allowed on a portion of the trail network. Horse and wagon may ride to just north of the "Tube" and the Fifth Lake tent site, but will not be allowed to continue west to the Deer Pond Circle. Six Lake Road must be forded for a section near Fifth Lake, and therefore horse and wagon use will also not be allowed on that trail. Trails will be marked accordingly, and distinguished on kiosk and webpage maps.

Horses require water sources along trails and near facilities designed for their use. In order to prevent undue environmental impacts to shorelines, the DEC will designate locations where equestrian trail riders will be able to get water for their horses.

Multiple Use Trails & Etiquette

Multiple use trails accommodate several recreational uses including equestrian trail riding, bicycling, hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing. Several sections of trails may also be designated for snowmobile use. See Snowmobile Trails section for more information about area snowmobile trails. The literature suggests that the main concerns regarding multiple use trails for equestrian trail riders are safety related, specifically horses becoming spooked by other users. Since horses are prey animals, they may be spooked by the unknown. Vehicles and ATVs are typically safe, since the mechanical noise can be heard from a distance, and they realize that is isn't a predator. Bicycles, which are quieter, are the main concern, since a horse may perceive it as an unknown threat.

There are other places on State land where horses (including horse and wagon) and bicycles share trails without conflict. An example is the Otter Creek trail system in both the Independence River Wild Forest

and Independence River State Forest. This trail system is mainly oriented toward equestrian use, however, bicycling, hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling are also allowed on many of the trails. Otter Creek is heavily used by equestrian trail riders, whose experience is not reportedly diminished by these shared trail uses.

The Complex Area multiple use trail network has been historically managed as a road network. Since roads are typically flatter and wider than trails, with a considerably longer line of sight, the equestrian concerns (discussed above) are mostly alleviated. Moreover, when combined with a deliberate multiple use trail etiquette program, these uses should prove compatible in the Complex Area.

There are certain trail etiquette standards that guide multiple use, especially when pertaining to horses and bicycles. The main way to reduce the potential for conflict is to provide user awareness about what other uses they are likely to encounter on the trail. Given the proper etiquette information and shared trail expectations, all users should yield to equestrian trail riders. Hikers and bicyclists should be prepared to provide a verbal announcement to equestrian users - coming from either direction. The verbal announcement by bicyclists is paramount to dispel any potential threat to horses, and etiquette information will be provided to that effect. Equestrian trail riders should also be prepared to offer additional guidance when necessary. This information will be posted at parking areas/trailheads.

Equestrian Trail Maintenance

Equestrian trail riding is a compatible use of Forest Preserve lands when the trails are properly located, designed and maintained. It is important to bear in mind that without adequate maintenance, these trails will become eroded, wet and deteriorate. Trails in such a condition are environmentally unacceptable, unsafe and unpleasant to use, especially for multiple-use purposes.

Horse trails within the Essex Chain and Pine Lake Primitive Areas will be maintained pursuant to the APSLMP. Horse hitching posts and rails, and horse trail bridges constructed of natural materials are allowed by the APSLMP in Primitive Areas. Horse barns are conforming structures in Wild Forest and opportunities for the placement of these structures at staging areas will be explored in consultation with APA.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Provide recreational opportunities for equestrian trail riders in suitable locations.
- Maintain trails to appropriate usable standards, while minimizing environmental impacts.
- Provide information about uses allowed on and appropriate etiquette for multiple use trails.

Action Steps

- Install a Type II register box with map at the equestrian staging area.
- Provide multiple use trail etiquette information at all parking areas and trailheads.
- Install up-to-date trail maps at all Complex Area parking areas and trailheads.
- Designate and mark horse trails with DEC trail markers.

- Install signage where equestrian trail riding is not allowed within the Complex Area. This includes the smaller canoe carry trails that lead directly to the water's edge.
- Construct a pull-in lane adjacent to the equestrian parking area along the Chain Lakes Road (North).
- Evaluate the condition of the historic well at the historic Outer Gooley farmhouse, and consider installing a hand pump at the existing well, primarily for equestrian use.
- Identify locations for equestrians where water is available for horses and install signage at these locations. Hitching posts may also be provided at these locations.
- Establish a method for horse drawn wagons to pass through the gates along the former all season roads designated for their use. This includes the following gates: at the Outer Gooley Parking Area, along the Chain Lakes Road (North), at the "Tube", and at the Iron (Polaris) Bridge Parking Area. This will most likely be a combination lock – but the method of passage will be identified and published on the DEC webpage and kiosk at the equestrian staging area.
- Install mounting platforms near the Iron (Polaris) Bridge and near Fifth Lake.
- Install a mounting platform near the proposed Cedar River Bridge, along the north side of the Cedar River.
- Maintain trails to their existing character, in conformance with the APSLMP, using appropriate materials, tools, and techniques.
- Place and sign trail registers in a manner that encourages all user groups to register. Accurate trail register data is an indispensable tool for DEC to appropriately manage the area.
- Encourage and support partnerships that capture use of the Complex Area.
- Promulgate a regulation which prohibits horses from being tethered to trees.
- Promulgate a regulation which prevents horse from entering wetlands and water bodies (except through fords on designated trails.)

O. Snowmobile Trails

History

In the late 1960's until sometime in the 1980's, Finch Pruyn allowed public snowmobile use on roads within their properties, including those on the Essex Chain Lakes Tract. In the winter months, these roads allowed snowmobiles to travel between the communities of Indian Lake, Newcomb, Inlet, Long Lake and others. Many of these routes closed in the 1980's but some, such as a trail from Newcomb to Long Lake and a trail from Indian Lake to the Moose River Plains, remained open, and are still open to the public today, and some, like the trail from Indian Lake to Blue Mountain Lake, Long Lake, and Newcomb along the O'Neil Flow and Cornell Roads, have been reopened.

Guiding Documents

Statewide Context

In 1985, the New York State Legislature required the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) to plan for and establish the means to fund a statewide snowmobile trail system.

In 1989, The Plan was completed and the Snowmobile Trail Development and Maintenance Fund was established.

Today, many DEC snowmobile trails are included in the OPRHP statewide snowmobile trail network. Trails designated by OPRHP as "corridor" or "secondary" trails are eligible for OPRHP funding to support maintenance and grooming, which is typically carried out by local governments and snowmobile clubs.

2006 Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondack Park

The 2006 Adirondack Snowmobile Plan provided a concept for creating a system of snowmobile trails between communities in the Adirondack Park, thereby allowing them to take advantage of the many economic benefits of snowmobiling. The Plan also identified key concepts that would ensure the creation of these trails would be a net benefit to the Forest Preserve. This includes shifting snowmobile trails to the periphery of the Forest Preserve and re-designating interior trails for non-motorized uses.

2009 Snowmobile Management Guidance

As a way of more specifically defining the broad recommendations of the 2006 Adirondack Snowmobile Plan and clarifying several key provisions of the APSLMP, in 2009 the DEC drafted the Management Guidance: Snowmobile Trail Siting, Construction and Maintenance on Forest Preserve Lands in the Adirondack Park ("Management Guidance", see Appendix B.) This Management Guidance was found to be compliant with the APSLMP by APA at that time.

The Management Guidance established a trail classification system, which is described as follows:

Class II (Community Connector Trails) - Snowmobile trails or trail segments that serve to connect communities and provide the main travel routes for snowmobiles within a unit are Community Connector Trails. These trails are located in the periphery of wild forest or other Forest Preserve areas. They are always located as close as possible to motorized travel corridors, given safety, terrain and environmental constraints, and only rarely are any segments of them located further than one mile away from the nearest of these corridors. They are not duplicated or paralleled by other snowmobile trails. Some can be short, linking communities to longer Class II trails that connect two or more other communities.

Class I (Secondary Snowmobile Trails) - All other snowmobile trails that are not Community Connector Trails are Secondary Snowmobile Trails. These trails are located in the periphery of wild forest and other Forest Preserve areas where snowmobile trails are designated. They may be spur trails—perhaps leading to population areas and services such as repair shops, service stations, restaurants and lodging—, short loop trails or longer recreational trails. If directly connected to Class II trails, new and rerouted Class I trails are always located as close as possible to - and no farther than one mile from - motorized travel corridors, although some - with high recreational value - may be located beyond one mile and may approach a remote interior area.

Snowmobile Use on Roads – Designated snowmobile routes can exist on Forest Preserve roads, such as the Chain Lakes Road (South). DEC management of all such roads for motor vehicle use, including snowmobiles, is guided by the DEC "CP-38 Forest Preserve Roads" policy.

Existing Conditions

Lessees have the right to use snowmobiles to access their camps through the winter of 2017-18. The Gooley Club can access their camps near Third Lake via the Chain Lakes Road (North). The Polaris Club can access their camps on the eastern side of the Hudson River via the Chain Lakes Road (North), the Drakes Mill Road and the Iron (Polaris) Bridge. As outlined in the 2006 Adirondack Snowmobile Plan, establishing snowmobile trails that connect communities continues to be a goal of the DEC. Currently, the route for snowmobilers to travel between Indian lake and Newcomb is by heading west out of Indian Lake on the Cedar River Trail across the Cedar River Bridge towards Blue Mountain Lake, then heading north through the Township 19 Conservation Easement on the O'Neil Flow and Cornell Roads.

As indicated on DEC's 2001 application for a permit to construct a bridge over the Cedar River near the hamlet of Indian Lake, the Cedar River Trail and associated bridge were constructed for the purpose of connecting Indian Lake to the Blue Mountain Lake area. Since public snowmobiling has been established on the conservation easement lands to the north, those trails and the Cedar River trail have also been utilized as a means of traveling to Long Lake and Newcomb. Significant terrain, water and land classification constraints have historically prevented the identification of a suitable route directly between Indian Lake and Minerva. With the 2013 classification of the lands in the vicinity of the Essex Chain Lakes, a new opportunity has emerged to create a connection between these two communities.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Provide snowmobiling opportunities in the Complex Area that are consistent with the APSLMP, the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act (WSSRA), the 2009 Management Guidance, other DEC Policies and Guidelines and are compatible with the resource protection objectives for the unit.
- Establish a community connector trail between the communities of Indian Lake and Minerva.
- Classify existing trails in the Blue Mountain Wild Forest, both within and outside of the Complex Area, to bring the unit into compliance with the 2009 Management Guidance.

Action Steps

Trail Closure

- Rock River Trail (1.8 miles) – This trail is currently not used by snowmobiles, but has never been officially closed. The trail will remain open to non-motorized uses.

Classification of Existing Trails

There are several snowmobile trails in the Blue Mountain Wild Forest in need of classification pursuant to the Management Guidance:

- Old Stage Trail (2.1 miles) – This trail runs between the Lake Durant Public Campground and private lands in the hamlet of Blue Mountain Lake. It will be a Class II Trail.

- Cedar River Trail (7.4 miles) – This trail connects Benton Road in the hamlet of Indian Lake to the Old Stage Trail and the O'Neil Flow Road, a private right-of-way that provides snowmobile access to the Township 19 Conservation Easement lands to the north. This trail serves as a community connection between Indian Lake and Blue Mountain Lake, and will be a Class II trail.
- Benton Road Trail (0.3 miles) – This short spur connects Benton Road to private lands in the hamlet of Indian Lake, and is part of the Indian Lake to Blue Mountain Lake connection. It will be a Class II trail.
- Elm Island Trail (1.6 miles) – This trail is designated for snowmobile use, but its current level of use is not currently known, as an adjacent private landowner has closed the trail once it leaves State land. As described in the following paragraphs, this trail will be incorporated into a new community connector Class II trail, and the private land section will be rerouted on to State land.

New Trail Proposal – Indian Lake to Minerva Community Connector

The classification of the lands within the Complex Area includes a wild forest corridor connecting larger portions of the Blue Mountain Wild Forest at the north and south ends of the unit. Combined with an approved (but not yet constructed) trail connecting Newcomb and Minerva, this corridor enables a critical snowmobile trail connection to be made between the communities of Indian Lake and Minerva.

The new trail will be classified a Class II Community Connection trail and will be on wild forest or currently unclassified lands within the Complex Area between the hamlet of Indian Lake and Iron (Polaris) Bridge, where the route will continue into the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest.

A full analysis of alternatives considered for this trail connection can be found in the in Appendix E.

This new trail will be comprised of the following segments, from south to north:

- Elm Island Trail - (State [2.5 miles], and Town [0.5 miles], total of 3.0 miles) – The trail begins at a parking area on Pelon Road. The first 1.6 miles of this trail segment are currently designated (but not used) as a snowmobile trail and in excellent condition. As the trail approached private land, a new trail would keep the route on State land for a 0.9 miles before heading onto a parcel owned by the Town of Indian Lake. The route would then head directly to the Chain Lakes Road (South), near the Bullhead Pond Trail parking area.
- Chain Lakes Road (Town Road) (0.1 miles) – The route would utilize a short section of the plowed Town road before reaching the unplowed section of the road under DEC's jurisdiction.
- Chain Lakes Road South (DEC Road) (3.7 miles) – Beginning where the Town Road (and plowing) ends and heading north to the point where seasonal hunting access and public motor vehicle use ends.
- Chain Lakes Trail (1.3 mile) – This former all-season road is closed to public motor vehicle use, but is very suitable as a Class II trail. It extends from the point where motor vehicle access ends at the Chain Lakes Road (South), to the Cedar River. The route then crosses the Cedar River on a bridge that is also proposed in Section III-C of this Complex Plan.
- Camp Six Trail (3.0 miles) – After crossing the Cedar River, the route heads northeast on this former all-season road. Several short re-routes will be needed where the condition of the trail is not suitable for use by snowmobiles. A 0.5 mile section of the Camp Six Road was not classified

as Wild Forest in the 2014 Classification of the Complex Area. APA has agreed to make this map correction.

- Camp Six Road (1.3 miles) – This section begins at the southern terminus of the seasonal hunting access on the Camp Six Road and ends at the intersection with the Drakes Mill Road.
- Drakes Mill Road (1.1 miles) – The route continues east to a point where motor vehicle access ends.
- Drakes Mill Trail (0.3 miles) – This short segment utilizes an old road from the end of Drakes Mills Road until reaching the Iron (Polaris) Bridge.
- Polaris Bridge to Chaisson Road (5.0 miles of new trail on VMWF, 0.1 mile on private land)

  From the Iron (Polaris) Bridge the trail would follow the former all-season road to the east in order to exit the Scenic River corridor as efficiently as possible. Once out of the corridor the trail would proceed generally north through the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest to a point approximately 0.6 miles south of Chaisson Rd where it would proceed onto private land until it meets the Chaisson Rd. Public snowmobile use historically occurred on this private land before the Vanderwhacker Mountain trail was closed to snowmobiling. The DEC and the Town would work with the landowner to re-establish this use.

  Approximately 1/3 of the trail could be built on former all-season roads and access trails to a previously existing private inholding. For these reasons, the tree cutting, rock removal, and ground work could be kept to a minimum. The remaining portion of the trail would need to be newly constructed. It would be located in a mixture of upland hardwoods and mixed woods stand, with occasional bridge crossings in lowland areas and across streams. This trail would require approximately 10 bridges, and would allow flexibility to construct it in the best possible location in order to minimize the ecological impacts and maximize the long term sustainability.

  As indicated in the 2005 Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest UMP, a GIS model indicates potential deer yard habitat along portions of this trail segment in the extensive softwood wetlands north of Vanderwhacker Mountain along the North Branch of Wolf Creek and the Hudson River. The majority of the proposed trail that intersects the potential deer yarding area is located on the outer edges of the model. Field work conducted in 2015 in the peripheral location indicated that trail use may not significantly impact deer yards.

Once the community connector trail system is complete, a trail monitoring system will be developed to track snowmobile use. This may be done in partnership with another organization also attempting to gather use statistics.

Duplicate or Parallel Class II Community Connection Trails

The description of Class II trails in the Management Guidance states that “they are not duplicated or paralleled by other snowmobile trials.”

The principle considerations in the Management Guidance relevant to consideration of Alternatives 1A and 1B as a potential snowmobile trail are:

- That Class II Trails be located on the periphery, with rare exceptions, by shifting them away from the remote interior and not duplicate or parallel other snowmobile trails and, in fact, recommends closing trails which are redundant or part of a dense network. New community connector trails should be located near motorized travel "corridors unless terrain or environmental constraints dictate otherwise."
- The trail siting standards also require that trails be located to "avoid areas considered environmentally sensitive."

The 2009 Guidance does not give priority to any of these considerations.

Applying these considerations to Alternatives 1A and 1B requires an evaluation of the distance from other Class II trails (generally about 5 miles), the environmentally sensitive area in the central part of the VMWFA, the constraints posed by the scenic river corridor of the upper Hudson River that prevent the trail from being located nearer the public highway, and the higher maintenance costs.

The existing north/south Class II trail to the west of the proposed Class II trail runs between two parallel east/west Class II trails, one which connects Indian Lake to Blue Mountain Lake and one which connects Long Lake to Newcomb. Thus, these trails were intended to connect Indian Lake to Blue Mountain Lake; Indian Lake and Blue Mountain Lake to Long Lake; and Long Lake to Newcomb but not Indian Lake to Minerva. All of these connections lie in the Blue Mountain Wild Forest and in conservation easement lands west of the Complex Area. The proposed community connector trail is intended to connect the communities of Indian Lake to Minerva.

Alternative 1B has significant environmental constraints because of the number of wetland crossings and the probable impacts to wetlands. In addition, because this alternative can be very wet in many sections, the costs of maintaining the trail are inordinately high.

For all of these reasons, Alternative 1A, is the preferred alternative because it conforms best to the Management Guidance.

No Material Increase

In March of 2008 the APA adopted a resolution which found that existing DEC policy, which places a limit on the total snowmobile trail mileage on all wild forest units in the Adirondack Park at 848.88 miles, is consistent with the APSLMP Wild Forest Basic Guideline #4. The resolution also outlined the format in which snowmobile trail mileage should be presented in UMP's to ensure continued compliance with Basic Guideline #4.

This information is presented below, and only includes mileage within what is currently classified as the Blue Mountain Wild Forest and Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest, on roads and trails under DEC's jurisdiction, that are proposed in this UMP to be designated as snowmobile trails, and of existing trails to remain open.

Blue Mountain Wild Forest Snowmobile Trail Mileage

Base Snowmobile Trail Mileage (pre-UMP):	13.3 miles
Proposed Closure Mileage:	1.8 miles
Proposed New Trail Mileage:	12.0 miles
Total Proposed Trail Mileage (post-UMP):	23.5 miles

Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest Snowmobile Trail Mileage

Base Snowmobile Trail Mileage (pre-UMP):	24.6 miles
Proposed Closure Mileage:	0 miles
Proposed New Trail Mileage:	5.0 miles
Total Proposed Trail Mileage (post-UMP):	29.6 miles

Park-wide Snowmobile Trail Mileage

1972 Mileage	Estimated Existing Mileage in All Wild Forest Units	Proposed Net Gain/(Loss) of Mileage in BMWF and VMWF	New Total Estimated Mileage in All Wild Forest Units	Total Allowable Wild Forest Mileage * *Mileage beyond which would be considered a "material increase"
740	762.14	15.2	777.34	848.88

P. Floatplanes

History

Based on information obtained from commercial floatplane operators, floatplanes have used First and Pine Lakes to land, taxi, takeoff, and to unload and load passengers, gear, necessary provisions, and any game lawfully taken, for the purpose of providing access to the remote areas of the Blue Mountain Wild Forest and the Complex Area since the mid-twentieth century. Floatplane access on these two lakes has also required the use of docks to safely transfer passengers and their gear, necessary provisions, and any game lawfully taken. The use of docks is necessary due to the rocky shoreline, and the proximity of the tree line in relation to the waterline of the lakes. The State acquired the remaining portions of these two lakes subject to private deeded easement-rights to the Towns of Indian Lake and Newcomb. Pursuant to these deeded rights, DEC issues permits to the towns and floatplane business owners on a yearly basis. The DEC-issued permit is a Temporary Revocable Permit (TRP), which outlines both general and specific conditions that must be adhered to by the towns and floatplane operators.

Existing Conditions

There are two primitive tent sites on both First and Pine Lakes which are only available for use by members of the public using floatplanes to access the lakes. The use of both First and Pine Lakes for floatplane access and any floatplane operations, including, but not limited to, landing, taxiing, takeoffs, and the unloading and loading of passengers, gear, necessary provisions, and any game lawfully taken, and the use of docks to effectuate these operations, may continue pursuant to the Pine Lake Primitive Area description in the APSLMP and deeded-easement rights.

Floatplane operations on First Lake are not within a WSRRS Act-designated river corridor; however, floatplane use on Pine Lake does occur within the boundaries of the Cedar River Wild River Area. (See ECL section 15-2713.1[a]). The use of floatplanes and docks for the purpose of providing access to the remote areas of the Complex Area predates, and continued regularly after the enactment of the WSRRS Act. Therefore, the DEC has determined that continued floatplane operations and the use of docks as a necessary component of floatplane operations on Pine Lake are existing uses, and they are authorized to continue by statute and regulation. (*See* ECL section 15-2709.2 and 6 NYCRR section 666.13[A][1]). Staff intend to remove one of two existing primitive tent sites on Pine Lake. The existing primitive tent sites are adjacent to each other, and do not meet the separation requirements of the APSLMP guidelines for the siting of primitive tent sites.

Campfires are allowed on First Lake, but only at the two designated primitive tent sites accessed by floatplanes. Campfires are allowed on Pine Lake. Those traveling to First and Pine Lakes will be encouraged to bring their own locally-sourced firewood or kiln-dried firewood (in compliance with current State firewood regulations) in order to reduce the environmental impact of gathering firewood on site. Cutting of live trees on Forest Preserve is prohibited. Extended length of stay permits may be issued for primitive tent sites by local Forest Rangers.

Proposed Management

Objective

- Continue to allow floatplane operations on First and Pine Lakes through the issuance of TRPs to the Towns of Indian Lake and Newcomb, and float plane operators.
- Bring the primitive tent sites into conformance with the APSLMP.

Action Steps

- Issue yearly TRPs to the Towns and floatplane operators for use of First and Pine Lakes.
- Monitor for compliance with TRP standard terms and special conditions.
- Require (through annual TRPs) flight reports from floatplane operators. This recreational opportunity can be more effectively managed if the DEC understands the timing and number of flights taken to each lake.
- Close one primitive tent site on Pine Lake. The existing primitive tent sites accessed by floatplanes on Pine Lake are directly adjacent to one another, and therefore do not meet separation requirements. Keep the remaining site as “floatplane use only.”

- Remove debris, and any personal items at all three remaining primitive tent sites (two on First, one on Pine).

IV. HISTORICAL RESOURCES

A. Outer Gooley Farmhouse

History

The Outer Gooley farmhouse is located in the former Indian River Tract, along the Chain Lakes Road (South), northwest of the confluence with the Indian and Hudson Rivers. The Indian River Tract was purchased from Finch Pruyn by The Nature Conservancy and sold to New York State in April 2013 for addition into the Forest Preserve. The Gooley Club, which included both the Outer Gooley and Inner Gooley areas, was formed in 1946.

The Outer Gooley house and surrounding area were classified as Wild Forest, and added to the Blue Mountain Wild Forest unit. The site also formerly included a woodshed, a cabin, an open garage, and an outhouse. The farmhouse is the only remaining structure on site.

Existing Conditions

The Outer Gooley farmhouse is located within the Blue Mountain Wild Forest, along the Chain Lakes Road (South). The main public access parking area is located adjacent to the house, in an area that has been historically used for parking. Since the State took ownership, DEC has performed maintenance necessary to maintain structural integrity, and keep out weather and animals.

The Town of Indian Lake and several stakeholder groups have expressed an interest in having the structure continue to be maintained and used for a compatible purpose.

Management Guidelines

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) is the State Historic Preservation Office. OPRHP has determined that the Outer Gooley building meets eligibility criteria for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Therefore, DEC must adhere to §14.09 of the New York State Historic Preservation Act (SHPA), which states, in part, that DEC *"shall fully explore all feasible and prudent alternatives and give due consideration to feasible and prudent plans which avoid or mitigate adverse impacts on such property."* This contemplation of alternatives and invitation for public comment takes place through the UMP process. In this context, a decision has been made with regard to the future of the building.

Proposed Management

Objective

- Comply with SHPA, the APSLMP, ECL, and DEC Rules and Regulations when considering the disposition of the Outer Gooley farmhouse

Action Steps

- For the immediate future, maintain the Outer Gooley farmhouse as a historic structure and use as an outpost for administrative and emergency personnel until a final disposition of the building is determined.
- For the long term purpose of the farmhouse, the following uses are being considered:

    - Interior Outpost
    - Incorporation into a hut-to-hut ski/snowmobile/equestrian touring system.
    - Historical museum
    - Outdoor museum

  The alternatives under this section overlap to some degree, and are not intended to be mutually exclusive, since several might be accommodated in the building. One or more of these may require statutory changes or APSLMP amendments. After the approval of this Complex Plan, DEC will rely on other organizations and/or citizen groups to come forward and partner with DEC for the long term future management of the structure. If this does not happen, or a viable solution is not found, DEC may decide to remove the structure. A full analysis of alternative uses of the Outer Gooley farmhouse, including those that involve the removal of the structure, can be found in Appendix E.

- As required by the Section 14.09 of the New York State Historic Preservation Act of 1980, the DEC consulted with the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) regarding the treatment of the Outer Gooley Club Farmhouse (see Appendix H.) OPRHP requested that the DEC enter into ongoing consultation with that Office regarding the re-purposing of the Outer Gooley Club Farmhouse. The DEC agrees to this and will continue to consult with OPRHP as detailed plans for the adaptation and use Outer Gooley Club Farmhouse are developed and implemented.

B. Inner Gooley Complex

History

The Inner Gooley area is located on the south shore of Third Lake in the Essex Chain. A bridge over the Cedar River historically connected the two camp areas via the Chain Lakes Road (North) and Chain Lakes Road (South). There are 7 buildings and several small sheds located in the Inner Gooley camp complex. The lessee exclusive use area shrank to a contiguous 7-acre parcel around the camp buildings on October 1, 2013.

Existing Conditions

The Inner Gooley buildings are located on the south shore of Third Lake, in the approximate center of the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area. The Inner Gooley Club currently functions within their exclusive use camp envelope. They have certain motorized use and access rights that extend beyond public use

(see Use Reservations section for more lessee information.) Their lease ends on September 30, 2018. After that, the buildings and all materials will be removed (no later than October 1, 2019.)

The Inner Gooley Club camp buildings are located in a remote location, with no nearby existing public motorized access. The classification of the area as Primitive and the remote location were major factors in the proposed future management of the buildings.

Management Guidelines

As with the Outer Gooley farmhouse, OPRHP has determined that the Inner Gooley complex meets eligibility criteria for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Therefore, DEC must adhere to §14.09 of the New York State Historic Preservation Act (SHPA), which states, in part, that DEC *"shall fully explore all feasible and prudent alternatives and give due consideration to feasible and prudent plans which avoid or mitigate adverse impacts on such property."* This contemplation of alternatives and invitation for public comment takes place through the UMP process. In this context, a decision has been made with regard to the future of the building.

Proposed Management

Objective

- Comply with SHPA, the APSLMP, ECL, and DEC Rules and Regulation when considering the disposition of the Inner Gooley structures

Action Steps

- The proposed management action regarding the Inner Gooley camp complex calls for the removal of the Inner Gooley camp buildings. This is due to their remote location in the Primitive Area, and the Leasehold Agreement which specifies the requirement for structure removal upon expiration of the lease in 2018.

  According to the APSLMP guidelines for Primitive Areas, *"non-conforming uses resulting from newly classified primitive areas will be removed as rapidly as possible..."* (pg. 27.) The Inner Gooley camp buildings are not of an essentially permanent nature, since they are small hunting camps formerly on leased land. The lack of ownership (lease) of the land signifies that the camps were not placed and constructed to last in perpetuity.

  In accordance with the 2012 "Reservation of Leasehold Estate and Management Agreement" between The Nature Conservancy and New York State, all of the camp structures and property in the Inner Gooley complex will be removed by the end of the lease-phase out period. Once the structures have been removed, the site will be allowed to return to its natural vegetative state.

  A full analysis of alternatives, including those that involve the removal of the structures, can be found in Appendix E.

- As required by the Section 14.09 of the New York State Historic Preservation Act of 1980, the DEC consulted with the of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) regarding the adverse impact resulting from the removal of the Inner Gooley Club buildings (see Appendix H.) OPRHP requested that the DEC record these buildings prior to demolition and consider relocating one or more of the structures to the site of the Outer Gooley Club in order to assure long term preservation.

  The DEC commits to recording the buildings of the Inner Gooley Club buildings to the appropriate Historic American Building Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) standard - level to be determined in consultation with OPRHP. The record created will be deposited with New York State Archives, OPRHP and an appropriate local institution.

- The DEC will explore the feasibility of relocating one or more of the Inner Gooley Club buildings to an alternate site, either that of the Outer Gooley Club or another site. If relocation proves feasible, the DEC will allocate appropriate funding and undertake relocation within a reasonable time frame. If relocation proves infeasible, the DEC will consult with OPRHP regarding possible alternate impact mitigation strategies.

- After the structures have been removed, construct a lean-to in a cleared area at the former Inner Gooley site.

V. USE RESERVATIONS

A. Sportsmen's Clubs

History

There are two lessee groups, the Gooley Club and the Polaris Mountain Club, who leased large portions of the Complex Area from Finch Pruyn prior to the addition of the lands to the Forest Preserve. Both clubs have access and use rights that are different from the general public's access and use provisions. Their leases expire on September 30, 2018, and all lessee camp buildings and property must be removed no later than October 1, 2019.

Existing Conditions

Gooley Club

The Gooley Club camp buildings are located on the south shore of Third Lake. Members and guests of the Gooley Club use the Chain Lakes Road (North) to access their camp buildings year-round. This use both predates and postdates the enactment of the WSRRS Act. This includes use of snowmobiles in winter, ATV's during mud season (defined by DEC based on weather conditions) and cars and trucks the remainder of the year. Car, truck and ATV use is also be allowed on designated gravel roads during hunting season. Gooley Club members are also allowed to use motorized boats (with certain restrictions) on Second through Sixth Lakes and Jackson Pond. Their camp buildings are tightly clustered together; therefore their exclusive use area is a contiguous parcel. Non-conforming structures and storage of property outside the seven-acre envelope is not permitted.

Polaris Mountain Club

The Polaris Mountain Club's camp buildings are located on the east side of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge, in the Polaris Mountain Primitive Area. This area will automatically become part of the Hudson Gorge Wilderness Area after the Polaris Mountain Club lease expires in 2018.

Members and guests of the Polaris Mountain Club use the Chain Lakes Road (North) and Drake's Mill Road to cross the Iron (Polaris) Bridge and access their camp structures year-round. This use both predates and postdates the enactment of the WSRR Act. This includes snowmobiles in winter, ATV's during mud season (defined by DEC based on weather conditions) and automobiles the remainder of the year. Car, truck and ATV use is also allowed on designated gravel roads during hunting season. Polaris Club members are also allowed to use motorized boats (with certain restrictions) on the Blackwell Stillwater section of the Hudson River. The camp buildings are spread out, and each camp building is surrounded by a one-acre exclusive use envelope; non-conforming structures and storage of property outside the one-acre envelopes is not permitted. The rest of the area east of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge is publicly accessible.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Ensure compliance with Leaseholder Management Agreement.
- Reduce the potential for conflict between lessees and the general public.

Action Steps

- Monitor lessees and the general public for compliance with access and use provisions and restrictions on Forest Preserve lands in the Complex Area.
- Show exclusive lease camp envelopes on DEC maps, especially at trailhead kiosks and access points, to educate the public of the private leases.

B. Floatplane Use

History

Based on information obtained by the DEC from local commercial floatplane operators, floatplanes have used First and Pine Lakes for floatplane operations since the mid-twentieth century. In December 2012, a Deed of Easement was granted to the Towns of Newcomb and Minerva from The Nature Conservancy, the landowners prior to the sale to the People of the State of New York, to allow floatplane access in the Complex Area.

Existing Conditions

Use of floatplanes on First and Pine Lakes will be managed on a yearly basis pursuant to a DEC-issued TRP to the Towns of Newcomb and Minerva, and the commercial floatplane operators. The TRPs set forth the special terms and conditions to safely allow floatplane operations while minimizing impacts to the area's natural resources. Please refer to the *Floatplanes* section (*III. Recreational Resources & Public Use, P. Floatplanes*) for information regarding recreational use of floatplanes.

Proposed Management

Objective

- Ensure compliance with Forest Preserve regulations, guidelines, policies, terms set forth in the Deed of Easement, and any DEC-issued TRP.

Action Steps

- Gather use data and ensure compliance with DEC regulations and policies through the issuance of yearly TRP's to the individual floatplane operators and the Towns of Newcomb and Minerva.
- Monitor for compliance with TRP standard terms and any applicable special

C. Gravel Extraction

History

In December 2012, a Deed of Easement was granted to the Towns of Newcomb and Minerva from The Nature Conservancy for use of three gravel pits in the Complex Area. The Chain Lakes Pit is located along the Chain Lakes Road (North), the Deer Pond Pit is located just north of Deer Pond, and the Outer Gooley Pit is located along the Chain Lakes Road (South), north of the former Outer Gooley farmhouse. These three gravel pits are classified as State Administrative.

Existing Conditions

The Towns of Newcomb and Minerva have a non-exclusive right to access and mine gravel from Chain Lakes, Deer Pond, and Outer Gooley Pits. A yearly TRP issued by DEC to the Towns names the roads in the Complex Area that the gravel may be used to maintain. The gravel pits may each not exceed one-acre in size, and when deemed exhausted by DEC, will be reclaimed and allowed to return to their natural state. Upon reclamation of the gravel pits, these State Administrative Areas will be reclassified to the classification category of its surrounding land.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Ensure compliance with Forest Preserve Regulations, Guidelines, Policies, and terms set forth in the Easement.

Action Steps

- Issue TRPs to the Towns of Newcomb and Minerva for gravel pit access and extraction.
- Monitor for compliance with TRP standard terms and any applicable special conditions.
- Delineate the boundaries of each gravel pit, which will discourage the lateral spread of extraction outside the one-acre boundaries.
- Monitor gravel pits in consultation with DEC Minerals Staff, and reclaim each gravel pit after DEC deems it exhausted.

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VI. SCHEDULE OF IMPLEMENTATION

Annual Maintenance and Other Activities
Maintain publicly accessible roads within the Complex Area north of the Cedar River (Approx. 10 miles) in partnership with the Town of Newcomb.
Maintain publicly accessible roads within the Complex Area south of the Cedar River (Approx. 5 miles) in partnership with the Town of Indian Lake.
Road maintenance to Fifth Lake (Approx. 1.5 miles) in partnership with the Town of Newcomb.
Maintain seasonal access routes (Camp Six Road and Chain Lakes Road (South)) in partnership with the Towns of Newcomb and Indian Lake.
Maintain administrative roads in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area.
Other routine trail maintenance, including: brushing, blowdown removal, replacement of trail markers and signage.
ADA facility compliance assessment and maintenance.
Conduct biological, chemical, and/or physical surveys of selected unit waters to assess management needs and to determine progress towards the objectives stated in this Complex Plan.
Stock fish in unit waters consistent with Bureau of Fisheries policies and the *Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Fish Species Management Activities of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Fish and Wildlife (1980.)*
Annual boundary line maintenance including signing and painting lines.
Annual primitive tent site and/or lean-to monitoring and assessments.
Work with APIPP to implement continuum of early detection invasive plant inventories focusing on all trails, parking areas, primitive tent sites, lean-tos, roads, and water bodies. Take immediate and appropriate action to eradicate or contain terrestrial and aquatic invasive plant infestations. Train DEC staff and participate in efforts to educate the public about invasive species identification, prevention, and management.

Year One
Add one to two tentsites in the ELCPA that are located more than 500 from shorelines.
Establish an equestrian staging area along the Chain Lakes Road (North), including an accessible mounting platform, privy, and register box with map.
Designate and mark multiple use trails throughout the Complex Area.
Create a trails map and install trail signage for multiple use trails at all trailheads.
Establish accessible parking, camping, and waterway access near the Fifth Lake. This includes an accessible horse mounting platform, privy, waterway access, and hardened access routes.
Establish a motor vehicle route past the Deer Pond parking area to both a 4 car accessible parking area north of the Fifth Lake and a 4-car permitted parking area for the general public approximately 0.50 miles from Fifth Lake. Develop a mechanism to permit general public parking at this area.
Install a gate on the north side of the Deer Pond Circle, to prevent motor vehicles from driving into the Primitive Area, while allowing for access to the gravel pit.
Install barrier rocks on the southern side of the Deer Pond Circle, to prevent motor vehicles from driving into the Primitive Area.
Install a gate just north of the “Tube”.
Establish 3 roadside accessible primitive tent sites on publicly accessible roads in the Complex Area.
Cut out and formally designate Upper Hudson River canoe carries around Long Falls and Ord Falls.
Establish two primitive tent sites on the west shore of the Hudson River, between Newcomb and the Iron (Polaris) Bridge.
Install accessible privy at the Outer Gooley parking area.
Complete an inventory and impact assessment for waterfront primitive tent sites in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area.
Move the Shadow Dam gate at the Forest Preserve boundary on the Cornell Road approx. 0.2 mi west along the road. This will facilitate public parking during mud season and avoid trespass onto adjacent private land.
Construct accessible facilities at the existing primitive tent site near Iron (Polaris) Bridge, including an accessible horse mounting platform, privy, fire ring, and picnic table.

Year Two
Inventory and assess all roads, culverts, and bridges in the Complex Area.
Construct a pull-in lane on the north end of the Chain Lakes Road (North) equestrian staging area.
Construct a bridge over the Cedar River.
Install an accessible horse mounting platform in the vicinity of the Cedar River Bridge.
Construct snowmobile trail connecting Elm Lake Trail to portions of trail on land owned by the Town of Indian Lake. Bring existing Elm Lake Trail to Class II standards.
Place an additional picnic table near the Iron (Polaris) Bridge for day use.
Establish accessible facilities at the existing primitive tentsite near the Iron (Polaris) Bridge. Construct a 0.3 mi ADA- compliant trail from the Parking Area to the tentsite.

Year Three
Promulgate proposed campfire regulation for the waterfront primitive tent sites in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area.
Extend the Upper Hudson Ski Loop Trail north to the Ord Road, including parking in the vicinity of the Ord Road.
Extend the Upper Hudson Ski Loop Trail to the Town of Newcomb, near the Transfer Station. This includes parking near the Transfer Station.

Year Four
Perform UTAP analysis for the Deer Pond Circle and to the primitive tent site area at Deer Pond.
Delineate, mark, and assess the three one-acre gravel pits.
Evaluate usage of the primitive tent sites along the seasonal access routes, and close or relocate sites that have apparent low use levels.

Year Five
Begin draft revisions for this Complex Plan.
Construct a lean-to in the vicinity of the Inner Gooley complex on the south shore of Third Lake. This includes a horse mounting platform, privy, and access to the water's edge.

VII. APPENDICES

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Appendix A – Bibliography and References

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Appendix B – Snowmobile Management Guidance

(Snowmobile Trail Siting, Construction and Maintenance on Forest Preserve Lands in the Adirondack Park)

I. Adirondack Park Snowmobile Trail System

The October 2006, *Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondack Park/Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement* (2006 Snowmobile Plan) presents a conceptual snowmobile plan with the goal of creating a system of snowmobile trails between communities in the Adirondack Park. The 2006 Snowmobile Plan outlines the concept of reconfiguring the existing snowmobile trail network across the Forest Preserve through the UMP process. Implementation is supported by this "Management Guidance…" establishing a new DEC snowmobile trail classification system with new standards and guidelines for snowmobile trail siting, construction and maintenance.

The designation of a new class of snowmobile trail to establish and improve community connections (Class II trails) will be complemented by the designation of another new class of trail (Class I trails) intended to preserve a more traditional type of Adirondack snowmobiling experience. Some existing snowmobile trails (most likely within the interior of Wild Forest areas or adjacent to private inholdings) will be redesignated for non-motorized use or abandoned as trails altogether. These actions will serve to ensure available, wintertime recreational opportunities in Wild Forest areas are not dominated by snowmobile use to the exclusion or near exclusion of passive recreational uses. All snowmobile trails, regardless of class, will be carefully sited, constructed and maintained to preserve the most essential characteristics of foot trails and to serve, where appropriate, hiking, mountain biking and other non-motorized recreational pursuits in spring, summer and fall. Additionally, this guidance helps ensure protection of sensitive natural resources on public lands and the minimization of snowmobiling safety hazards.

Implementing the broad recommendations of the 2006 Snowmobile Plan will also result in the establishment of important new routes on private lands through the acquisition of easements or other access rights from willing sellers. This Guidance does not address the management of those trails, but instead provides standards and guidelines solely for the management of DEC snowmobile trails on Forest Preserve lands throughout the Adirondack Park.

In many locations, designated snowmobile routes of varying lengths exist on Forest Preserve roads, rather than on trails. DEC's management of all such roads for motor vehicle use, including snowmobiles, is guided by DEC's "CP-38 Forest Preserve Roads" policy and not by this Guidance.

Snowmobile Trail Classification

The classification system for designated snowmobile trails (not on roads) in the Forest Preserve is presented below. It establishes two classes of trails,[1] for which the following definitions apply:

"Motorized travel corridor" – non-snowmobile public motor vehicle routes[2] and motorized waterbodies.

"Motorized waterbodies" – waterbodies upon which year-round, public motorized uses (including snowmobiling) occur to a moderate or great extent, typically facilitated by direct motorized route access to shorelines and boat launching facilities.

"Periphery" – the geographic area within two miles of a motorized travel corridor.

"Remote interior" – the geographic area more distant than two miles from the nearest motorized travel corridors in all directions.

Class II Trails: ***Community Connector Trails***

Snowmobile trails or trail segments that serve to connect communities and provide the main travel routes for snowmobiles within a unit are Community Connector Trails. These trails are located in the periphery of Wild Forest or other Forest Preserve areas. They are always located as close as possible to motorized travel corridors, given safety, terrain and environmental constraints, and only rarely are any segments of them located further than one mile away from the nearest of these corridors. They are not duplicated or paralleled by other snowmobile trails. Some can be short, linking communities to longer Class II trails that connect two or more other communities.

Class I Trails: ***Secondary Snowmobile Trails***

All other snowmobile trails that are not Community Connector Trails are Secondary Snowmobile Trails. These trails are located in the periphery of Wild Forest and other Forest Preserve areas where snowmobile trails are designated.[3] They may be spur trails (perhaps leading to population areas and services such as repair shops, service stations, restaurants and lodging), short loop trails or longer recreational trails. If directly connected to Class II trails,

[1] The classification scheme outlined in the 2006 Snowmobile Plan differed from the scheme presented here. Class I trails were presented as snowmobile trails on Forest Preserve roads, Class II trails (of two subtypes) as secondary trails and Class III trails as community connector trails.

[2] Including routes where rights for motorized access to private in-holdings exist, but generally not including DEC administrative roads.

[3] Snowmobile trails may also be located in some Primitive areas and in Wilderness areas within 500 feet of the Wilderness boundary.

new and rerouted Class I trails are always located as close as possible to – and no farther than one mile from – motorized travel corridors. If not directly connected to Class II trails, they are generally located within one mile of motorized travel corridors, although some – with high recreational value – may be located beyond one mile and may approach a remote interior area.

II. Reconfiguration of the Snowmobile Trail System

Establishment of Community Connections

The establishment of a Park-wide community-connection snowmobile trail system will provide north-to-south and east-to-west routes that will link many Adirondack communities together. Designation of Class II, Community Connector snowmobile trails on Forest Preserve lands will create essential portions of the system, the use of which will result in a significant shifting of snowmobile use away from some remote interior areas of these lands to the periphery. Within the periphery, these Class II trails will intentionally be located as close to motorized travel corridors as practicable without locating them within – nor within sight of – road rights-of-way wherever such locations can be avoided. The actual, on-the-ground routes that establish the connections through Forest Preserve will be determined through the UMP process. Many of the connections already exist and the focus will be on improving them through proper siting, construction and trail maintenance work.

A small number of existing[4] DEC snowmobile trails in the Park shown to be located partly within remote interior areas may receive Class II designation due to their importance and may be retained and kept open, as long as either of the following conditions are met: 1) the remote interior area of concern is small – no more than 750 acres in area; or, 2) the trail segments of concern are located very near the boundary of the remote interior area, with no trail segment located further than one-half mile into the interior from any boundary. DEC will give high priority to relocating out of the remote interior area any Class II trails or trail segments so retained.

No existing DEC snowmobile trails in the Park that receive Class I designation may be retained and kept open with any portion of the trail located within a remote interior area.

Redesignation and Abandonment of Existing Trails

Actions taken under this Guidance will also include the re-designation of some existing Forest Preserve snowmobile trails as either Class I, Secondary Snowmobile Trails or as non-snowmobile trails (such as foot trails or horse trails) for non-motorized recreational uses. The re-designation of some snowmobile trails for non-motorized uses will occur consequent to management actions called for in adopted UMPs or UMP amendments and will be guided by the primary goal: *To provide a net benefit to the Forest*

[4] "Existing," as used here and in the paragraph immediately below, means existing at the time of DEC's adoption of this guidance.

Preserve through reconfiguring the trail system and revising trail management practices[5]. In some instances, the re-designation of particular snowmobile trail segments – such as the far portions of some dead-end trails – may be the preferred alternative over re-designation or abandonment of the entire trail. Such actions can provide for a new type of recreational opportunity – a combined or hybrid type (motorized/non-motorized), in which the last stretches of some routes are undertaken by means of skis or snowshoes.

Snowmobile trails that receive the new Class I designation or are re-designated for non-snowmobile use will be revegetated to narrower widths that conform to their specific trail classification standards where they are wider. In many locations, this will serve to restore a more consistently closed canopy, thereby improving the aesthetic experience of trail users and enhancing ecological integrity.

Criteria for Redesignation or Abandonment of Trails

Removing some snowmobile trails or trail segments from the existing network is central to the balance sought in providing a net benefit to the Forest Preserve while also providing for key improvements in snowmobile riding in the Park. In proposing trails or trail segments for redesignation or abandonment, management will seek to eliminate those that:

- do not provide safe snowmobiling conditions;
- ·penetrate the more remote areas of large Wild Forest parcels[6] or traverse an existing undeveloped forest corridor connecting two or more remote interior areas in the Forest Preserve;
- are located near Wilderness area boundaries;
- are redundant trails, or are part of an unnecessarily dense, local snowmobile trail network where opportunities for quiet, non-motorized use of trails are rare or nonexistent;
- are no longer used or receive only minimal public use;
- might encourage illegal motorized access to public and private lands or create significant potential conflicts with adjacent property owners;
- incur unusually high snowmobile trail maintenance costs.

Additional Environmental Benefits

By restricting use of tracked groomers to the more developed Class II trails (see "Motor Vehicle Use Guidelines"), and by allowing Class I snowmobile trails to acquire a less developed and less maintained character, this Guidance is intended to clearly distinguish between two important types of snowmobiling opportunities in the Adirondacks while shifting the highest snowmobile use to the outer periphery of Forest Preserve lands. Consequently, the wilder, more remote areas of the Forest Preserve

[5] For a discussion of the "net benefit" concept, see page 187 of the Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondack Park/Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement, October 2006.

[6] Trails providing access to frozen surfaces of waterbodies located wholly or partly within remote interior area should be rerouted or abandoned to prevent possible incursion into the remote areas via the frozen surfaces.

will be less impacted by motorized traffic. There will be lower noise levels, lower exhaust emission levels, decreased impacts on wildlife and reduced user conflicts between users participating in motorized and non-motorized forms of recreation. DEC's responsibility to manage and monitor snowmobile use and impacts will also be made easier.

III. Standards and Guidelines for Snowmobile Trail Siting, Construction and Maintenance on the Forest Preserve

The following standards will apply to siting and designating snowmobile trails on Forest Preserve lands in the Adirondack Park and carrying out construction and maintenance activities on them.

Specific Trail Siting Criteria for New and Rerouted Snowmobile Trails

Class I Trails: ***Secondary Snowmobile Trails***

New and rerouted Class I trails will be sited within the periphery of State lands and may only be sited beyond one mile from motorized travel corridors when the recreational value of the newly sited or rerouted trail segment is high and potential impacts to sensitive interior areas are minimal as carefully assessed and described in a UMP.

All new and rerouted Class I trails directly connected to Class II Trails will be sited as close as possible to motorized travel corridors and, without exception, will be sited no farther than one mile from these corridors.

Class II Trails: ***Community Connector Trails***

New and rerouted Class II Trails on State lands will be sited as close as possible to motorized travel corridors. No new or rerouted trail segments will be sited farther than one mile from these corridors unless terrain or environmental constraints dictate otherwise, or such siting of a new or rerouted trail segment within the periphery is necessary to connect important, existing trail segments that together will form the same Community Connector Trail.

Snowmobile Trail Siting Standards

1. In cases where closure or abandonment of a motorized travel corridor results in an existing snowmobile trail location being inconsistent with these guidelines, such trail will, if practicable and as soon as possible, be relocated or reclassified to comply with these guidelines.

2. New and rerouted snowmobile trails will be sited, when possible, along existing routes or previously existing old routes such as foot trails, roads, utility rights of way and abandoned railroad beds in lieu of constructing entirely new trails.

3. New and rerouted snowmobile trails will be sited with an objective to avoid locations that present safety hazards such as the edges of ravines or ledges, major highway crossings and crossings of frozen surfaces of water bodies such as rivers, lakes and ponds. If suitable alternative routes are designated or developed, trails that lead riders to unsafe locations will be closed to snowmobile use in favor of the alternative routes in order to lower risks and eliminate unnecessary snowmobile trail mileage.

4. New and rerouted snowmobile trails will be sited with an objective to avoid areas considered environmentally sensitive, such as: wetlands; endangered plant or animal populations that might be harmed by the trails and/or their use; remote interior areas as defined by these guidelines and forested corridors connecting such remote interior areas; and deer wintering areas and other significant habitats, so that the values of these areas are not diminished.

5. New and rerouted snowmobile trails will not be established without an evaluation of potential significant impacts on adjacent private holdings.

6. New and rerouted snowmobile trails, including spur trails, will not provide access to private lands where public snowmobile access is not permitted.

7. New and rerouted snowmobile trails, through the acquisition of easements or other access rights from willing sellers, will be sited on private lands rather than State lands wherever possible to minimize impacts on the Forest Preserve.

Snowmobile Route Design, Construction and Maintenance Standards

Snowmobile route design, construction and non-ordinary maintenance activities[7] will be carried out pursuant to Snowmobile Trail Work Plans developed by DEC staff in consultation with APA staff. The following standards will be followed and reflected in the development of these Work Plans in order to preserve the trail-like character of snowmobile trails while ensuring they are appropriately safe to ride. When undertaking any of the types of work described below with motorized landscaping equipment (almost exclusively on Class II Trails), only careful use of appropriate low-impact landscaping equipment will be approved, as determined by a "minimum requirement" decision making approach set forth in the Snowmobile Trail Work Plan. For example, use of bulldozers and creation of "dugways" will not be approved. Operators of low-impact landscaping equipment will conduct their work in optimal environmental conditions and in a manner that will not contribute to any potential degradation of the wild forest setting. All work will be done with appropriate DEC oversight.

For new snowmobile trails of both classes to retain essential characteristics of foot trails, management practices must integrate thorough knowledge of the standards and guidance below, with efforts to

[7] Ordinary maintenance activities are defined in the "Memorandum of Understanding Between the Adirondack Park Agency and the Department of Environmental Conservation Concerning Implementation of the State Land Master Plan for the Adirondack Park" (APA/DEC MOU.)

appropriately balance them and the underlying concerns as the trails are sited, constructed and maintained thereafter. The end result should be trails that are both enjoyable and safe to ride for essentially the same reason – for the way the trails snake through the wild landscape of the Adirondacks in a natural fashion… construction and maintenance practices having altered the terrain enough to allow for an acceptable degree of riding comfort, but not so much as to create potential for high-speed, disruptive and unsafe snowmobiling experiences.

Many existing snowmobile trails are sited on old roads and other routes originally constructed and maintained for use of motor vehicles other than snowmobiles. In such cases, the standards set forth below may also be used to reroute or otherwise minimally alter such trails with the objective to achieve the same end result.

Alignment and Grade:

Trail alignment will not result in blind curves and abrupt changes in either horizontal or vertical direction; trails will be designed to ensure:

a) Sight distance will be 50 feet or more wherever possible;
b) Curves will have a radius of at least 25 feet;
c) The maximum grade of trails will not exceed 20% unless deemed necessary to minimize environmental impacts associated with trail construction;
d) Trails will not normally be laid out on existing cross slopes greater than 12%;

1. To the greatest extent possible, trails will not be aligned with long straight sections. Trails will follow the natural contours of the terrain as much as possible and will be laid out to balance and minimize necessary tree cutting, rock removal and terrain alteration.

2. Trails will be laid out to avoid rocky areas and drainage features such as wetlands and streams to the greatest possible extent.

3. In locations where serious environmental or safety conditions exist along a trail, the trail will be rerouted rather than rehabilitated at that location.

Trail Width:

1. Class I Trails may be maintained to an 8-foot maximum cleared trail width.

2. Class II Trails may be maintained to a 9-foot maximum cleared trail width except on sharp curves (inside turning radius of 25-35 feet) and steep running slopes (over 15%) where they may be maintained to a 12-foot maximum cleared trail width.

Class I and II trails wider than their classification allows will be actively restored to these limits.

Tree Cutting:

DEC policy requires that cutting trees should be minimized, but where cutting is required, trees must be identified, tallied and included in a Work Plan in accordance with *DEC Program Policy LF91-2 Cutting and Removal of Trees in the Forest Preserve.*

1. Cutting of overstory trees will be avoided in order to maintain a closed canopy wherever possible. Large and old growth trees should be protected.

2. Cutting trees to expand a trail from its current width or otherwise improve a trail will be carried out only pursuant to a Work Plan.

3. All snowmobile trails may be kept clear to a height of 12 feet, as measured from ground level.

4. No trees, except trees that due to structural problems or fallen/tipped conditions present an immediate hazard to the safe use of the trail by snowmobilers, will be cut outside the cleared trail width.

5. Trees should be felled away from the trail to minimize the amount of material that needs to be moved. If the tree trunks are not used to help delineate the trail, felled trees should be delimbed and cut into short enough lengths to lie flat on the ground. Once delimbed and cut up, the short lengths should be dispersed and not left in piles next to the trail. If the tree trunks are used to help delineate the trail, the cut ends of the trunks should be located outside the intended edge of the trail by at least one foot for safety reasons.

6. When trees are cut within the cleared trail width, they will be cut flush with the ground, and the preference will be to leave the root masses in place.

a) On Class II trails, if it is important to remove a root mass because it presents an obstacle in the trail surface, the preference will be to grind the stump and roots. If grinding is not feasible, the root mass may be dug up, rolled or placed off the trail into the woods without removing intervening vegetation and organic matter; the root mass will be set down so as to have the lowest profile possible.

b) Grinding will not occur on Class I trails.

7. No brushing will occur outside the cleared trail width of any snowmobile trails.

Trail Surface:

1. Grading:

a) Class I Trails. Trail surfaces should generally follow the existing contours of the natural forest floor and not be graded flat. While limited leveling and grading may be undertaken, this work will be done using hand tools almost exclusively. In rare circumstances, appropriate low-impact landscaping equipment may be used as specified in a Work Plan.

b) Class II Trails. Trail surfaces should generally follow the existing contours of the natural forest floor and not be graded flat. Limited leveling and grading may be undertaken using appropriate low-impact landscaping equipment as specified in a Work Plan.

2. Rock Removal:

a) Removal of boulders and rocks from snowmobile trail surfaces will be minimized to the greatest extent possible and will be described in a Work Plan. Methods of removal will be specified in the Work Plan. No boulders or rocks will be removed outside the cleared trail width.

i. On Class I Trails, rock removal will occur using hand tools only, except in rare circumstances in new trail construction and trail reconstruction when use of low-impact landscaping equipment may be approved. Rock removal on Class I trails will be primarily limited to uncommon, major obstacles that present demonstrable safety hazards to snowmobile riders and which cannot be avoided by appropriate trail layout or rerouting.

ii. On Class II Trails, rock removal may occur using low-impact landscaping equipment and may include removal of rocks determined to present demonstrable safety hazards to snowmobile riders or to be very likely to damage grooming equipment. Many rocks in snowmobile trails, due to their specific shapes and/or locations, do not present themselves so as to cause these problems, and these may not be removed regardless of how high above the trail surface they project. Conversely, some rocks in snowmobile trails – while small – do present themselves so as to cause these problems, and if they are identified in an approved Work Plan, they may be removed.

b) Boulders and rocks removed from trails will preferably be buried in the trails to minimize disturbance. Earth moved to dig the holes into which the boulders or rocks are to be placed will be used to fill the holes that result from the rock removal. When removed boulders and rocks are not buried, but are instead set to the side of the trail, they will be dispersed with care and not left in windrows or piles next to the trail. If a boulder or rock is used to help delineate the trail, it should be placed outside the intended edge of the trail by at least one foot for safety reasons.

c) Alternatives to rock removal should be considered to minimize the need for disturbance of the ground, to reduce the likelihood of creating drainage problems and to reduce the potential need for fill. Such alternatives may include covering or minor relocation of the trail where a boulder or rock may be too large or the number too great to deal with by any other method.

d) Removal of boulders and rocks from the surrounding natural, wild forest setting for use in snowmobile trail construction and maintenance work will be minimized and may occur only on a limited, carefully selective basis for small-scale projects. On Class II

trails, where large-scale trail construction projects using stone material may be approved, importation of native stone from appropriate, specified sources may occur.

3. Side Slope Management:

   a) On Class I trails, elimination or reduction of side slopes by means of bench cuts will be accomplished using hand tools exclusively. The need for bench cuts will be minimized through proper trail layout. The maximum amount of cut, measured vertically, will be 20% of the tread width. Side slopes of newly constructed trails and reroutes will be dressed and tapered within the cleared trail width; side slopes of some existing, degraded trails may be dressed and tapered outside the cleared trail width if this is determined the best way to address the degradation and restore environmentally sound, safe conditions.

   b) On Class II trails, elimination or reduction of side slopes will be accomplished primarily by means of full bench cuts for which appropriate landscaping equipment may be used. The need for bench cuts will be minimized through proper trail layout. The tapering of side slopes will be allowed outside the cleared trail width. The areas dressed and tapered will be re-vegetated to restore stability and natural site conditions after the full bench cut is created.

Drainage:

1. Adequate drainage will be provided within the cleared trail width to prevent trail erosion and washout and to maintain a safe trail. All snowmobile trails will be constructed so as not to intercept groundwater to the greatest extent possible; natural drainage patterns will be maintained. In areas where the natural drainage patterns may be affected, bridges will be the preferred method for crossing wet areas as authorized in a Work Plan. Bridges will be constructed pursuant to approved snowmobile trail bridge designs.

2. Water bars and broad-based dips may extend beyond the cleared trail width to the extent necessary to effectively remove water from the trail surface, provided that no trees are cut outside the cleared trail width. Culverts will not be installed as drainage devices. Any existing culverts will be removed unless the culverts are very large and their removal is essentially not possible.

Wetlands:

1. Wetlands will be avoided to the greatest extent possible.

2. When wetlands crossings or trail locations adjacent to wetlands are proposed, the trail will be designed to minimize potential adverse impacts.

3. Any activity in a wetland or that may impact a wetland will be undertaken with prior consultation with the APA and with recognition of Army Corps of Engineers' permit requirements.

Motor Vehicle Use Guidelines

1. Snowmobile route design, construction and non-ordinary maintenance will be carried out pursuant to Snowmobile Trail Work Plans (Work Plans) developed by DEC staff in consultation with APA staff.
2. Administrative personnel, equipment and materials will be brought to work sites by the least intrusive means possible, as determined by a "minimum requirement" decision making approach set forth in the Snowmobile Trail Work Plan and as identified in priority order below:

    a) By non-motorized means or, during periods of sufficient snow and ice cover, by snowmobile.

    b) By aircraft.

    c) By appropriate motor vehicles other than snowmobiles. Such motor vehicle use will only be approved when alternative means of transportation (non-motorized means, snowmobiles, aircraft) are not feasible or are inadequate. The motor vehicles used will be those which are suitable for the particular activities but have the least potential adverse impact on the environment. Even when such motor vehicle use has been approved, administrative personnel will utilize motor vehicles only to the minimum extent necessary.

3. Proposed motor vehicle or aircraft use will also be described in a Conceptual Use Plan, per CP 17, "Record Keeping and Reporting of Administrative Use of Motor Vehicles and Aircraft in the Forest Preserve" or any successor policy.

4. Any motor vehicle used will display an official "DEC Administrative Use" sign, unless otherwise prominently identified as a DEC vehicle.

5. All motorized uses will be supervised by an individual who has attended and completed DEC training concerning guidelines and policies for snowmobile trail construction and maintenance.

6. All activities involving landscaping equipment will be directly supervised by DEC staff.

7. A detailed Work Plan, approved by DEC Lands & Forests staff must be prepared for all work to be done on snowmobile trails except for the Initial Annual Maintenance Trips described below and immediate removal of fallen or tipped trees that present safety hazards as described above, under "Tree Cutting."

8. A Snowmobile Trail Maintenance Log (Trail Log) will be used to record all work done on snowmobile trails.

9. Work requiring use of aircraft or motor vehicles other than snowmobiles should be done, whenever possible, when environmental conditions allow during the months of August, September, and October.

Maintenance Trips involving Snowmobiles and other Motor Vehicles:

1. **Initial Annual Maintenance Trips.** These trips will be authorized under an AANR or TRP and are undertaken solely for the purpose of removing fallen branches and trees that obstruct the trail and maintaining drainage features.
    a) AANRs and TRPs will identify trail names, trail class and authorized motor vehicles to be used for Initial Annual Maintenance Trips.
    b) Motor vehicle use will be limited to one trip per trail per year.
    c) Trips will only be conducted when environmental conditions allow in the months of August, September, and October.
    d) All activities undertaken during Initial Annual Maintenance Trips will be recorded in Snowmobile Trail Maintenance Logs.
    e) During Initial Annual Maintenance Trips an assessment of necessary trail construction and maintenance work will be conducted. Necessary work will be recorded in Snowmobile Trail Maintenance Logs by specific location and will be used to develop Work Plans.

2. **Maintenance, Rehabilitation and Construction Trips.** These trips include all work trips on snowmobile trails except for "Initial Annual Maintenance Trips," described above, and "Grooming and Associated Winter Maintenance Trips," described below. They are undertaken primarily for the purposes of snowmobile route design, construction and non-ordinary maintenance activities (i.e., most "trail work," bridge construction, etc.) and so are a primary focus of the standards and guidelines set forth earlier in this section of the Guidance.

    a) All motor vehicle use associated with work of this type will be undertaken by the least intrusive means possible, as identified in priority order set out under "Motor Vehicle Guidelines," Section 1.

    b) All work of this type will require an approved, detailed Work Plan as describe under "Snowmobile Route Design, Construction and Maintenance Standards," above.

3. **Grooming and Associated Winter Maintenance Trips**. Grooming will be tailored to the Class of the snowmobile trail; it must not alter a trail's width or physical character and will not be used to gather snow from outside the allowable cleared width of the trail. Grooming equipment will be operated only by administrative personnel including DEC staff or volunteers under an agreement with the DEC (AANR or TRP) and covered by appropriate insurance. The type of equipment allowed will be as follows:

Class I Trails: Snowmobile with a drag, as the 8-foot cleared width and layout of the trail will allow[8] and as approved in an AANR, TRP or pursuant to a Work Plan.

Class II Trails: Snowmobile with a drag, or, grooming equipment with tractor and drag width sufficiently less than the 9-foot to 12-foot trail width[9] to allow for grooming that

[8] The drag should not be wider than 7 ½ feet on Class I trails.
[9] The drag should not be wider than 8 ½ feet on Class II trails.

will not cause tree damage. Type and dimensions of grooming equipment to be identified and approved in an AANR, TRP and pursuant to a Work Plan.

Associated Winter Maintenance Trips will occur only when snow and ice cover is sufficient to protect the trail. They will normally be performed by use of snowmobiles but may also involve use of tracked groomers or other motor vehicles, where appropriate, as approved in an AANR, TRP and pursuant to a Work Plan. These trips may include any of the following activities:

a) Removing fallen or tipped trees that present immediate safety hazards as described above, under "Tree Cutting."
b) Placing trail signs or markers.
c) Pruning vegetation.
d) Taking building materials, supplies and tools to a construction site for immediate work or for staging them for an upcoming construction season;
e) In rare instances, installing temporary trail safety or natural resource protection features or structures.
f) Removing materials from the Forest Preserve that were staged during previous work projects.

<u>Department Oversight of Motor Vehicle Use</u>:

1. The Regional Natural Resource Supervisor, or a Departmental designee, will be notified no less than 48 hours prior to commencement of motor vehicle use and will determine whether or not trail conditions are suitable for such work and vehicle use prior to such use.

2. The Regional Natural Resource Supervisor, or a Departmental designee, will be responsible for ensuring Department staff periodically monitor and inspect all construction and maintenance work to ensure compliance with approved Work Plans.

    a) Department staff shall inspect the snowmobile trail work at times which are intended to coincide with the use of equipment that has the greatest potential to cause environmental damage.
    b) All construction activities involving landscaping equipment will be directly supervised by DEC staff.
    c) Within seven days of completion of authorized construction and maintenance activities, the Regional Natural Resource Supervisor will verify the work was satisfactorily completed according to Standards and Guidelines for Snowmobile Trail Construction and Maintenance and, if applicable, that any AANR or TRP terms and conditions were met.
    d) If the terms and conditions of an AANR, TRP and associated Work Plan are violated at any time, the AANR/TRP may be amended or revoked, with the determination to be made by the Director of the Division of Lands and Forests.

IV. Implementation and Review

Implementation of this Guidance – and the appending of it to the APA/DEC MOU – is intended to establish snowmobile trail management practices that conform to the guidelines and criteria of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan.

Some activities may require a freshwater wetlands permit from the Agency. Some activities will qualify by MOU definition as ordinary maintenance, rehabilitation, and minor relocation of snowmobile trails. In addition to these considerations, implementation of this Guidance may occur through: authorization granted directly via an approved UMP or UMP amendment; interagency consultation on Work Plans authorized by UMP's or UMP amendments; and APA/DEC staff observations and monitoring of off-season snowmobile trail management practices and trail character.

This Guidance does not prevent DEC, via individual UMP's or other means, from providing more restrictive management where necessary to protect the character of Forest Preserve lands.

Staff of both the APA and DEC will document examples of the implementation of this guidance in order to: 1) verify that implementation is producing the desired results; and, 2) identify specific aspects of the guidance that may need to be clarified or otherwise revised by APA and DEC in order to achieve, or more fully achieve, the desired results. APA staff will report regularly to the Agency State Land Committee concerning such review and any recommendations that may stem from it.

Appendix C – Invasive Species Guidelines

(Interagency Guidelines for Implementing Best Management Practices for the Control of Terrestrial and Aquatic Invasive Species on Forest Preserve Lands in the Adirondack Park – 2010)

Prepared By
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
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I. Introduction

The negative impacts of invasive species on natural forest and aquatic communities are well documented (Appendix F). Colonization and unrestrained growth of invasive species cause the loss of biodiversity, interruption of normal hydrology, suppression of native vegetation, and significant aesthetic, human safety and economic impacts. Terrestrial and aquatic invasive species have been identified at increasing rates of colonization along roadsides in campgrounds, and in water bodies of the Forest Preserve within the past 10 years. Some of these species have the potential to colonize backcountry lands, lakes and ponds and degrade natural resources of the Forest Preserve.

These guidelines apply to Adirondack Forest Preserve lands, which are protected by Article XIV, Section 1 of the New York State Constitution. This Constitutional provision, which became effective on January 1, 1895 provides in relevant part:

> *"The lands of the state, now owned or hereafter acquired, constituting the Forest Preserve as now fixed by law, shall be forever kept as wild forest lands. They shall not be leased, sold or exchanged, or be taken by any corporation, public or private, or shall the timber thereon be sold, removed or destroyed."*

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC or Department) has jurisdiction over the Forest Preserve, and its management of these lands must be in keeping with this Constitutional provision.

Furthermore, the DEC's management of the Adirondack Forest Preserve is governed by the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP), which was initially adopted in 1972 by the APA, with advice from and in consultation with the Department, pursuant to Executive Law §807 (recodified as Executive Law §816). The APSLMP provides the overall general framework for the development and management of State lands in the Adirondack Park. The APSLMP sets forth the following classifications for State land within the Adirondack Park: Wilderness, Primitive, Canoe, Wild Forest, Intensive Use, Historic, State Administrative, Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers, and Travel Corridors, and sets forth management guidelines for each of these major land classifications.

Executive Law §816 requires the Department to develop, in consultation with the Agency, individual UMP's for each unit of land under the Department's jurisdiction which is classified in one of the nine classifications set forth in the Master Plan. The UMPs must conform to the guidelines and criteria set forth in the Master Plan. Thus, UMPs implement and apply the Master Plan's general guidelines for particular classifications of State Land within the Adirondack Park.

Executive Law §816(1) provides in part that "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.

Article XIV, Section 1 of the New York State Constitution does not specifically address the issue of invasive species. However, since Article XIV directs that Forest Preserve lands be "forever kept as wild forest lands" and prohibits the removal or destruction of timber, care must be taken to ensure that decisions to eradicate invasive species do not result in a material cutting of Forest Preserve timber or adversely impact the wild forest character of Forest Preserve lands.

Although there are no explicit references to active invasive species management on Forest Preserve lands in the Master Plan, the Master Plan provisions are consistent with the concept of actively managing invasive species to protect the "wild forest" character of the Forest Preserve. For instance, page 1 of the Master Plan (2001 Update) states that, "If there is a unifying theme to the Master Plan, it is that the *protection and preservation* of the natural resources of the state lands within the Park must be paramount" (emphasis added). Surveys of Forest Preserve lands document the continued importation and expansion of invasive plants into and throughout the Adirondack Park (see Section II below). Given that models indicate that eradication of an invasive species becomes progressively more difficult, more expensive, and less effective the longer the species is allowed to grow without intervention (Chippendale 1991; Hobbs and Humphries 1995), it is critical for the Department and APA to address this problem in an expeditious manner.

The goal of these guidelines is to establish parameters known as best management practices (BMPs) for the control of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species while ensuring that such management activities do not alter the "forever wild" character of Forest Preserve lands. These guidelines are intended to harmonize the Constitution's "forever wild" provisions with the Master Plan's overriding directive to manage forest preserve lands for their protection and preservation. They have been developed pursuant to, and are consistent with, relevant provisions of the New York State Constitution, the Environmental Conservation Law (ECL), the Executive Law, the State Environmental Quality and Review Act (SEQR), the Master Plan, and all other applicable rules and regulations, policies and procedures.

It is also important to determine if any regulatory jurisdictions or permits are triggered by a proposed management activity. For example, any management activities than may involve wetlands on private or public lands may require a permit from APA.

II. Present Extent of Terrestrial and Aquatic Invasive Species on Forest Preserve Lands

An inventory of invasive species that are present and a measure of the extent of the invasive species populations is essential to determining the correct course of action. The Department conducts ongoing regular, systematic surveys to identify and quantify the extent of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species on Forest Preserve units in the Adirondack Park. The results of this continued survey have been included in Appendix E of these guidelines and documented in UMPs. Appendix E and UMPs should be updated at

the end of each calendar year to reflect the survey data from the previous growing season. DEC will present an annual report on the survey data from the previous growing season. The tabular information will include Forest Preserve land unit name, species name, total number of populations and area affected, and other pertinent information as identified by the Office of Invasive Species Coordination (OISC). Detailed location and population information shall be provided to the Regional Land Manager for each Region and be included in the iMap Invasive Species Database.

The Department shall seek to develop and foster a relationship with private landowners adjacent to or connecting Forest Preserve land units to share information regarding existing and potential invasive species populations or threats.

III. BMPs for the Control of Terrestrial and Aquatic Invasive Species and Procedure for Implementation
The general parameters or BMPs for the control of invasive species that apply regardless of the targeted species are set forth below. Specific control methods for select terrestrial and aquatic invasive species are attached as Appendix B. These BMPs will be implemented through site specific work plans with corresponding SEQR compliance, which must be approved by the Department's Central Office Bureau of Forest Preserve. Adopt-A-Natural Resource (VSA) Agreements with outside parties to conduct invasive species management must incorporate site specific work plans with corresponding SEQR compliance. It is anticipated that if the proposed activities conform to these guidelines, they will be consistent with constitutional directives and authorized pursuant to the APA/DEC MOU, and will not require approval through the UMP process. However, if the Department determines during its review of a proposed site specific work plan that proposed management activities may potentially have a material effect on the character or use of the land or the vegetation thereon, DEC and APA staff will then consult to determine if the activity should be reviewed and approved as part of an individual UMP or UMP Amendment. Furthermore, application of these guidelines to all such management activities on Forest Preserve lands throughout the Adirondack Park will ensure that cumulative impacts will be avoided due to the fact that the BMPs being implemented through these guidelines avoid and mitigate impacts to native ecological communities.

The following BMPs apply to the control and management of invasive species.

1. **Prevent the introduction of invasive plants and animals to uninfested sites.**
   Invasive species can be introduced to a site by moving infested equipment, sand, gravel, borrow, fill and other off-site material. Monitoring disturbed areas and proper sanitation of equipment will help prevent new infestations. BMPs to prevent the introduction of invasive species include:
   - Clean all clothing, boots, and equipment prior to visiting site.
   - Begin activities in uninfested areas before operating in infested areas.
   - Use native plants and weed-free seed and mulch (straw, wood fiber).
   - Use fill that does not have invasive plant seeds or material.
   - Keep equipment on site during the entire project.
   - Incorporate invasive plant prevention into road work layout, design, and decisions. Use uninfested areas for staging, parking and cleaning equipment. Avoid or minimize all types of travel through infested areas, or restrict to those periods when spread of seed or propagules are least likely.
   - When possible, to suppress growth of invasive plants and prevent their establishment, retain relatively closed canopies.

2. **Contain and treat new invasive plants and animals or those not yet well established.**
   Controlling small infestations is more effective and economical than trying to control well-established, rapidly spreading infestations. Selected control measures need to be based on species biology and the individual characteristics of an infestation.

3. **Minimize transport of invasive plants and animals from infested to uninfested areas.**
   Invasive species can be spread by moving infested materials and equipment. Cleaning vehicles and equipment (usually with steam or hot water) is the most effective method of preventing an introduction. BMPs involving the transport of off-site material and equipment include:
   - Determine the need and identify sites where equipment can be cleaned. Seeds and plant parts need to be collected when practical and effectively disposed of (e.g., burned, dried, bagged and taken to landfill, etc.). Remove mud, dirt, and plant parts from project equipment before moving it into a project area and clean all equipment before leaving the project site, if operating in infested areas.
   - Check, clean, and, when appropriate, dry all clothing, boots, and equipment (e.g., boats, trailers, nets, etc.) prior to visiting site.
   - Don't move firewood. All cut tree material should be either chipped or dispersed onsite.
   - Inspect material sources at site of origin to ensure that they are free of invasive plant material before use and transport. Treat infested sources for eradication, and strip and stockpile contaminated material before any use.
   - Inspect and document the area where material from treated infested sources is used annually for at least three years after project completion to ensure that any invasive plants transported to the site are promptly detected and controlled.
   - Minimize roadside sources of seed that could be transported to other areas.
   - Periodically inspect roads and rights-of-way for invasion. Inventory and mark infestations and schedule them for treatment.
   - Avoid working in infested areas if possible. Postpone such work until invasive plants have been eliminated from the site.
   - Perform road maintenance such as road grading, brushing, and ditch cleaning from uninfested to infested areas to help prevent moving seeds and plant material from infested areas into adjacent uninfested areas.
   - Clean road graders and other equipment immediately after operating in infested areas.
   - Clean all dirt and plant parts from the top and underside of mower decks.

4. **Minimize soil disturbance.**
   Invasive plants prefer and often thrive under disturbed conditions. Do not disturb the soil unless absolutely necessary. BMPs for activities involving soil disturbance include:
   - Before starting ground-disturbing activities, inventory invasive plant infestations both on-site and in the adjacent area.
   - Minimize soil disturbance and retain desirable vegetation in and around area to the maximum extent possible.
   - Monitor infested areas for at least three growing seasons following completion of activities. Provide for follow-up treatments based on inspection results.
   - Do not blade roads or pull ditches where new invaders are found, if possible.

• When it is necessary to conduct soil work in infested roadsides or ditches, schedule activity when seeds or propagules are least likely to be viable and to be spread.
• Do not move soil from infested area to prevent off-site spread.

5. **Maintain desirable species.**
Establishing and maintaining competitive, desirable plants along roadsides and disturbed areas prevents or slows establishment of invasive plants. BMPs for revegetating disturbed areas include:
• Revegetate all disturbed soil, except on surfaced roads, in a manner that optimizes plant establishment for that specific site, unless ongoing disturbance at the site will prevent establishment of invasive plants.
• Use native material where appropriate and available. Revegetation may include planting, seeding, fertilizing, and mulching.
• Monitor and evaluate success of revegetation in relation to project plan.
• When revegetating areas that were previously dominated by invasive plants, try to achieve at least 90% control of the invasive before attempting restoration.

IV. General Practices

1. **Minimum Tool Approach** – State land stewardship involving invasive species management practices should always incorporate the principles of the Minimum Tool Approach. Any group or individual implementing such practices on State land should only use the minimum tools, equipment, devices, force, actions or practices that will effectively reach the desired management goals. Implicit in this document is the stricture to implement a hierarchy of management practices based upon the target species and site conditions starting with the least intrusive and disruptive methods. <u>For the management of aquatic invasive species, hand harvesting and benthic matting are to be used unless a different approach has been reviewed and approved by the Department and the Agency.</u>

2. **Erosion Control** - Some of the species specific methods described in Appendix B require digging or pulling of plants from the soil. Where vegetation is to be removed, it must be determined if the proposed control method and extent of the action will destabilize soils to the point where erosion is threatened. Generally if more than 25 square feet of soil surface is cleared or plant removal occurs on steep slopes, staked silt fencing should be installed and maintained as a temporary erosion control practice. In some cases seeding and organic, non-hay mulching may be required.

3. **Revegetation** - Although not required, replanting or reseeding with native species may sometimes be necessary. All of the species specific control methods described in Appendix B are aimed at reducing or eliminating invasive species so that natives are encouraged to grow and re-establish stable conditions that are not conducive to invasive colonization. In most cases, removal or reduction of invasive populations will be enough to release native species and re-establish their dominance on a site. The site specific work plan for treatment of invasive species should include monitoring provisions and contingency plans for revegetating the site.

4. **Composting** - Because of the extremely robust nature of invasive species, composting terrestrial invasive plants in a typical backyard compost pile or composting bin is not appropriate. However, methods can be used whereby sun-generated heat can be used to destroy the

harvested plant materials, such as storage in a sealed 3 mil thickness (minimum) black plastic garbage bags on blacktop in the sun until the plant materials liquefy. If a larger section of blacktop is available, make a black plastic (4 mil thickness minimum) envelope sealed on the edges with sand bags. The plant material left exposed to the sun will liquefy in the sealed envelope without danger of dispersal by wind. The bags or envelopes must be monitored to make sure the plants do not escape through rips, tears or seams in the plastic. **When composting is suggested later in the text it is understood that liquefying the plant material in or under plastic is the desired action; not disposal in backyard composters or open landfill composting piles.**

5. **Material Collection and Transportation** – While on the control site, place all cut plant material in heavy duty, 3 mil or thicker, black contractor quality plastic clean-up bags. Securely tie the bags and transport from the site in a covered vehicle in order to prevent spread or loss of the plant material during transport from the control work site to the appropriate staging or disposal location. The main root structure, root fragments and/or horizontal rhizomes from harvested controlled Japanese, giant or bohemian knotweed infestation should be bagged only to facilitate transport to an appropriate staging area. All knotweed root structure, root fragments and rhizome propagules should be separately bagged from any cut, aerial canes and crowns. Over an open bag, remove as much adherent soil as possible from the root/rhizome structure prior to spreading the root/rhizome parts out onto a secure, impervious surface. Once completely dried out, the root/rhizome structure may be burned or disposed of in an approved landfill.

   The mature, upright stems and canes of common reed and the knotweeds can be cut, formed into bundles and securely bound with rope or twine. The bundles may then be transported to an appropriate staging or disposal location that has an impervious or near-impervious surfaced area. After the bundles have completely dried out they may be burned at an approved incinerator or burn pit with an appropriate permit.

V. Management Protocols

a. All Department personnel whose duties involve outdoor field work on State land (e.g., UMP Planners and State Land Managers, Forest Rangers, ECOs, Operations, etc.) will report the location of suspected terrestrial and aquatic invasive species encountered during the course of their ordinary work and to implement BMPs when conducting or supervising work to remove invasive species from State land. Terrestrial and aquatic invasive species identification and management training will be provided as needed.

b. All site specific work plans must include a site map, an inventory of target and non-target species, an estimate of the size and age of the infestation, target species impacts and concerns, a Natural Heritage review, adjoining land uses and nearby State land units, a proposed treatment method and probability of success, treatment impacts and concerns, an assessment of treatment alternatives, a history of past treatment methods used on site, a timeframe by which the work will be undertaken and completed, a schedule of anticipated future work, and monitoring provisions to determine the effectiveness of the management action.

c. All work on State land will be conducted using the BMPs and species specific control methods listed in Appendix B, pursuant to the DEC – APA Memorandum of Understanding.

d. Any individual or group demonstrating an interest and appropriate expertise in implementing the species specific control methods may apply for a VSA agreement to manage terrestrial and aquatic invasive species.

e. The treatment of invasive species by Department personnel or any other party will only be undertaken pursuant to a site specific plan for the treatment of invasive species and pursuant to all applicable State, federal and local regulations regarding pesticide use, residue removal and disposal.

f. A VSA and a site specific work plan for treatment of invasive species are required for all non-Department personnel to implement species specific control methods and BMPs on State land.

g. All site specific work plans and applications for VSAs for the treatment of invasive species will be noticed in the Environmental Notice Bulletin for a 15 day public comment period prior to final approval by the Department.

h. Appropriate certification (NYS pesticide applicator certification) is required for pesticide applications. The only pesticide application allowed under these guidelines is spot treatment to individual plants using a back pack or hand sprayer, wick applicator, cloth glove applicator, stem injection or herbicide clippers. **No broadcast herbicide applications using, for example, a truck-mounted sprayer, are allowed. In all cases, all herbicide directions for use and restrictions found on the label shall be followed by a New York State Certified Applicator or Technician in an appropriate category.** The application methods described and allowed are designed to reduce or eliminate the possibility that non-target species will be impacted by the pesticide use. All pesticide treatments require follow-up inspection later in the growing season and/or the following year to assess and document effects and possibly re-treat any plants that were missed. The following guidelines apply with respect to the application of herbicides, which must be applied according to respective labels under federal and state law:

    - In wetlands with standing water, only the RODEO® glyphosate formulation may be used. If the standing water is greater than one acre in size and/or has an outlet to surface waters, an aquatic pesticides permit is required pursuant to ECL 15-0313(4) and (6) NYCRR327.1 in which case application can only be made by a Certified Applicator or Technician or supervised Apprentice licensed in "Category 5 – Aquatic Vegetation Control". In wetlands with no standing water, either the RODEO®, ROUNDUP ® or the AQUAMASTER® formulation may be used.
    - In uplands either ROUNDUP®, AQUAMASTER® or GLYPRO® may be used.
    - The propose use of herbicides must be detailed in a work plan.

i. All appropriate and applicable signage and public notification required for pesticide application by or on behalf of the Department shall be used, including adjacent landowner notification, newspaper notice, and temporary on and off-site signs.

j. These guidelines do not authorize the use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or aircraft. All use of motorized equipment on State lands under the jurisdiction of the Department within the Adirondack Park shall be in compliance with Commissioner's Policy Number 17 (CP-17), and

other pertinent Department policy regarding the use of motorized equipment on Forest Preserve Lands.

k. A UMP or UMP Amendment may be required if the proposed implementation of an activity identified in these guidelines is considered to cause a potential material change to the use of the land or the vegetation thereon due to its extent, intensity or duration.

l. Invasive species management materials and methods evolve; any deviation from the BMPs and species specific control methods must be approved by the Department after consultation with the Agency.

m. Any invasive species management action proposal that involves tree cutting for control or access must comply with constitutional requirements and will be carried out pursuant to LF-91 and a site specific work plan.

n. Appendix A of these guidelines contains a list of species that are considered terrestrial or aquatic invasive species. Other species may be added over time recognizing the constant threat of new invasive species. Note that to be eligible for management actions under these guidelines, species specific control methods must be accepted by the Department after consultation with the Agency. New or revised control methods may be developed by other entities, but also must be reviewed and accepted by the Department after consultation with the Agency.

o. Those individuals or groups applying for a VSA to manage any invasive species without an approved species specific control method must develop and submit a control method for the species of concern. The submitted control methods will be reviewed and must be approved by the Department and the Agency before the approval of a site specific work plan or issuance of the VSA agreement. Those individuals or groups applying for an VSA to manage aquatic plants identified in Appendix A are limited to hand-harvesting or benthic matting as described in a site specific work plan describing the full course of work.

VI. Potential Environmental Impacts

The control methods and BMPs contained in these guidelines restrict the use of herbicides so that adverse impacts to non-target species are avoided and native plant communities are restored. Aquatic invasive species will be managed using non-mechanical harvesting techniques (hand-pulling) and temporary benthic matting as described in the guidelines. Use of pesticides for aquatics is not a part of this guidance.

The removal of these species reduces the potential for disruption and harm to the native ecosystem. It is expected that by using the guidelines invasive species populations will be managed, and hopefully eradicated, in a timely manner before significant impact to the Forest Preserve resource occurs. Successful implementation of these control methods and BMPs or other recommended control methods will allow natural processes to take place undisturbed by the impacts of invasive species colonization and proliferation.

Any of the control actions described in the guidelines has the potential for environmental impact. For example, the use of pesticides may cause mortality to non-target species and cutting tress may have both visual and ecological impacts on the landscape. It is recognized that although the BMPs and species

specific control methods seek to mitigate these impacts, the potential for impact is real and must carefully be weighed against all other possible actions, including the no-action alternative. It is believed that the protection, preservation, and restoration of native flora and fauna in the Adirondacks is an action that is worth reasonable associated risk. These guidelines represent a tool for land managers to reduce the potential for disruption and harm to Forest Preserve lands from terrestrial and aquatic invasive species. It is expected that these actions will lead to the preservation and restoration of native ecological communities on State lands within the Adirondack Park.

VII. Effect of This Action

The guidelines seek to lay the ground rules for managing terrestrial and aquatic invasive species on Forest Preserve lands. It identifies certain species that, if left untreated, have the potential for colonizing backcountry land and water bodies causing severe disruption and degradation of natural systems. The guidelines set out a protocol for action and recommend a set of comprehensive BMPs and specific control methods for dealing with invasive species of concern, and sets out a process for developing and incorporating new control methods for additional species. The control methods provide detailed guidance on the use of several techniques for managing terrestrial and aquatic invasive species including hand pulling, cutting, digging, matting and pesticides. Finally, the guidelines identify a host of additional terrestrial and aquatic invasive species that require surveillance, early detection and, after appropriate consultation with the Regional Supervisor of Natural Resources a rapid response to protect Forest Preserve lands.

Adoption of the guidelines and implementation through the UMP and site specific work planning process, gives the Department the basic tools needed to preserve, protect and restore the natural native ecosystems of the Forest Preserve.

VIII. Definitions

a. Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP) – A partnership including the Department, the Agency, Department of Transportation, and the Adirondack Nature Conservancy whose goals are:

    1. to coordinate a regional early detection and monitoring program in cooperation with staff, volunteers and the public;

    2. to facilitate invasive species management and control with public and private landowners; and,

    3. to increase public awareness and involvement to prevent the spread of invasive species through education and outreach.

c. Agency – APA, its officers and employees.

d. Aquatic Invasive Plant Species – A plant that is typically found in wetland or riparian settings (including lakes, ponds, rivers or streams) that is capable of rapid reproduction and displacement of native species.

e. Area – Lands under the jurisdiction of the Department.

f. Best Management Practice (BMP) – Best management practices are state-of-the-art mitigation measures applied on a site specific basis to reduce, prevent, or avoid adverse environmental or social impacts.

g. Biological Control – A method of controlling pests (including insects, mites, weeds and plant diseases) that relies on predation, parasitism, herbivory, or other natural mechanisms. It can be an important component of integrated pest management (IPM) programs.

h. Certified Applicator – An individual who has successfully completed the course of training and licensing and who holds a valid, appropriate pesticide applicators certificate in New York State.

i. Control Method – A field tested recommendation for the most effective control of invasive species. Species specific control methods for terrestrial invasive species are attached in Appendix B. As of this writing, only hand harvesting and/or benthic matting are approved control methods for aquatic invasive species.

j. Department – The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), its officers and employees.

k. Herbicide – A pesticide that is registered in New York State that kills plants. Due to the sensitive nature of Forest Preserve lands, only selected herbicides are included for use under these guidelines. Glyphosate in the Roundup®, Rodeo®, Aquamaster ®, and Glypro® formulations are the herbicides of choice. In wetlands with standing water only the RODEO® formulation may be used. In wetlands with no standing water either the RODEO®, ROUNDUP ® or the AQUAMASTER® formulation may be used. In uplands either ROUNDUP®, AQUAMASTER® or GLYPRO® may be used. In all cases herbicides will be used in strict compliance with label precautions and the species specific control methods found in Appendix B.

l. Herbicide Application Method – The method of herbicide application will be by backpack sprayer, wick applicator, handheld spray or dropper bottle applicator, stem injection, or cloth glove applicator. No application will be allowed by broadcast sprays or by equipment permanently mounted on a vehicle.

m. Inter-Agency Guidelines ("Guidelines") – The document agreed to by the Adirondack Park Agency and the Department of Environmental Conservation that outlines regulated management of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species on State land.

n. Invasive Species – "invasive species" means a species that is:

   (a) non-native to the ecosystem under consideration; and

   (b) whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. For the purposes of this paragraph, the harm must significantly outweigh any benefits.

o. Pest – "Pest" means (1) any insect, rodent, fungus, weed, or (2) any other form of terrestrial or aquatic plant or animal life or virus, bacteria or other micro-organism (except viruses, bacteria

or other micro-organisms on or in living man or other animals) which the Department Commissioner declares to be a pest.

p. Pesticide – Any substance or mixture of substances that is registered in New York State to kill pests. A pesticide may be a chemical substance, biological agent (such as a virus or bacterium), antimicrobial, disinfectant, plant regulator, defoliant, or other device used against a pest.

q. Site Specific Work Plan – A detailed description of work to be performed at a specific site, the Best Management Practices that will be used to perform the work and the desired final condition of the site once the work is complete.

r. Terrestrial Invasive Plant Species – A plant that is typically found in upland settings that is capable of rapid reproduction and displacement of native species.

s. Volunteer Stewardship Agreement – The agreement for the Department's program to foster public participation to preserve, maintain and enhance the lands and facilities under the Department's jurisdiction.

IX. Goal of the Guidelines

The goal of the guidelines is to restore and protect the native ecological communities on Forest Preserve lands in the Adirondack Park through early detection and rapid response efforts to eradicate or control existing or newly identified invasive species populations.

X. Objectives of the Guidelines

These guidelines provide a template for the process through which comprehensive active terrestrial and aquatic invasive species management will take place on Forest Preserve lands in the Adirondack Park. The guidelines provide protocols for implementing BMPs on Forest Preserve land. The protocols describe what management practices are allowed and when they can be implemented, who can be authorized to implement the management practices, and which terrestrial and aquatic invasive species are targeted. The guidelines are a living document and should be revisited and revised periodically to reflect the dynamic nature of invasive species and the state of knowledge of best management practices.

Reference to these guidelines will be included in UMPs as they are drafted or revised. UMPs will also include available inventory information on the distribution of invasive terrestrial and aquatic species on or in close proximity to the Unit. The guidelines will guide invasive terrestrial and aquatic species management activities on Forest Preserve units. The site specific plan for treatment of invasive species will contain up-to-date invasive species inventory data, specific location information, and specific management recommendations for each species on each site including control actions, materials and methods, monitoring, contingencies and restoration actions.

The guidelines also describe a process by which the Department may enter into VSA Agreements with and facilitate individuals or groups to manage terrestrial and aquatic invasive species on Forest Preserve lands using the listed best management practices, including pesticide use, in the appropriate circumstances. The VSA will be accompanied with a site specific plan for treatment of invasive species based on the BMPs in the guidelines and include provision for monitoring and additional actions to

restore natural communities. As noted above, the site specific plan for treatment of invasive species will provide the detail regarding the selected management options on a site specific basis.

XI. Responsibilities

The responsibility for interpretation and update of these guidelines and overall management shall reside with the cooperating agencies. The Department shall be responsible for management of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species on Forest Preserve lands while the Agency will be responsible for providing review of, and advice on, the management activities contained in the guidelines and the assessment of materiality of proposed actions and the management recommendations in UMPs.

Appendix D – Pond Narratives

History Overview:

The ponds in the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex have been under private ownership for nearly 150 years. Prior to 1948, the land had individual camps and homes and was managed for timber, agriculture, and recreation. In 1948, the Outer Gooley Club was formed, which included Pine Lake and Clear, Mud and Corner Ponds. In 1950 the Essex Chain Lakes was added and dubbed the Inner Gooley Club. Both club lease areas were owned by Finch, Pruyn & Co. and leased to the club. The first DEC surveys of these private waters began in 1952, during which time the first bass stocking request was denied by DEC. From the 1960's to today, the waters have been privately managed and stocked. Studies during this time were completed by researchers Flick, Simkins, and Field. Finch sold the land to The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and New York State purchased it from TNC. Proper management of this area for recreation as well as the maintenance of ecological integrity is paramount.

Individual Pond Descriptions

A brief description of each pond in the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex follows. Definitions of fisheries management classifications referred to in this section of the unit management plan are noted below:

Adirondack Brook Trout Ponds - Adirondack Zone ponds which support and are managed for populations of brook trout, sometimes in company with other salmonid fish species. These waters generally lack warmwater fishes but frequently support bullheads. The majority of these waters are stocked.

Coldwater Ponds and Lakes - Lakes and ponds which support and are managed for populations of several salmonids. These waters are stocked and lack warmwater fishes but frequently support bullheads.

Other Ponds and Lakes - Waters containing fish communities consisting of native and non-native fishes which will be managed for their intrinsic ecological value without any new species introductions.

Two-Story Ponds and Lakes - Waters which simultaneously support and are managed for populations of coldwater and warmwater game fishes. The bulk of the lake trout and rainbow trout resource fall within this class of waters. The majority of these waters are stocked.

Unknown Ponds and Lakes - Waters which could not be assigned to the subprogram categories specifically addressed in this document due to a lack of or paucity of survey information. These waters usually contain native and non-native nongame fishes which will be managed for their intrinsic ecological value without any new species introductions.

Warmwater Ponds and Lakes - Waters which support and are managed for populations of warmwater game fishes and lack significant populations of salmonid fishes. Selected waters are stocked to introduce these species to waters where they do not already exist.

First Lake (P625):

First Lake (56.4 acres) is located within the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area. Floatplane use has been a historically popular use of this lake, and this use will continue. The maximum depth is 62.0 feet, and the average depth is 20.3 feet. The most recent survey was by the Adirondack Lakes Survey Corporation (ALSC) in 1987. It had a ph 7.72 and an ANC of 380.6 µeq/l. However, DEC has surveyed First Lake in years 1980, 1979, 1964, 1962, and 1952. Brown trout were stocked in 1980, and rainbow smelt in 1973. Rainbow trout are present in the lake from historic stocking efforts, along with lake trout, brook trout, brown bullhead, creek chub, redbreast sunfish, slimy sculpin, and white sucker. Minnows found during the ALSC 1987 survey were golden shiner and banded killifish.

Floatplane use will continue on First Lake, and it will be managed as a coldwater fishery.

Management Class: Coldwater

Second Lake (P626):

Second Lake, which is contiguous with First and Third Lakes, was last surveyed in 1987 by the Adirondack Lakes Survey Corporation. This 22.7-acre pond had a pH of 7.78 and an ANC of 411 µeq/l. The same survey found the following species: Landlocked salmon, brook trout, rainbow smelt, golden shiner, bluntnose minnow, blacknose dace, creek chub, white sucker, brown bullhead, banded killifish, redbreast sunfish. The species stocked in Third Lake (landlocked salmon and brook trout) likely immigrated to Second Lake, which explains their presence in the survey.

Second Lake will be managed to preserve the native coldwater fishery.

Management Class: Coldwater

Third Lake (P626A):

Third Lake (261.9 acres) is the largest lake in the Essex Chain itself, and in the entire Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area. Historically, it has been stocked yearly by the Gooley Club. Species stocked include: brook trout, landlocked salmon, rainbow trout, and perhaps Arctic char. Rainbow smelt were stocked once, in year 1973. The maximum depth is 80.1 feet, and the average depth is 20.7 feet. The most recent chemical survey was completed by DEC in late summer of year 2012. Third Lake was found to have characteristics that are acceptable for trout survival, and a pH of 7.86 and an ANC of 476 µeq/l. A survey was completed by the ALSC in October 1987, where the species caught were: landlocked salmon, brook trout, rainbow smelt, golden shiner, northern redbelly dace, bluntnose minnow, creek chub, brown bullhead, banded killifish, and redbreast sunfish. Stocked rainbow trout have also been caught. Third Lake also has a native lake trout population, a slow-growing species with no known stocking history. A 2013 DEC survey caught 4 lake trout and 1 white sucker. The Gooley Club buildings lie on the southern shore of Third Lake.

Third Lake will continue to be stocked with landlocked salmon and rainbow trout, and managed in order to protect the native lake trout population.

Management Class: Coldwater

Fourth Lake (P626B):

Fourth Lake is 27.0 acres in size, and likely contains species that are emigrants from Third and Fifth Lakes, which have both been stocked. There is no recorded biological survey for this lake. The most recent survey was a chemical survey by DEC in the summer of 2012. It had a pH of 7.82 and an ANC of 401 µeq/l. A large culvert connects Fourth Lake to Fifth Lake of the Essex Chain.

A biological survey is needed on Fourth Lake, and will be managed as a coldwater fishery.

Management Class: Coldwater

Fifth Lake (P626C):

Fifth Lake (70.9 acres) has a stocking history much like Third Lake. Both have been stocked yearly by the Gooley Club with landlocked salmon, brook trout, and rainbow trout. The 2012 DEC chemical survey found that Fifth Lake is suitable for trout survival, with a wide depth zone of favorable dissolved oxygen conditions. It also has a pH of 7.67 and an ANC of 305 µeq/l. in 1971,a survey was completed by researcher Simkins, where the species recorded were: lake trout, rainbow trout, brook trout, creek chub, brown bullhead, and unspecified sunfish species. Despite the believed presence of lake trout in Fifth Lake, a 2013 DEC survey caught only 1 white sucker and 1 rainbow smelt.

There is a culvert between Fourth and Fifth Lakes that allows for water and species flow, and is also large enough to accommodate paddlers.

Fifth Lake will continue to be stocked rainbow trout and salmon, and managed for its coldwater fishery.

Management Class: Coldwater

Sixth Lake (P631):

Sixth Lake does not have a recorded biological survey. However, the 2012 DEC chemical survey shows that Sixth Lake does not possess temperature and dissolved oxygen characteristics that would be sufficient for trout survival. This 36.4- acre lake has a ph of 7.63 and an ANC of 285 µeq/l.

Sixth Lake will be managed to preserve its aquatic community for its intrinsic value.

Management Class: Coldwater

Seventh Lake (P631A):

Seventh Lake, like Sixth Lake, does not have a recorded biological survey, but may also contain emigrant species due to the interconnectivity of the Essex Chain of Lakes. Seventh Lake was also found to be

unsuitable for trout populations, based on the 2012 DEC chemical survey. It has a pH of 7.63 and an ANC of 342 µeq/l. This lake is also relatively small, only 9.0 acres in size.

Sixth Lake will be managed to preserve its aquatic community for its intrinsic value.

Management Class: Coldwater

Eighth Lake (P633):

Eighth Lake (17.0 acres) is the final lake in the Essex Chain Lakes, and is located northeast of Jackson Pond. A spur road off of the road that leads to the Gooley Club buildings runs to the south of Eighth Lake. A biological survey was completed by Thomas Field of Fernwood & Linme, Inc. in 1984. The fish species found were: brook trout, creek chub, golden shiner, redbreast sunfish, and brown bullhead. Brook trout were stocked by the Gooley Club as recently as year 2011, and the 2012 DEC chemical survey shows that there is a depth range that is favorable for trout. Eighth Lake has a pH of 7.82 and an ANC of 422 µeq/l.

Eighth Lake will be managed as an Adirondack brook trout pond to preserve its native fish community.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Jackson Pond (P634):

Jackson Pond is 29.2 acres in size, and located southeast of Third Lake, to the east of the Gooley Club camp complex. When surveyed in late summer 2012, Jackson Pond was found to have a narrow (2-3') zone suitable for trout, and therefore average trout growth. The maximum depth is 23.0 feet. It has been suggested for reclamation, but DEC surveys in 2012 show that there is not a good barrier site. Jackson Pond was surveyed in 1971 by Simkins, and the gill net sampling yielded only 1 rainbow trout and 9 brook trout. Brook trout have been previously stocked yearly by the Gooley Club. The most abundant species caught in the Simkins survey were creek chub, golden shiner, sunfish (unspecified species). Brown bullhead were also found in the lake. The 2012 DEC chemical survey yielded a pH of 8.02 and an ANC of 627 µeq/l.

Brook trout were stocked in Jackson Pond by DEC in Fall 2013, and will be managed as an Adirondack brook trout fishery in the presence of non-native and historically associated species.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Deer Pond (P629):

In 1973, Deer Pond was reclaimed and a barrier was built. It was restocked with British Columbian strain brook trout and Temiscamie hybrids after completion. The barrier failed in 1977, and gill lice presence was also detrimental to trout survival. It is 48.4 acres in size and has a maximum depth of 54 feet. The last biological survey for Deer Pond occurred in late summer 1985 by Thomas Field, of Fernwood-Limne, Inc. The most abundant species were landlocked salmon, brook trout, and creek chub. Smelt,

unspecified sunfish, and unspecified dace species were also present. Field suggested that Deer Pond be reclaimed again and the barrier rebuilt, but the 2012 DEC survey did not find a suitable barrier site.

Brook trout were stocked in Deer Pond by DEC in Fall 2013, and will be managed as an Adirondack brook trout fishery.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Mud Pond (P630):

Mud Pond is located just to the southeast of Deer Pond, and just north of Third Lake. It is a shallow pond with a maximum reported depth of 10.5 feet, and an area of 21.7 acres. According to the 1984 biological survey by T. Field, Mud Pond is shallow enough that light penetrates through the water column, causing the whole lake to be oxygenated by photosynthesis in summer. Due to this high level of biological demand, it is likely that "winterkill" is why there is a relatively unproductive fishery in Mud Pond. "Winterkill" occurs under ice cover, and is the depletion of dissolved oxygen due to high biological demand. Field (1984) does not speak definitively about this phenomenon occurring in Mud Pond, but physical characteristics suggest that this can be used to explain the low populations of fish in the pond. Mud Pond has historically discussed as a candidate for reclamation, but the 2012 DEC survey did not find the pond to have suitable barrier potential.

Mud Pond will be managed to preserve its aquatic community for its intrinsic value.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Chub Pond (P632):

Chub Pond is a very small pond (3.0 acres in size) and located just east of Seventh and Eighth Lakes of the Essex Chain, in the Newcomb 7.5' Quadrangle. There are not any recorded stocking, biological, or chemical survey records. However, it is possible to infer that it may have been fished in the past (if sustaining populations exist), due to its proximity to Seventh and Eighth Lakes and the Gooley Club Road.

Mud Pond will be managed to preserve its aquatic community for its intrinsic value.

Management Class: Unknown

Grassy Pond (P627):

Grassy Pond is a 31-acre pond located just to the north of First Lake. It was located in the Blue Mountain Wild Forest prior to the 2013 reclassification, and it is now located in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area. It has a maximum depth of 41 feet. In 1991, DEC surveyed Grassy Pond as a potential reclamation candidate, but was found not to be suitable due to lack of barrier sites. The ALSC sampled Grassy Pond in 1987, and caught creek chub and brown bullhead. A 1980 DEC survey found brook trout to be present.

Grassy Pond will be managed as an Adirondack brook trout water, and will be surveyed again to assess the presence of brook trout.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Little Grassy Pond (P628):

Little Grassy Pond is a 5.4-acre Adirondack brook trout water that is a tributary to Grassy Pond. The stream that connects the two waters flows through a large wetland. It has a maximum depth of 11 feet and a mean depth of 6 feet. A survey in 1991 found that it was not a suitable candidate for reclamation. A 1983 survey in Little Grassy Pond found: brook trout, creek chub, brown bullhead, pumpkinseed, banded killifish, and northern redbelly dace.

Little Grassy Pond will be surveyed again and will be managed as an Adirondack brook trout pond to preserve its native fish in the presence of nonnative species.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Pine Lake (P655):

Pine Lake, like First Lake, has a history of floatplane use. It is located south of First Lake, and is 91.4 acres in size with an average depth of 25.6 feet. In terms of fisheries, Pine Lake contains a variety of species, including brook trout, golden shiner, white sucker, rock bass, brown bullhead and redbreast sunfish. These findings came from the ALSC 1987 database and the lake is currently in the Adirondack Brook Trout management class.

Floatplane use will continue on Pine Lake, and will be surveyed again to determine trout presence and survival.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Mud Pond (P624):

This is the second Mud Pond in the management area. It is located to the north of Clear Pond and to the south of the Cedar River. Mud Pond is relatively unknown, but it was surveyed for chemical properties in August 2012 and found to be unsuitable for trout sustainability. This 10.0-acre pond has also never been stocked. Mud Pond is quite shallow, with an average depth of approximately 10 feet. It also has a pH of 7.72 and an ANC of 350 µeq/l.

Mud Pond will be managed to preserve its aquatic community for its intrinsic value.

Management Class: Unknown

Clear Pond (P616):

Clear Pond (23.2 acres) is located in the Pine Lake Primitive Area, between Mud Pond and Corner Pond. There is a trail to Clear Pond that extends southwest from the Chain Lake Road South. Clear Pond

contains a sustained native lake trout population with satisfactory growth characteristics, and may be sensitive to increased fishing pressure. It was historically stocked, because brown trout were caught in 1965, and kokanee salmon and rainbow trout in 1996. Current fisheries management calls for the continued stocking of rainbow trout. A pre-reclamation survey was completed in 1991, which also noted an abundance of frog species observed. Clear Pond has undergone biological surveys by DEC in years 1932, 1957, 1965, 1996, and 2012. The most recent biological survey caught lake trout, redbreast sunfish, and brown bullhead. Historical surveys have also caught brook trout, creek chub, eastern blacknose dace, golden shiner, and northern redbelly dace. DEC also completed a chemical survey in 2012 and found a pH of 7.58 and an ANC of 197 µeq/l.

Clear Pond will continue to be stocked by DEC with rainbow trout, and managed as a coldwater fishery.

Management Class: Coldwater

Corner Pond (P659):

Corner Pond is located south of Clear Pond in the Pine Lake Primitive Area. This 20.3 acre pond is very shallow, with a maximum depth of 4 feet and a mean depth of 2 feet. The most recent biological survey was done by DEC in 1957, and the only species reported was brown bullhead.

Corner Pond will be surveyed to determine its chemical and biological characteristics.

Management Class: Unknown

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Appendix E – Analysis of Alternatives

Snowmobile Trails

Maps of each alternative can be found in Appendix I.

Alternative 1 – *Preferred Alternative*

This alternative is described in more detail in Section III of the UMP. It begins at Pelon Road in Indian Lake, follows the Elm Island Trail until reaching private land, where a new section of the Elm Island Trail will be constructed. The route then enters land owned by the Town of Indian Lake until reaching Chain Lakes Road (South). The route follows the road to the point where seasonal hunting access ends, which coincides with the end of the wild forest classification along the road. From there, the route follows the old road to the Cedar River, crosses the river, and continues northwest on the Camp Six Trail. The Camp Six Trail becomes the Camp Six Road where seasonal hunting access terminates. The Camp Six road intersects Drakes Mill Road, which the route follows to the east. The road becomes a trail approximately 1/3 of a mile from the Hudson River. The route crosses the river over the Iron (Polaris) Bridge then follows one of two alternatives to reach 28N.

Alternative 1A – *Preferred*

From the Polaris Bridge the trail would follow existing haul roads to the east in order to exit the Scenic River corridor as efficiently as possible. Once out of the corridor the trail would proceed generally north through the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest to a point approximately 0.6 miles south of Chaisson Rd where it would proceed onto private land until it meets the Chaisson Rd. The route would then follow Chaisson Road until crossing Route 28N and connecting with the proposed Newcomb to Minerva trail.

As indicated in the 2005 Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest UMP, a GIS model indicates potential deer yard habitat along portions of this trail segment in the extensive softwood wetlands north of Vanderwhacker Mountain along the North Branch of Wolf Creek and the Hudson River. The majority of the trail that intersects the potential deer yarding area is located on the outer edges of the model. The fringe location coupled with the relatively large area of potential habitat nearby suggests that trail use may not greatly impact deer yarding since there is a great deal of potential habitat in the area. Field work conducted in 2015 in the peripheral location indicated that trail use may not significantly impact deer yarding.

While this alternative is less direct to Minerva than Alternative 1B, it is preferred because it would require much less modification to the land to construct, require fewer bridges, and would be much easier to maintain over the long-term. This is especially important considering one of the uses of this route would be a community connector snowmobile trail, which would need to be constructed to a width of nine feet. This route allows for a trail of this width to be constructed and maintained sustainably for four-season use, unlike Alternative 1B which contains significant water management issues.

Alternative 1B

This segment would utilize old haul roads closer to the bridge, but new trail construction would be necessary for most of this trail segment. The trail would continue easterly along the old Vanderwhacker Mountain snowmobile trail until it hits the current Vanderwhacker Mountain multi-use trail, at which point it would continue along the multi-use trail to the trailhead on the Moose Pond Club Road. From the Vanderwhacker Mountain trailhead the route would merge with and continue easterly on the Moose Pond Club road to Route 28N. It will require a crossing of Route 28N to connect to the proposed Newcomb to Minerva community connector trail. This alternative provides a more direct route to Minerva, but because of the challenges to both construction and long-term maintenance, it was discarded. The need for this trail to be nine feet in width to accommodate snowmobiles and groomers makes it especially problematic, as this route is considerably wet in many places (the base of Vanderwhacker Mountain has several seeps and Wolf Creek is generally located within a wetland throughout most of this area) and management of water on a wide trail during the warmer months would be a perpetual challenge.

Alternative 1A is the Department's preferred alternative.

Alternative 2

This alternative follows the same route as Alternative 1 until reaching the intersection of Drakes Mill Road and Camp Six Road. At this point, the route heads north on Drakes Mill Road and Chain Lakes Road (North) until reaching the State land boundary and Goodnow Flow Road. From here two alternatives were considered to complete the connection to Route 28N:

Alternative 2A

This alternative would use Goodnow Flow Road, or a new path just off the Road, until the point where the road intersects an existing snowmobile trail on CE lands. The route would then follow that trail into Newcomb where it would connect with the proposed Newcomb to Minerva trail. This alternative was discarded because there is a history of private land issues related to snowmobiling in this area, and the use of a Town road for a long distance is not ideal when other alternatives exist.

Alternative 2B

This alternative would utilize a portion of the recently designated Upper Hudson Ski Loop Trail until a point where the ski trail circles back towards the west. The snowmobile trail would head north on an undesignated trail (herd path) parallel to the Hudson River until reaching private land. The route would continue on to Route 28N, then use Route 28N and Campsite Road to connect to the proposed Newcomb to Minerva trail. This alternative was discarded because of the long distance the trail would travel in close proximity to the Hudson River.

Alternative 3

This alternative would use the existing Cedar River Trail heading northwest out of Indian Lake and the O'Neil Flow Road on the Township 19 Conservation Easement. Rather than continuing north on the Cornell Road, the route would follow a new trail heading east into Blue Mountain Wild Forest until reaching an unclassified corridor. It would then cross the Chain Lakes Road (North), and then proceed along the same route as Alternative 2A or 2B for the remainder. This alternative was discarded because of its indirect approach towards reaching Minerva, and because of the uncertainty surrounding the use of the conservation easement roads during timber harvesting activities.

Alternative 4

This alternative begins in the same way as Alternatives 1 and 2. At the intersection of Chain Lakes Road (North) and Drakes Mill Road, the route heads west on Chain Lakes Road (North), then north on a road circling around Sixth and Seventh Lake. Instead of following the road into the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area, a new trail would be used to cross the Blue Mountain Wild Forest heading east until reaching the Cornell Road on the conservation easement lands. From here the route would follow an existing snowmobile trail through the easement until reaching the hamlet of Newcomb and connecting with the proposed Newcomb to Minerva community connector trail. This alternative was discarded primarily because of the indirect nature of the route considering the goal of connecting Indian Lake to Minerva. Additionally, the wild forest section between the Chain Lakes Road (North) and Cornell Road would be challenging in terms of water management, especially when considering summer uses. Finally, as mentioned previously, the use of conservation easement trails come with a level of uncertainty as timber management activities can disrupt snowmobile use.

Alternative 5 – No Action

The no action alternative would result in the continued use of the Cedar River Trail (Indian Lake to Blue Mountain Lake), the O'Neal Flow and Cornell Roads in the Conservation Easement lands to the west of the Complex Area, and an existing trail on Conservation Easement lands to the north of the Complex Area. The use of these road and trail segments eventually connects Indian Lake and Newcomb, and then connect to an approved trail between Newcomb and Minerva. Adopting the no action alternative would result in the use of a more circuitous route as a substitute for an Indian Lake to Minerva connection, and would therefore increase the travel time between Indian Lake and Minerva.

Land Ownership of Each Alternative (in miles)

	Total Mileage	DEC Lands	CE Lands	Private/Town
Alternative 1, 1A	**20.69**	18.68	0	2.02
Alternative 1, 1B	**22.63**	22.15	0	0.47
Alternative 2, 2A	**20.69**	13.4	1.98	4.9
Alternative 2, 2B	**21.11**	19.42	0	1.69
Alternative 3	**31.75**	20.4	6.9	4.44
Alternative 4	**33.22**	19.2	12.21	1.82
Alternative 5	**31.02**	7.3	20.69	3.03

Ground Conditions for Each Alternative (in miles)

	Total Mileage	New Trail	Existing Trail	Old Road/Trail (minimal tree cutting)	Motor Vehicle Road	Potential wetland impact for trail considered New or Old Road
Alternative 1A	**20.69**	3.1	1.52	6.86	9.21	0.59
Alternative 1B	**22.63**	3.57	1.52	7.97	9.55	1.1
Alternative 2A	**20.69**	1.36	4.25	4.12	10.54	0.57
Alternative 2B	**21.11**	1.36	4.24	8.37	7.14	0.61
Alternative 3	**31.75**	6.34	16.11	4.13	5.15	1.29
Alternative 4	**33.22**	2.59	15.46	8.99	6.18	0.81
Alternative 5	**31.02**	NA	22.08	NA	8.94	NA

Compliance with the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act (WSRRSA:)

One of the purposes of the WSRRS Act is to grant to the DEC the authority to adopt regulations in order to place "primary emphasis on protecting ecological, ***recreational***, aesthetic, botanical, scenic, geological, fish and wildlife, historical, cultural, archeological and scientific features of the area." (*See* ECL Section 15-2709.1) (emphasis added.) DEC staff has proposed the location of the multiple use trail in the river corridor area that minimizes the potential for adverse environmental impacts by locating the trail within the BMWF and VMWF, limiting the number of trees cut, avoiding wetlands, and minimizing stream crossings consistent with the snowmobile Management Guidance. The preferred alternative utilizes an area in the river corridor that accesses the “destination” in as short a distance as possible and that does not have a reasonable alternative. The location of this trail will be placed so as to take advantage of an existing motor vehicle bridge over the Hudson River. For this reason, the DEC has determined that this trail crossing the river will not affect the river resource.

One segment of two alternatives begins at the Hudson River, which in this vicinity is designated as a Scenic River pursuant to the WSRRS Act (ECL section 15-2713.2(f.) The WSRRS Act, and its implementing regulations found in Part 666 of Title 6 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the

State of New York (6 NYCRR), regulate activities within a Scenic River Area, defined geographically as the river and the area within ½ mile from the river on both sides. The construction of a multiple-use trail within a Scenic River Corridor requires the DEC to issue a permit in accordance with 6 NYCRR section 666.13[E][3] (for the construction of a new trail) and section 666.9 [d] (to allow *motorized* open space recreational uses). A variance for the width of the trail may also be needed pursuant to 6 NYCRR section 666.9[a][2] because the term "trail" is defined by the WSRRS Act implementing regulations as a "path or way four feet or less in width." (*See* 6 NYCRR section 666.3[lll]). Current state snowmobile guidance requires a snowmobile trail to be nine feet in width to allow for the safe passage of snowmobiles traveling in opposite directions. This permit will be subject to the public notice requirements of the Uniform Procedures Act (UPA) as set forth in Article 70 of the ECL and its implementing regulations found in 6 NYCRR Part 621. The application requirements, and the applicable criteria for the issuance of the permit, are found in section 666.8 of the WSRRS Act implementing regulations. A permit will be issued if the proposed land use is consistent with the purposes of the WSRRS Act and its implementing regulations, the river resources are protected, the proposed activity will not have an undue adverse environmental impact, and no reasonable alternative exists for modifying or locating the proposed activity outside of the designated river area, among others.

The use of bridges and trails at the location of the existing Polaris Bridge, predates and continued regularly after the enactment of the WSRRS Act. DEC records indicate that a bridge existed at this location previously, and both DEC and the APA issued permits to allow the construction of the existing bridge which subsequently allowed motor vehicle use for timber harvesting and recreational purposes. Therefore, the operation of motor vehicles, including snowmobiles, on the trail leading to and over the Polaris Bridge is considered an existing land use and is allowed to continue pursuant to the WSRRS Act statute and its implementing regulations (ECL section 15-2709.2 and 6 NYCRR section 666.13[A][1]; *see also* 6 NYCRR section 666.2[i][3]&[4]).

One segment of the proposed snowmobile trail in the Complex Area, the Elm Island Trail, is an existing snowmobile trail located within the Cedar River Wild River area. (*See* ECL section 15-2713.1[a]). The Cedar River Wild River area extends one-half mile from each bank. (See 6 NYCRR sections 666.6[f] & 666.3[yy]). The Elm Island Trail was sited with the purpose of minimizing adverse environmental impacts to the greatest extent practicable. In order to allow the continued use of the trail, the DEC and the Agency agree to establish a new boundary of the river area. The authority and procedures for amending river area boundaries are found in ECL section 15-2711, 6 NYCRR section 666.6, and 9 NYCRR section 577.3.

The new river area boundary will extend one-quarter mile from the east bank of the river starting from the existing boundary with the Cedar River Recreational River area, and end where the Elm Island Trail is no longer within the river area at a location more commonly known as the "four corners" as referenced in the 1995 Blue Mountain Wild Forest Unit Management Plan. The west bank of the river area in this vicinity will remain one-half mile.

Cedar River Bridge Location

History

The Chain Lakes Road (North and South) has been in existence since the mid-nineteenth century, and became a Town Highway sometime in the mid to late 1800's. The road starts from present-day Route 28 in the Town of Indian Lake, runs northeast along the western shore of the Indian River, continues north past the Hudson River, and then turns northwest toward the Cedar River. Initially, barges were used to cross the Cedar River, and at least one bridge was constructed to span the river. The last known bridge was improved in the 1940's and again in the 1950's to allow for motor vehicle access. In 1978 the bridge collapsed from river ice buildup and was never replaced. The Chain Lakes Road (North and South) on either side of the Cedar River continued to be used for motor vehicles until the land was purchased by the State in 2013. Snowmobiles crossed on the frozen river surface after the bridge washout until State acquisition.

There is an existing bridge over the Cedar River approximately 9 river miles from the proposed Cedar River Bridge in this Complex Plan. This multiple use recreational trail bridge was permitted by DEC and APA in 2001. The DEC permit (#5-2026-00103/00001) describes its purpose:

> *"The proposed multiple use recreational trail bridge will span a segment of the Cedar River designated "recreational" under the WSRRA. The bridge will link the hamlet of Indian Lake with the trail system of the Blue Mountain Wild Forest. It will provide direct access to an existing trail, whose main purpose is snowmobiling, which leads towards the hamlet of Blue Mountain Lake. Eventually the trail may be extended to connect with the hamlet of Long Lake."*

Current Situation

The 2013 APA Resolution (with Respect to the 2013 Classification Package) committed to considering revising the APSLMP to allow for the construction of a bridge over the Cedar River in the vicinity of the previous bridge using non-natural materials.

The Complex Plan proposes to construct this bridge over the Cedar River, in the vicinity of the previous bridge, to reconnect the Chain Lakes Road (North and South) in conformance with the APSLMP. The alternatives for the exact location of the bridge are contemplated here. A map of the location alternatives is located in the Appendix.

Compliance with the WSRRS Act: each alternative of the proposed multi-use trail enters into the Cedar River Corridor. The Cedar River, in this vicinity, is designated as a Scenic River pursuant to the WSRRS Act. (*See* ECL section 15-2713.2[e]). The WSRRS Act, and its implementing regulations found in Part 666 regulate the activities within a Scenic River Area, defined geographically as the river and the area within ½ mile from the river on both sides. The construction of a bridge and a multiple use recreational trail within the Cedar River Scenic Corridor requires the issuance of a permit in accordance with 6 NYCRR sections 666.13[E][3] (for the multiple use trail) and section 666.13[E][5][b] (for the construction of a bridge). Section 666.13[E][5][b] allows the construction of a bridge over a classified river for "public

roads" or for "non-motorized open space recreational uses" such as hiking, cross-country skiing, and travel by horse and wagon. The DEC intends to allow the use of snowmobiles on this bridge, therefore, a permit is required in accordance with 6 NYCRR section 666.9[d]. A variance for the width of the trail may also be needed pursuant to 6 NYCRR section 666.9[a][2] because the term "trail" is defined by the WSRRS Act implementing regulations as a "path or way four feet or less in width." (See 6 NYCRR section 666.3[lll]). Current state snowmobile guidance requires a snowmobile trail to be nine feet in width to allow for the safe passage of snowmobiles traveling in opposite directions. These permits are subject to the public notice requirements set forth in Article 70 of the ECL and its implementing regulations found in 6 NYCRR Part 621. The application requirements, and the applicable criteria for the issuance of the permit, are found in section 666.8 of the WSRRS Act and its implementing regulations. A permit will be issued if the proposed land use is consistent with the purposes of the WSRRS Act, the river resources are protected, the proposed activity will not have an undue adverse environmental impact, and no reasonable alternative exists for modifying or locating the proposed activity outside of the designated river area, among others.

DEC staff has proposed the location of the bridge and recreational trail in the river corridor area that minimizes the potential for adverse environmental impacts by limiting the number of trees cut, avoiding wetlands, and minimizing stream crossings consistent with the 2009 Snowmobile Management Guidance. Public motor vehicle use of the bridge will be limited to snowmobiles, and administrative motor vehicle use of the bridge will be limited to snowmobile trail groomers and those activities required for bridge maintenance.

Alternative 4 was selected as the preferred alternative because, among other reasons, it avoids or minimizes adverse environmental impacts to the greatest extent practicable.

Alternative 1 – No Action

The no action alternative would not propose bridge construction at any of the selected alternative sites. The no action alternative is not feasible because it does not support the State's plan to provide a balanced approach to allow recreational uses in the unit while minimizing impacts to natural resources. By not constructing a bridge, the DEC would then allow the construction of a multiple-use trail that would lead to the west and dissect two areas classified as Primitive in the vicinity of Pine Lake.

Alternative 2

This alternative would use a narrow point in the Cedar River, downriver (east) of Alternatives 3 and 4. The banks of this site are high, with boulders on either bank for any potential bridge stabilization. However, this alternative does not use a direct connection between the Chain Lakes Road (North and South). For construction, short road sections would have to be built to access either side of the river bank. Additionally, this alternative is located within the boundaries of the Hudson Gorge Wilderness Area, and would require a map change or reclassification if selected. This alternative will not be considered.

Alternative 3

This alternative would use the site of the Cedar River Bridge that was built sometime in the 1930's and washed out in 1978 from river ice buildup. The location was found using a 1968 aerial photo and field confirmation. An approximate 750 foot section of trail (on the former all-season road accessing the river bank) would need to be rehabilitated in order access the river bank from the Chain Lakes Road (South). This short section of trail is within the 100 year floodplain. It is also located within lands currently classified as wilderness by the APSLMP. The river span at this location is approximately 175 feet. The elevations on the southern shores of Alternatives 3 and 4 are similar, but Alternative 3 does not have the rock outcrop, so the southern shore would need to be armored and potentially hardened. In the field, it appears that the south shore was partially eroded or washed away with the wood abutments from the old bridge. The elevation of the northern end of this site may already be above flood water elevation.

Alternative 4 – *Preferred Alternative*

This alternative is located approximately 800 feet west (using the centerline of the river) of the Alternative 3 location. The distinguishing characteristic of this site is the large rock outcrop on the southern shore that has a benchmark on it. A 1901 topographic map shows a crossing of the Cedar River at this location. Between 1978 (when the old bridge washed away) and State acquisition, snowmobiles routinely entered the Scenic River Corridor from the Essex Chain Road South and crossed the river at this location. This location is also within the lands classified as wild forest by the APSLMP.

The existing trail that leads to the Cedar River shore from the south goes directly to this location. The span was surveyed to be 145 feet, narrower at this location than the Alternative 3 location. The high rock outcrop at this location provides a desirable anchor point for the southern edge of the bridge abutment. The northern end of this site would need to be built up to be out of the flood water elevation. This is the preferred alternative for the Cedar River Bridge proposed in this UMP.

Outer Gooley Farmhouse

History

The Outer Gooley farmhouse is located in the former Indian River Tract, along the Chain Lakes Road (South), northwest of the confluence with the Indian and Hudson Rivers. The Indian River Tract was purchased from Finch Pruyn by The Nature Conservancy and sold to New York State in April 2013 for addition into the Forest Preserve. The Gooley Club, which included both the Outer Gooley and Inner Gooley areas, was formed in 1946.

The Outer Gooley farmhouse and surrounding area were classified as Wild Forest, and added to the Blue Mountain Wild Forest unit. The site also formerly included a woodshed, a cabin, an open garage, and an outhouse. The farmhouse is the only remaining structure on site.

Management Guidelines

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) is the State Historic Preservation Office. OPRHP has determined that the Outer Gooley building meets eligibility criteria for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Therefore, DEC must adhere to §14.09 of the New York State Historic Preservation Act (SHPA), which states, in part, that DEC *"shall fully explore all feasible and prudent alternatives and give due consideration to feasible and prudent plans which avoid or mitigate adverse impacts on such property."* This contemplation of alternatives and invitation for public comment takes place through the UMP process. In this context, a decision will be made with regard to the future of the building.

Alternative 1 – No Action

The no action alternative would mean allowing the building to deteriorate, without maintenance performed or decision-making about any potential uses or demolition. This deterioration is an adverse impact according to the SHPA, and would result in a public health and safety hazard. This alternative will not be considered.

Alternative 2 – Structure Removal

The Outer Gooley farmhouse meets eligibility criteria for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Alternatives considered as part of conformance with the SHPA includes this alternative to demolish the building. Historical and natural history interpretation could be provided, without the building, using kiosks and panels. Ongoing future maintenance and staff costs are eliminated with the demolition of the building.

Alternative 3 – *Preferred Alternative*

The preferred alternative would retain the Outer Gooley farmhouse as a historic structure and for other compatible uses, discussed below. The uses under this section overlap to some degree, and are not intended to be mutually exclusive, since several might be accommodated in the building. One or more of these may require statutory changes or APSLMP amendments. Many of the alternatives listed could be accomplished by DEC if appropriate staff and resources were made available. Some could be done in partnership with local government or non-profit organizations. Another possibility would be to consider transferring management jurisdiction to another State agency, such as ORPHP. DEC will rely on public comment to guide the decision-making process.

Potential uses could include:

- Manage as an interior outpost, like Lake Colden or John's Brook Lodge. This would provide a DEC presence, but would require significant and ongoing budgetary and maintenance allocations. Also, the building is located directly adjacent to the public Outer Gooley parking area. Therefore, it is not a remote or interior location. It is, however, located at a strategically important location where paddlers can last exit the Hudson River before entering the Gorge.
- Incorporate the building into a hut-to-hut/snowmobile/bike/equestrian touring system. Within this use category is an array of possible sub-options involving the use of the

building in various ways and to varying degrees for any of the above purposes. This would enhance the overall tourism economy, but would have budgetary impacts from staffing and maintenance. This option also has numerous legal issues, from housing the public on the Forest Preserve.

- Use the building as a historical museum for hunting camp tradition and river driving exhibits. This could be accomplished through a variety of management arrangement options, depending on appropriate and willing partners.
- Use only the exterior of the building to provide an interpretive experience. This could be accomplished through a variety of management arrangement options, depending on appropriate and willing partners.
- Establish the building as a bed and breakfast. There are significant legal (and potentially constitutional) issues with this option.
- Use the building site as a natural/cultural history outdoor exhibit, after the building is demolished. This would eliminate any budgetary obstacles from ongoing maintenance of the building.

Inner Gooley Structures

History

The Inner Gooley area is located on the south shore of Third Lake in the Essex Chain. A bridge over the Cedar River historically connected the two camp areas via the Chain Lakes Road (North) and Chain Lakes Road (South). There are 7 buildings and several small sheds located in the Inner Gooley camp complex. The lessee exclusive use area shrank to a contiguous 7-acre parcel around the camp buildings on October 1, 2013.

Existing Conditions

The Inner Gooley buildings are located on the south shore of Third Lake, in the approximate center of the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area. The Inner Gooley Club currently functions within their exclusive use camp envelope. They have certain motorized use and access rights that extend beyond the public use (see Use Reservations section for more lessee information). Their lease ends on September 30, 2018. After that, the buildings and all materials will be removed (no later than October 1, 2019).

The Inner Gooley Club camp buildings are located in a remote location, with no nearby public motorized access. The classification of the area as Primitive and the remote location were major factors in the proposed future management of the buildings.

Alternative 1 – No Action

The no action alternative would mean allowing the buildings to be abandoned in 2018, without removal. This deterioration is an adverse impact according to the SHPA, and would result in a public health and safety hazard. This alternative will not be considered.

Alternative 2 – Interior Outpost

Manage as an interior outpost, like Lake Colden or John's Brook Lodge. This would provide a DEC presence in a relatively remote area, but would require significant and ongoing budgetary and maintenance allocations. These structures are non-conforming in primitive areas (as explained in the preferred alternative), therefore this alternative is not considered viable.

Alternative 3 – *Preferred Alternative*

The preferred alternative calls for the removal of the Inner Gooley camp buildings. This is due to their remote location in the Primitive Area, and the Leasehold Agreement which specifies the requirement for structure removal upon expiration of the lease in 2018.

According to the APSLMP guidelines for Primitive Areas, *"non-conforming uses resulting from newly classified primitive areas will be removed as rapidly as possible..."* (pg. 27.) The Inner Gooley camp buildings are not of an essentially permanent nature, since they are small hunting camps formerly on leased land. The lack of ownership of the land signifies that the camps were not placed and constructed to last in perpetuity.

In accordance with the 2012 "Reservation of Leasehold Estate and Management Agreement" between The Nature Conservancy and New York State, all of the camp structures and property in the Inner Gooley complex will be removed by the end of the lease-phase out period.

Equestrian and Bicycle Trail Configuration

All proposed equestrian and bicycle trails in the Complex Area utilize the former all season road and/or administrative road network. There are approximately 50 miles of mapped "road" in the Complex Area. This includes maintained gravel roads, summer roads, winter roads, former ATV trails, and skid trails. As part of DEC's role as land manager - recreational facilities, including trails, use mitigation by design. In the case of the Complex Area equestrian and bike trail system, a subset of the all-season road network was selected that will be able to withstand use, and that also provide an enjoyable recreational experience.

Alternative 1 - *Preferred Alternative*

The preferred alternative, which is proposed in the Complex Plan, will designate a subset of the former all season road and/or administrative network as multiple-use trails, to include horse use and bicycle use in conformance with the APSLMP. The trails selected will be those that have been historically utilized by motor vehicles and have been maintained to a higher standard than others. These typically have better surfaces, better drainage, and travel to points of interest in the Area. The horse and bicycle trail systems will largely overlap. Equestrian trail riders can ford a section of washed out road near Fifth Lake to loop back into the main trail system. This fording opportunity was enjoyed be several groups of equestrian riders in the last couple years, and users have expressed interest in this unique riding opportunity. Bicycle trails will be designated in conformance with the APSLMP.

Alternative 2 – No Action

The no action alternative would not designate any horse or bicycle trails in the Complex Area. This alternative will not be considered for several reasons. The first is that the 2014 Stewardship Plan for the Complex Area committed to designating a subset of the all-season road and/or administrative road network as equestrian trails and establishing an equestrian parking and staging area along the Chain Lakes Road (North). The second reason is that public comment displayed a strong desire for both horse and bicycle trails in the Area.

Alternative 3 – Open Entire Network

This alternative would designate and open the entire universe of former all-season road and/or administrative road network to horse and bicycle use, regardless of the actual on-the-ground conditions. This would include gravel roads, summer roads, winter roads, former ATV trails, and skid trails. This alternative will not be considered because the condition of most of the secondary roads and trails that may exist in the Area are not suitable for sustainable use as a trail, especially horse (with possible horse and wagon use) and bicycle use. Unfavorable conditions may be due to: lack of use/deterioration, poor drainage, seasonality of previous use, overgrowth, or poor siting. The preferred alternative designates a subset of the universe, which are improved gravel roads that have withstood historic use, that travel to points of interest, and will provide for sustainable horse and bicycle trails.

Alternative 4 – Site and Build New Trails

This alternative would site and build new horse and bicycle trails, and not use any of the former all-season road and/or administrative road network. This alternative will not be considered because of the economic and natural resource costs involved with appropriately siting and constructing a new network of trails. With the extensive all-season road network already in existence, it would not make reasonable sense to abandon the use of the network in order to build new trails that would ultimately bring the user to the same points of interest.

Alternative 5 – Separate Uses

This alternative would use the former all season road and/or administrative road network, but would separate horse and bicycle uses. This alternative will not be considered for several reasons. The first reason is logistical, in that there are not enough appropriate all-season roads in the network to separate the uses, while still providing a desirable recreational experience to both user groups. The second reason is that shared use between equestrian trail riders and bicyclists has been proven successful in other areas of the Forest Preserve and beyond. A nearby example is the Newcomb Lake Road, which leads to the Great Camp Santanoni Historic Area. Equestrian use (including horse and wagon) and bicycle use have shared this road for decades without incident. In fact, this area continues to grow in popularity, which suggests that user experiences are not diminished with shared trails. A book published in 1997 by Anne O'Dell, a renowned equestrian trails expert, is entitled "Ride New York: 35 Horse and Multiple Use Trails in the Empire State." This book provides information on horse destinations, many of which share trails with bikes and other uses. O'Dell encourages this shared use, and also authored a presentation advocating for and providing education on designing shared use trails. On the other side, the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) encourages shared use, and

has published proper etiquette for bicyclists sharing trails with equestrian trail riders. Additionally, since the proposed trail network in the Complex Area uses all-season roads, the trails are wider with longer sight lines than most other multiple use trails in the Forest Preserve.

Administration of Camping Permits

Background

Camping in the Complex Area became open to the public for overnight use on July 1, 2014. Prior to July 1, 2014, the area—the shoreline in particular—was inventoried for appropriate primitive tent site locations. There is a significant amount of undisturbed, emergent wetlands along the shorelines of the Chain Lakes and surrounding waterbodies, so the selection of sites in locations with the capacity to withstand use was critical to minimize natural resource impacts. Sites were located so as to be reasonably screened from trails, bodies of water, and other primitive tent sites.

Since public interest was piqued prior to opening of the Area for overnight use, the DEC established a free camping permit system for primitive tent sites in the Complex Area that are located within 500 feet of lakes/ponds in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area, including: First through Eighth Lakes, Little Grassy Pond, Grassy Pond, Mud Pond, Deer Pond, and Jackson Pond.

Current Situation

The Adirondack Interpretive Center (AIC), a SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry facility located off of Route 28N in Newcomb, is the location where camping permits are issued (during AIC business hours) for camping at the 11 designated primitive tent sites in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area which require a permit. The maximum length of stay at the same primitive tent site is 3 nights, and the maximum day use group size is 15 people and overnight group size is 8 people. Permits are required and are issued by AIC Staff between May 15 and October 15 each year. Outside of this time window, the maximum length of stay will still be 3 nights at the same primitive tent site, but use will not be subject to a permitting system. Reservations may be made up to 10 days in advance (due to the 10-day weather forecast window.) Visitors with a reservation permit may arrive after AIC hours, but must notify staff ahead of time, and arrange to have their permit and area map emailed to them, or pick it up at the outdoor kiosk at the AIC.

Fires are prohibited at these permitted primitive tent sites. Other designated sites within this Primitive Area do not require a permit, and are subject to general State Land backcountry camping regulations. Camping at-large is not allowed in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area, but is allowed on the Blue Mountain Wild Forest, subject to general State land backcountry camping regulations.

Usage Data

Year 2014 was the first year that the public was allowed to camp in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area, and use levels were documented via the permit system records and the Deer Pond access point kiosk. A total of 77 camping permits were issued between July 1 and October 15, 2014. The total number of overnight visitors was 216, with 453 total user nights. September was the month with the highest percent occupancy (14%.) These use statistics indicate a lesser demand for camping than was

anticipated. However, almost 1,000 day-users signed in at the Deer Pond access point kiosk during that same time frame.

Alternative 1 – *Preferred Alternative*

The preferred alternative, which is proposed in the UMP, is to continue the existing camping permit system through 2018. This will give five years of camping data – which will inform the decision to remove the system if numbers do not justify the permit system. In 2014, day use proved to be much more popular than overnight use. This could be attributed to a number of factors, including the relatively small area occupied by the lakes/ponds, the campfire prohibition, or the permit system itself. The camping permit system used in the ELCPA is unlike any other in the Forest Preserve, and uses scarce staff time and resources. If and when the camping permit system is discontinued, camping in the entire ECLPA will be at designated primitive tent sites only, and the no-fires rule will remain for primitive tent sites within 500 feet of the lakes/ponds.

Alternative 2 – No Action: Discontinue Permit System Immediately

The no action alternative would include discontinuing the camping permit system immediately (ie. not requiring or issuing camping permits for year 2015.) This alternative is not being considered because it is prudent to gather more than one year of usage/permit data prior to discounting the system. Year 2014 was the first year the public was allowed to camp in the Area, an additional five years of data is needed before conclusions about use can be made. This alternative will not be considered.

Alternative 3 – Continue Permit System Indefinitely

This alternative would continue the camping permit system for the foreseeable future, regardless of usage data. This would require continued allocation of staff time and resources – to implement a system that may be found not to be critical. This alternative is not being considered.

Alternative 4 - Consider Other Camping Regulation Systems

Prior to opening the ECLPA to the public for camping in 2014, DEC staff and partners considered a variety of options for managing high use of the area. Options considered were: an online reservation system called Reserve America, a tag system at the access point, among others. The Reserve America system has overhead costs and usually require payment by the visitor, so it was not pursued. The tag system for primitive tent site reservation at the access point was tried at the Whitney Wilderness Area, and was found to be ineffective and difficult to manage/enforce. The current free camping permit system, administered in partnership with the Adirondack Interpretive Center (AIC) in Newcomb was the preferred method at the time, and worked effectively in 2014. Additionally, changing from the existing permit system to another system will likely confuse the public and result in even less camping use of the area. This alternative will not be considered.

Appendix F – Potential Environmental Impacts and Proposed Mitigation Measures

I. MITIGATION BY DESIGN

The design and siting of the multiple-use trails proposed herein is based on the 2006 Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondack Park/Final Environmental Impact Statement and the 2009 Management Guidance for Snowmobile Trail Siting, Construction and Maintenance on Forest Preserve Lands in the Adirondack Park. These documents are incorporated by reference and portions are reiterated herein as appropriate. Multiple-use trail siting and design is accomplished using the guidance documents and inherent in the process is the avoidance of valuable natural resources such as wetlands and wildlife habitat and use of appropriate slopes, avoidance of trees and rocks and reuse of existing skid trails or old all-season roads or existing trails. This approach results in mitigation by design to avoid potential significant environmental impacts. Through the planning process, significant adverse environmental impacts of both a temporary and long-term nature are avoided or minimized by utilizing the established design criteria.

In terms of trail design for the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex, using established design standards for the trails ensures that they will be sited and constructed to be sustainable for all of the proposed uses, including horseback riding, mountain biking, snowmobiling, cross country skiing and show shoeing.

The 2006 Snowmobile Plan included a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement that recommended a conceptual plan to create a system of snowmobile trail connections between communities in the Adirondack Park. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation were co-lead agencies and the Adirondack Park Agency and the New York State Department of Transportation were Involved Agencies in the SEQR process. Key to the conceptual plan that was developed is the reconfiguration of the existing system to ensure protection of sensitive resources on both public and private land. The 2006 Plan outlines guidelines and criteria for how snowmobile trails and trail segments will be developed and maintained, particularly when and if they are located on Forest Preserve lands within the Park. The concepts in the 2006 Plan/EIS are put forth in recognition that snowmobiling is a winter recreation activity that is critical to supporting the economies of the communities in the Park. It recognizes that motorized winter recreation in and among the wild lands that make up the Forest Preserve and on sensitive private lands must be configured in a manner that protects the wild forest. The 2006 Plan/EIS proposed the concept that, in establishing a snowmobile trail system that connects communities in the Park, it is essential to create a new benefit to the Forest Preserve lands. This net benefit will result through the reconfiguration of the existing snowmobile trail system, with a focus on

shifting snowmobile trails to the periphery of the Forest Preserve, re-designating existing snowmobile trails in the interior for non-motorized use and avoiding sensitive private lands.

The 2006 Snowmobile Plan outlines the concept of reconfiguring the existing snowmobile trail network across the Forest Preserve through the UMP process. Implementation is supported by the 2009 Management Guidance, establishing a new DEC snowmobile trail classification system with new standards and guidelines for snowmobile trail siting, construction and maintenance.

The designation of a snowmobile trail to establish and improve community connections (Class II trails) will be complemented by the designation of trail (Class I trails) intended to preserve a more traditional type of Adirondack snowmobiling experience. Some existing snowmobile trails (usually within the interior of Wild Forest areas or adjacent to private inholdings) will be re-designated for non-motorized use or abandoned as trails altogether. These actions will serve to ensure available, wintertime recreational opportunities in Wild Forest areas are not dominated by snowmobile use to the exclusion or near exclusion of passive recreational uses. The 2009 Management Guidance notes that all snowmobile trails, regardless of class, will be carefully sited, constructed and maintained to preserve the most essential characteristics of foot trails and to serve, where appropriate, hiking, mountain biking and other non-motorized recreational pursuits in spring, summer and fall. The guidance helps ensure protection of sensitive natural resources on public lands and the minimization of snowmobiling safety hazards.

As stated in the 2009 Management Guidance beginning on page 7:

"Snowmobile Trail Siting Standards

1. In cases where closure or abandonment of a motorized travel corridor results in an existing snowmobile trail location being inconsistent with these guidelines, such trail will, if practicable and as soon as possible, be relocated or reclassified to comply with these guidelines.

2. New and rerouted snowmobile trails will be sited, when possible, along existing routes or previously existing old routes such as foot trails, all-season roads, utility rights of way and abandoned railroad beds in lieu of constructing entirely new trails.

3. New and rerouted snowmobile trails will be sited with an objective to avoid locations that present safety hazards such as the edges of ravines or ledges, major highway crossings and crossings of frozen surfaces of water bodies such as rivers, lakes and ponds. If suitable alternative routes are designated or developed, trails that lead riders to unsafe locations will be closed to snowmobile use in favor of the alternative routes in order to lower risks and eliminate unnecessary snowmobile trail mileage.

4. New and rerouted snowmobile trails will be sited with an objective to avoid areas considered environmentally sensitive, such as: wetlands; endangered plant or animal populations that might be harmed by the trails and/or their use; remote interior areas as defined by these guidelines and forested corridors connecting such remote interior areas; and deer wintering areas and other significant habitats, so that the values of these areas are not diminished.

5. New and rerouted snowmobile trails will not be established without an evaluation of potential significant impacts on adjacent private holdings.

    a. New and rerouted snowmobile trails, including spur trails, will not provide access to private lands where public snowmobile access is not permitted.

    b. New and rerouted snowmobile trails, through the acquisition of easements or other access rights from willing sellers, will be sited on private lands rather than State lands wherever possible to minimize impacts on the Forest Preserve."

Trail siting goals include the following:

- For safety reasons, trails should be kept off highways (especially major highways) and water bodies whenever possible.
- Trails should be free of dangerous obstructions, such as trees and boulders.
- Trails must also be sited with environmental considerations in mind; rare and endangered plant and animal species and their habitats should be avoided;
    - deer wintering yards should be avoided;
    - vegetative disturbance should be minimized;
    - wetlands, areas with poor drainage and steep slopes should be avoided;
    - tree cutting should be minimized and the trail canopy preserved; and
    - user group conflicts should be avoided.
- The Department will not place snowmobile trails on private land without the owner's permission. Where an owner of private property agrees to allow a snowmobile trail on their property, the Department should, whenever possible, secure a permanent snowmobile trail easement which binds the owner's successors in title.

Snowmobile Route Design, Construction and Maintenance Standards

Snowmobile route design, construction and non-ordinary maintenance activities[3] will be carried out pursuant to Snowmobile Trail Work Plans developed by DEC staff in consultation with APA staff. The following standards will be followed in order to preserve the trail-like character of snowmobile trails while ensuring they are appropriately safe to ride. When undertaking any of the types of work described below with motorized landscaping equipment (almost exclusively on Class II Trails), only careful use of appropriate low-impact landscaping equipment will be approved, as determined by a "minimum requirement" decision making approach set forth in the Snowmobile Trail Work Plan. For example, use of bulldozers and creation of "dugways" will not be approved. Operators of low-impact

[3] Ordinary maintenance activities are defined in the "Memorandum of Understanding between the Adirondack Park Agency and the Department of Environmental Conservation Concerning Implementation of the State Land Master Plan for the Adirondack Park" (APA/DEC MOU.)

landscaping equipment will conduct their work in optimal environmental conditions and in a manner that will not contribute to any potential degradation of the wild forest setting.

For new snowmobile trails of both classes to retain essential characteristics of foot trails, management practices must integrate thorough knowledge of the standards and guidance below, with efforts to appropriately balance them and the underlying concerns as the trails are sited, constructed and maintained thereafter. The end result should be trails that are both enjoyable and safe to ride for essentially the same reason – for the way the trails snake through the wild landscape of the Adirondacks in a natural fashion and because construction and maintenance practices having altered the terrain enough to allow for an acceptable degree of riding comfort, but not so much as to create potential for high-speed, disruptive and unsafe snowmobiling experiences.

Many existing snowmobile trails are sited on old roads and other routes originally constructed and maintained for use of motor vehicles other than snowmobiles. In such cases, the standards set forth below may also be used to reroute or otherwise minimally alter such trails with the objective to achieve the same end result.

Alignment and Grade:

1. Trail alignment will not result in blind curves and abrupt changes in either horizontal or vertical direction; trails will be designed to ensure:

    a) Sight distance will be 50 feet or more wherever possible;
    b) Curves will have a radius of at least 25 feet; The maximum grade of trails will not exceed 20% unless deemed necessary to minimize environmental impacts associated with trail construction;
    c) Trails will not normally be laid out on existing cross slopes greater than 12%

2. To the greatest extent possible, trails will not be aligned with long straight sections. Trails will follow the natural contours of the terrain as much as possible and will be laid out to balance and minimize necessary tree cutting, rock removal and terrain alteration.

3. Trails will be laid out to avoid rocky areas and drainage features such as wetlands and streams to the greatest possible extent.

4. In locations where serious environmental or safety conditions exist along a trail, the trail will be rerouted rather than rehabilitated at that location.

<u>Trail Width:</u>

1. Class I Trails may be maintained to an 8-foot maximum cleared trail width.

2. Class II Trails may be maintained to a 9-foot maximum cleared trail width except on sharp curves (inside turning radius of 25-35 feet) and steep running slopes (over 15%) where they may be maintained to a 12-foot maximum cleared trail width.

Class I and II trails wider than their classification allows will be actively restored to these limits.

Tree Cutting:

DEC policy requires that cutting trees should be minimized, but where cutting is required, trees must be identified, tallied and included in a Work Plan in accordance with ***DEC Program Policy LF91-2 Cutting and Removal of Trees in the Forest Preserve.***

1. Cutting of overstory trees will be avoided in order to maintain a closed canopy wherever possible. Large and old growth trees should be protected.

2. Cutting trees to expand a trail from its current width or otherwise improve a trail will be carried out only pursuant to a Work Plan.

3. All snowmobile trails may be kept clear to a height of 12 feet, as measured from ground level.

4. No trees, except trees that due to structural problems or fallen/tipped conditions present an immediate hazard to the safe use of the trail by snowmobilers, will be cut outside the cleared trail width.

5. Trees should be felled away from the trail to minimize the amount of material that needs to be moved. If the tree trunks are not used to help delineate the trail, felled trees should be delimbed and cut into short enough lengths to lie flat on the ground. Once delimbed and cut up, the short lengths should be dispersed and not left in piles next to the trail. If the tree trunks are used to help delineate the trail, the cut ends of the trunks should be located outside the intended edge of the trail by at least one foot for safety reasons.

   When trees are cut within the cleared trail width, they will be cut flush with the ground, and the preference will be to leave the root masses in place.

   a) On Class II trails, if it is important to remove a root mass because it presents an obstacle in the trail surface, the preference will be to grind the stump and roots. If grinding is not feasible, the root mass may be dug up, rolled or placed off the trail into the woods without removing intervening vegetation and organic matter; the root mass will be set down so as to have the lowest profile possible.

   b) Grinding will not occur on Class I trails.

7. No brushing will occur outside the cleared trail width of any snowmobile trails.

Trail Surface:

1. Grading:

   a) Class I Trails. Trail surfaces should generally follow the existing contours of the natural forest floor and not be graded flat. While limited leveling and grading may be undertaken, this work will be done using hand tools almost exclusively. In rare

circumstances, appropriate low-impact landscaping equipment may be used as specified in a Work Plan.

b) Class II Trails. Trail surfaces should generally follow the existing contours of the natural forest floor and not be graded flat. Limited leveling and grading may be undertaken using appropriate low-impact landscaping equipment as specified in a Work Plan.

2. Rock Removal:

a) Removal of boulders and rocks from snowmobile trail surfaces will be minimized to the greatest extent possible. No boulders or rocks will be removed outside the cleared trail width.

i) On Class I Trails, rock removal will occur using hand tools only, except in rare circumstances in new trail construction and trail reconstruction when use of low-impact landscaping equipment may be approved. Rock removal on Class I trails will be primarily limited to uncommon, major obstacles that present demonstrable safety hazards to snowmobile riders and which cannot be avoided by appropriate trail layout or rerouting.

ii) On Class II Trails, rock removal may occur using low-impact landscaping equipment and may include removal of rocks determined to present demonstrable safety hazards to snowmobile riders or to be very likely to damage grooming equipment. Many rocks in snowmobile trails, due to their specific shapes and/or locations, do not present themselves so as to cause these problems, and these may not be removed regardless of how high above the trail surface they project. Conversely, some rocks in snowmobile trails – while small – do present themselves so as to cause these problems, and if they are identified in an approved Work Plan, they may be removed.

b) Boulders and rocks removed from trails will preferably be buried in the trails to minimize disturbance. Earth moved to dig the holes into which the boulders or rocks are to be placed will be used to fill the holes that result from the rock removal. When removed boulders and rocks are not buried, but are instead set to the side of the trail, they will be dispersed with care and not left in windrows or piles next to the trail. If a boulder or rock is used to help delineate the trail, it should be placed outside the intended edge of the trail by at least one foot for safety reasons.

c) Alternatives to rock removal should be considered to minimize the need for disturbance of the ground, to reduce the likelihood of creating drainage problems and to reduce the potential need for fill. Such alternatives may include covering or minor relocation of the trail where a boulder or rock may be too large or the number too great to deal with by any other method.

d) Removal of boulders and rocks from the surrounding natural, wild forest setting for use in snowmobile trail construction and maintenance work will be minimized and may occur only on a limited, carefully selective basis for small-scale projects. On Class II trails, where large-scale trail construction projects using stone material may be approved, importation of native stone from appropriate, specified sources may occur.

3. Side Slope Management:

a) On Class I trails, elimination or reduction of side slopes by means of bench cuts will be accomplished using hand tools exclusively. The need for bench cuts will be minimized through proper trail layout. The maximum amount of cut, measured vertically, will be 20% of the tread width. Side slopes of newly constructed trails and reroutes will be dressed and tapered within the cleared trail width; side slopes of some existing, degraded trails may be dressed and tapered outside the cleared trail width if this is determined the best way to address the degradation and restore environmentally sound, safe conditions.

b) On Class II trails, elimination or reduction of side slopes will be accomplished primarily by means of full bench cuts for which appropriate landscaping equipment may be used. The need for bench cuts will be minimized through proper trail layout. The tapering of side slopes will be allowed outside the cleared trail width. The areas dressed and tapered will be re-vegetated to restore stability and natural site conditions after the full bench cut is created.

Drainage:

1. Adequate drainage will be provided within the cleared trail width to prevent trail erosion and washout and to maintain a safe trail. All snowmobile trails will be constructed so as not to intercept groundwater to the greatest extent possible; natural drainage patterns will be maintained. In areas where the natural drainage patterns may be affected, bridges will be the preferred method for crossing wet areas. Bridges will be constructed pursuant to approved snowmobile trail bridge designs.

2. Water bars and broad-based dips may extend beyond the cleared trail width to the extent necessary to effectively remove water from the trail surface, provided that no trees are cut outside the cleared trail width. Culverts will not be installed as drainage devices. Any existing culverts will be removed unless the culverts are very large and their removal is essentially not possible.

Wetlands:

1. Wetlands will be avoided to the greatest extent possible.

2. When wetlands crossings or trail locations adjacent to wetlands are proposed, the trail will be designed to minimize potential adverse impacts.

3. Any activity in a wetland or that may impact a wetland will be undertaken with prior consultation with the APA and with recognition of Army Corps of Engineers' permit requirements.

II. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND MEASURES PROPOSED TO MITIGATE SUCH IMPACTS

SEQR requires an objective description of potential significant environmental impacts, to the degree possible and include both quantitative and qualitative information to determine how likely it is that an impact will occur, how large the impact will be, how important the impact will be and the time frame in which the impact is anticipated.

One of the basic purposes of SEQR is to incorporate the consideration of environmental factors at an early stage of project development. This often means that an EIS will be prepared before final plans are available. As a general rule, the amount of detail regarding a specific impact in an EIS should depend on the magnitude and importance of the impact. For instance, in terms of ground disturbance, the EIS should use accepted methods of calculating the area of ground disturbance, identify the structural and non-structural best management practices (BMP's) for minimizing ground disturbance and identify the approximate location and size of structures. Although final plans are not necessary, the EIS should contain enough detail on size, location and elements of the proposal to allow an understanding of the proposed action, the associated impacts and the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation.

In order to allow the full range and magnitude of the environmental, social and economic impacts which could result from the adoption of the proposed management actions, the descriptions of the impacts given below reflect the assumption that the alternative is fully implemented.

In terms of beneficial impacts which are foreseen as a result of the implementation of the Complex Plan, it is anticipated that there may be a minor reduction in the level of public use and associated impacts in other areas of the Forest Preserve as new recreational trails are provided. Adoption of this Plan in coordination with UMP's for neighboring Forest Preserve lands will provide an opportunity for a significant expansion of the regional economy, a substantial increase in trail-based recreational and educational opportunity and the improved utilization of a public resource.

In terms of potential adverse impacts, adoption of this Complex Plan in addition to UMP's for neighboring Forest Preserve lands could lead to minor pollution of surface waters and minor disturbance of wetlands related to trail construction and maintenance, and the removal of minimal vegetation related to trail construction and maintenance activities. Minor negative effects on fish and wildlife populations related to trail construction and maintenance activities are anticipated. In addition, implementation of the Complex Plan could cause a minor increase in highway use and traffic congestion in communities where trailheads and support facilities are located. There may be a moderate increase

in the public use of neighboring Forest Preserve lands with subsequent moderate increase in the need for law enforcement, fire protection and search and rescue services. Noise levels are not anticipated to be significantly more noticeable than that generated by existing uses and are discussed in more detail below in order to supplement earlier planning documents. Adoption of the Complex Plan could lead to a minor increase in the likelihood of trespass onto neighboring private lands and related new costs to State agencies and taxpayers associated with management of the Complex Area.

Refer to the 2006 Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondack Park/Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement for a thorough discussion of potential impacts and mitigation measures during construction and operation and use of trails, primitive tent sites, etc. relating to soils, air quality, wildlife, water quality and economic impacts (see Appendices E, F and H.)

Supplemental Information on Potential Operational Phase Noise Effects

With regard to the effects of snowmobile noise on people and wildlife, as stated in the International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association Snowmobiling Fact Book (2013), since 1974, sound levels for snowmobiles have been reduced 94%. At full throttle, pre-1969 snowmobiles were noisy and emitted sound levels as high as 102 dB(A) from a distance of 50 feet.

Snowmobiles produced since February 1, 1975 and certified by the Snowmobile Safety and Certification Committee's independent testing company emit no more than 78 dB(A) from a distance of 50 feet while traveling at full throttle. Snowmobiles manufactured after June 30, 1976 (and similarly certified) emit no more than 73 dB(A) at 50 feet while traveling at 15 mph. For comparison purposes, normal conversation at three feet produces approximately 70 dB(A.) Note that illegal modification of a snowmobile exhaust system can produce excessive noise levels.

Other examples of decibel levels are as follows:

Sound	dB(A)
75-Piece Orchestra	130
Car Horn, Snowblower	110
Blow-dryer, Diesel truck	100
Electric Shaver, Lawn Mower	85
Garbage Disposal, Vacuum	80
Alarm Clock, City Traffic	70
Dishwasher	60
Leaves Rustling, Refrigerator	40

From the Snowmobiling Fact Book, “In a paper written by Greg Davis and Neil Marietta of Michigan

Technological University, tests were performed comparing sound emissions of production trail-ridden snowmobiles to that of other everyday vehicles that ravel by road such as passenger cars, motorcycles and semi tractor/trailers. The test show in many cases, snowmobiles are noticeably quieter. A snowmobile under full throttle emits the same sound level as a truck pulling a camper or an off-road Jeep traveling at constant highway speeds applying very little throttle. …in the worst case scenario, a snowmobile leaving a stop sign and applying full throttle, the noise produced is still about the same as a very common vehicle simply cruising down the road.

… (for relative comparison,) some motorcycles accelerating and applying nearly full throttle produces nearly 6 times the noise… that a snowmobile driving the same way produces. In a more common example, a logging truck pulling a loaded trailer down the highway traveling at 45 mph will produce twice the noise of a snowmobile applying full throttle. A 4X4 pickup truck pulling a boat on a trailer at a constant speed makes more noise than a snowmobile…

Operated in a normal, considerate manner, snowmobiles are barely audible from inside a home. From a distance of 50 feet, snowmobiles generate between 68—73 dB(A) at 15 mph. Since doors and windows are almost always closed in winter, snowmobiles operating outside at a distance of 50 feet only create an interior sound level between 41 and 47 dB(A). From a distance of 200 feet, snowmobiles produce an interior sound level between 29 and 35 dB(A), This is well below the average evening household sound level of 47 dB(A).

Natural sound barriers, careful trail planning and reduced speed limits in residential areas further reduce snowmobile noise. Snowbanks or trees can cause a 20 dB drop in sound levels if they are between the machine and listener.

U.S. Forest Service researcher Robin Harrison reported that under usual wildland conditions, snowmobile operation is undetectable to the human ear at distances of more than 750 feet. He reported that snowmobiles were barely detectable above normal campground sound levels at a distance of 400 feet."

With regard to the effect of snowmobiles on wildlife, per the Fact Book, "Dr. Andres Soom participated in the University of Wisconsin's comprehensive three-year study on the effects of snowmobile sound levels on deer and cottontail rabbits. His report, titled Emission, Propagation and Environmental Impact of Noise from Snowmobile Operations, concluded that 'only minor reactions were noted in the movements of cottontail rabbits and white tailed deer to moderate and intensive snowmobiling activity.' He stated that it had not been possible to determine sound levels at which there is a clear reaction on the part of the deer 'because snowmobiles must be so close to deer to generate the higher levels that other factors such a visible presence…are likely to be more important.'

The Wisconsin study also compared the reaction of deer to the presence of cross-country skiers. When cross-country skiers replaced snowmobiles on the test trail systems, the deer moved away from the trail more frequently.

A three-year study, Response of White-Tailed Deer to Snowmobiles and Snowmobile Trails in Maine, conducted by wildlife scientists for the Maine Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife revealed that *'Deer consistently bedded near snowmobile trails and fed along them even when those trails were used for snowmobiling several times daily. In addition, fresh deer tracks were repeatedly observed on snowmobile trails shortly after machines had passed by, indicating that deer were not driven from the vicinity of these trails…The reaction of deer to a man walking differed markedly from their reaction to a man on a snowmobile…This decided tendency of deer to run with the approach of a human on foot, in contrast to their tendency to stay in sight when approached by a snowmobiler, suggests that the deer responded to the machine and not to the person riding it.'*

In a study entitled Snow Machine Use and Deer in Rob Brook, conducted by the Forest Wildlife Biologists of White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire, snowmobile operations and deer movement were monitored. A summary of the study indicated that deer travel patterns were not affected by periodically heavy snowmobile use. In addition, continued use of established snowmobile trails was recommended.

The University of Minnesota issues a study by Michael J. Dorrance entitled Effects of Snowmobiles on White Tailed Deer which found no meaningful difference in the deer's home range during periods of snowmobile use and non-use.

Addressing the subject of snowmobile operations in Yellowstone National Park, Jack Anderson, a former Superintendent of Yellowstone commented, *'We found that elk, bison, moose, even the fawns wouldn't move away unless a machine was stopped and a person started walking. As long as you stayed on the machine and the machine was running, they never paid any attention. If you stopped the machine, got off and started moving, that was a different story. The thing that seemed to be disturbing to them was a man walking on foot*.'

Because the use of snowmobiles is limited to a narrow defined corridor and is sporadic, intermittent and isolated, no significant adverse long-term impacts from the operation of snowmobiles are anticipated in the Complex Area. The very limited extent of snowmobile trails within the management area and on adjacent management areas limits the potential for adverse impacts.

Mitigation Measure Proposed for Construction Phase Impacts on Topography, Soils and Drainage

The alternative A trail layout is 20.7 miles long, and is located on 20 miles of state land and .07 miles of private property, some of which is owned by the towns. Alternative A requires 3.1 miles of new trail, as the remainder consists of existing trail (1.5 miles), old road (6.86 miles) and existing motor vehicle road (9.2 miles.)

The alternative B trail layout is 22.6 miles long, and is located on 22 miles of state land and .06 miles of private property, some of which is owned by the towns. Alternative A requires 3.6 miles of new trail, as

the remainder consists of existing trail (1.5 miles), old road (8.0 miles) and existing motor vehicle road (9.6 miles.)

In the appendix are maps which show the topography, soil drainage classes and potential wetlands present in the area of each alternative layout for each trail section that constitute the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex. As can be seen in these maps, the trail layouts avoid steep slopes and wetlands and utilize well drained soils, to the maximum extent practicable. By avoiding wetlands, the experience of trail users other than snowmobilers is improved, since trails will be better suited for non-winter seasonal use. The wetland map layer is a model provided by the APA and exact locations need to be delineated in the field.

It is anticipated that there will be minor, temporary impacts to soils and slopes during construction. A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) utilizing best management practices will be in place and maintained on-site during trail construction. Proper trail design and construction will limit the need for significant maintenance efforts during the public use of the trails.

The trail plan lays out the location of trail modification, bridges, water bars and other trail structures. The SWPPP designates the procedures and BMPs to be used in construction of these structures. The SWPPP is an integral part of the trail project plans.

Water is by far the worst enemy of a sustainable trail. Through proper layout the trail is designed to avoid or minimize developed drainage devices. Using water bars, broad-based dips, trail hardening and other trail building methods, water will be diverted off the trail tread and minimize down-trail water travel to reduce erosion and sedimentation and create a sustainable trail tread. New construction where possible will be built in a method that results in water being shed to the side of the trail, preventing “trail rutting.” Bench-cut areas will be out-sloped to encourage lateral shedding of water.

Trail construction will consist of three main phases:

- Tree cutting and blowdown removal.
- Bridge construction
- Terrain modification and installation of erosion control best management practices.

Tree cutting as a first step will remove identified and marked trees which fall inside the trail corridor. Trees will be cut flush to the ground with chainsaws and removed from the trail.

Bridge construction will be another step of the trail construction process. Once the trees have been removed from the trail bed, bridge materials will be brought to the bridge sites either during the winter or during times when the soil conditions will support the transportation of these materials.

Terrain modification and installation of water control devices performed by the mini excavator will be another step of the trail construction process. During this process the mini excavator will make one planned trip along the trail length. This trip will allow for terrain modification in select locations consisting of bench cuts, rearrangement of specific rocks, installation of water bars, and repair of any eroded portions of pre-existing roads that may have been utilized during placement of this trail.

Water/sediment control structures will be installed at locations of bridge construction and terrain modification locations as required to minimize any potential sources of erosion or sedimentation. When active work is complete, disturbed portions of this trail will be seeded and mulched and any temporary erosion and sediment control structures will be left in place until the site is stabilized.

Refer to the Schedule of Implementation provided in Section VI of this Complex Plan for a discussion of the estimated timing for construction of trail segments. It is expected that clearing of vegetation from trail bed will be completed, followed by installation of water/erosion/sediment control structures as necessary for bridge construction or terrain modification. Then trail segments will be completed with various portions being put to bed, with seeding and mulch as they are individually completed. Temporary drainage/erosion/sediment control structures will remain in place until the areas have stabilized.

Description of the minimum erosion and sediment control practices:

All erosion and control practices will be installed during the terrain modification or bridge construction phases of the project. Areas targeted for ground manipulation or rehabilitation and subject to erosion will be identified and control practices will be installed to avoid, minimize, or repair erosion hazards. All temporary practices will remain in place until the areas have stabilized.

The following sedimentation and erosion control practices will be utilized:

- **DRAINAGE**

- Proper drainage will carry the water either over the trail, under the trail, or will intercept the water before it crosses the trail.
- Surface runoff which is intercepted by erosion-control measures must be collected by drainage ways and discharged in stabilized areas or sediment basins.
- The drier the terrain, the more stable the trail, which keeps potential erosion problems at a minimum, and also minimizes the need to perform maintenance.
- Examine topography, surface flow patterns, soils, and the water table to help determine the area's potential wetness, preferably during the wettest months of the year, to help prevent future erosion problems.
- The ideal trail would be located on soil which has a seasonal high water table of two to four feet below the surface.
- Poor drainage is the primary cause of a majority of trail maintenance problems which can be avoided with proper planning.
- Cross-drainage techniques, such as swales, and water bars should be utilized to divert water off of the trail as soon as possible.
- Attempts should always be made to maintain natural drainage patterns.

Outsloping

- Outsloping will be used on bench cuts and other locations prescribed in the work plan.
- Outsloping is a process where the trail surface is sloped in the same direction (with) as the slope on which it is located

- Outsloping is appropriate in areas where the grade of the slope is relatively high and in areas where the amount of water flow is relatively low.
- Be sure to maintain the slope pitch at approximately 1-2%.
- No intermittent or perennial streams should cross over the trail.
- No drainage ditches should be laid on the upslope side of the trail.
- Make sure the water is not being diverted towards streams or other bodies of water. If water drainage is unavoidable in areas adjacent to streams, make sure there are vegetative buffers.
- If water flow is more extensive than outsloping can control, larger structures such as diversion ditches may be necessary.

Swales, Dips and Berms

- These features constitute a depression constructed across a slope, above and in conjunction with an earthen berm.
- These features are used in areas where surface runoff might create erosion problems running across a trail.
- These features are used on slopes which have a trail grade less than 10%.
- Install swales at the top of any slope and at proper spacing along sloping sections of the trail.
- The swale can be as shallow or as deep as necessary, taking into consideration the expected trail use and the conditions.
- Soil should be removed from the swale and transferred to the downhill side to form the berm.
- The swale should be constructed at a 30-45 degree angle downslope from a line perpendicular to the direction of the trail.
- The downhill end of the swale should extend far enough to disperse the water flow away from the trail.
- If erosion is a potential problem at the outlet (downhill end) of the swale, riprap or other velocity dissipaters should be utilized.
- The uphill end of the swale should extend far enough beyond the trail in order to fully intercept the flow of water.
- Alternative water drainage techniques may be required if the swales are consistently becoming filled or breached.
- The frequency that the swale and the berm may need to be cleaned or restored depends on the amount of sedimentation which occurs.
- A broad-based dip is the recommended practice on trails where distinct bumps pose an erosion problem.

Water Bars

- These features consist of a rock, earthen, or log barrier, or excavated channel, angled across a trail to divert the runoff water off of a trail.
- In general, the greater the slope and the higher the velocity or volume of water, the greater the need for water bars as opposed to other drainage techniques.
- Earthen water bars will be the preferred method of construction.
- Place each rock or log solidly into the ground, preferably using flat rocks or rot-resistant logs.

- Water bars will be installed at locations prescribed and as needed in other locations to prevent erosion of the trail tread.
- All water bars prescribed in the work plan will be constructed according to New York State Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality 2011 Edition.
- All water bars prescribed within 100 feet of a stream will have a catchment basin/rock trap to prevent sedimentation of the stream.
- Install water bars at the top of slopes and at steep sections of the trail as needed.
- The water bar should be constructed at a 30-45 degree angle downslope from a line perpendicular to the direction of the trail.
- Extend the outlet end of the water bar beyond the edge of the trail and place rocks or logs there to filter the water.
- Construct the water bar so that it extends at least 12 inches beyond both sides of the trail.
- As a minimum, the water bar should drain at a 3% outslope.
- In a rock water bar, each rock should overlap the rock below it and be overlapped by the rock directly above it.
- A log water bar should be constructed with peeled logs at least 10 inches in diameter.
- Log water bars should be held in place with large stones.
- Observe the trail during a rainstorm to more accurately determine the need for water bars.
- The channel created by the water bar outlet and the water bar itself can be lined with stone to reduce erosion.
- Tree species appropriate for log water bars include spruce, hemlock, beech and oak.
- Consider using box culverts where the bumps caused by water bars pose a problem.

<u>Spacing for Water Bars</u>

Road/Trail Grade (percent)	Spacing Between Water Bars (feet)
2 %	250 ft.
5	135
10	80
15	60
20	45
30	35

Open Top Culverts

- Open top culverts constructed of 4”x4”s will be used where small drainages and seeps cross high traffic sections of the trail.
- Open top culverts will be in place before machinery crosses small drainages.
- Larger drainage crossings will follow BMP guidelines appropriate for the site.
- Crossing streams prior to bridge construction will follow BMP guidelines.

- Open top culverts can be constructed of either stone or sawn timber, depending on the availability of materials.
- Log culverts may be constructed with two 6-10" logs set into the trail and pinned to prevent movement.
- Line the base of the culvert with riprap and install spreaders if necessary.
- Sawn timber open-top culverts are usually constructed of two 3" x 8" planks set on a 3" x 12" plank, spiked at the bottom. This would create a water flow area 8" deep x 6" wide.
- Open-top culverts are most appropriate when water runoff is light.

➢ **SEDIMENT BARRIERS**

Silt Fences

- Silt fences will be used around all bridge foundations where possible to keep sediment from entering the stream. Silt Fences will remain in place until the area is firm and stable. After the area has stabilized the silt fence can be removed. If silt fences will not fit beneath and around bridge foundations, any exposed soil will be covered with native stone to slow runoff and prevent erosion until the area is stabilized with grass seed and mulch.
- The filter fabric should be purchased in a continuous roll and cut to the length of the carrier to avoid the use of joints. When joints are unavoidable, filter cloth should be spliced together only at a support post, with a minimum of a six-inch overlap, and sealed.
- When wire support is used, a standard-strength filter cloth may be used. When wire support is not being used, extra-strength cloth should be used.
- The fabric should be stapled or wired to the fence and a minimum of 4 inches of the fabric should be extended into the trench.
- The trench should be backfilled and the soil compacted over the filter fabric.
- Inspect bales and barriers after heavy rains.
- Sediment deposits should be removed when the level of deposits reaches one-half of the height of the bale or the silt fencing.
- Barriers should be removed when the area has re-vegetated and the barriers are no longer needed. The sediment should be removed or graded out before removal.
- Straw (weed free) barriers require more maintenance than geotextiles due to the permeability of the bales being less than that of silt fencing.
- Silt fences should be removed when they have served their useful purpose, but not before the upslope area has been permanently stabilized.

➢ **STABILIZATION**

Mulching and Seeding

- Upon completion of the trail, the area will be seeded with a DEC approved conservation mix and mulched with straw to stabilize the trail tread. Disturbed areas outside of the trail tread may also be additionally mulched with woody debris from on site to aid in stabilization.
- Active work areas will not require mulch, until work in the area is completed.
- Seed will be non-invasive grass species.

- Seeded areas should be inspected periodically and after heavy rain events to check for erosion and loss of vegetative cover.
- Areas that have lost mulch prior to establishment of vegetation will be re-established.

➢ **Water Crossings**

- Water crossings are a major concern in the construction and use of trails because of the potential for large amounts of sediment to enter a stream.
- Avoid water crossings if at all possible. Rerouting the trail away from water crossings will save construction time and money, as well as create less of an impact to the environment.
- When needed, crossing sites should be selected at right angles to the stream and should not interfere with natural water flow.
- Erosion and sedimentation-control devices should be utilized whenever trail construction occurs in or near a wetland, stream, or water body.

Before constructing any type of water crossing on trails, a permit or notification from the APA is needed.

Fords

- A ford is a shallow stream crossing that utilizes the hardened streambed.
- Fords will only be used as a temporary crossing for machinery, until a bridge is constructed.
- Fords will be used only on perennial streams having intermittent flow.
- Fording should be a last resort due to the potential impacts on water quality.
- Fords will be used only where the streambed is hard or easily hardened.
- Fords will be used where recreational use is non-motorized.
- Fords will be used when no other stream crossing alternative is viable or permitted.
- Attempt to minimize extensive work within the streambed.
- Provide for a hardened stream bank to prevent bank erosion.
- Fording can generate bank erosion, disturb aquatic life and may be potentially dangerous for the user.
- Fords will be closed if water turbidity is increased.

Boardwalks

- Boardwalks are used in wet or seasonally wet areas, to allow for sustainable travel by non-winter users. Winter users will not use the boardwalks, as they will have a frozen and snow covered surface to travel over.
- Boardwalks are constructed of 6”x6”x4’ pressure treated lumber that is set on top of the wet area. The 4”x4” stringers are placed across them, and then 2”x4” decking back across the stringers.
- Decking is spaced at 1” intervals to allow for a sufficient amount of light to enter under the structure in order to allow vegetation to flourish.

Constructed Bridges

- Bridges will be constructed to cross streams at prescribed locations according to the Department's snowmobile bridge design and in accord with APA policy (Agency Guidance, State Land -2.)
- Culvert bridges will not be used as a permanent structure, and will be used only for temporary crossings during the first winter if bridges are not able to be constructed (not anticipated.)
- A constructed bridge will be used only when the terrain is not conducive to any other type of construction or there is a need to protect/maintain the stream bed in an unaltered condition.
- Place the sills back from the top of the bank and have no work or materials within the banks (bank-to-bank bridge).
- Bank-to-bank bridges (outside top of banks) are preferred. The bridge should span the total width of a stream and its adjacent flood plain.
- It is a good idea to be prepared for washouts by anchoring one end of the bridge with a cable, so that in the event of the bridge being swept away, it can be retrieved and reset.
- Use large rocks or ledges as abutments whenever possible.
- For larger streams, complete hydrologic studies to compute peak flow rates for proper design of the bridge.
- A dredge and fill permit or notification is required for work within the body of a stream or water body, or within the banks of a stream and in any adjacent seasonal wetlands.
- Bridges should use native materials compatible with the adjacent trail environment whenever possible.
- Because of the proximity to wetlands, it is especially important to have erosion-control measures in place before bridge work begins.
- Rocks or logs should be used as fill around logs to bring the trail surface up to the level of the bridge deck to allow for drainage.
- Abutments, such as rock, logs, and sawn timbers should be firmly anchored into the stream bank and placed parallel to the stream thread.

Wet Soil Crossings

- Avoid constructing new trails through wet soils and consider rerouting those sections of existing trails that cross wet soils.
- Trails located on wet soils may not be appropriate for frozen ground conditions.
- When designing trails, attempt to provide alternative routes during wet seasons.
- Rake out ruts caused by machinery.

Corduroy

- Corduroy is a structural unit composed of a series of logs or other material placed perpendicular on the trail to provide a method of crossing wet areas.
- Corduroy can be used as a temporary means of stabilizing a wet area of a trail until more extensive construction can be arranged.

- Corduroy can be used on winter-use trails to protect wet areas which are usually frozen but may soften occasionally during the winter months.
- Lay a mat of green brush, posts, or small logs parallel to the direction of the trail.
- Use geotextile fabric or other appropriate bedding if needed.
- Cover the mat with a series of logs laid side by side, perpendicular to the trail.
- The corduroy should be removed in the spring to prevent damage to the area and should be left in place during the summer until drainage problems can be corrected or until trail rerouting can be completed.
- Cover logs with gravel or native material to create the treadway.
- An alternative to constructing corduroy is geotextiles with gravel cover.

Temporary Culverts

- Temporary culverts consist of a metal, plastic, cement, or wood pipe placed under a trail to permit crossing an intermittent or active stream.
- Temporary culverts are used on trails where water consists of small or intermittent flows that have not been bridged before winter.
- In general, cross-drainage culverts are more effective for drainage areas under ten acres.
- Culverts should be of a size appropriate to carry potential maximum water flow. The minimum size recommended is 12" to facilitate cleaning with a shovel.
- The culvert should extend one foot beyond the base of the trail on either side.
- Culverts should be sloped at least 6% to produce water velocities that will prevent the pipe from becoming unduly silted.
- It may be necessary to construct a berm across the side ditch to assist in water removal.
- Stream alignment should be straight at the point of crossing and of uniform profile so as not to obstruct the flow of water.
- For larger water flows, a corrugated metal culvert is recommended.
- Seat the pipe, backfill to half the diameter with clean fill, and tamp.
- Then fill over and around the culvert with snow and tamp at six inch intervals to pack in, add strength to the pipe, and to prevent seepage along the pipe. Cover the pipe with 12” of snow.

Temporary and Permanent Soil Stabilization Plan:

Trail construction will begin with clearing of identified and marked trees, clearing of blowdown and grubbing. All water/sediment control structures will be installed on the first pass of the mini excavator or around bridge sites if bridge construction begins before the pass of the mini excavator. When active work is complete on the trail, it will be mulched and seeded. Any temporary structures will be removed only after the trail is stabilized.

Bridge materials will be transported to identified sites during winter or times when soil conditions allow. Installation of water/erosion/sediment control structures or other terrain manipulation will take place when soil conditions permit and will be stabilized section by section as work is completed. Upon completion of the trail, temporary water/erosion/sediment control structures can be removed once the trail has become firm and stable.

Maintenance Inspection Schedule:

No contractors will be used in construction of the facility. Maintenance inspections will be carried out by Departmental personnel on a weekly basis and after significant rain events and after the spring thaw. After completion, the trail will be inspected seasonally.

Pollution Prevention Measures:

- All equipment and machinery will be maintained in accordance with manufacturer's maintenance recommendations.
- All equipment will be inspected for leaks.
- Care will be taking during refueling of equipment to avoid spills.
- Refueling will be done at least 100 feet from wetlands and streams.
- A spill kit will be available on site in case of fuel spills.
- Carry it in, carry it out. All materials and litter not used in construction of the trail or trail structures will be removed from the site.
- Work areas will be inspected for litter at the end of each day.

Conformance with New York State Standards and Specifications for Erosion and Sediment Control:

All proposed structures are in conformance with required standards.

Construction Plans

Note that thorough site specific construction level work plans are developed prior to each segment of trail construction which detail (step by step in hundredths of a mile) every area of proposed work, including leveling of each hummock, padding at each rock approach as deemed necessary, every relocation of a protruding rock or boulder, installation of boardwalks or other methods of water crossing, and areas which need APA wetland delineation and potentially a permit. During this process it is important to note that the least intrusive method of construction is always preferred, for instance, if a wet area has several rocks in it, the rocks are padded around instead of being removed, if possible.

Work plans identify that all aspects of the trail construction are covered, including brushing, tree cutting, rock removal, drainage, terrain modifications, tread development and bridging activities. In the case of the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex, work plans will state that the trail segment is being developed following the Snowmobile Trail Management Guidance. The core objective of the Guidance is to balance tree cutting, rock removal and terrain modification, using careful layout to design a trail that has the character of a foot trail and can be safe and sustainable for the multiple users of the trail. Specific All Terrain Bicycle and hiking accommodations will be made, as the trail will be used for that purpose in non-winter months. Through a thorough examination of the trail corridor as it is laid out and developed the Department will further adjust, as needed, the plan and actions to build the trail through work plan modifications. Using this method allows for necessary flexibility as staff look at each section of trail as trees are cut or tread defined. Snowmobile Trail Work Project Plan Modification reports will be submitted to document changes. These reports will amend this Complex plan so the complete process of the design and thinking process and work completed are pulled together in a document that captures the entire story of the construction of each trail segment.

a) Tree Cutting- A tally of proposed tree cuts by species and size (diameter at breast height) is detailed by a DEC Forester. Notice of this is provided in the DEC Environmental Notice Bulletin as required by regulation. The trees to be cut are marked with orange paint. The work plan notes the number of trees that are healthy, distressed, diseased, or dead snags. ALL STUMPS WILL BE CUT FLUSH with the GROUND. High stumps will result in safety hazards to workers and future snowmobile use, once the ground around them is compacted and they stick out more. Cutters will take the time to flush stumps as they go. Trees will be dispersed off the trail; however tree trunks of larger sized trees may be used to delineate the trail at certain locations or may be used to modify the trail tread through a future work plan.

b) Brushing and Pruning- The width of the trail is defined. Brush will be cleared to a specified width and overhead branches trimmed to a specified height. All brush and stumps will be cut level or with the slope of the terrain. Branches will be pruned with proper cuts to avoid leaving branch stubs and allow for trees to heal properly. Small brush that hangs into the trail width from beyond the specified width can be cut at the base instead of creating "hedge" cuts. Any brush to be cut on a curve or slope will be marked to delineate the allowable width.

c) Rock Removal- Rock Removal is included in the list of terrain modifications below. Any additional rock work that is needed will be identified in a Snowmobile Work Project Plan Modification Report.

d) Drainage Devices- Through proper layout the trail is designed to avoid or minimize developed drainage devices. Using water bars, broad-based dips, cross drains, trail hardening and other trail building methods we will divert water off the trail tread and minimize down-trail travel of water to create a sustainable trail tread. Areas along that trail that have slope or potential drainage needs will be built in a method that results in water being shed to the side of the trail, preventing "Trail Rutting." Bench-cut areas will be out-sloped to encourage lateral shedding of water. Drainage devices will be installed when deemed necessary and in accordance with the BMP guide. Any more substantial work that may be needed will be identified in a Snowmobile Work Project Plan Modification Report.

e) Terrain Modification- When trails are built through unbroken forest, there needs to be a balance of what trees are cut and what dirt is moved or areas leveled. The balance of tree cutting and terrain modification is important to achieve, to help the trail have the character of a foot trail and be sustainable to multiple users. Where there is moderate side slope present there will be full bench cuts and have proper and sustainable upslope cuts that can re-vegetate to a natural forest cover. Any additional work that may be needed will be identified in a Snowmobile Work Project Plan Modification Report. Due to the fact that this will be a multiple-use trail used by snowmobiles, hikers, and bicycles, there will need to be some hardening done throughout the trail. Although this is a more intensive trail manipulation, it will only be implemented on a smaller 36" to 48" (depending on specific site needs, and in accordance with guidelines) wide path on necessary sections. Any hardening will also be done in accordance with standards to insure proper installation.

f) Trail Markers and Signs- This trail will be marked with Blue trail markers. These will either be DEC Snowmobile Trail Markers or markers that say TRAIL.

g) Trail Rehabilitation- any rehabilitation work necessary, will be performed by the work crews as they make their way out of the work area. Ruts caused by All Terrain Vehicles will be raked smooth and drainage areas impacted by ruts will be restored to working order. Areas disturbed around the bridge sites during the construction process will be raked out, seeded with native grasses, and covered in straw. All scraps of lumber will be removed from bridge sites.

h) Bridges- The number of bridges and boardwalks required for the trail are detailed. The work plans note that the bridges will conform to the adopted Forest Preserve Bridge Design. Bridge materials will be transported to each bridge site via an ATV, snowmobile, landscaping equipment or groomer. Each bridge will be built to allow for the transportation of materials for any bridge construction that may occur beyond that location, unless a method can be used to create zero impacts on stream bed and banks. The construction of bridges will involve the mud sills being placed on exposed mineral soil or rock. Boardwalks will be 4 feet wide and will be decked with 2x4's in 1" spacing in order to allow light to pass through to the soil and vegetation below.

The final construction level work plans also provide a list of materials required to complete the specific segment of trail, enumerating the type and size of all lumber, hardware and other materials needed. A schedule for the work and a location map is provided.

IMPACTS OF PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

• Short-Term Impacts

The immediate short-term impact of implementing the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex will be in the form of increased DEC staff time and materials necessary to plan and construct the trails. Similarly, the adjacent and neighboring communities will spend staff and volunteer time as well as materials to plan and construct the trail connections to merge with recreational facilities in the individual towns. Noise will be generated on a short term, temporary basis during construction of trails and a bridge. During the construction phase there will be a temporary interruption in the use and enjoyment of the river resources and trails in the immediate vicinity of the trail and bridge work, as well as temporary impacts to wildlife.

• Long-Term Impacts

Long-term impacts include a possible increase in overall levels of bicycle, cross-country ski, snow shoe, horseback and snowmobile traffic, and in the number of campers and hunters who access the project site, with an attendant increase in economic benefit to local communities. Persons with disabilities will have a greater opportunity to access state forests and waterways. Increasingly stringent EPA emissions standards for snowmobiles should mitigate any increase in emissions and impacts to air quality. The need for law enforcement services will be minimized through the posting of informational signs and educational outreach. The need for search and rescue services will be minimized by educating trail users, providing trail maps and marking intersecting roads and trails. Designation, management and maintenance of trails for recreational use should decrease user conflicts and wildlife impacts. Adherence to design, construction and maintenance standards should reduce the potential for soil impacts and water quality impacts.

• Cumulative Impacts

Full implementation of the entire Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex will occur over a number of years and in coordination with unit management plans for neighboring state land. Due to the many points of access to the multiple-use trail system, the increase in use will be dispersed throughout the communities to be connected by the trail system. Therefore, significant impacts to any one area are not likely.

It is anticipated that there will be continued use of campsites, trails and water access points by the public. However, the level of use is not estimated to be so high as to have a negative impact on the natural or man-made resources of the project site or environs, including neighboring state land and private land. It is planned that there will be a suitable number of campsites, parking areas, trails and water access points without the occurrence of over-crowding or over use. DEC will continue to monitor the level of use and will enforce all applicable regulations. The development of the Complex Area will provide a greater opportunity for enjoyment of recreation by persons with disabilities. Continuation of land uses lawfully existing on the project site on the effective date of the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act (February 24, 1986) can proceed without the need for any additional permitting. This includes the continued use of floatplanes and snowmobiles. It is anticipated that the level of use of snowmobiling and motor vehicles will decrease somewhat after the hunting club leases for the Gooley and Polaris Clubs expire in 2018.

While an increase in snowmobile traffic within the Adirondack Park may increase exhaust emissions above what they would be without implementing the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex, stricter emissions standards will reduce the overall impact of this increase. In particular, the EPA regulations regarding three-phase reduction in snowmobile emissions requires that current 2015 emissions can be only 30 percent of 2006 levels. The level of use is very small compared to the overall size of the project site and environs within the Park and the extremely high quality of existing air resources, so significant adverse impacts on air quality are not anticipated.

Increased education and law enforcement efforts are anticipated to reduce unauthorized use of both public and private lands. Utilization of trail siting guidelines should result in reduced potential for trespass onto private lands and wilderness areas.

Safety is expected to improve as a result of implementation of trail design and construction guidance. Improved education efforts should allow the public to better anticipate the conditions likely to be encountered on the Adirondack Forest Preserve trail system; trail surface guidelines allow for removal of protruding rocks that could pose safety hazards: tree cutting standards allow for expedient clearing of hazard trees and trees that have fallen across trails.

The UMP process includes SEQR analysis of the alternatives for trail alignment and provides for public input. The environmental impacts of designating trails, developing additional trails and designating campsites, parking areas and water access points are evaluated through this process. Elements considered within this process include but are not limited to:

- Soils/Wetlands

- Drainage
- Vegetation
- Fish/Wildlife
- User Conflicts
- Relationships with adjacent landowners and other public lands
- Tourism/Economic impacts.

The evaluation considers both short and long term impacts. Short term impacts will primarily relate to those associated with the construction of new trails and long term impacts related to the operation and maintenance of the trail system, campsites and parking areas, as noted above. DEC will enforce the area in relation to compliance with the no fires rule at the campsites and length of stay limits at campsites, fishing regulations, etc.

III. UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

New trail layout and trail re-designation decisions made in the UMP process are guided by sound environmental principles. Multiple-use trail siting and design is accomplished using established guidance documents and inherent in the process is the avoidance of valuable natural resources such as wetlands and wildlife habitat and use of appropriate slopes, avoidance of trees and rocks and reuse of existing skid trails or old roads or existing trails. This approach results in mitigation by design to avoid potential significant environmental impacts.

During the trail construction process, resources including staff time and materials will be utilized. Grading will occur as deemed necessary and soils and surface water resources will be subject to short term impacts. Vegetation will be removed. The number, species and size of trees to be removed is calculated carefully during the formulation of specific work plans for each trail segment. Tree density (number of trees per acre) varies with stand age, species composition and site quality. The number of trees cut will be mitigated by re-vegetation of some current access ways.

IV. IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

The planning, development and implementation of this Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex will involve irreversible and irretrievable commitments of public funds in the form of time, labor and materials. Also, there is a commitment to the long-term maintenance of a multiple-use trail system for the Adirondack Park. This commitment will be made by all state agencies, local municipalities, snowmobile groups/clubs and private landowners involved in the administration of this trail system. Acquisition of trail corridors through easement, or fee title by the State will lead to a commitment to expend time, labor and materials to establish these trail corridors for snowmobile use.

V. GROWTH INDUCEMENT

SEQR requires that public need and other social, economic and environmental benefits of the project be weighed and balanced against identified environmental harm. Implementation of the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex may result in increased snowmobile use as well as other users of the multi-use trails throughout the region. These community connector trails are meant to link Adirondack communities that offer travelers services such as food, lodging, fuel, repair service and other support services. The creation of community connector trails may increase the Adirondack Park's attractiveness to the touring market as well as increase the local recreational enthusiasts' territory. This will bring positive, on-going, economic impacts to the Adirondack communities. Impact will be in the form of increased business investment in the community, increased tax revenue, and possibly more year-round business and employment opportunities. No negative effects from public use of the facility are anticipated, for example, area roadways have ample capacity to handle any increase in visitor traffic. The area will be monitored for any effects of over use and addressed accordingly.

VI. NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Taking no action at this time would result in the continuation of snowmobile traffic at current levels in interior areas of Wild Forest areas, with an anticipated continuation of the trend of increasing traffic as the sport of snowmobiling grows. Conflicts with other winter users of the Forest Preserve and adjacent land owners would likely increase with the increase in snowmobile traffic. Potential positive economic impacts from use of the multiple-use trail system would not accrue to the local communities. State grants provided to the communities would not have the desired effect of increased economic opportunities from increased recreation traffic.

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Appendix G – Consultation with OPRHP

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Division of Lands and Forests, Bureau of State Land Management
625 Broadway, 5th Floor, Albany, New York 12233-4250
P: (518) 402-9428 I F: (518) 402-9028 I Landsforests@dec.ny.gov
www.dec.ny.gov

Ms. Ruth Pierpont, Deputy Commissioner
Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Peebles Island State Park, PO Box 189
Waterford, New York 12188-0189 June 16, 2015

RE: Essex Chain Lakes and related state land units
Unit Management Plan and Draft EIS
Hamilton and Essex Counties

Dear ~~Mrs. Pierpont~~ Ruth,:

Pursuant to Article 14 of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law and its implementing regulations, I am requesting your comments on the enclosed draft Unit Management Plan for the Essex Chain Lake Primitive Area which includes an Environmental Impact Statement. These documents are currently circulating for public comment and are under review by the Adirondack Park Agency. I am also providing GIS shape files which delineate the corridor. All are being uploaded through the CRIS.

In addition to comments on the various projects proposed in the draft plan the unit contains two properties which have been determined eligible for the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

1) The Outer Gooley Club Farmhouse, determined eligible for Register listing in 2012(file 12PR04317). The Department proposes to retain the building and explore possible administrative uses.
2) The Inner Gooley Hunting Fishing Club, determined eligible for Register listing in 2013 (file 13PR04428). The Department proposes to remove these buildings as part of an effort to restore the remote primitive character of the area.

The Department believes that the removal of the Inner Gooley Club buildings constitutes an adverse impact on the register listed property. We are prepared to enter into discussions with OPRHP as to how best to mitigate this impact.

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY | Department of Environmental Conservation

Should you or your staff have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Charles E. Vandrei
Agency Historic
Preservation Officer

Enc.

cc: F. Sheehan
C. O'Dea
K. Prickett

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. | Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ROSE HARVEY
Commissioner

July 23, 2015

Mr. Charles E. Vandrei
NYS DEC
Bureau of State Land Management
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4255

Re: DEC
Essex Chain Lakes and Related State Land Units/
Unit Management Plan and Draft EIS
Hamilton and Essex Counties
15PR03210

Dear Mr. Vandrei:

Thank you for requesting the comments of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). We have reviewed the project in accordance with the New York State Historic Preservation Act of 1980 (Section 14.09 of the New York Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law). These comments are those of the OPRHP and relate only to Historic/ Cultural resources.

Based upon our review of the Draft UMP the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation concurs with your agency's opinion that enactment of the plan will have an Adverse Impact on known historic resources. Specifically, the proposed demolition of the camps known as the Inner Gooley Club, which were determined eligible for inclusion in the New York State and National Registers of Historic Places.

Our office agrees that the next steps in the 14.09 process should be a discussion of appropriate mitigation measures. At this early stage in this process we would suggest that your agency consider:

- Full documentation of all buildings and the current setting of the Inner Gooley Club complex.
- The relocation of one or more of the small Inner Gooley Club camps to the site of the Outer Gooley Club site for interpretation and possible adaptive reuse.
- Documentation of the Outer Gooley Club Farmhouse prior to any work being undertaken on it.
- Ongoing consultation for future rehabilitation for at the Outer Gooley Club Farmhouse.
- Ongoing consultation if a component or components of the Inner Gooley Club are relocated and adapted.

Division for Historic Preservation
P.O Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189 • (518) 237-8643 • www.nysparks.com

Lastly, we are unsure as to what extent if any the UMP will require ground disturbing activity to implement. As a result, we cannot provide any comments regarding impacts to potential archaeological deposits. We would recommend that as any agreement includes an ongoing assessment of archaeological impacts as the plan is implemented.

If I can be of any further assistance I can be reached at (518) 268-2166.

Sincerely,

John A. Bonafide
Director,
Technical Preservation Services Bureau

Cc: Corrie O'Dea, NYS DEC

RESOURCE EVALUATION

Date:	9/25/2013	Staff:	Nancy Todd
Property:	Inner Gooley Hunting/Fishing Club, house and 6 cabins	MCD:	MINERVA
Address:	Goodnow Flow Rd, Third Lake	County:	Essex
Project Ref. No.:	**13PR04428**	USN:	03108.000189

I. ☐ Property is individually listed on SR/NR :

Name of listing :

☐ Property is a contributing component of a SR/NR district:

Name of District:

II. ☑ Property meets eligibility criteria

☐ Property contributes to a district which appears to meet eligibility criteria.

Pre SRB: ☑ Post SRB: ☐ SRB Date

Criteria for inclusion in the National Register.

A ☑ **Associated** with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;

B ☐ **Associated** with the lives of persons significant in our past;

C ☑ Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or represents the work of a master; or possess high artistic values; or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose component may lack individual distinction;

D ☐ **Have** yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Based on the limited information provided (including the lack of a context statement about private sportmen clubs in New York State), it appears that the Inner Gooley Club (main house and six cabins) is historically and architecturally significant as a relatively intact example of an early twentieth century hunting-fishing club in the Adirondacks. Throughout the region, many private logging or mining companies offered long-term leases to groups of private individuals to build and maintain a broad range of sports clubs deep in the wilderness. Like other camp complexes of its type, the Inner Gooley buildings are rustic and utilitarian in design and materials.

If you have any questions concerning this Determination of Eligibility, please call Nancy Todd at 518-237-8643. ext 3262

RESOURCE EVALUATION

Date:	3/23/2002	Staff:	Nancy Todd
Property:	GOOLEY CLUB	MCD:	MINERVA
Address:	off of NY 28 near Indian Lake	County:	Essex
Project Ref. No.:	**12PR04317**	USN:	03108.0109

I. ☐ Property is individually listed on SR/NR :

Name of listing :

☐ Property is a contributing component of a SR/NR district:

Name of District:

II. ☑ Property meets eligibility criteria

☐ Property contributes to a district which appears to meet eligibility criteria.

Pre SRB: ☑ Post SRB: ☐ SRB Date

Criteria for inclusion in the National Register.

A ☑ **Associated** with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;

B ☐ **Associated** with the lives of persons significant in our past;

C ☑ Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or represents the work of a master; or possess high artistic values; or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose component may lack individual distinction;

D ☐ **Have** yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Based on the information provided, the Gooley Club appears to be eligible for listing as an intact example of a typical late 19th-early 20th century private hunting/fishing club in the Adirondacks. Established in the the 1870s by Michael Gooley, this club began as a private retreat for hunters and fishermen. In 1905, Gooley sold the property to the Finch-Pruyn lumber company, who granted long-term leases to club members. In 1928, the original house built by Mr. Gooley burned; club members then built the current house. The buildings and setting of the Club reflect the importance of men's hunting and fishing clubs in the Adirondacks.

If you have any questions concerning this Determination of Eligibility, please call Nancy Todd at 518-237-8643. ext 3262

Appendix H – Public Comment

The DEC held three SEQRA public hearings on July 7, 9 and 22, 2015 and the public comment period remained open until July 27, 2015. Below is a summary of the comments that were received at the hearings and from comment letters and emails, with the DEC response.

General

COMMENT: DEC must also schedule hearings on this issue outside of the Adirondack Park. The Adirondack Park belongs to (and is paid for) by all New York citizens yet DEC rarely if ever holds hearings on this incredibly important resource anywhere outside the park's boundary.
RESPONSE*: An additional public hearing was held in Albany at DEC headquarters at 625 Broadway on July 22, 2015.*

COMMENT: While my greatest love of the Adirondacks is based around the motor-less wilderness and primitive area experience, I applaud, respect, and welcome the DEC choice to apply balance with the unit designations for the newly acquired lands near Newcomb. Since the Master Plan was written, I've witnessed a disproportional amount of land acquisitions assigned as wilderness. While I applauded this trend years ago, I now believe this practice has become grossly unbalanced at the expense of local public support. As an environmentalist, I believe there is no environmental benefit to managing the forest area in a way that alienates so much of the public against every environmental initiative, law and policy. Designating all newly purchased land as wilderness with no balance does exactly that. Allowing such a small percentage to be wild forest goes a long way for defusing those who might spend their lives fighting other worthy environmental initiatives. In other words, ideology on one end of a political view spawns the same at the other extreme. As a society, we need balance or we'll never cooperate effectively for the benefit of the environment.
RESPONSE *Noted.*

COMMENT: Please add to this draft a proposal to allow ATV access on designated access roads for the purpose of camping, fishing and hunting. The local area can gain a great deal of tourist dollars and visitors by allowing registered and insured ATV's into this area. Please consider this as a way to boost dollars into this area. As a multi parcel land owner I feel not addressing this is a big miss on the state of New York and the DEC groups who oversee this land. There should be equal use of the land for all tax payers, not just hikers who pay no fees to use this land. Please look at states like Pennsylvania and Maine and see what they are doing with ATV use to bring in dollars to the local economy.
RESPONSE: *DEC has considered this comment and declines to make this revision. ATVs are not proposed as an allowed use in this Complex Plan, nor are they a conforming use in Primitive Areas. The public may use motor vehicles to access the Wild Forest tent sites along the Cornell Road, Deer Pond Road, and seasonally along the Camp Six Road and Chain Lakes Road (South). Additionally, hunting and fishing access is allowed along those same road segments.*

COMMENT: Opposes allowing all-terrain vehicles on any multi-use trails in the Complex. Any multi-use trail that includes snowmobile use must remain otherwise motor-free, and not include any possible future use of any other off-road motor vehicles.

RESPONSE: *Aside from snowmobiles, no other public motorized uses are proposed for the multiple-use trails identified in this Complex Plan.*

COMMENT: In regard to wheeled transit: bicycles yes, ATV's a strong NO.
RESPONSE: *ATVs use is not proposed in this Complex Plan.*

COMMENT: Support for the DEC managing several Forest Preserve units as a complex, as they have long-advocated for this complex-planning approach.
RESPONSE: *This Complex Plan takes a more "complex" approach to planning in order to identify where proposals continue beyond unit boundaries.*

COMMENT: I commend the planners for the comprehensive nature of the plan and their outstanding effort to provide public access to this beautiful area while preserving its integrity.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: As a senior citizen hunter and fisherman I would like to see as much access as possible to this land. For too long the environmentalists have succeeded in getting the overwhelming majority of land locked up for the benefit of the fit few. In my opinion it is wrong to preclude the less fit and disabled from the ability to enjoy this land. This means making available the existing access roads on the land. The Finch lands include an extensive road and bridge network that could be utilized for recreation access. Notably the Polaris Bridge being targeted by the environmentalists should be left intact and maintained for access by the public and DEC. There needs to be a way to make this happen. Furthermore snowmobiling, bicycling and even RV traffic should be allowed on these well-constructed haul toads which were built to withstand log truck traffic for many years. The time has come to stop the environmental lobby before the whole park is off limits to almost everyone.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: As an organizer of Lean2Rescue projects, the commenter notes that they have learned to see such infrastructure as is proposed as a huge cost saver and carbon footprint reducer for maintenance of the interior, especially the Wilderness areas. There have been several incidents where they have been able to have materials carried by groomer to the edge of the wilderness area, where volunteers have then been able to drag the materials the final miles to the site. This avoids the need for a helicopter which processes so much more fossil fuel per hour as compared to the groomer or snowmobile.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: The campfire ban should not be implemented. The carries to reach the Chain Lakes make for a very effective filter, generally removing those less motivated individuals that have a tendency to be irresponsible campers. Those likely to visit the Chain Lakes can certainly be trusted to observe the "dead and down" firewood regulations.
RESPONSE: *DEC believes that the documented ecological impacts of fires in other areas of the Forest Preserve lend themselves to the prohibition of fires at waterfront sites in the Complex Area.*

COMMENT: An advance campsite reservation system will be very cumbersome and limiting in nature. The designated campsites should be first come first served, as all other backcountry sites are. Exclusive set aside campsites for floatplane customers should not be implemented. Again, all designates sites should be first come first served, set aside campsites exclusively for floatplane customers on public land,

is illegal. Are these specific campsites on State land or not? If so, they should be open to all. If not, revise the plan and collect taxes from the floatplane operators.
RESPONSE: *The need for the camping permit system will be assessed after the 2018 camping season. If the five years of permit data do not justify a permit system, it will be discontinued, and the sites will become first come, first served.*

COMMENT: Increase the number of campsites on the Chain Lakes Road (South), and include ADA sites.
RESPONSE: *Accessible roadside camping opportunities will be provided along the Chain Lakes Road (South).*

COMMENT: More should be done to protect against invasives, especially against aquatic invasives.
RESPONSE: *DEC will support scientific research, work with our partners, provide educational information, and enforce existing policies that protect Forest Preserve vegetation.*

Bicycle and Horse Trails

COMMENT: With regard to the use of bicycles on the roads around the Essex Chain, although I am happy to see riding opportunities for bicycles in the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex, these routes must be legitimately designated as DEC administrative roads before allowing bicycle use of these roads.
RESPONSE: *The Department's proposal is to identify bicycling opportunities on former all-season roads in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas, and manage such use in conformance with the APSLMP. On Wild Forest lands within the Complex Area, the Department proposes to designate for bicycle use a portion of the Chain Lakes Roads (North), Chain Lakes Road (South), Deer Pond Road, and Drake's Mill Road to the* Iron (Polaris) *Bridge.*

COMMENT: The comment was made that the justification for the designation of administrative roads should be provided. It appears that the Department decided where it wanted the bike trails and then designated these as administrative roads.
RESPONSE: *See Response above.*

COMMENT: Plans for mountain bike use on roads in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive area should be based on natural resource and market studies to determine feasibility, public interest, maintenance costs, and natural resource damage. There is no evidence that mountain biking is desirable on former logging roads anywhere else in the Forest Preserve.
RESPONSE: *In the Stewardship Plan, the DEC designated certain former woods roads open for bicycling. Based on feedback from users of these trails, The Complex Plan proposes to identify bicycling opportunities on former all-season roads in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas, in conformance with the APSLM In addition, the Plan calls for a continued assessment of both bike and horse trail use and experiences. This assessment will be conducted in a variety of ways, and will allow DEC to better understand use, potential problems and public desires. The DEC, in consultation with APA, will assess the condition of non-motorized recreational trails used by equestrians and bicyclists to measure the impact these activities have on natural resources.*

It is understood that the public desires to have "family style" bicycling experiences throughout the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex Area. There are many factors, that when combined, result in an

overall user experience. The assessment called for in this Complex Plan will attempt to measure these factors in a way that captures the overall public use as well as more subjective measurements. These subjective measurements will deal with: aspects of the trails that users find enjoyable or memorable and describe positive or negative interactions.

Methods used to conduct this assessment will utilize DEC staff, including SCA Backcountry Stewards, Forest Rangers, and Foresters, as well as DEC partners, including Towns, volunteers, colleges, and contractors. The assessment will likely provide use estimates through a combination of trail registers, trail counters, and observation. The assessment will also involve interviews with users in an attempt to capture more "experience" based information, to define what is important to individual users of the area.

COMMENT: I particularly support the use of the existing road network for bicycles.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: The Adirondack Council supports allowing mountain biking and equestrian use in certain areas of the Complex.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: I am opposed to allowing mountain biking on trails frequented by hikers as they are dangerous to pedestrians and destructive to trails.
RESPONSE: *DEC has considered this comment and has specifically included sections on "trail etiquette" to remind users that these are shared use trails.*

COMMENT: I support the use of the roads in the area for horse trail riding.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: I have skied and mountain biked the Upper Hudson Ski Loop for over 25 years. It is a great wonderful area and the path was built to support logging trucks. I have no idea why bikes were excluded from this area in the proposed plan. Perhaps there is an excellent reason, but none was offered at the meeting nor was there an opportunity to ask questions at the hearing. Newcomb could provide that same opportunity if one could ride the trail from the Upper Hudson Ski Loop down to Ord Falls and into Town on existing trails or on newly created trails being considered to extend the Upper Hudson Ski Loop into Town.
RESPONSE: *The Upper Hudson Ski Loop crosses private land (working forest conservation easement land) between the parking and the register box location. DEC has proposed to open the Ski Loop (located on Blue Mountain Wild Forest land) for bicycling, and try to gain approval from the private landowner for the crossing.*

Cedar River Bridge

COMMENT: I firmly support the proposed bridge over the Cedar River at the recommended site.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: The Adirondack Council supports the building of a replacement bridge over the Cedar River for hiking, mountain biking, snowmobiling, and equestrian traffic, but not for any other motorized use. This bridge must be legally and irrevocably closed to any motorized use other than snowmobiles.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: I support DEC's plan to build the Cedar River Bridge and to maintain the Polaris Bridge in the Essex Chain Lakes Complex.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: I strongly support a Cedar River Bridge as described in Alternative 4.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

Economic Development and Enjoyment of the Outdoor Experience

COMMENT: I attended last night's meeting at the Newcomb school. As a former part time resident on the Goodnow Flow for more than 30 years, and now a full time resident for the past 8 days, I want to express my appreciation for the thoughtful balance your recommended plan achieves. One of the most troubling aspects of home ownership in the park is the continuing decline of many of the hamlets in our area including Newcomb, Long Lake, Blue Mountain Lake, North Hudson, Minerva, Indian Lake, etc. The proposed plan addresses requirement to provide wilderness experience while also recognizing the importance of economic development in the affected communities. I firmly support proposed snowmobile trail that crosses the Hudson on the Polaris Bridge and continues up the east side of the Hudson to Newcomb, where it will join the Newcomb to Minerva trail. I also firmly support the proposed bridge over the Cedar River at the recommended site.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: The Nature Conservancy / Finch Pruyn lands represent a very special collection of unique outdoors opportunities on land that was previously an important economic engine for these communities. The proposed horse trails, mountain bike trails and limited vehicular traffic are certainly appropriate for this area. All of those activities together represent a mere fraction of the disturbance caused by chain saws, skidders, chippers and logging trucks. In the 30 years on the Goodnow, we had several summers with the wakeup call of logging trucks rattling down the Goodnow Flow Road at 5:00 am to get their first load of the morning. I won't miss that particular aspect of the logging operations, but am a strong supporter of town's effort to be a place where the children of town residents will have a viable place to live, work and raise a family.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: Mountain bikes, horses, snowmobiles, airplanes and other motorized vehicles should all have a place in the park. Many hunters, fisherman, and outdoor folks are older and need to use these areas that allow wheeled access. The local economy relies on all types of outdoor recreation and the park is large enough to allow everyone with any interest in the outdoors to enjoy it. If people of all interests don't enjoy the area and learn first-hand of its beauty and importance of open space, it will die a slow death of disinterest and neglect with future generations.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: I write to express my support for the overall Complex plan. The plan should support the efforts and the desire of the five surrounding towns to become a "Recreational Hub." I also believe that the Polaris Bridge should stay in place and serve multi-trail interests in the Complex. I also strongly support Alternative 1B for a snowmobile trail that will connect Indian Lake to Minerva and a Cedar River Bridge as described in Alternative 4.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: I am very excited about the progress that has been made as a lifelong resident of the greater Adirondack region. The economic benefit to our area from the snowmobile industry alone has been proven by the research at our neighboring institution, the State University of Potsdam, in Potsdam, NY.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: The only business that could profit from a major connector in Minerva is Sporty's Iron Duke Saloon until they get to Newcomb. There is no gas, restaurant, bar, rest room, mechanical or first aid help for 25 miles through the forest.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: I've been snowmobiling for 25 years in the Old Forge area and travel to Indian Lake and have used the Newcomb trail. It opens new areas to see and we do not have to return the same way from Old Forge to Indian Lake. I know I speak for all of my snowmobile friends in supporting the trail and all bridges concerned. By keeping this trail open it will boost the economy in the entire area. Snowmobiling has tripled in my tenure in Old Forge and this recreational sport helps the town make it through the winter. By keeping this trail open and removing the tracks from Old Forge to Tupper Lake would make the entire area from Old Forge to Indian Lake to Newcomb and loop to Tupper Lake and back to Old Forge possible and boost the winter economy in these northern towns.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: I recognize the economic value of having a community connector snowmobile trail network in this area, and support those efforts.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: I understand the importance of stimulating the economy within communities of the Adirondack Park, so I support the proposed community connector snowmobile trail network. And that should also include the Vanderwhacker Wild Forest Area. Please don't listen to the misguided people who think this plan will destroy the area.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: To who it my concern, as outdoors enthusiasts and snowmobilers since 1973, my wife and I are all for the upgrades to the area. The upgrade should help generate more revenue for the area from hunters, fishermen, skiers, campers, snowmobilers, etc. New York State and or government have taken so much from locals already that hundreds have packed and moved out of state. Keep promoting the importance of the outdoors experience because it is relaxing for people after a hard week at work, and will also give children an opportunity to be outside instead of behind a computer.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: Support the comprehensive Essex Chain of Lakes Plan as proposed. Specifically, they are strongly supportive of the provisions in the plan pertaining to snowmobile trails. They note that in New York State alone, snowmobilers spend over $1 billion on snowmobiling each year. This includes expenditures on equipment, clothing, accessories, vacations, gas, food, etc. Surveys show that snowmobiling families go on 27 snowmobile outings on average each winter. Snowmobiling is responsible for significant economic benefits such as: jobs for thousands of people, jobs which enable those people to further stimulate the economy through additional expenditures on goods and services, jobs which provide significant income tax revenues to state and federal treasuries and dramatically reduce unemployment and welfare payments; millions of dollars in tax revenues derived from snowmobile-related businesses including manufacturers, suppliers, distributors, resort and hotel facilities, restaurants, service stations, insurance agencies, hardware stores, banks and credit unions; millions of dollars in winter tourism spending which support upstate economics, and; thousands of dollars in local/state sales and gas tax revenues. ARCC states that snowmobiling has rejuvenated the economies of many communities and is an important segment of the active outdoor recreation economic engine in Upstate NY. The New York State Snowmobile Association, in cooperation with SUNY Potsdam, conducted an economic impact analysis in 2003 showing the economic impact of snowmobiling in New York State to be estimated at $476.2 million. In 2008 the state of New York surveyed snowmobilers in New York and calculated the economic impact of snowmobiling in New York had increased to $875 million annually – an increase of 84% in 5 years. ARCC notes that on a local level, many businesses have reported a significant increase in business during the 2014 snowmobile season. Restaurants, taverns and hotel/motels have reported that their business increased two-fold over the 2012-13 season. The NYS Department of tourism actively promotes snowmobile tourism and has established a website with information on snowmobiling opportunities and conditions. ARCC states that the comprehensive proposals in the ECLMC Plan will play a significant role in the increase in economic activities in the region, and that without the ability to connect people – whether hiking, biking, snowmobiling or by motor vehicle – to the recreational opportunities and businesses in the respective counties, businesses would realize a measureable decline in sales with a corresponding increase in unemployment. Businesses need the support of all sectors, including government. Approval of the ECLMC Plan will insure the businesses will remain strong and provide employment and tax revenues for the region.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

Goodnow Flow

COMMENT: From the perspective of the Goodnow Flow Association, Inc., the commenter notes that for over 60 years the Association leased much of the land in the northern section of the purchase. For the past ten or so years, they have been involved in an effort to rebuild the spillway to protect and preserve the Goodnow Flow along with the surrounding areas and wildlife habitat that depend on it. The Association is close to being able to commence this project and hopes to complete the replacement of the spillway during the summer months within the next couple of years. The Association hopes that the area proposed for the hiking parking lot can be used as a summer construction season staging area so that the spillway can be replaced.
RESPONSE: *DEC will contact and work with the Goodnow Flow Association during the spillway construction.*

Outer Gooley Farmhouse and Inner Gooley Buildings

COMMENT: The buildings at the former Outer Gooley Club should be removed.
RESPONSE: *The Complex Plan calls for further consideration of potential uses of the Outer Gooley Club building.*

COMMENT: The Outer Gooley Club buildings should remain. The Inner Gooley Club buildings should also remain, like Santanoni, for use in emergencies and for interpretive opportunities. Information for displays and related websites should be developed to appeal to younger users.
RESPONSE: *DEC agrees that the Outer Gooley Club buildings warrant further consideration for use as an administrative building, an interpretative center, or possibly a historical landmark. DEC disagrees with the commenter in regard to the Inner Gooley Club structures and buildings. The Plan calls for the removal of these facilities at the end of the lease arrangements with the Gooley Club. DEC recognizes that historic preservation and the provision of wild recreational lands are both matters of state policy. In the case of the Inner Gooley Club buildings, these public values are directly in conflict with one another. In this case, it was DEC's judgement that the value of recreational lands outweigh the value of preserving the historic buildings. The Plan calls for the removal of these facilities at the end of the lease arrangements with the Gooley Club.*

COMMENT: Supports the plan to retain the farmhouse as an historic structure and other compatible uses. However, AARCH asks the Department to acknowledge that the Inner Gooley Club buildings have also been deemed to be eligible for listing under the National and State Registers of Historic Places and provides the listing reference #13PRO4428 dated 9/25/13. The Department needs to acknowledge that this complex of seven buildings is National Register eligible, that it has obligations under the State Historic Preservation Act (SHPA), and it must explore alternatives to the proposed demolition of the Inner Gooley Club buildings. The 2012 "Reservation of Leasehold Estate and Management Agreement" calling for the demolition of the buildings doesn't negate the Department's legal obligations under the SHPA.
RESPONSE: *DEC has complied with the State Historic Preservation Act in its determination to remove the Inner Gooley Club buildings. See Appendix G which contains the record of correspondence with the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation on SHPA compliance matters.*

COMMENT: With regard to the Outer Gooley Club buildings, the Environmental Conservation Law currently would not allow these structures to remain. They can stay only if the state purchased it prior to the enactment date of the law. The structures should be removed or relocated.
RESPONSE: *DEC has considered this comment and determined not to make a change the Complex Plan.*

COMMENT: It is our belief that this would constitute a crime against the history of the Town of Minerva and the Adirondacks in general. The Gooley Club, incorporated in 1946, has been one of the largest and most prestigious Adirondack Sportsman's Clubs for many decades, truly an iconic landmark within the Blue Line. The Gooley Club has hosted several generations of sportsmen including many prominent New Yorkers, as well as being an important part of the logging history with Finch, Pruyn & Co. in the Adirondacks. The buildings that make up the Chain Lakes Camp are an ingrained component of Adirondack architectural heritage. We urge you to follow the legal obligations regarding the identification and protection of historic resources required by NYS Environmental Conservation Law (ECL 9-0109) to evaluate these facilities as to their historic

importance. As is presently being arranged for the Gooley Farmhouse south of the Hudson River, the Chain Lakes Camp can provide an ideal location for interpretive use as well as a sub-station for DEC management of the Complex and a point of refuge for users in distress.
RESPONSE: *DEC has considered this comment and declines to make this revision.*

Management of the Complex Area

COMMENT: The principal management objective for the Essex Chain Lakes area should be forest restoration and natural resource preservation. Retention of roads for recreational use will undermine these objectives.
RESPONSE: *The Complex Plan was prepared by the State of New York to allow for appropriate public access to the lands within the complex area and to protect natural resources. The proposed management actions were chosen because they seek to allow access while protecting the area's natural resources, and will be implemented through a series of protecting measures and administrative and management practices.*

COMMENT: ECLMC should have been classified as Wild Forest. The patchwork of classifications is problematic and doesn't satisfy any of the stakeholders and leaves the process legally vulnerable.
RESPONSE: *After careful consideration of all viable and possible alternatives, and involving major stakeholders through various forms of outreach efforts, the State has determined that the current classification best represents a management plan that provides for reasonable public access while protecting the natural resources of the Complex Area.*

COMMENT: I support the Department of Environmental Conservation's plan to manage multiple and adjoining Adirondack Forest Preserve area as one "complex" unit. Managing the area in this way will allow better integration with natural resource protection, community engagement, and recreation.
RESPONSE: *DEC agrees with this comment.*

COMMENT: The Forest Preserve is replete with former land uses long made illegal under the Constitution and statutory and executive law. DEC commonly asserts that when land becomes Forest Preserve, the State buys all fee simple rights and extinguishes all prior underlying rights of ownership - absent a reserved and deeded right. There are no reserved, deeded rights in this case. Yet, DEC illogically argues here for "grandfathered" rights.
RESPONSE: *Lands purchased by the State within its geographical and political boundaries are managed by the DEC and the APA for the benefit of the people of the State of New York. Unless encumbered by a reserved right, the State can exercise its discretion to determine how best to manage the property while seeking a balance between protecting the natural resources of the area, and allowing reasonable public access. "'Grandfathered' rights" is a term ordinarily associated with land use law, but the language that appears in the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act is whether existing land uses are allowed to continue without expanding or altering the historical use. DEC has determined that current law and regulation allow the continued use of certain structures and improvements located in the Complex Area.*

COMMENT: The "Schedule of Implementation" provides a column for 'Estimated Cost' [page 61 *et seq*.], but no estimated cost is provided, not to mention the source of funds. Purchase of a snow groomer tractor can reach $150,000 not including the attachments, maintenance, and operating expenses.

Whence cometh the funds for this? (Please do not cite the NYS Snowmobiles Trails Grant-in-Aid program without specifically listing the amount allocated to the Adirondack region, the manner of allocation, and other pertinent information). We are asked to buy a pig-in-a-poke. "Approve this. We will bill you for the costs later. After all you approved this. Nonsense. Provide the costs, real estimates: best case and worst case.
RESPONSE: *The DEC is not always able to provide estimated costs for specific activities listed in the schedule of implementation because it is sometimes difficult for DEC to project costs without completed design plans, and costs are susceptible to changing economic conditions.*

COMMENT: DEC should undertake feasibility, public interest, maintenance cost and natural resource damage studies for your proposed roads in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive area.
RESPONSE: *DEC undertakes a thorough analysis of all available resources when determining the use of existing roads and the construction of new roads or trails.*

COMMENT: I would like to submit that I am a frequent tourist to the Adirondack Park from CT. I also visit VT and NH, but find the wilderness quality of the Adirondacks a better "deal" for my tourist, and eventually 2nd home dollars. I spend about $10,000 a year on family vacations to the Adirondacks because it's "forever wild" clause. I hike, camp, canoe and ski. I do not snowmobile nor mountain bike, which I feel should be severely restricted and not expanded because they ruin the isolated, non-mechanical aspect that I feel so appealing. Please do not allow more snowmobile and mountain bike access or improved trails in the park.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: In regards to the Essex Chain Snowmobile plan, I am writing to encourage keeping the proposed plan that the Department of Environmental Conservation released last month. These lands should be "used" by the public. I agree with Governor Cuomo's desire to make the Adirondacks more accessible.
RESPONSE: *Many of the previous determinations regarding snowmobile trails have remained the same.*

COMMENT: Last week there were news stories about the average age of the population in the US. Hamilton County, with an average age of 54, is one of the oldest counties in the United States! (New York State was about 33 years old). This area needs more flexibility to live. New York cannot afford to keep the Adirondacks pristine without local support. If that local support evaporates simply because there is no population, we may have wild lands, but what are we saving it for?
RESPONSE: *DEC believes that this Complex Plan strikes the appropriate balance between recreational access and resource preservation.*

COMMENT: While the description and inventory of fish, wildlife and habitats in this UMP is significantly improved over last year's draft, this UMP still lacks the requisite analysis and assessment required under the SLMP. The majority of priority recommendations are generally stated, as in "monitor and inventory wildlife populations and their habitats." For an area noted for its ecological importance, including highly-rated and vulnerable wetlands, and with populations of breeding birds, amphibians, mammals and plants vulnerable to this higher intensity of human presence and uses, this UMP should recommend particularly needed or important wildlife studies , how these will be conducted and by whom, and any management implications**.**
RESPONSE: *DEC believes they have complied with the APSLMP with regard to an assessment of existing fish, wildlife and habitat within the complex area, and further analysis will be conducted when necessary.*

COMMENT: This Draft UMP does not comply with the SLMP. DEC should re-write this UMP to forthrightly address and comply with all existing law, regulation, policy and guidance documents. We encourage DEC and APA to form a citizen advisory committee or stakeholder task force that brings the agencies together with the five towns, recreational interests and Forest Preserve advocates together to discuss the legal obstacles, alternative management recommendations, and other constructive forward steps to achieving SLMP compliance.
RESPONSE: *DEC believes the proposed management objectives and action steps comply with the APSLMP, existing law, regulation, policy and guidance documents. DEC and APA participated in numerous outreach sessions to stakeholder groups, and the Forest Preserve Advisory Committee was another forum that allowed the exchange of information on the Complex Plan.*

COMMENT: The area is classified Primitive regardless of the existing road infrastructure.
RESPONSE: *This Complex Plan addresses management objectives in lands classified as primitive and wild forest.*

COMMENT*:* The priority for management of the property should be to protect natural resources and the secondary consideration is the recreational use. There is no grandfathering provision to allow continued use of the roads and abridges. Activity on the land while under private ownership does not mean the uses can continue now that it is public land.
RESPONSE: *Current law and regulations specifically allow existing land uses to continue within designated river areas notwithstanding any laws or regulations to the contrary. DEC and the Agency retain the discretion to determine management actions that are the most appropriate to balance public access and natural resource protection.*

COMMENT: The current Draft UMP should be withdrawn and all stakeholders should be consulted to come up with a new management plan together. Most of the Park is already located within one to two miles of main roads and people should not be able to drive up to the 4th and 5th Lakes area. Historically, the Indians allowed all tribes to access the wild lands of the Adirondacks with the basic understanding that the wilderness was to be preserved and protected. The process to determine their use should be public.
RESPONSE: *DEC does not intend to withdraw the UMP, and will instead present the Complex Plan to the APA to seek a conformance determination consistent with the process set forth in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Adirondack Park Agency and the Department of Environmental Conservation Concerning Implementation of the State Land Master Plan for the Adirondack Park. With regard to the commenter's reference to historical Indian practice, traditional Indian Nation concepts such as "one bowl, one spoon" did not recognize political boundaries of land, therefore their use of land is inapposite to the discussion of how the state manages the land of the Complex Area.*

COMMENT: Comment was made that the towns and communities understood at the time of the discussion of the land purchase that there would be opportunities for those who like quiet paddling areas and those who like to snowmobile and mountain bike and hunt and fish. These uses can all be accommodated without the need for extensive work by using the existing road infrastructure. The communities want to believe that there is an opportunity for economic benefit from tangible public recreational opportunities from the land purchase that will help to make the communities more economically sustainable. The road network on the site should be used to increase access to the Forest Preserve for the public so they can learn about and appreciate the Forest Preserve.

RESPONSE: *The Complex Plan does not propose public access to the entire existing road network, but rather in the interest of seeking a balance between access and the protection of the Complex Area's natural resources, an overwhelming percentage of the existing roads will not be utilized for recreation.*

Motorized Use

Comment: The commenter says the existing roads on the property should be allowed to be used by sportsmen who hunt, fish and trap. These roads have been used for 150 years without damage to the environment and should continue to be used. When the land was being purchased it was said that a parking area for the public, not just CP3, would be constructed near the tube to allow for access. Also, DEC says they will monitor use and could close the parking lot that is proposed for the public and he is concerned if the area is not marketed well, use numbers will be low and the lot will be closed. The ECLMC has 50 miles of road and should not be classified as Primitive.
RESPONSE: *The Complex Plan proposes a six-car parking west of the "Tube" in conformance with the APSLMP.*

COMMENT: I urge DEC to dramatically cut back on motorized uses within these lands, providing only for limited access by handicapped people and holding to the deal struck with the towns for snowmobile passage, which never included the Polaris Bridge, but did include a legal bridge across the Cedar.
RESPONSE: *DEC believes that this Complex Plan strikes the appropriate balance between recreational access, including access for people with disabilities, and resource preservation.*

COMMENT: I support keeping the Essex Chain of Lakes motor-free to protect the rivers and lakes from the introduction of invasive species. This is a unique, ecological area and protecting the waters from invasive species should be a priority.
RESPONSE: *Motorized boats are equipment not allowed in the Essex Chain Lakes.*

COMMENT: Driving to the Essex Chain of Lakes by permit violates the State Land Master Plan and the APA Classification Resolution: The Draft UMP recommends that the general public, by permit, be allowed to drive past Deer Pond parking lot for 2 miles to a 4- car parking lot at "the Wild Forest-Primitive boundary" near Fifth Lake. By doing so, the Draft undermines the APA classification resolution for a "motorless" Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area. Even 4-cars by permit throughout the year encourage the very things DEC does not want: introduction of invasive species into the lakes, and introduction of baitfish into the lakes. The easier DEC makes motor vehicle access for the general public, the more likely that the lakes will become polluted. The proposed action violates the Master Plan's Primitive Area guidelines by proposing a motor vehicle road to the heart of a Primitive area. Further, it undermines the very purpose of the DEC's CP-3 program designed to provide exclusive motorized access to persons with disabilities or mobility limitations so that they have an opportunity to experience the same solitude and connection to nature that the general public enjoys. Finally, the APA classification decision in 2013 clearly intended to limit motor vehicle use of this road only to those qualifying for CP-3 access: "Wild Forest access… to the south shore of Fifth Lake was established for the sole purpose of providing access to persons with disabilities."
RESPONSE: *DEC has considered this comment and has determined not to make a change in the Complex Plan. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires, in part, that reasonable modifications must be made to the services and programs of public entities, so that when those services and programs are viewed in their entirety, they are readily accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. This*

must be done unless such modification would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of the service, program or activity or an undue financial or administrative burden.

COMMENT: An area of about 27,000 acres purchased had approximately 40 miles of 2-wheel drive accessible roads which were cut back to less than 3 miles. Try to call that real access and you will find it is little more than a non-substantive appeasement. Much of the 40 miles of roads were of the quality that withstood the travel of logging trucks. Now they cannot be used for a pickup truck; cutting back from 40 to 3 miles does not make sense.
RESPONSE: *The Complex Plan calls for 10 miles of the approximate 30 miles of former woods roads (a combination of all season and winter use only roads) to be open for public motor vehicle access within the lands classified as Wild Forest. These 10 miles of public motor vehicle roads are those which most suitable for travel by motor vehicle.*

COMMENT: Some items such as proposed parking lots and non-CP3 access were mentioned and then somehow lost between the initial proposals and the management use plan. These should be corrected in the UMP as it pertains to the Essex Chain Lakes Complex.
RESPONSE: *The Complex Plan proposes a six-car parking area west of the "Tube" in conformance with the APSLMP.*

Non-Motorized Use

COMMENT: I believe that there are aspects of the draft plan that fail to take into account a more long-term vision for the Park. I believe that allowing motorized access on the Essex Chain Complex would greatly harm the unique ecosystems found here. Thus, I fully support management of the Complex as motor-free. In line with this view, I do not support expanding motorized access in the Hudson Wild and Scenic River Corridor, or the building of new snowmobile trails in the Vanderwhacker Wild Forest Area. Both of these areas contain habitats and organisms that would be put in danger by the damage motor vehicles can cause. In addition, this area will also be threatened by the likely introduction of invasive species as a result of motorized vehicle use. Consequently, I believe that the Polaris Bridge should be removed. I also support replacing the bridge over the Cedar River for hiking, mountain biking, snowmobiling and equestrian use, but believe the bridge must remain irrevocably closed to all motorized use with the exception of snowmobiles. In addition, I support providing special access for persons with disabilities, such as the creation of parking lots near Fourth and Fifth Lake, as I believe it is essential that all are able to experience the beauty that the Complex has to offer.
RESPONSE: *The use of motor vehicles in the Complex Area has continued for nearly a century, and DEC believes that the continued use of motor vehicles subject to the restrictions within the Plan, will not adversely affect the natural resources present in the management area.*

COMMENT: The Wild Forest corridor to 4th-5th Lakes on the Essex Chain violates the State Land Master Plan because it does not facilitate legal motor vehicle use. This road is an illegal peninsula into the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive area and DEC should abandon plans for motor vehicle access on this corridor. The "tube" that allows motor vehicle access across 4th-5th lakes should be removed and that channel ecologically restored.
RESPONSE: *The road to the "Tube" is classified Wild Forest and motor vehicle use is a permitted use within lands classified as Wild Forest. The Complex Plan proposes to remove the "Tube" when it becomes no longer usable, and replace with a bridge, which will provide for a more natural channel.*

Iron (Polaris) Bridge

COMMENT: Please take this letter as my public input in favor of keeping the Polaris Bridge and to designate the area as Wild Forest.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: I do not own a snowmobile, and I try to avoid the noise and smoke whenever and wherever I can. I do see some value in the machines as a tool, but that's not the purpose of the Polaris Bridge. Nevertheless, connecting different snowmobile regions with corridors (and such novel infrastructure as the Polaris Bridge) provides such great benefit for the snowmobile economy for so little land and infrastructure cost. We all need to get along and respect the other side if we are to effectively manage our resources. The decision to designate the area as a wild forest is a sound investment in that direction. It gives the snowmobilers a little consideration with a little land and infrastructure.
RESPONSE: *The comment is noted and the Complex Plan proposes a Class II community connector snowmobile trail that utilizes the existing Iron (Polaris) Bridge in order to connect the communities of Indian Lake and Minerva.*

COMMENT: Use of the bridge after the expiration of the Polaris Club's leases would be a violation of the APSLMP and WSRRSA.
RESPONSE: *The DEC agreement with the former landowner allows lessee access until September 30, 2018, and the Nature Conservancy access until September 30, 2019. The future of this bridge may be determined prior to these dates and acted upon afterwards. Note that this bridge was constructed under a WSRRSA permit issued by the APA.*

COMMENT: One of the most significant issues is the fact that the Iron (Polaris) Bridge is currently designated for motorized use in this UMP so that snowmobiles can access one of two proposed trails in the Vanderwhacker Wild Forest. The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) must not allow motorized use of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge and should remove this temporary bridge which was installed by Finch Pruyn for logging in 1992. There is no need for a snowmobile trail across the Polaris Bridge into the Vanderwhacker Wild Forest and in fact, motorized use of the bridge would not be in the best interest of the resource because this action would site motorized use in the edge of the defined Remote Interior areas in the Vanderwhacker Wild Forest. Further, DEC has explained that the two routes that are proposed to cross the Iron (Polaris) Bridge have major construction issues. The two proposed routes in the Vanderwhacker Wild Forest that would cross the bridge are very wet or have major construction issues. I am also very concerned that either one of these proposed routes will create a redundant snowmobile corridor because of the existing snowmobile route to the west of the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex that utilizes the Cornell Road and connects Indian Lake to Newcomb and Minerva.
RESPONSE: *The Complex Plan proposes to allow the continued use of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge for snowmobile access and to support a CP-3 designated route. Pursuant to current law and regulations, DEC has determined that the use of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge can continue as an existing land use.*

COMMENT: As snowmobilers in NY, we support the overall Complex plan as submitted by the Department of Environmental Resources. We believe the Polaris Bridge should remain in place. Also, we support a Cedar River Bridge. We are snowmobilers from PA that visit NY to snowmobile several times each winter.

RESPONSE: *Comment is noted and the Complex Plan currently proposes the continued use of the Polaris Bridge, and the construction of a bridge over the Cedar River, to support a Class II community connector snowmobile trail linking the Towns of Indian Lake with Minerva.*

COMMENT: The Opalescent Hunting and Fishing Club has 75 members who also hike, bike and snowmobile. As snowmobilers we support the overall plan and support any effort for the trails to become a hub for the five surrounding towns. We believe the Polaris Bridge should stay open and serve multi-trail function. We STRONGLY support Alternative 1B for a snowmobile trail that will connect Indian Lake to Minerva and a Cedar River bridge as you outlined in Alternative 4. This area has long been neglected and can serve to open up the recreational possibilities like those in Old Forge/Inlet area.
RESPONSE: *Comment is noted; with regard to the use of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge, please see the response above. In regard to Alternative IB, DEC has concluded this alternative has the potential for greater adverse environmental impacts due to terrain constraints and the presence of wetlands areas. Alternative 1A can be constructed using fewer bridges and terrain manipulation.*

COMMENT: The connection of these towns and the use of both proposed bridges will be a great way to enjoy these wonderful chunks of land that would otherwise only be enjoyed by a few. I know this land better than most and would love to see the next generation get off their phones and get into the woods.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: I firmly support the proposed snowmobile trail that crosses the Hudson on the Polaris Bridge and continues up the east side of the Hudson to Newcomb, where it will join the Newcomb to Minerva trail.
RESPONSE: *Comment is noted and the Complex Plan currently supports the use of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge.*

COMMENT: The Adirondack Council opposes expanding motorized recreational use in the Hudson Wild and Scenic River corridor and opening for new public motorized use what the Council refers to as the "temporary" Polaris Bridge installed in 1992 by Finch Pruyn for logging.
RESPONSE: *DEC believes the proposed use of the Chain Lakes Road (South) and the Iron (Polaris) Bridge do not constitute an alteration or expansion from the current levels of existing land use.*

COMMENT: I DO NOT believe that the Polaris Bridge, which crosses the Hudson River, should be removed. The Polaris Bridge should be retained and repaired when necessary.
RESPONSE: *Comment noted and the Complex Plan currently supports the continued use of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge*.

COMMENT: Any bridges that are currently in place should remain such as the Polaris Bridge. Removing already in place structures in this area is just plain not a good idea.
RESPONSE: *Comment noted, see above response.*

COMMENT: The Polaris Bridge should be removed. It is a nonconforming use in a Wild, Scenic, and Recreational River Area. It was never intended to be permanent. The APA permit allowing its' construction stated that the bridge was to be used temporarily until logging was completed. It was never a public road or open to use by the public. The Draft Complex's statements to the contrary are an

attempt to rewrite history and are misleading. To comply with the law, once this property came into State ownership, the State – through its appropriate agency, which in this case is DEC, is required to take the bridge away.

RESPONSE: *The APA permit issued on February 27, 1992 does not contain a condition that the bridge be removed after the property is logged. As stated in the APA permit Conclusions of Law: "The project would not cause an undue adverse impact upon the natural, scenic, aesthetic, ecological, wildlife, historic, recreational or open space resources of the Park or upon the ability of the public to provide supporting facilities and services made necessary by the project, taking into account the economic and social benefits that might be derived therefrom." DEC has determined that the Iron (Polaris) Bridge is an existing land use, and the continued use of the bridge by the public does not constitute an expansion or alteration of its use.*

COMMENT: The justification for the continued use of the Polaris Bridge and the construction of the Cedar River Bridge should be provided.
RESPONSE: *The Complex Plan includes additional information relating to the justification to support the determination that allows the continued use of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge and the construction of a bridge over the Cedar River.*

Snowmobiling

COMMENT: The two options for new class II community connector snowmobile trails proposed to be cut through the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest area will violate the NYS Constitution because of the great number of trees to be cut and the vast alteration of the natural terrain which undermines constitutional protections that these lands be "forever kept as wild forest lands."
RESPONSE: *DEC believes the construction of the proposed Class II community connector trail through the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest area will not violate Article XIV of the New York State Constitution because an immaterial amount of three cutting is anticipated. The location of the new trail will be sited in a manner which minimizes impacts to the environment to the greatest extent practicable.*

COMMENT: The alternatives for snowmobile trails which could be located to the west of the Hudson River need additional analysis. Related to this, the assertion that the Chain Lakes Road (North) is a town road is incorrect. The commenter says there is no evidence that the Town of Newcomb maintains this road. The DEC should refer to Highway Law 212 and disallow ATV's on this road.
RESPONSE: *DEC has considered this comment and declines to make this revision with regard to the snowmobile trails located to the west of the Hudson River. The location of the trails to the west of the Hudson River result in the potential for adverse impacts to the river resources in the area greater than the preferred alternative. With regard to the ATV use, the Complex Plan does not propose any public ATV use on roads.*

COMMENT: I would like to see at least consideration for a trail from Indian lake to Minerva. The trail from Indian lake to Newcomb was one of the best things that ever happened to the area.
RESPONSE: *The Complex Plan establishes a trail between Indian Lake and Minerva.*

COMMENT: The Adirondack Council supports establishing appropriate snowmobile use and snowmobile trail alternatives that limit impacts to the natural resources and serene recreational

experience that this wild area offers. The Council opposes the building of new snowmobile trail in the interior of the Vanderwhacker Wild Forest Area. The Council states that this would unnecessarily open this wild and remote area to disturbances given other trail alternatives to the west, and put at risk sensitive wetlands and wildlife habitats.
RESPONSE: *DEC has determined that the preferred alternative for the segment of the Indian Lake to Minerva Class II community connector trail located within the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest area minimizes adverse environmental impacts to the greatest extent practicable. Locating the trail within the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest area provides the most direct and reasonable route for creating a community connector route between the communities of Indian Lake and Minerva. Existing haul roads will be utilized for a portion of the segment, and DEC will seek to avoid, consistent with the 2009 snowmobile guidance, wetlands and sensitive wild life habitat.*

COMMENT: How will ATVs be prevented from using snowmobile trails?
RESPONSE: *DEC will enforce against unauthorized ATV use within the Complex Area.*

COMMENT: I have been snowmobiling the area for over 33 years and my family enjoys all the area has to offer. We usually stay in the area 8 weekends in the winter and 1-2 weekends in the summer.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: Snowmobiles trails should stay on the periphery of management areas and stay near existing roads.
RESPONSE: *The Complex Plan proposes to locate snowmobile trails in accordance with the 2009 snowmobile guidance. Careful consideration will be given to site trails in locations that minimize adverse environmental impacts to the greatest extent practicable. Locating snowmobile trails next to existing roads can sometimes diminish the snowmobile experience and create potential safety issues.*

COMMENT: I strongly support Alternative 1B for a snowmobile trail that will connect Indian Lake to Minerva.
RESPONSE: *Alternative 1B has the greater potential for adverse environmental impacts to the natural resources of the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest area, therefore the preferred location of the trail is Alternative 1A.*

COMMENT: As nature and snowmobile enthusiasts, we support the complex plan and believe a "recreational hub" would not only be beautiful, but also could provide needed winter revenue for these communities. We support Alternative 1B and Alternative 4 and feel that the Polaris Bridge should stay in place to serve the multi-trail system in the Complex. We also support ALL of the efforts and energies of the DEC and applaud your work as you serve and protect our beautiful Adirondack Park!
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: The commenter supports both options 1A and 1B for the snowmobile trail, but prefers 1B as they like the direct connection between the towns. Parking areas should be in the hamlets and not in the interior of the management areas, so the people who access the management areas will have access to food and lodging.
RESPONSE: *DEC believes that the most direct route would result in an unacceptable level of adverse impacts to the natural resources within the area, therefore Alternative 1A is the preferred alternative. The DEC has provided for a limited number of parking spaces in the interior of the management area*

with the full understanding that demand will exceed the capacity and parking areas within the hamlets and towns will be utilized.

COMMENT: I was at the hearing in Newcomb and was disappointed that we could not ask questions. I was also disappointed that you are still showing Alternative B as a possible route, and concerned that snow trends in the park and climate change in general were not discussed. Minerva has not had reliable snow cover in the last ten years, enough for heavy use by groomers and half ton snowmobiles. The commenter asks who would maintain the marshy route through the wild forest. The commenter asks if DOT has been contacted about constructing a bridge at Route 28N over the Boreas River. The commenter asks what chemicals are used on bog bridges, such as fungicides, and asks if these chemicals would come in contact with the water. The commenter asks for a picture or specification for bog bridges and asks if these are in use on private land. The commenter asks to see an easement contract for a connector trail going over private land, preferably a form that is completed.
RESPONSE: *The purpose of the hearing is for DEC to receive public comment on the proposed Complex Plan. In order to conduct the hearing in a manner that is fair to all participants, DEC is unable to respond to questions or comments in that forum because of the time it would take to answer all questions received.*

COMMENT: DEC's plans to retain and utilize the Iron (Polaris) Bridge and build new multi-use snowmobile trails through the interior of the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest area violates the Snowmobile Trail Guidance because it is duplicative and will be cut through a wild, interior area of the Forest Preserve. No new snowmobile trails should be cut through the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest area east of the Hudson River. These trails are redundant since the APA has approved a Minerva to Newcomb trail and there is already a trail from Indian Lake to Newcomb, so there is already an Indian Lake to Minerva connection. The existing snowmobile trail through the conservation easement needs to be assessed. **RESPONSE:** *The existing trails to the West in the Blue Mountain Wild Forest connect Indian Lake to Blue Mountain Lake, Indian Lake and Blue Mountain Lake to Long Lake, and Long Lake to Newcomb, but not Indian Lake to Minerva. The proposed snowmobile trail in this UMP is intended to connect Indian Lake to Minerva.*

COMMENT: I support the recreational use of snowmobiles on a dedicated trail network as long as these recreational uses do not impact recreational uses of other visitors, wildlife, and habitat in the wilderness area. However, I oppose building a snowmobile trail into the interior of the Vanderwhacker Wild Forest Area as it would unnecessarily disturb the area and put sensitive wetlands and wildlife at risk.
RESPONSE: *DEC has selected the preferred alternative for the snowmobile trail in a location that minimizes adverse environmental impacts to the greatest extent practicable. The analysis by DEC took into account impacts to other uses on this multiple use trail, as well as impacts to wildlife, habitat, and other natural resources. DEC has chosen Alternative 1A because it avoids environmentally sensitive areas within the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest which includes many wetland areas.*

COMMENT: We are a family of 4 avid snowmobilers. My wife and I and our children absolutely love Adirondacks. We are members of the NYSSA and travel 6 ½ hours every weekend each way to enjoy what the Adirondacks have to offer for our sport. We support the overall Complex plan as it should support the efforts of the five surrounding towns to become a "Recreational Hub" and generate much needed income for the area. We would love to see the proposed 1B alternative for a snowmobile trail that would link Minerva to Indian Lake. We also believe the Polaris Bridge should stay in place and serve all seasonal uses for recreation. We would also support a new Cedar River Bridge as described in

Alternative 4. We own a property in upstate Pennsylvania where we have snowmobiled for years and we prefer to make the much longer trip to the Adirondacks because of the involvement and planning such as this that makes the experience that much more enjoyable.
RESPONSE: *Alternative 1B was rejected by DEC because of the significant environmental constraints caused by the existing terrain, number of wetland crossings and probable impacts to wetlands. DEC estimates that Alternative 1B would require twice as many bridges built than Alternative 1A, and would require more terrain modification such as the construction of water bars, bench-cutting, ditching, and the construction of a turnpike through a wetland.*

COMMENT: Please allow/keep the Essex Chain of Lakes trails open to snowmobile use. I also strongly urge the DEC to make the necessary upgrades to any bridges, crossings, signage and maintenance of trails to enhance the system for all types of activities. Snowmobilers' economic impact is considerable and reaches past NY State borders. Please keep the trails open and maintained.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: As a snowmobiler, I support the overall Complex Plan. The plan should support the efforts and the desire of the five surrounding towns to become a "Recreational Hub." I believe that the Polaris Bridge should stay in place and serve multi-trail interests in the Complex. I strongly support Alternative 1B for a snowmobile trail that will connect Indian Lake to Minerva.
RESPONSE: *Alternative 1B was rejected by DEC due to the greater potential for adverse environmental impacts to the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest.*

COMMENT: Remember that snowmobile trails are designed for multiple uses, including horses and bikes, not just snowmobiles.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: It should be explained how the proposed location and design of the proposed snowmobile trails comply with the snowmobile guidance documents.
RESPONSE: This has been addressed in Section O on the Complex Plan – Snowmobile Trails

COMMENT: In assessing various alternative management recommendations this Draft UMP fails to take Climate Change into account. The decline in the number of weeks of snow pack and the loss of ice cover even in the central Adirondack Park over the past 50 years is very well-documented. The failure of any Adirondack Forest Preserve UMP to take these facts into account in how winter sports like snowmobiling are planned and managed should be viewed by the DEC and APA as a serious UMP deficiency.
RESPONSE: *DEC has considered the effects of climate change on the proposed Complex Plan, but declines to make any changes to the current version of the document*.

Universal Access

COMMENT: I am glad to see a section devoted to handicapped and elderly people. I am 82 years old, a year round resident of Newcomb living at Goodnow Flow on Woodys Road and have a DEC handicap permit. Please speed up your plans for handicap use at Fourth and Fifth Lakes. Traffic in front of my home has increased ten-fold. The DEC Ranger told us that people going to and from Deer Pond would use the Cornell Road all the way to and from Route 28N. The state spent our tax dollars to buy this

easement, so please grade that road to make it the access to Deer Pond and not Woodys Road. Safety is important.
RESPONSE: *The accessible parking, camping, and waterway access for people with disabilities will be constructed this field season.*

COMMENT: For over 30 years I have enjoyed fishing the Stillwater area of the Hudson River. The gate was erected 0.80 miles from the river. There is no way I can haul my canoe up that long hill. We were told the gate was going to be moved closer to the river as permitted, so as to eliminate the hill. If this cannot be done, then let handicapped people go around the existing gate. Snowmobiles can. How do handicapped people get to Third Lake? Do we have to paddle all the way to get to the best fishing? Will the Management plan permit battery powered bicycles? They have no motors, and can travel the proposed bicycle trails. They are used by pedaling on level ground and then assist when going up hills. They have a far less impact on the trails than horses and snowmobiles and require less expense for trail maintenance.
RESPONSE: *The parking for the Hudson River at the Iron (Polaris) Bridge has been moved down the hill, and is now 0.30 mi from the River, on a much flatter grade. Accessible parking and waterway access will be provided at Fifth Lake, and from Fifth Lake there are no carries to Third Lake, one can paddle seamlessly.*

COMMENT: The Adirondack Council supports providing special access for persons with disabilities, including a parking lot close to Fourth and Fifth Lake for those seeking an authentic wild lands experience.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: I believe that the Hudson Wild and Scenic River corridor must remain open to people of all abilities to enjoy. And, I support keeping the Polaris Bridge across the Hudson River. The Adirondack Park is vast. There are enough totally wild areas to preserve the natural resources. Its beauty should not be completely closed off from people with limited mobility.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: Efforts should be made to provide the maximum four-season motorized access for the most people.
RESPONSE: *DEC believes that this Complex Plan strikes the appropriate balance between recreational access, including access for people with disabilities, and resource preservation.*

Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act (WSRRSA)

COMMENT: Use of the Polaris Bridge and crossing of the Boreas River by snowmobiles is not permissible under the WSRRSA.
RESPONSE: *DEC has determined that existing statutory and regulatory authorities allow a permit to be issued to locate a trail, designed for use by snowmobiles, within a WSRRSA-designated river corridor, and allow the construction and use of a bridge over a river designated as Scenic.*

COMMENT: DEC must ensure that the planning, implementation, and construction of the bridge over the Cedar River complies with NYS Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers Act (WSRRA) Regulations. DEC

must follow the law in creating this new recreational resource in the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex.
RESPONSE: *DEC will adhere to existing statutory and regulatory authority for the planning, implementation and construction of a bridge over the Cedar River Scenic River.*

COMMENT: DEC's plans for motor vehicle use within designated Wild and Scenic River corridors violates the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Act and violates long established management principles, practices, and precedents in long-standing Unit Management Plans, such as the Blue Mountain Wild Forest UMP.
RESPONSE: *DEC has interpreted existing statutory and regulatory authority to allow the continued use of motor vehicles, primary snowmobiles, within designated river areas as an existing land use.*

COMMENT: I support wild lands restoration and to that end, oppose expansion of motorized recreational use in the Hudson Wild and Scenic River corridor. I also support the removal of the Polaris Bridge to bring the area back to the wild quality its name suggests.
RESPONSE: *The State realizes that constructing program goals, such as the protection of natural resources and providing public access to recreational opportunities , are sometimes unavoidable, however, experience DEC strives to seek a balance among these priorities in order to provide as broad experience as possible to all members of the public.*

COMMENT: The Essex Chain Complex UMP should comply with the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Act, which prohibit a motor vehicle bridge over the Cedar River, prohibits retention of the Polaris Bridge for use by motor vehicles, and prohibits motor vehicles, such as float planes on Pine Lake or automobiles on the Chain Lake Road South, within the .5-mile corridor of classified Wild rivers.
RESPONSE*: The Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act and its implementing regulations were enacted and adopted, respectfully, to preserve rivers in their free-flowing condition and to protect their immediate surroundings for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. The act and implementing regulations identified certain activities that were allowed and prohibited, but also acknowledged that certain land uses, in existence when the act and its regulations first took effect, could continue. Such is the case for the use of the Polaris Bridge, the Chain Lakes Road (North), the Chain Lakes Road (South), and floatplane use on Pine Lake. The construction of a bridge over the Cedar River Scenic River is permitted for roads and non-motorized open space recreational uses. The regulations also allow DEC to permit motorized open space recreational uses, namely snowmobiles, to use the bridge if the DEC determines that the use will not adversely impact any river resource and meets all other applicable standards.*

COMMENT: When the purchase of the land was being considered, the understanding at that time was that the WSRRS was going to be amended to allow the uses and their locations that are proposed in the Draft UMP. If the Cedar River Bridge is important, then the regulations should be amended.
RESPONSE: *DEC has determined that existing statutory and regulatory authorities allow the proposed Action Steps in the UMP to be implemented without the need for a regulatory amendment.*

COMMENT: Comment was made that when the WSRRS Act was enacted it was not understood that all existing structures had to be removed.
RESPONSE*: DEC has interpreted the WSRRS Act to conclude that existing structures and improvements can continue to be used in the Complex Area in compliance with the WSRRS Act.*

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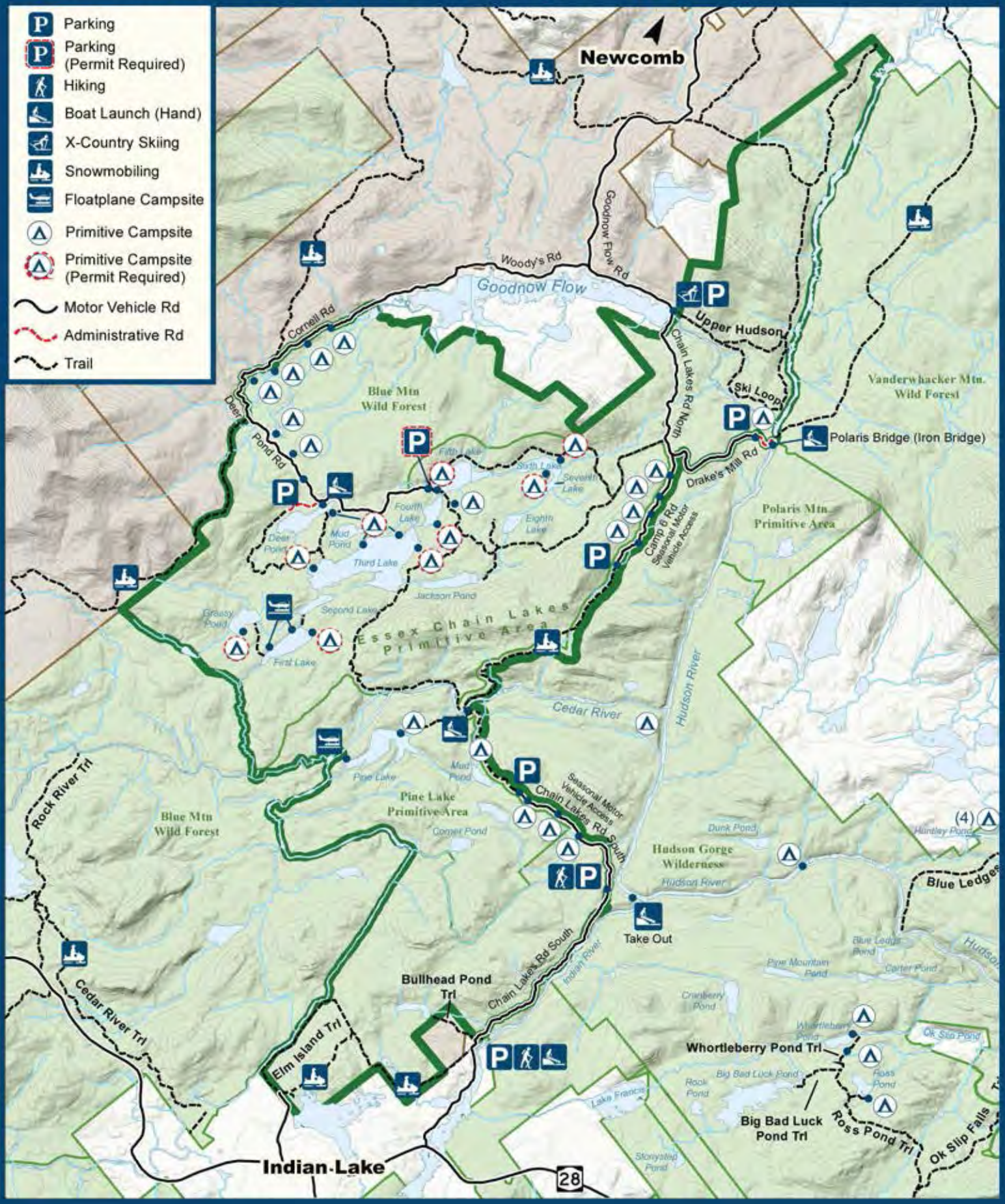
Appendix I - Maps and Photos

New York State's Forest Preserve

Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan

Proposed Facilities



NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY | Department of Environmental Conservation

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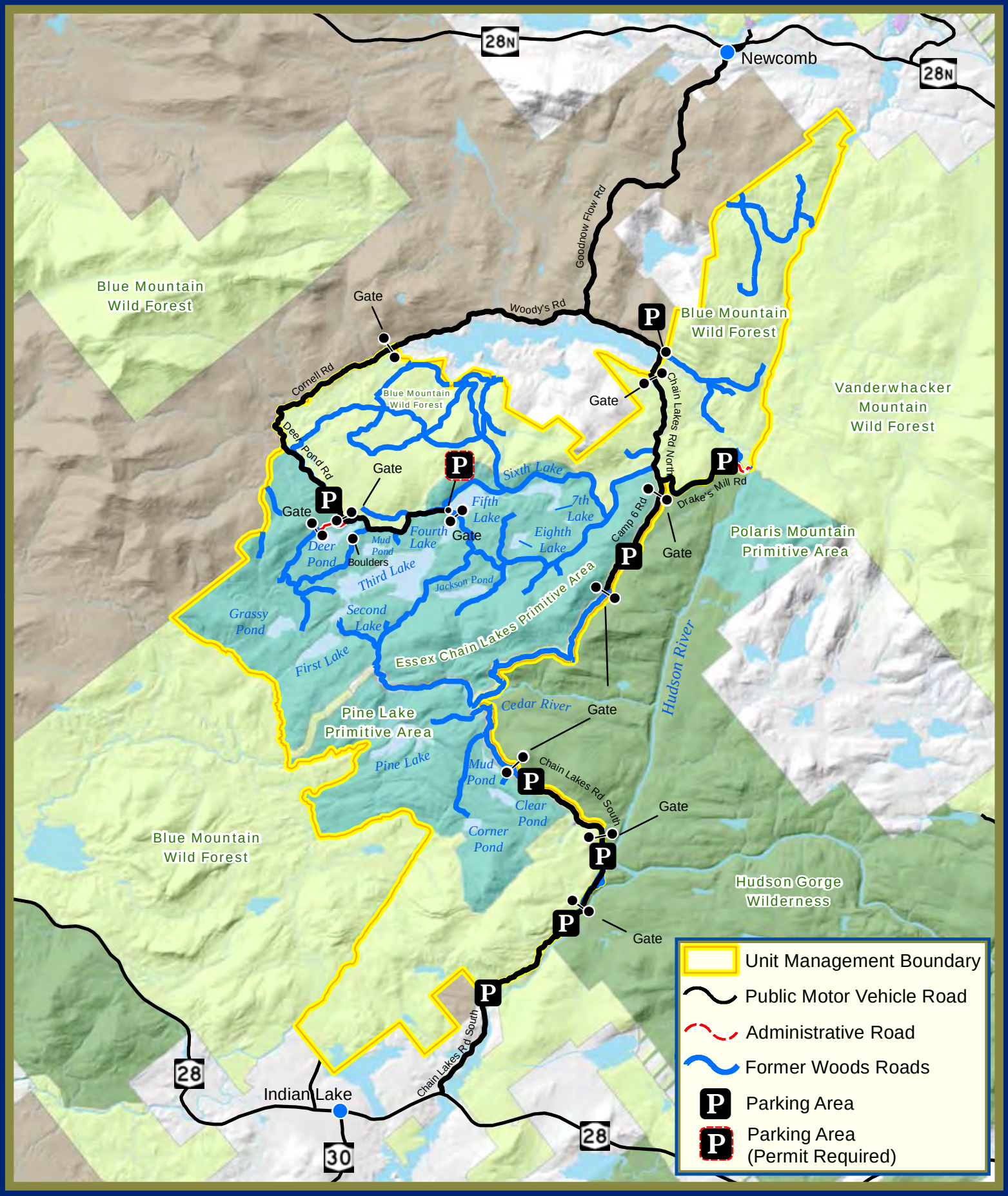
New York's Forest Preserve

Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan

Proposed Gates & Administrative Roads



NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY | Department of Environmental Conservation

Warrensburg Office: (518)623-1200

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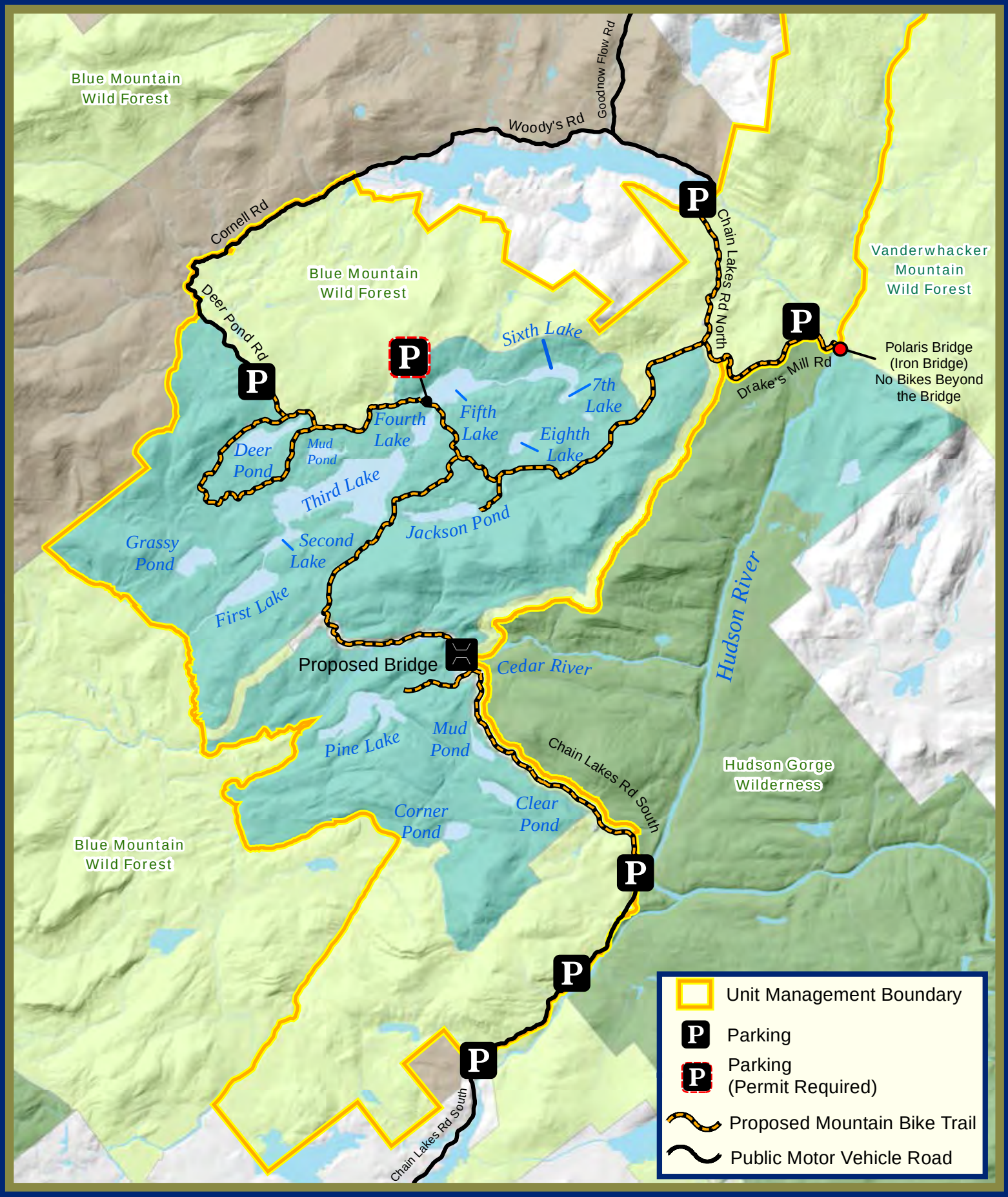
New York's Forest Preserve

Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan

Proposed Bicycle Trails



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Warrensburg Office: (518)623-1200

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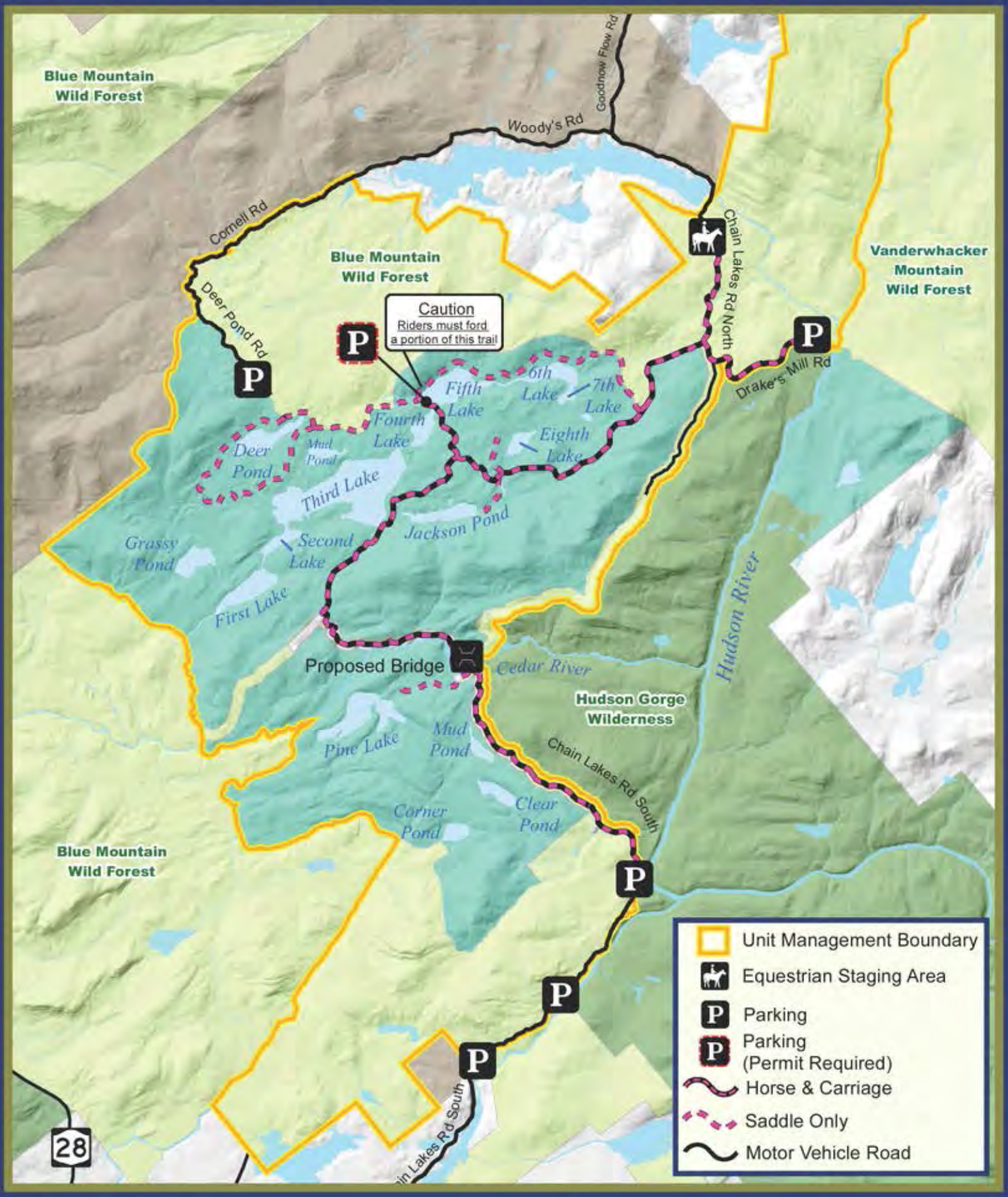
New York's Forest Preserve

Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan

Proposed Equestrian Trails



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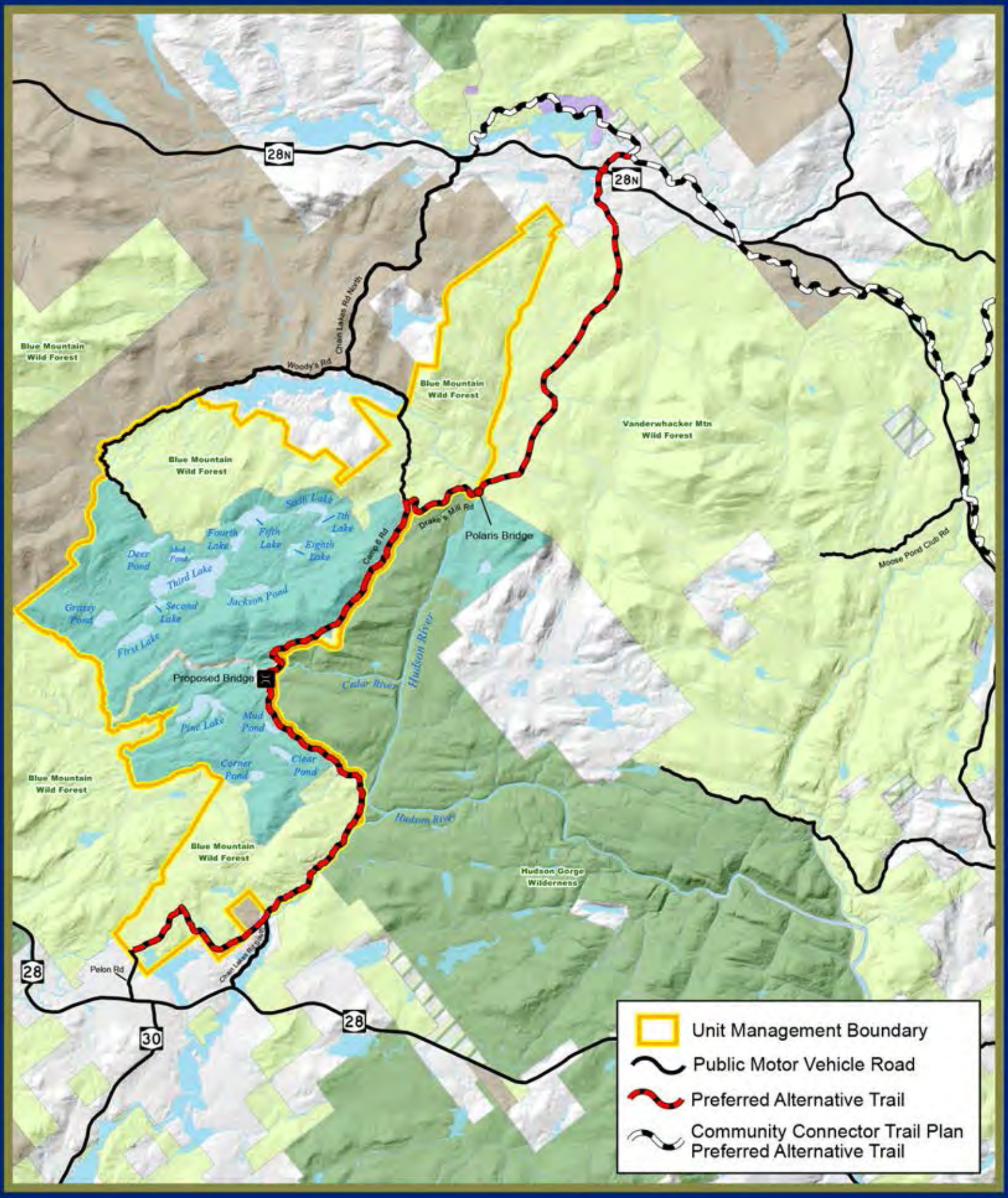
New York's Forest Preserve

Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Mangement Plan

Proposed Snowmobile Trail



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Warrensburg Office: (518)623-1200

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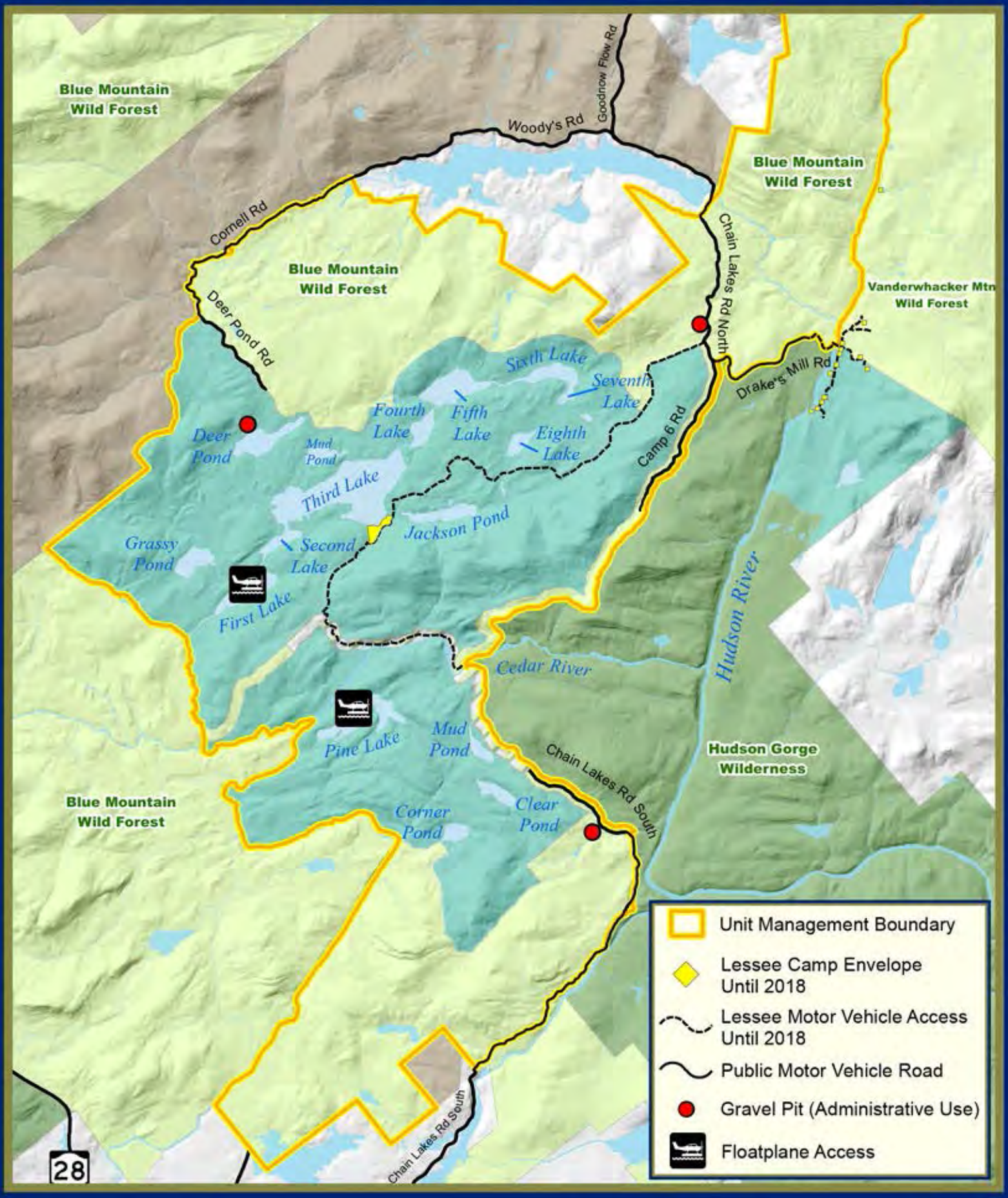
New York's Forest Preserve

Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan

Reserved Rights



NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY | Department of Environmental Conservation

Warrensburg Office: (518)623-1200

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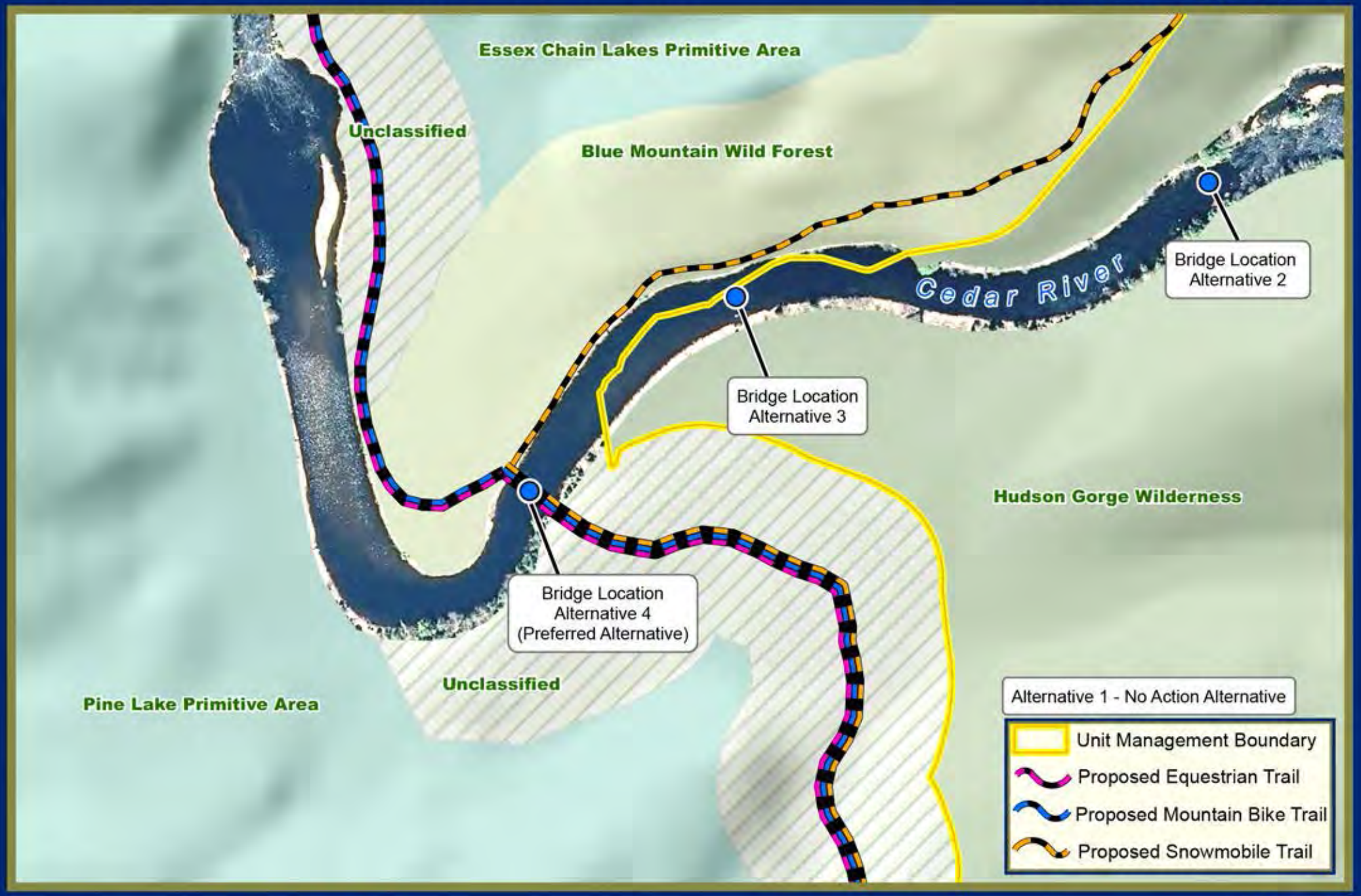
New York's Forest Preserve

Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan

Cedar River Bridge Location



NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY | Department of Environmental Conservation

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Warrensburg Office: (518)623-1200

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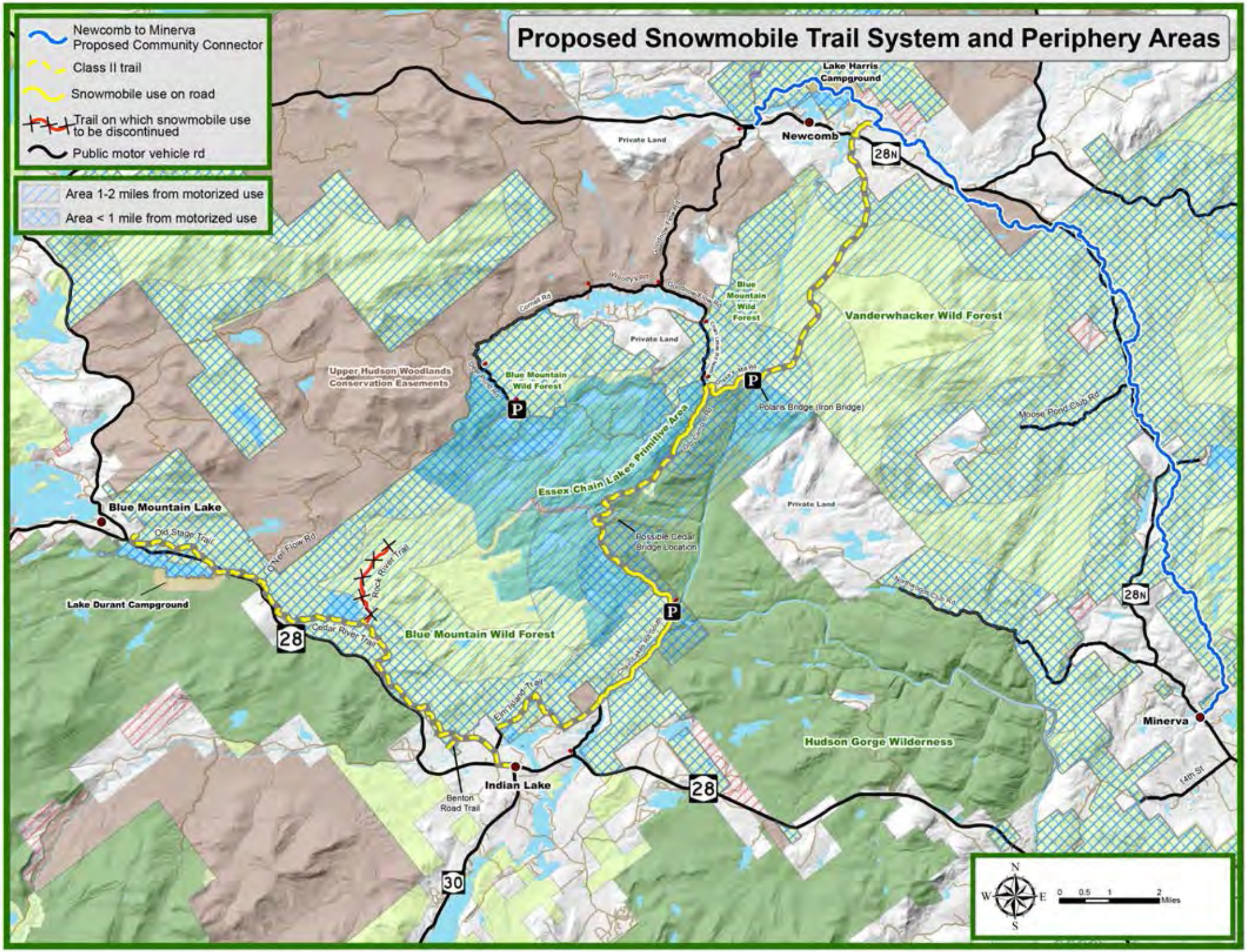
Proposed Snowmobile Trail System and Periphery Areas
Newcomb to Minerva Proposed Community Connector
Class II trail
Snowmobile use on road
Trail on which snowmobile use to be discontinued
Public motor vehicle rd
Area 1-2 miles from motorized use
Area < 1 mile from motorized use
Lake Harris Campground
Newcomb
28N
Private Land
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
Vanderwhacker Wild Forest
Upper Hudson Woodlands Conservation Easements
Polaris Bridge (Iron Bridge)
Moose Pond Club Rd
Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area
Possible Cedar Bridge Location
Blue Mountain Lake
Old Stage Trail
O'Neil Flow Rd
Rock River Trail
Lake Durant Campground
28
Cedar River Trail
Elm Island Trail
Hudson Gorge Wilderness
Minerva
14th St
Indian Lake
Benton Road Trail
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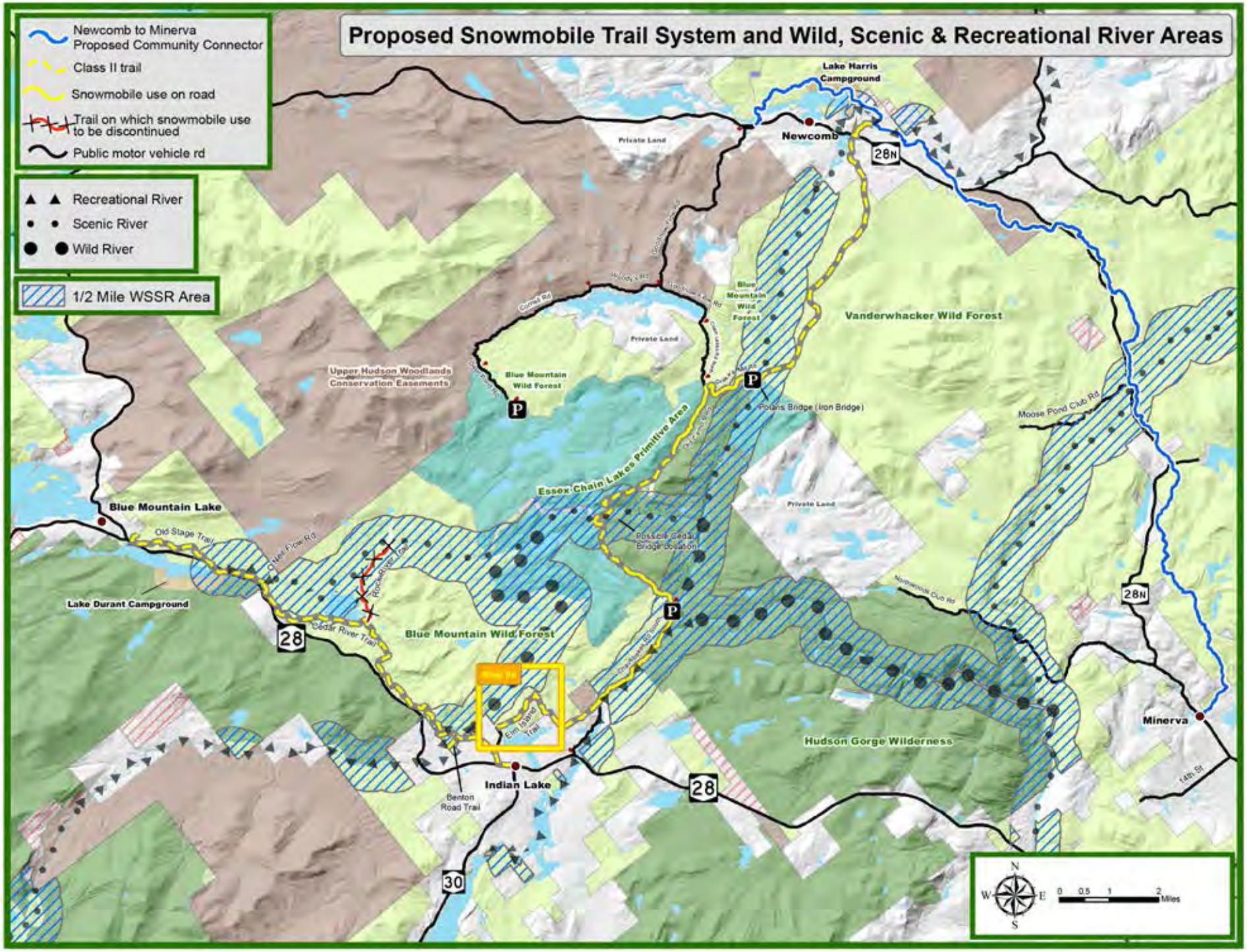
Proposed Snowmobile Trail System and Wild, Scenic & Recreational River Areas
Newcomb to Minerva Proposed Community Connector
Class II trail
Snowmobile use on road
Trail on which snowmobile use to be discontinued
Public motor vehicle rd
Recreational River
Scenic River
Wild River
1/2 Mile WSSR Area
Lake Harris Campground
Newcomb
28N
Private Land
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
Vanderwhacker Wild Forest
Upper Hudson Woodlands Conservation Easements
Potsdam Bridge (Iron Bridge)
Moose Pond Club Rd
Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area
Blue Mountain Lake
Old Stage Trail
O'Neil Flow Rd
Rocky River Trail
Possible Cedar Bridge Location
Lake Durant Campground
28
Cedar River Trail
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
Elm Island Trail
Hudson Gorge Wilderness
Minerva
Indian Lake
Benton Road Trail
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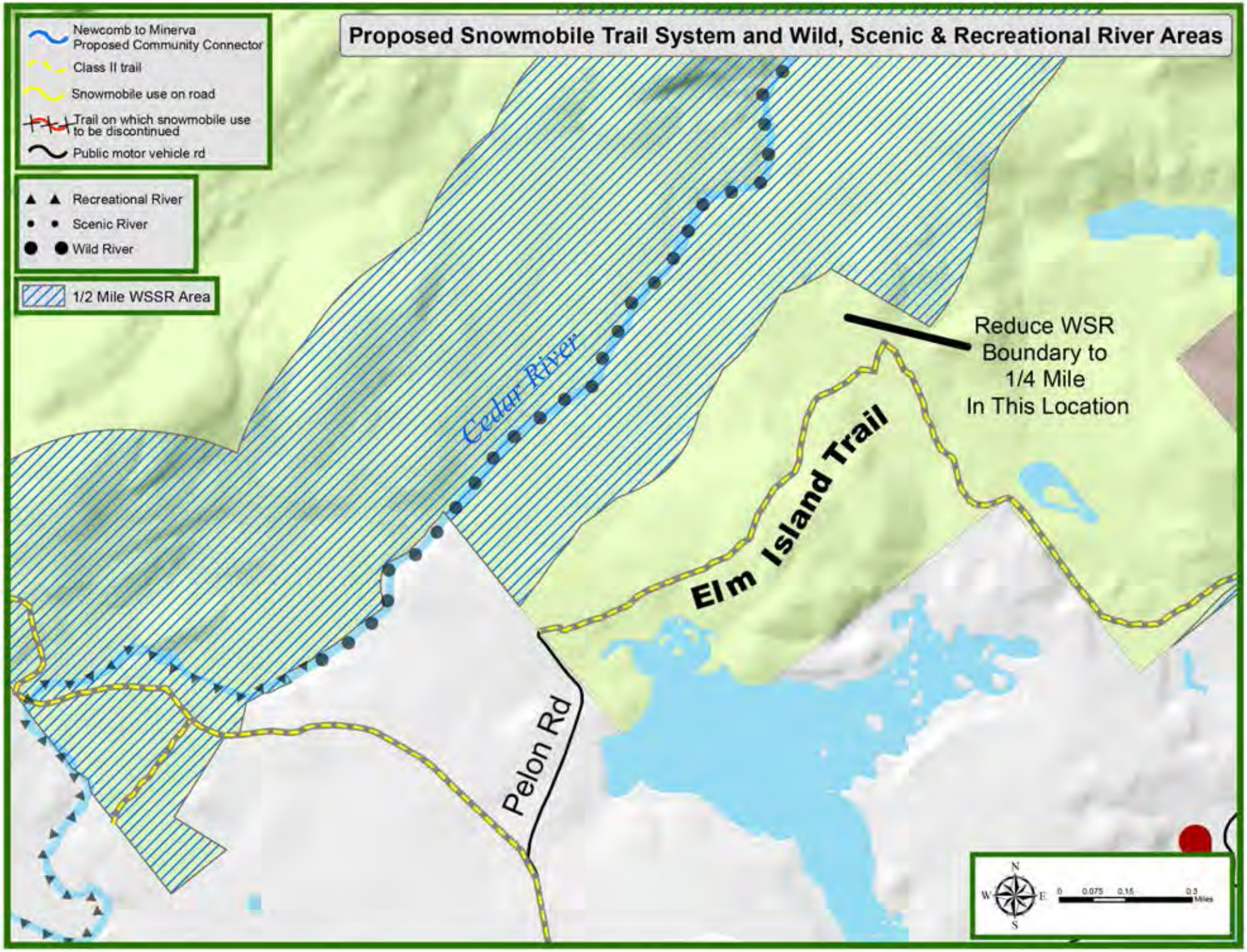
Proposed Snowmobile Trail System and Wild, Scenic & Recreational River Areas
Newcomb to Minerva Proposed Community Connector
Class II trail
Snowmobile use on road
Trail on which snowmobile use to be discontinued
Public motor vehicle rd
Recreational River
Scenic River
Wild River
1/2 Mile WSSR Area
Cedar River
Reduce WSR Boundary to 1/4 Mile In This Location
Elm Island Trail
Pelon Rd
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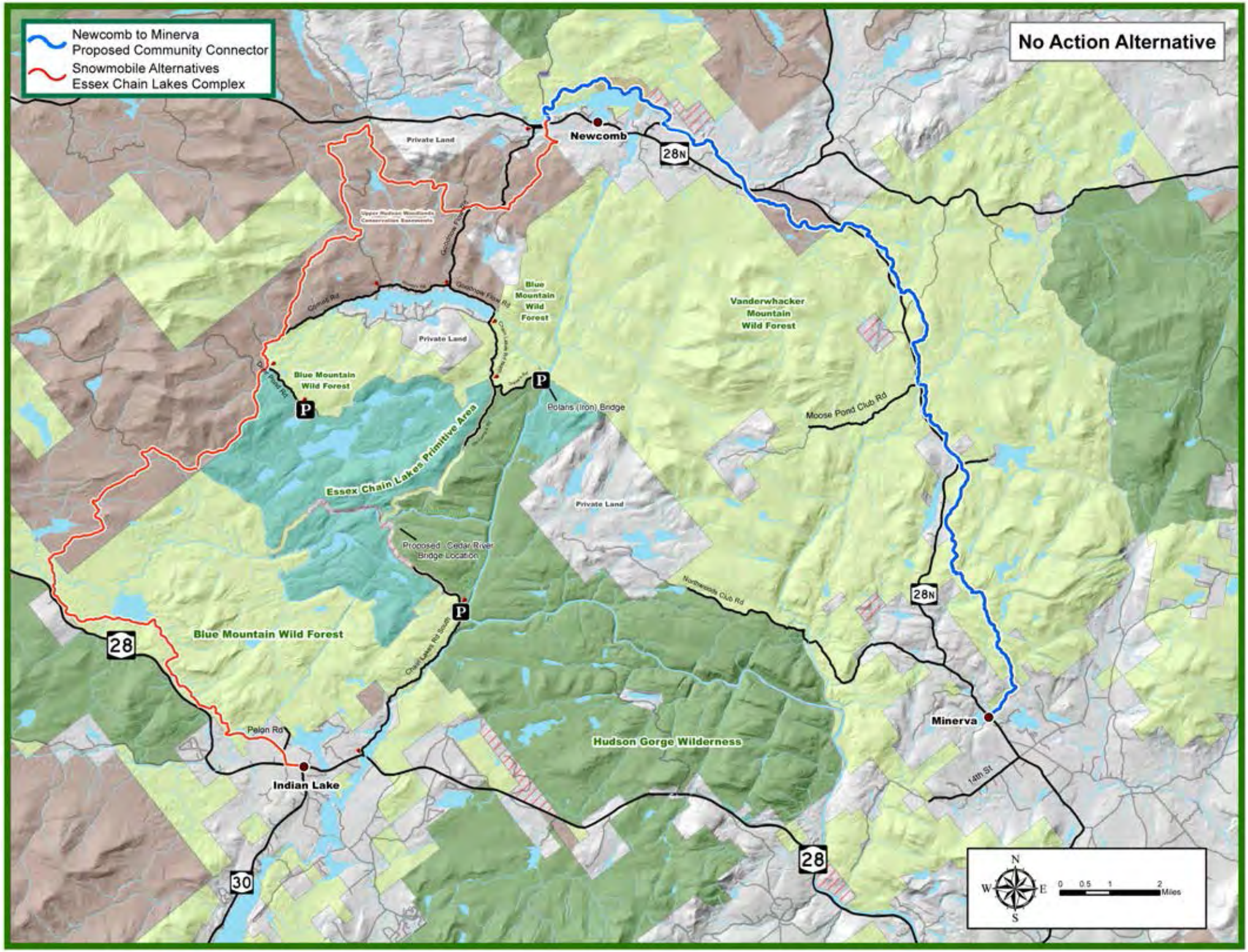
No Action Alternative
Newcomb to Minerva
Proposed Community Connector
Snowmobile Alternatives
Essex Chain Lakes Complex
Newcomb
28N
Private Land
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest
Private Land
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
Potsans (Iron) Bridge
Moose Pond Club Rd
Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area
Private Land
Proposed Cedar River Bridge Location
Northwoods Club Rd
28N
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
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Hudson Gorge Wilderness
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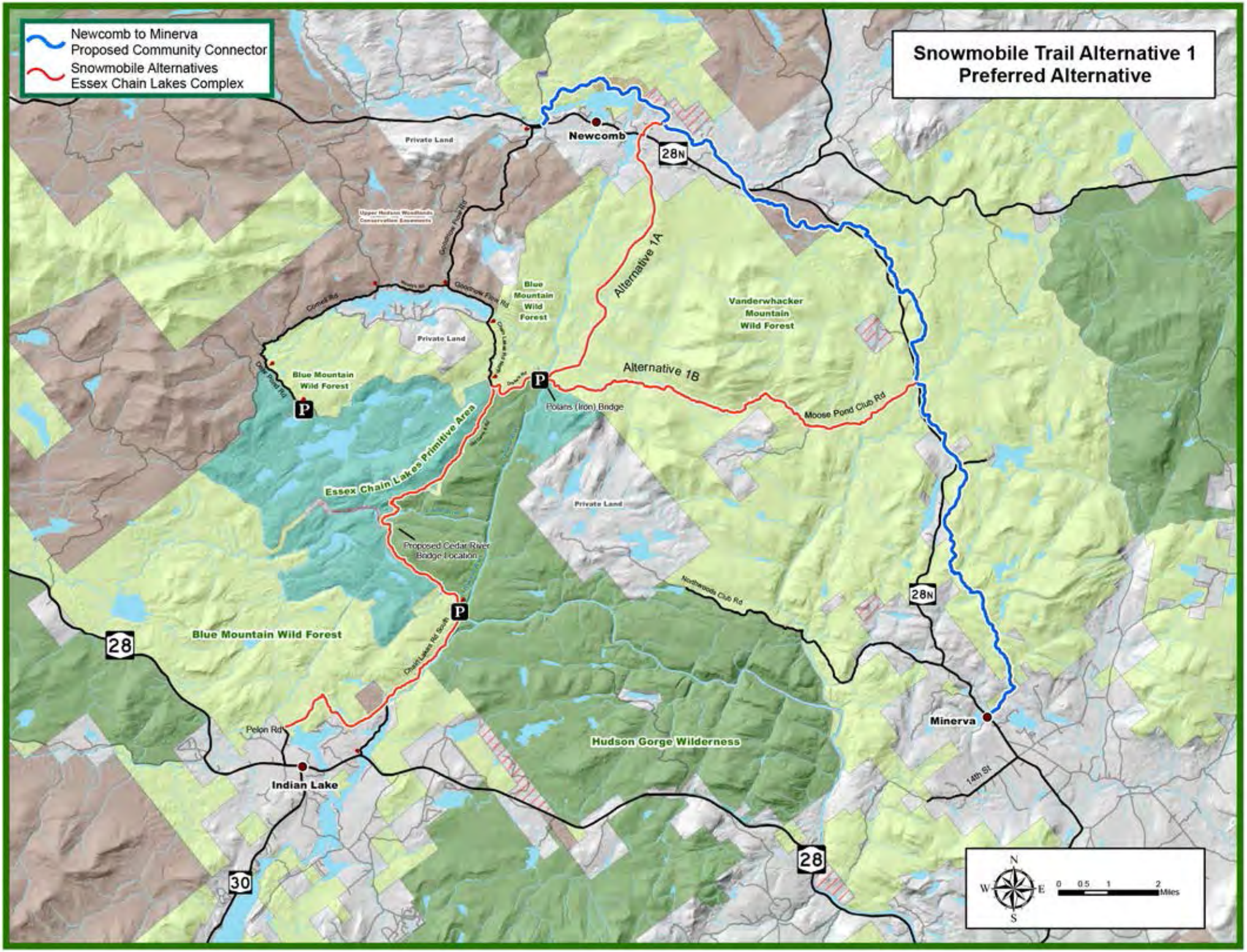
Newcomb to Minerva
Proposed Community Connector
Snowmobile Alternatives
Essex Chain Lakes Complex
Snowmobile Trail Alternative 1
Preferred Alternative
Newcomb
28N
Private Land
Upper Hudson Woodlands Conservation Easements
Goldthrite Flow Rd
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
Alternative 1A
Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest
Alternative 1B
Moose Pond Club Rd
Polans (Iron) Bridge
Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area
Proposed Cedar River Bridge Location
Northwoods Club Rd
Chain Lakes Rd South
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
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Pelon Rd
Indian Lake
Hudson Gorge Wilderness
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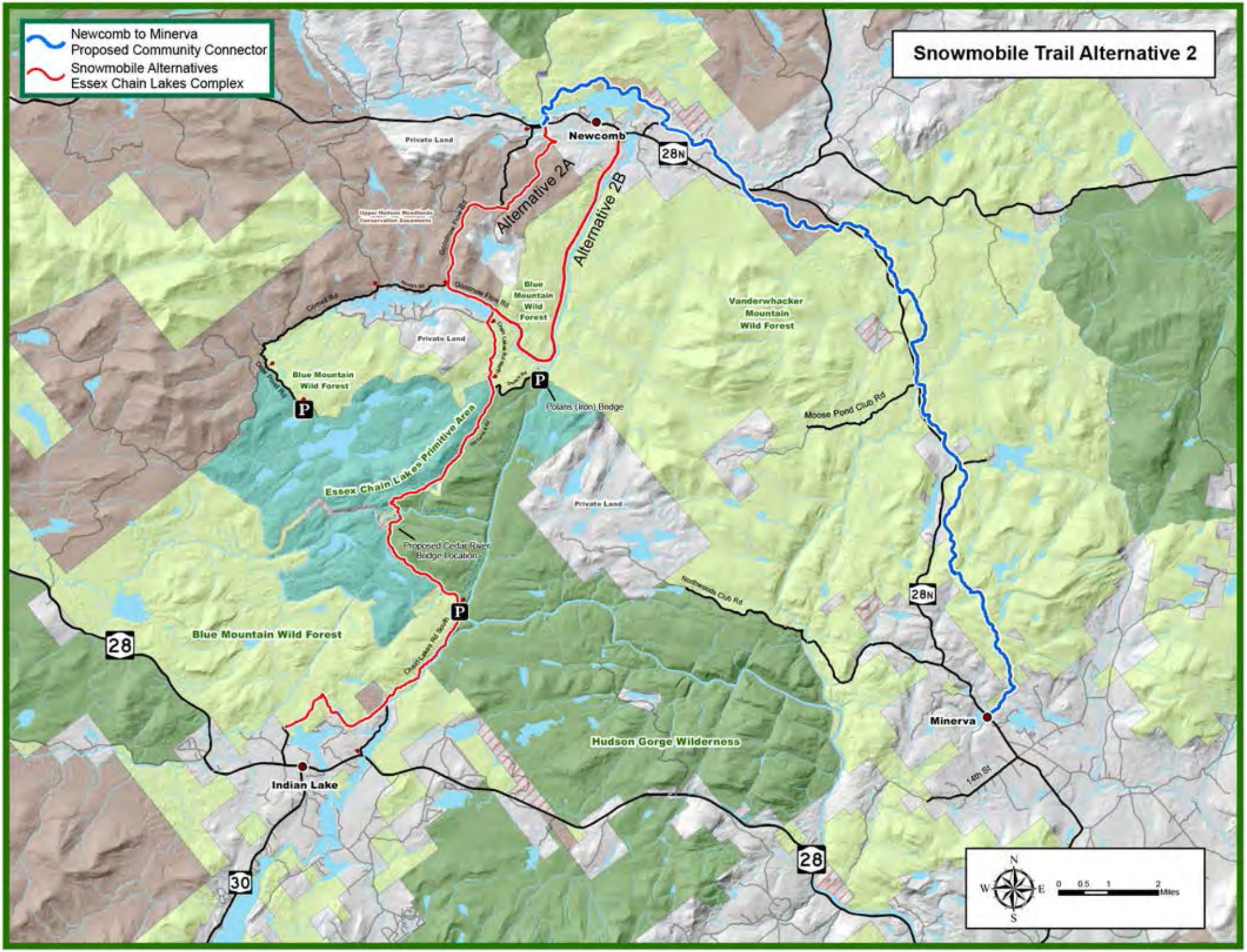
Snowmobile Trail Alternative 2
Newcomb to Minerva
Proposed Community Connector
Snowmobile Alternatives
Essex Chain Lakes Complex
Newcomb
Minerva
Indian Lake
Alternative 2A
Alternative 2B
28N
28
30
Private Land
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest
Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area
Hudson Gorge Wilderness
Polaris (Iron) Bridge
Proposed Cedar River Bridge Location
Moose Pond Club Rd
Northwoods Club Rd
Cedar River Rd
Chain Lakes Rd South
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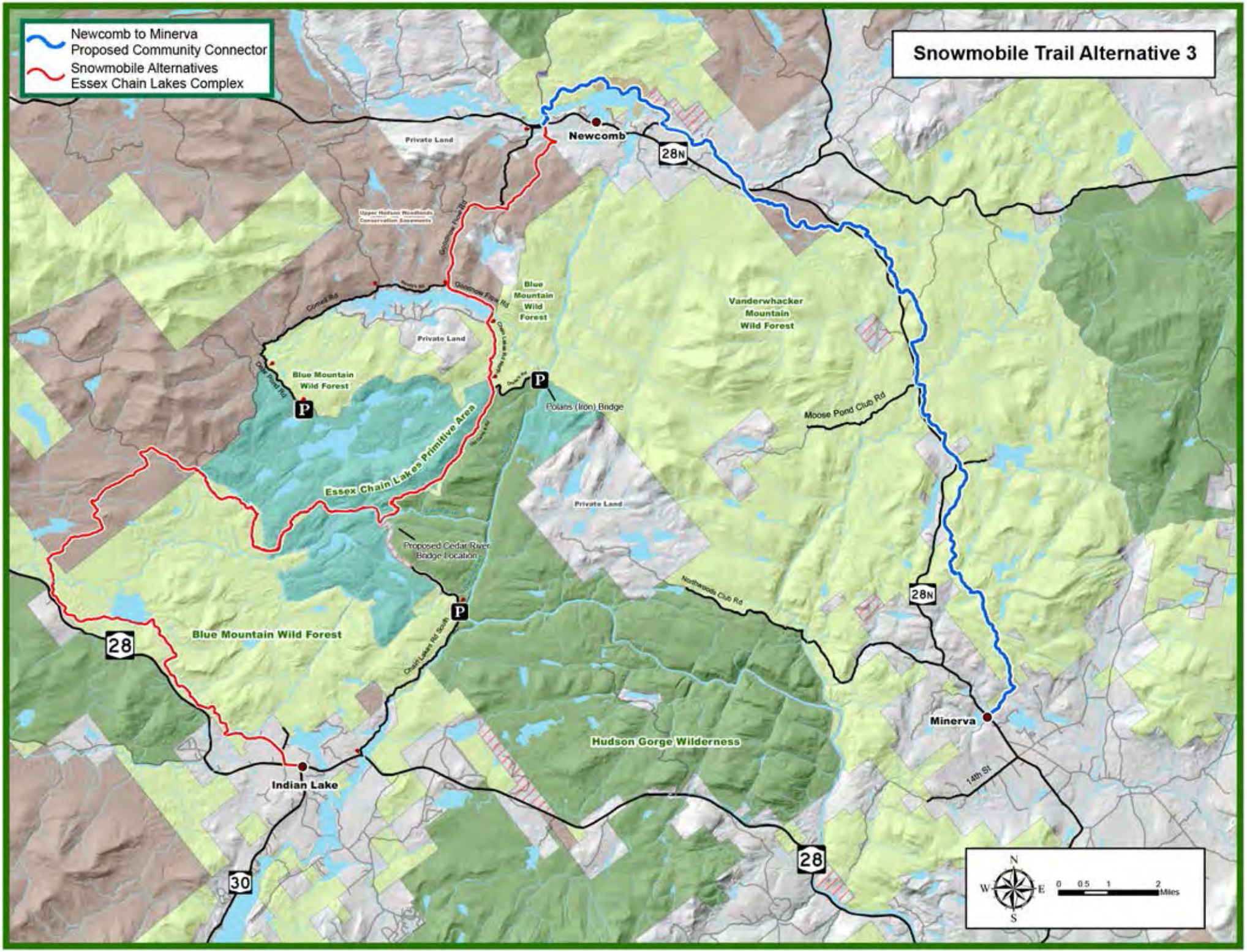
Snowmobile Trail Alternative 3
Newcomb to Minerva
Proposed Community Connector
Snowmobile Alternatives
Essex Chain Lakes Complex
Newcomb
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Private Land
Upper Hudson Woodlands Conservation Easements
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Blue Mountain Wild Forest
Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest
Cornell Rd
Private Land
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
Cedar River Rd
Polaris (Iron) Bridge
Moose Pond Club Rd
Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area
Private Land
Proposed Cedar River Bridge Location
Northwoods Club Rd
28N
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
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Chain Lakes Rd South
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Hudson Gorge Wilderness
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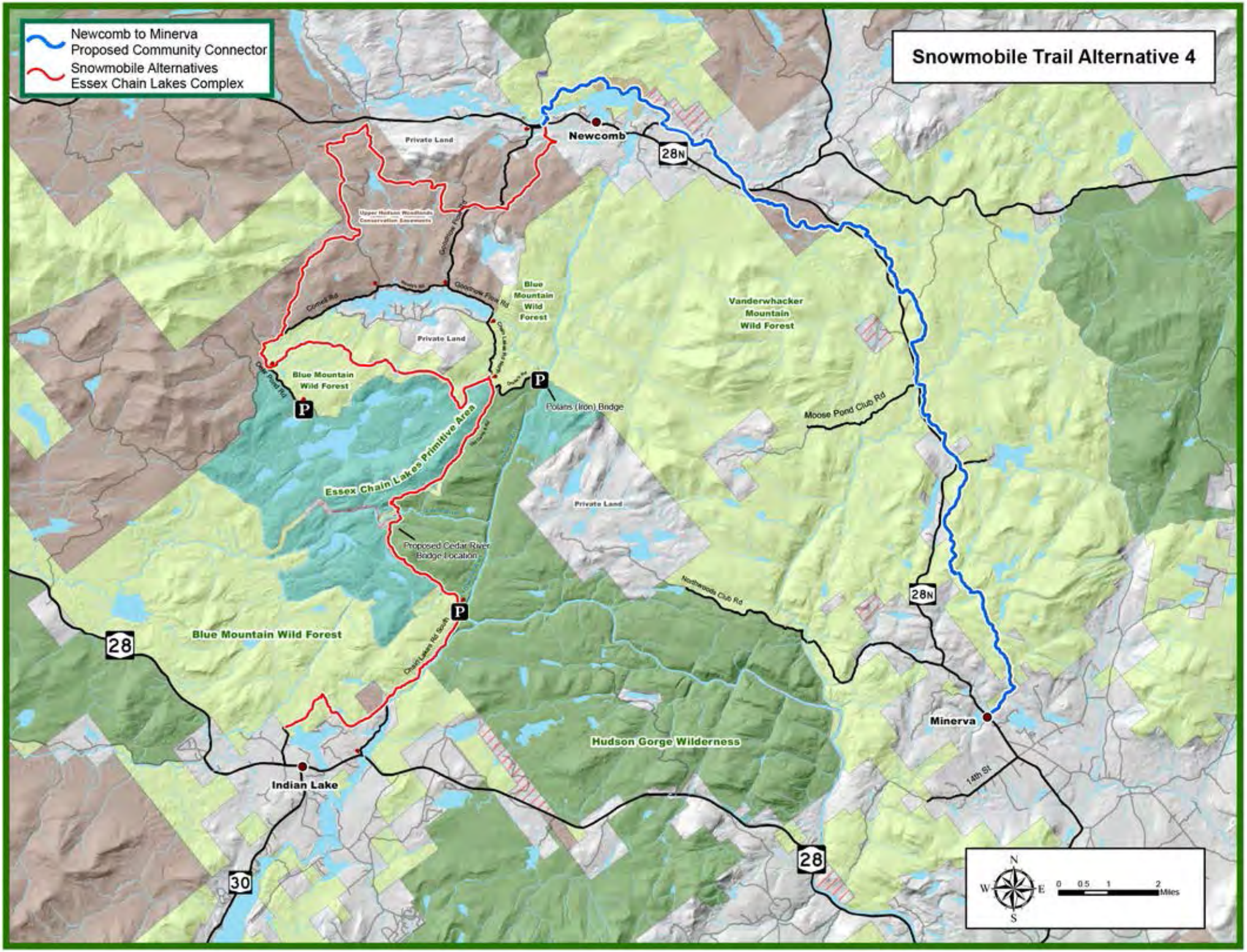
Snowmobile Trail Alternative 4
Newcomb to Minerva
Proposed Community Connector
Snowmobile Alternatives
Essex Chain Lakes Complex
Newcomb
28N
Private Land
Upper Hudson Woodlands Conservation Easements
Goldthrite Flow Rd
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest
Private Land
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
Polaris (Iron) Bridge
Moose Pond Club Rd
Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area
Private Land
Proposed Cedar River Bridge Location
Northwoods Club Rd
28N
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
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Chain Lakes Rd South
Minerva
Hudson Gorge Wilderness
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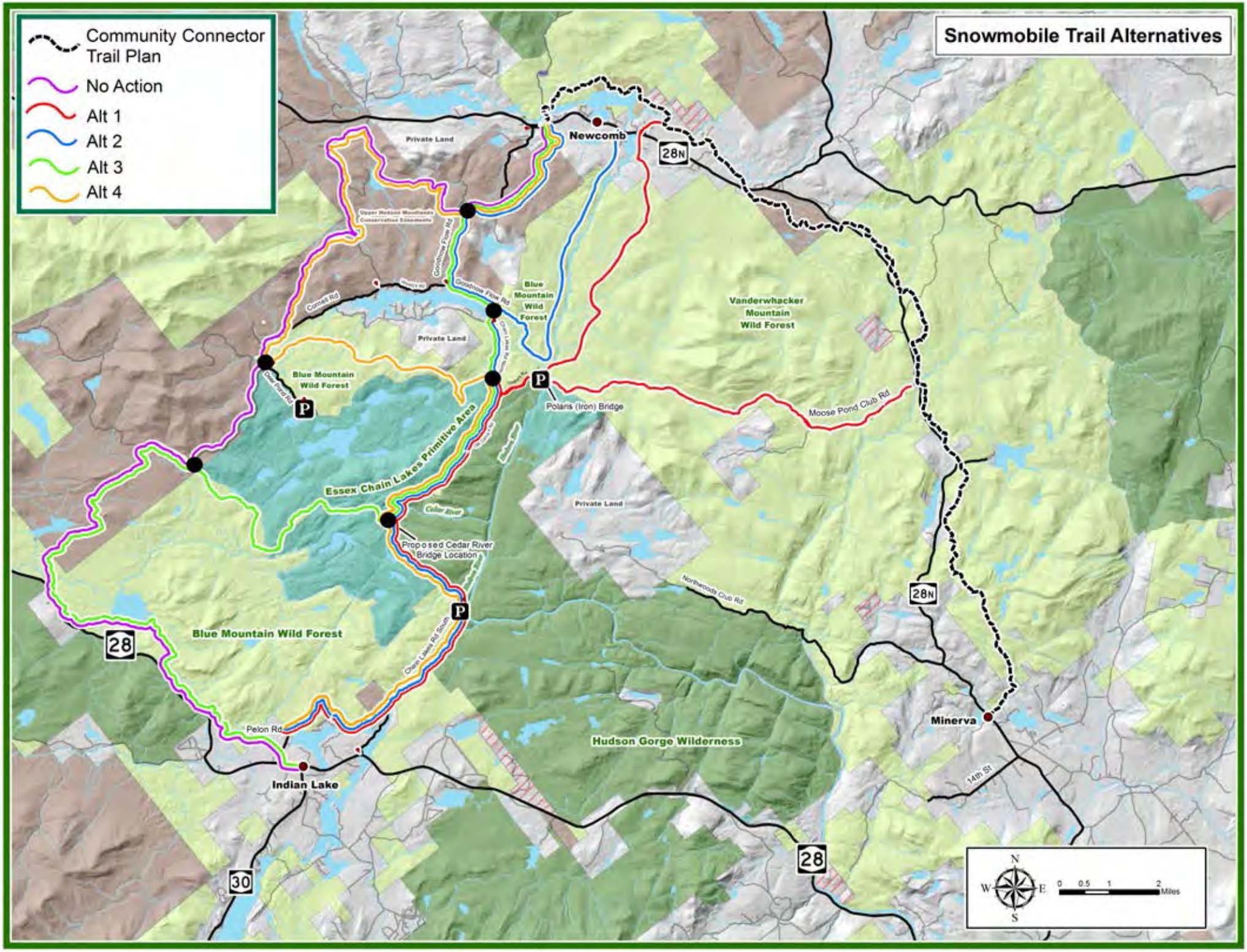
Snowmobile Trail Alternatives
Community Connector Trail Plan
No Action
Alt 1
Alt 2
Alt 3
Alt 4
Newcomb
28N
Private Land
Upper Hudson Woodlands Conservation Easements
Goodnow Flow Rd
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest
Cornell Rd
Private Land
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
Polaris (Iron) Bridge
Moose Pond Club Rd
Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area
Private Land
Cedar River
Proposed Cedar River Bridge Location
Northwoods Club Rd
28N
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
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Chain Lakes Rd South
Peton Rd
Hudson Gorge Wilderness
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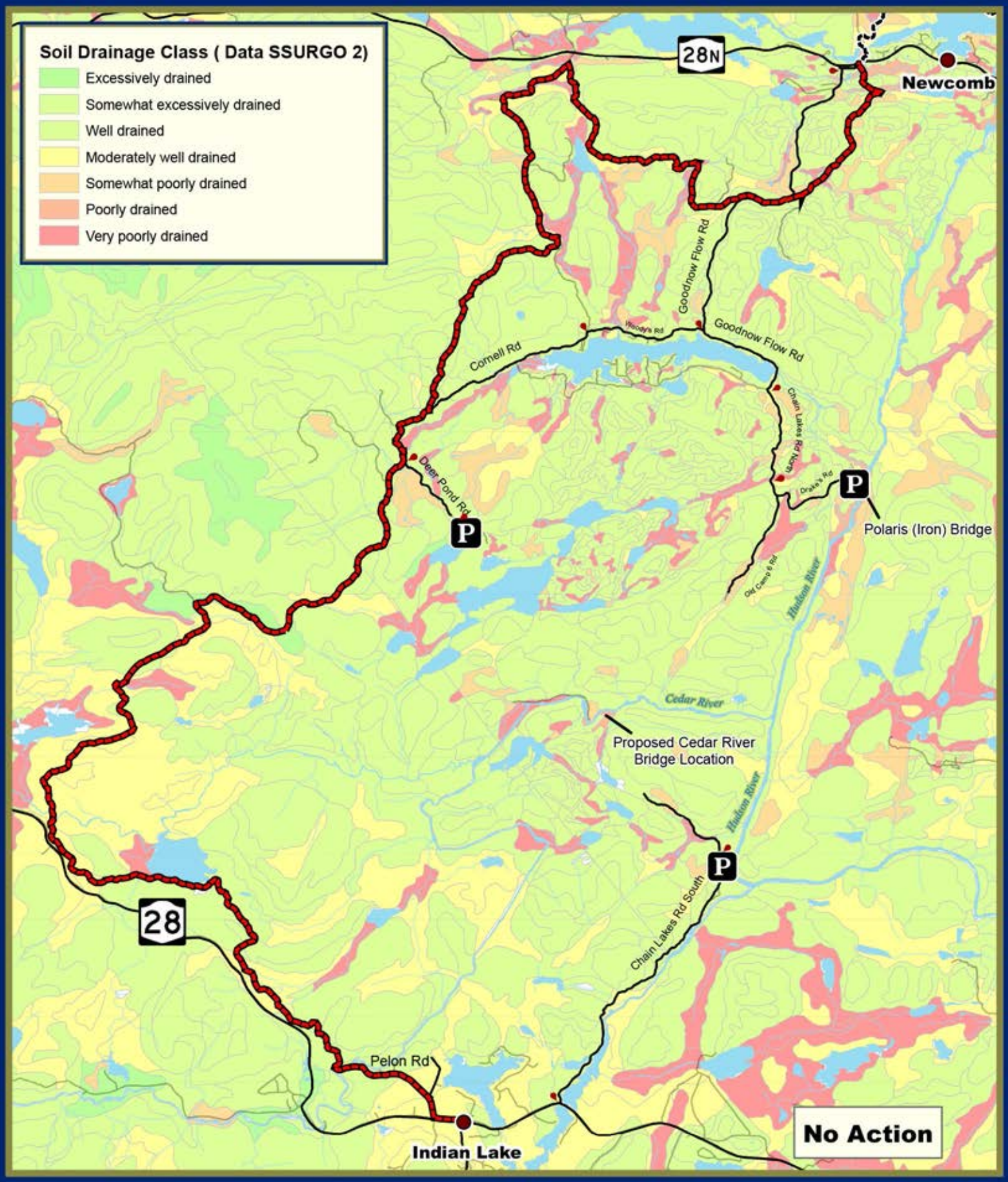
New York's Forest Preserve

Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan

Soils



NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY | Department of Environmental Conservation

Warrensburg Office: (518)623-1200

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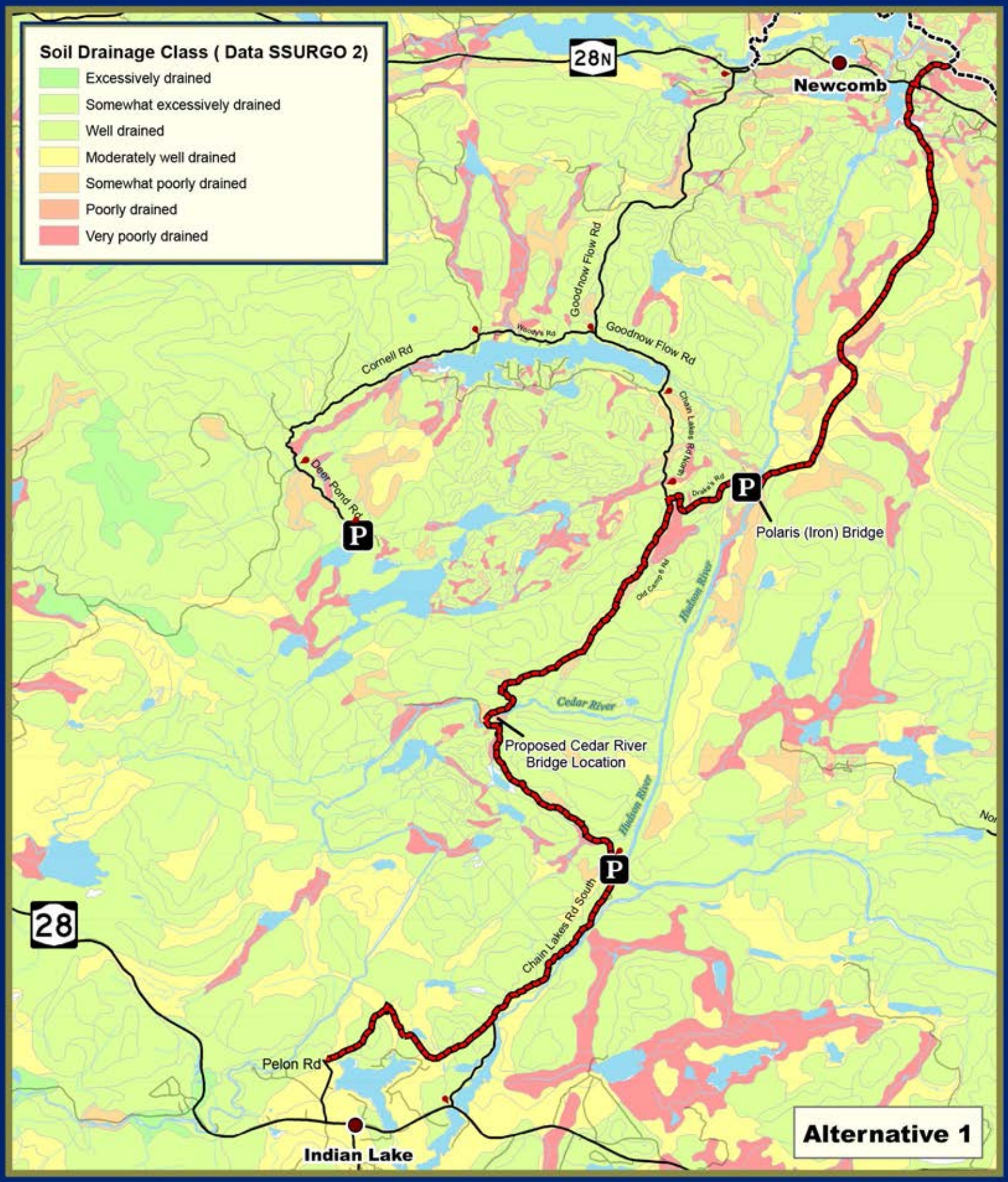
New York's Forest Preserve

Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan

Soils



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New York's Forest Preserve

Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan

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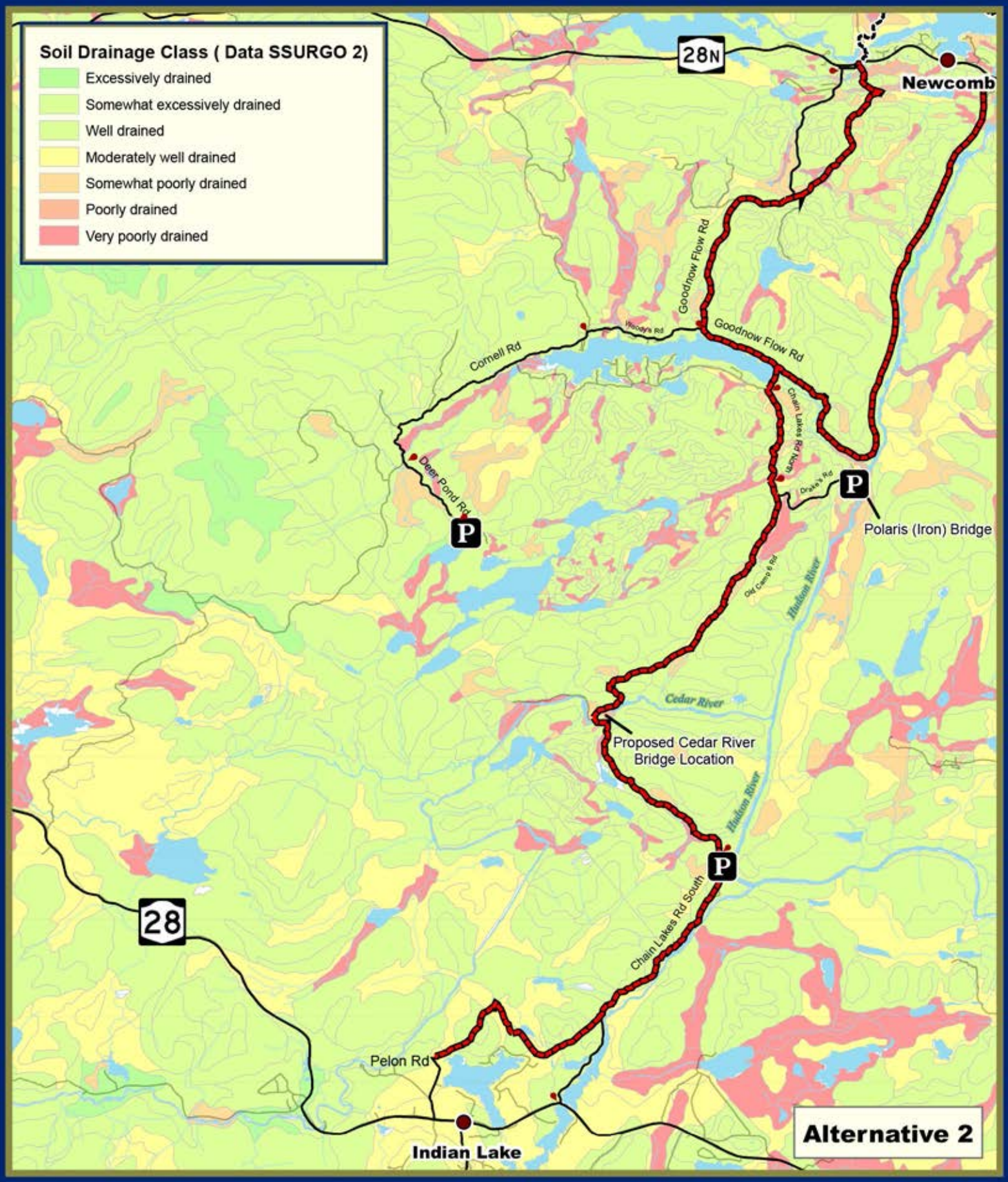

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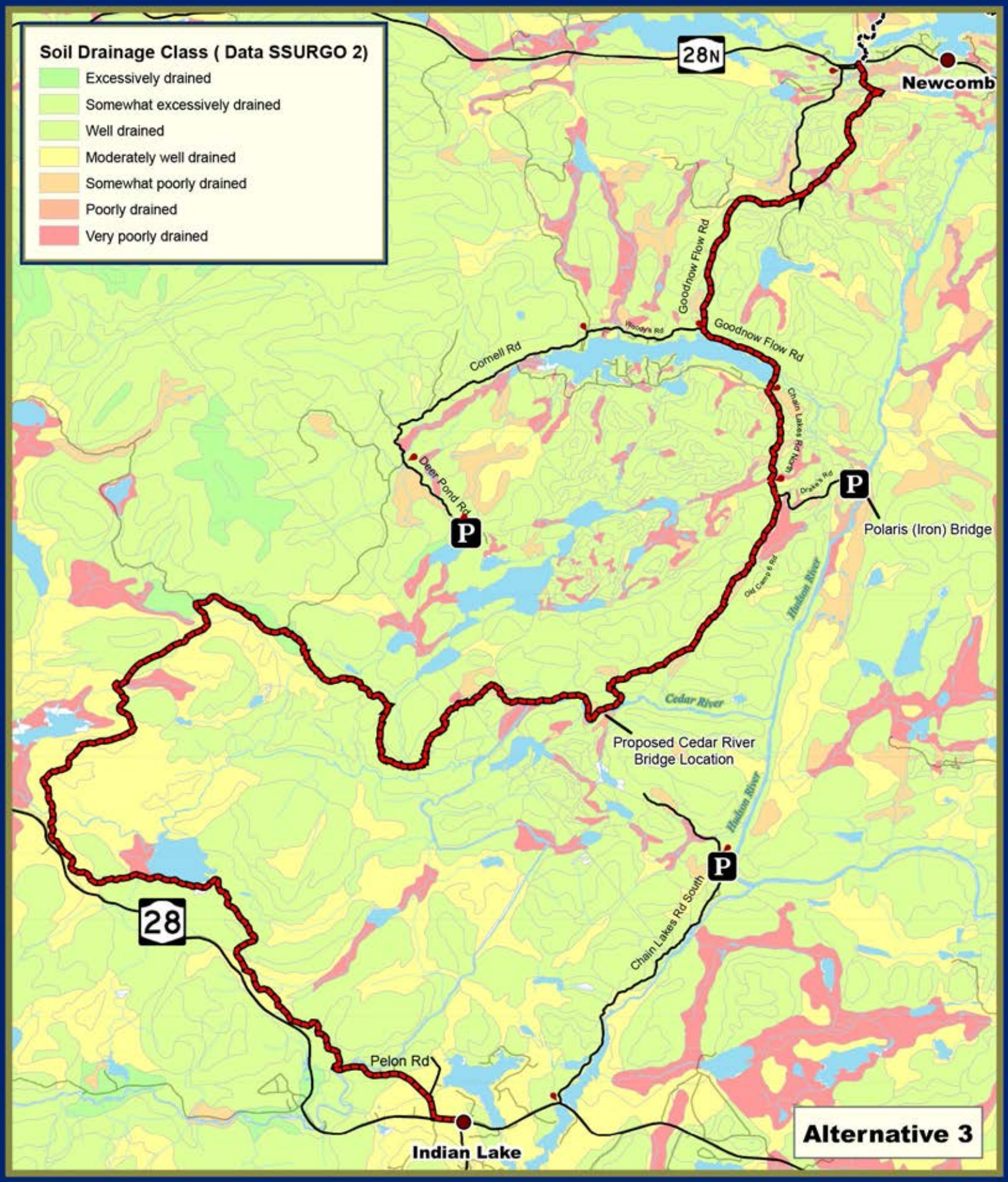

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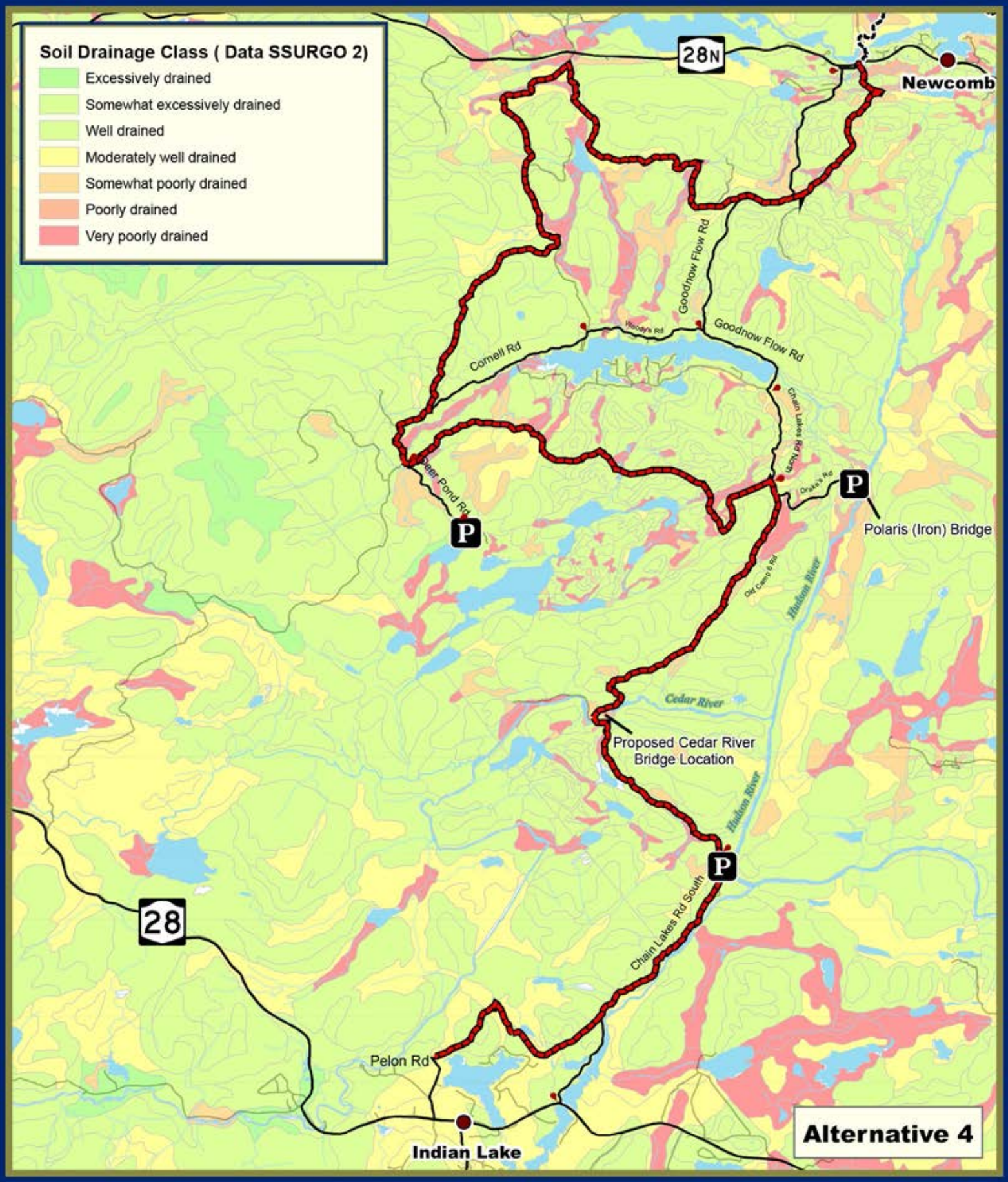

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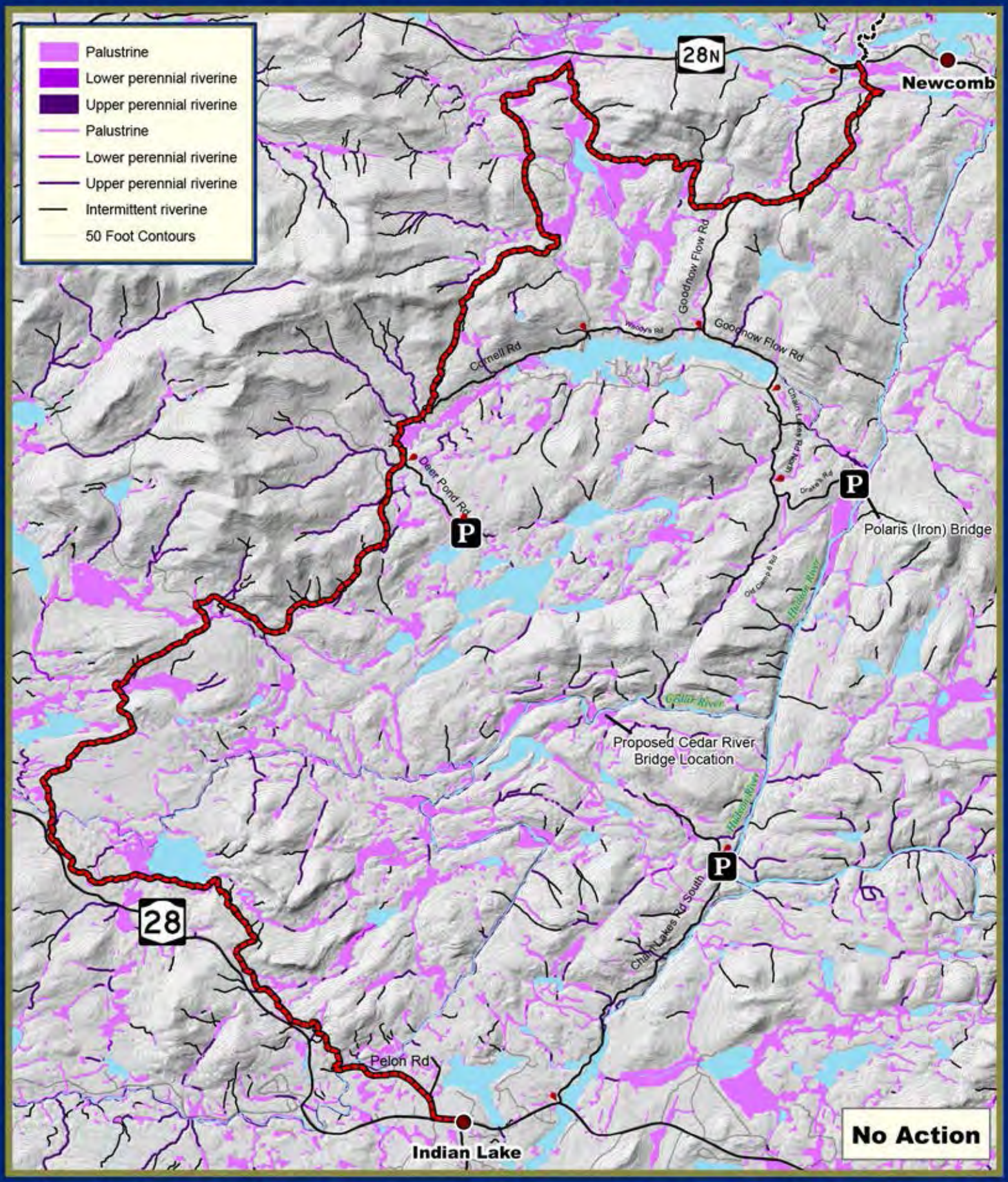
New York's Forest Preserve

Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan

Wetlands



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Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan

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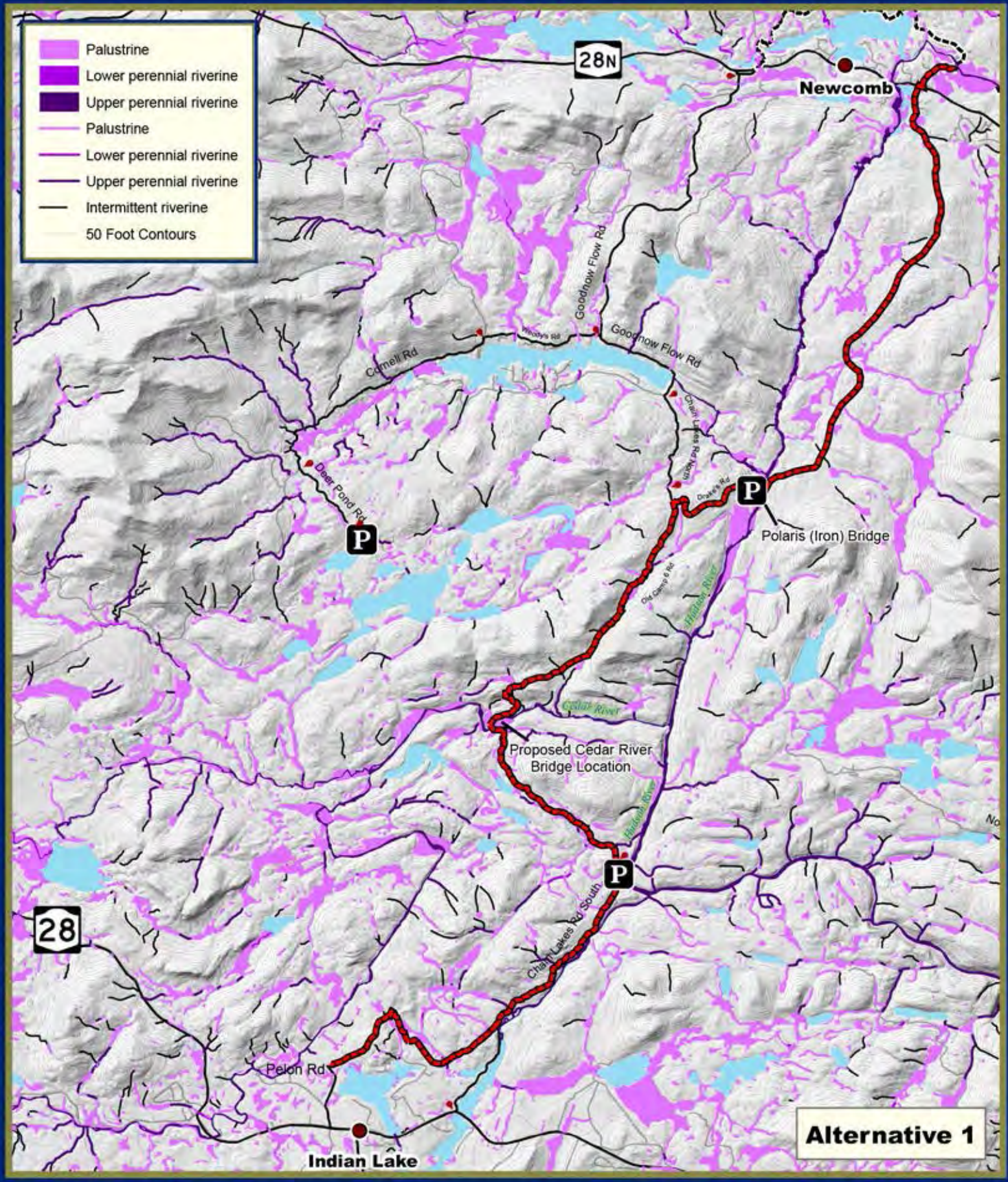

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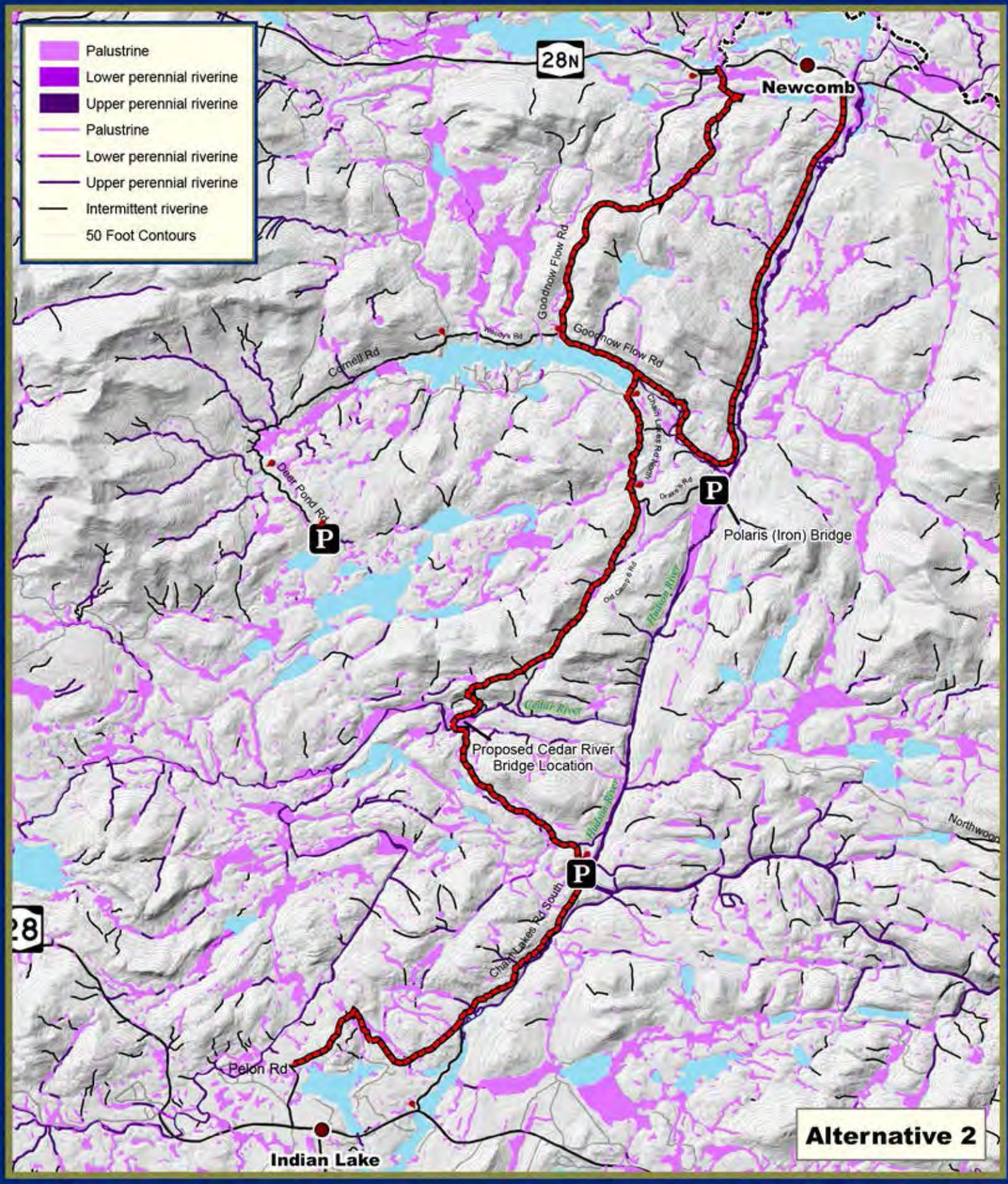

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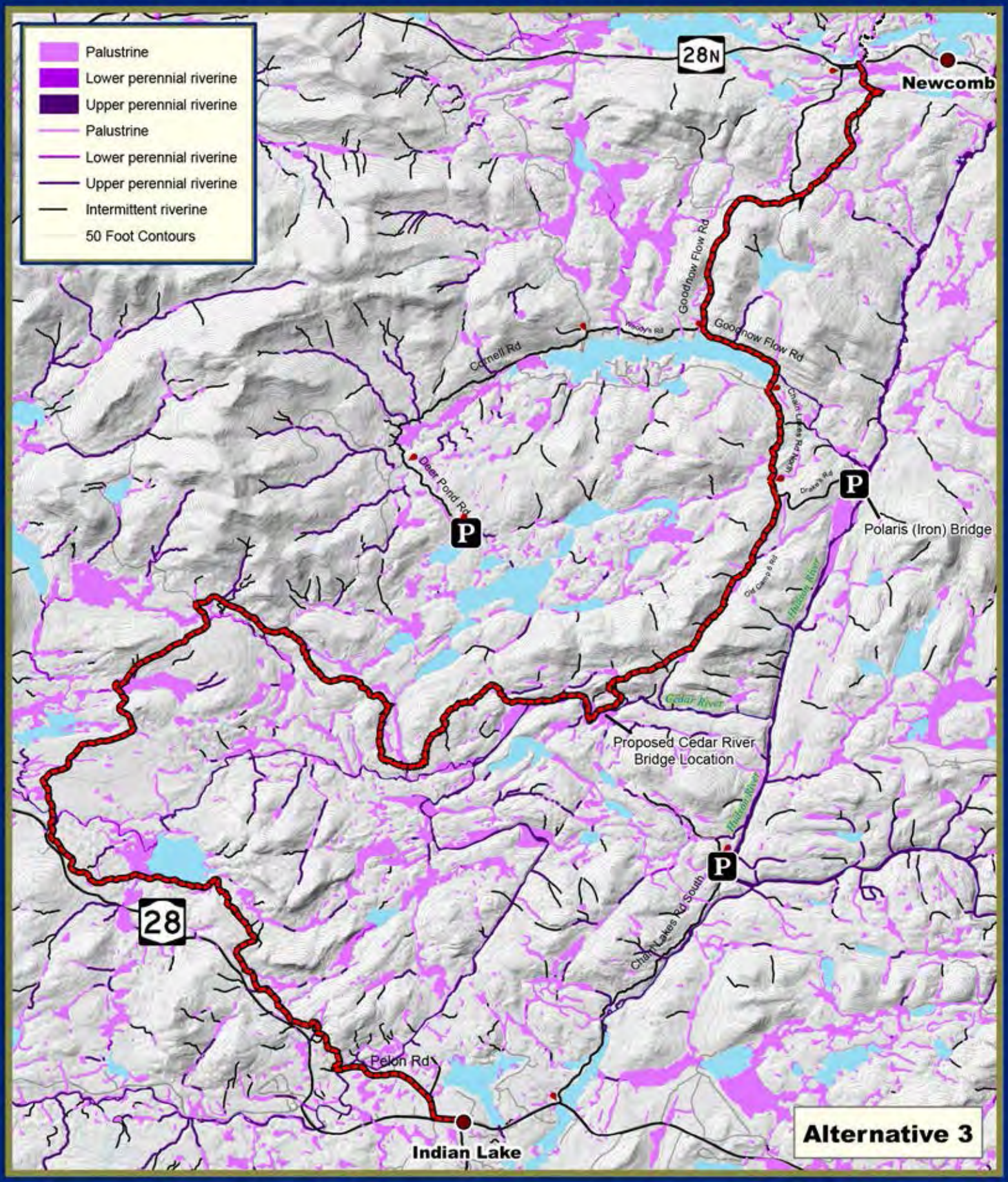

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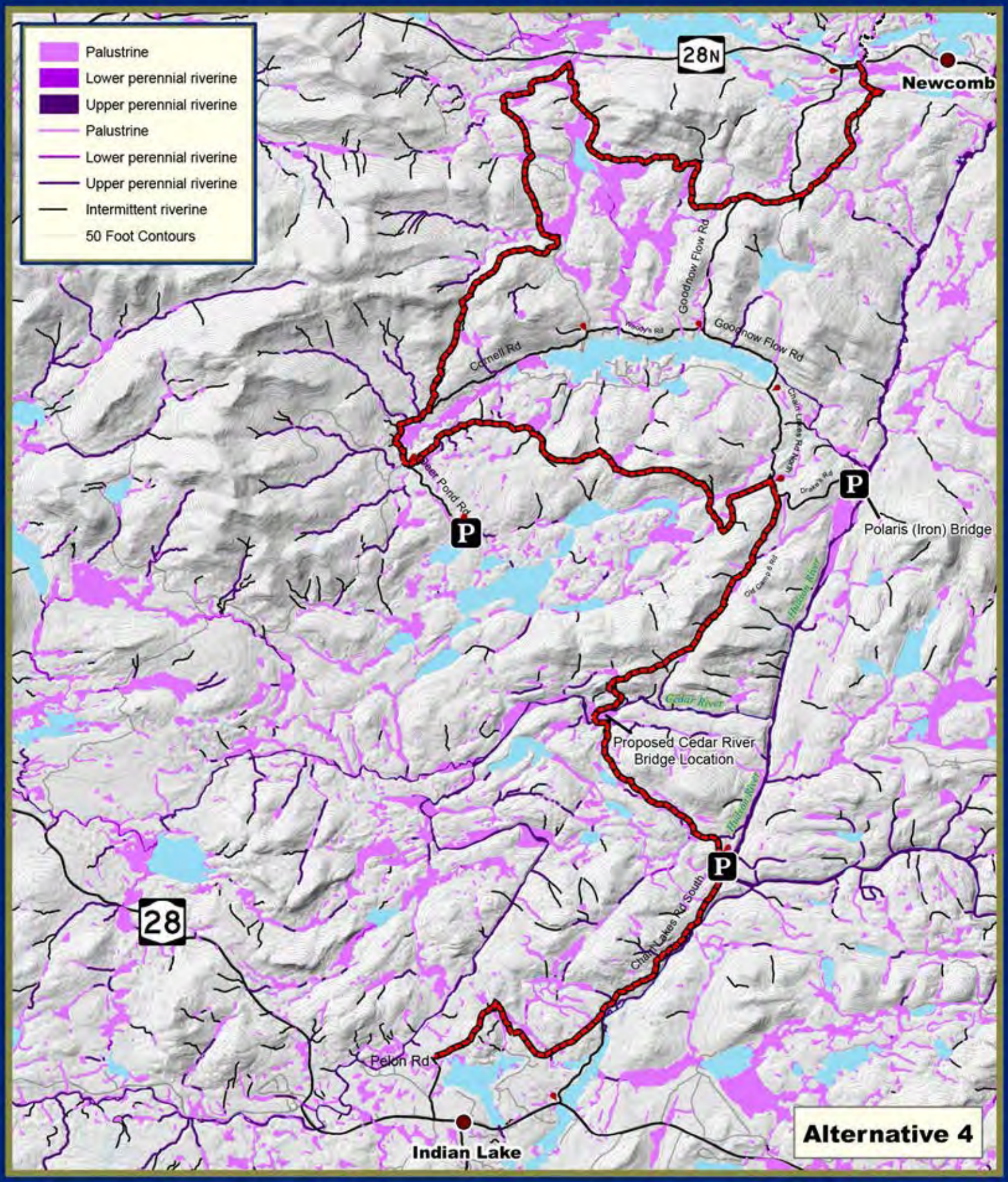

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Photo 1: Polaris (Iron) Bridge over the Hudson River. Taken from the east shore, looking west.

Photo 2: The Gooley Club main clubhouse building, located on the south shore of Third Lake.

Photo 3: Taken from the Cornell Rd, looking south at Deer Pond Rd.

Photo 4: Deer Pond parking area. Taken from the north end of the parking area, looking south.

Photo 5: Canoe carry trail from Deer Pond to the Deer Pond parking area. Taken from the north shore of Deer Pond, looking north to the carry.

Photo 6: The "Tube" is the culvert between Fourth and Fifth Lakes. Taken from the woods road over the culvert, looking east at Fifth Lake.

Photo 7: Waterway access site to Fifth Lake, from a distance. Taken from the "Tube", looking southeast towards the gradual, sandy shore.

Photo 8: Cedar River, looking upriver. Taken from the Chain Lakes Rd North, just as the Cedar River comes into view.

Photo 9: Cedar River, Alternative 4 potential bridge site. Taken from the north shore, looking at the south shore.

Photo 10: Cedar River, Alternative 4 potential bridge site. Taken from the south shore, looking at the north shore.

Photo 11: Cedar River, Alternative 3 potential bridge site. Taken from the north shore looking at the south shore.

Photo 12: Cedar River, Alternative 3 potential bridge site. Taken from the south shore looking at the north shore.

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY | Department of Environmental Conservation

Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex Proposed Final Plan

Proposed Final Unit Management Plans

for the

Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area
Pine Lake Primitive Area

Proposed Final Unit Management Plan Amendments

to the

1995 Blue Mountain Wild Forest Unit Management Plan
2005 Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest Unit Management Plan

Final Environmental Impact Statement

River Area Management Plans

for the

Hudson River and **Cedar River**

Towns of Newcomb and Minerva – Essex County

Town of Indian Lake – Hamilton County

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

BASIL SEGGOS
Acting Commissioner

November 2015

Lead Agency:
NYS DEC
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Draft Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex Plan (Complex Plan) has been prepared in order for the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to allow for appropriate public access to the lands within the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex Area (Complex Area) and to protect natural resources. Executive Law §816 requires the DEC to develop, in consultation with the Adirondack Park Agency (APA), UMPs for land under DEC's jurisdiction.

The Complex Area contains prominent watercourses classified under the Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers System Act (WSRRS Act) including the Rock River (Scenic), the Cedar River (sections of Scenic and Wild), the Hudson River (sections of Scenic and Wild), and the Indian River (Recreational.) It also features several small coldwater and warmwater beaver flowages and streams.

The Complex Plan also serves as a River Area Management Plan in accordance with the WSRRS Act, and its implementing regulations found in Part 666 of Title 6 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York (6 NYCRR.) The construction of Complex Area trails and public access facilities within designated rivers areas may require the DEC to issue permits to allow for activities to occur within classified river corridors.

A permit will be issued if the proposed land use is consistent with the purposes of the WSRRS Act, the river resources are protected, the proposed activity will not have an undue adverse environmental impact, and no reasonable alternative exists for modifying or locating the proposed activity outside of the designated river area, among others. DEC staff have proposed the location of the facilities in the river corridor areas that minimizes the potential for adverse environmental impacts by locating the trails within existing travel corridors, limiting the number of trees cut, avoiding wetlands and minimizing stream crossings.

This Complex Plan addresses the development of potential future public uses and facilities such as bicycling, creation of additional recreational opportunities for people with disabilities, additional primitive tent sites along the Hudson River, construction of a bridge over the Cedar River for recreational access north and south through the Complex Area, the disposition of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge over the Hudson River when the Gooley and Polaris Club leases expire in 2018 and analysis of alternatives for a snowmobile trail to connect the communities of Indian Lake and Minerva.

Proposed management actions in this Complex Plan include:

- Establishing bicyclist and equestrian use opportunities within the Complex Area in conformance with the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan ("APSLMP");
- Extending the Upper Hudson Ski Loop to the Ord Road and ultimately to the Town of Newcomb;
- Designating routes for public motor vehicle access, including parking;
- Establishing a community connection, multiple use trail which connects Indian Lake to Minerva;

- Construction of a bridge over the Cedar River, in conformance with the APSLMP, to provide a route for four season recreation including hiking, biking, horse riding, snowmobiling, cross country skiing and snowshoeing;
- Providing access for persons with disabilities, in conformance with the APSLMP, to a tent site and fishing and waterway access site at Fifth Lake and additional designated tent sites along Complex Area roads;
- Enhancing paddling opportunities, including providing additional canoe carries between the Essex Chain Lakes and along the Hudson River;
- Designation of additional camping opportunities including the placement of lean-tos within the Complex Area;
- Managing continued floatplane use and designated tent sites on First and Pine Lakes;
- Maintaining 2.5 miles of additional public motor vehicle roads for access and camping during big game hunting season; and
- A proposal to maintain the historic farmhouse at the Outer Gooley and evaluate potential future administrative uses until a final disposition for the structure is determined.

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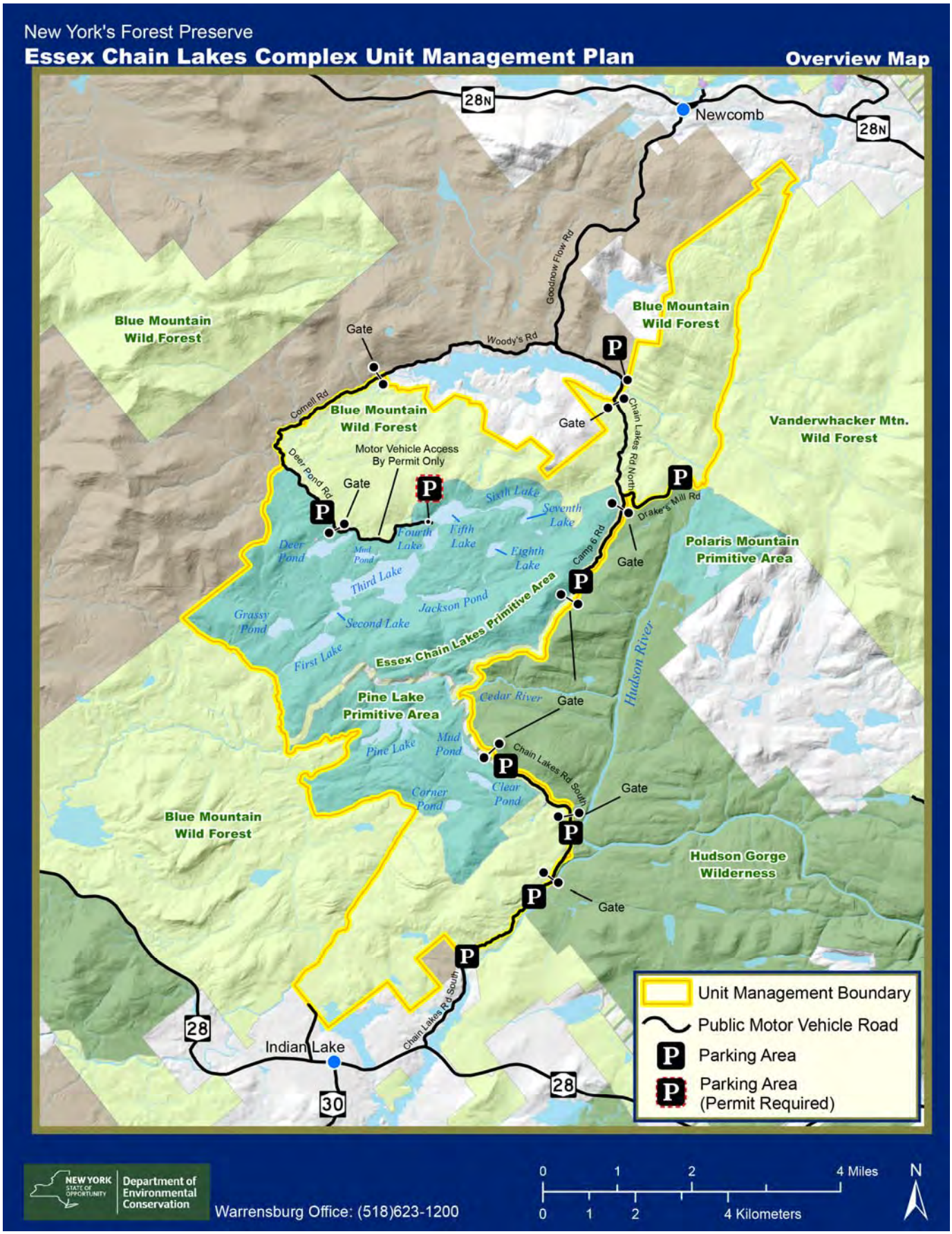
New York's Forest Preserve
Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan
Overview Map
Newcomb
28N
Goodnow Flow Rd
Woody's Rd
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
Gate
Comell Rd
Deer Pond Rd
Motor Vehicle Access By permit Only
Chain Lakes Rd North
Vanderwhacker Mtn. Wild Forest
Drake's Mill Rd
Camp 6 Rd
Polaris Mountain Primitive Area
Sixth Lake
Seventh Lake
Fourth Lake
Fifth Lake
Eighth Lake
Deer Pond
Mud Pond
Third Lake
Jackson Pond
Grassy Pond
Second Lake
First Lake
Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area
Hudson River
Pine Lake Primitive Area
Cedar River
Pine Lake
Mud Pond
Clear Pond
Corner Pond
Chain Lakes Rd South
Hudson Gorge Wilderness
Indian Lake
28
30
Unit Management Boundary
Public Motor Vehicle Road
Parking Area
Parking Area (Permit Required)
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Department of Environmental Conservation
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I. INTRODUCTION

This Essex Chain Lakes Complex Plan (Complex Plan) enables the DEC to provide for appropriate public access within the Essex Chain Lakes Complex Area (Complex Area.) The management actions outlined in the Complex Plan are specific to what is being called the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex (Complex Area.) The Complex Area contains includes the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area (ECLPA), the Pine Lakes Primitive Area (PLPA) and portions of the Blue Mountain Wild Forest (BMWF) and the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest (VMWF.) These management actions will serve to protect natural resources through a series of protective measures and administrative and management practices as well as set the stage for how these areas will be accessed and used by the public into the future.

The Complex Area contains a spectacular variety of ecologically significant resources, including numerous pristine lakes and ponds, large wetland complexes and scenic stretches of the Cedar and Hudson Rivers. The Area affords a variety of recreational opportunities as part of a larger recreational complex in the central Adirondack Park. Although the public has travelled through these lands throughout history and individuals have had recreational access to these lands with permission of the landowner (through leases and other types of agreements), the general public has not had unfettered use of portions of the Complex Area in over one hundred years. Limited public access facilities were established following the acquisition of the former Essex Chain and Indian River Tracts pursuant to an Interim Access Plan in the fall of 2013. The influx of visitors and users during this time reflected the high level of interest in the Complex Area.

A. Location and Access

Public motor vehicle access to the Essex Chain Lakes and surrounding waterbodies currently exists via the Cornell Road, off of the Goodnow Flow Road in the Town of Newcomb. The existing Deer Pond parking area is located approximately 9.4 miles from Newcomb, 0.25 miles from Deer Pond. Public motor vehicle access also currently exists off of the Goodnow Flow Road in the Town of Newcomb, entering the Blue Mountain Wild Forest onto the Chain Lakes Road (North). From this point public motor vehicle access is allowed to a parking area 0.3 miles from the Hudson River on the Drake's Mill Road in the vicinity of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge. Motorized access from the south currently exists via the Chain Lakes Road (South) in the Town of Indian Lake. An existing parking area is located at the former Outer Gooley farmhouse site, 2.7 miles south of the Cedar River.

Note: The road name "Chain Lakes Road (North)" refers to that road north of the Cedar River, accessed from the Town of Newcomb. The road name "Chain Lakes Road (South)" refers to that road south of the Cedar River, accessed from the Town of Indian Lake.

B. Planning and Classification Timeline of the Area

1995 Blue Mountain Wild Forest UMP

Of the 37,800 acres covered in the 1995 UMP, 5,560 acres are included in the current planning effort for the Complex Area. The 1995 UMP covered the full suite of actions usually contemplated in a UMP, including trail designations for all uses.

Spring 2013 Interim Access Plan

In early 2013 the State acquired the 18,100-acre Essex Chain Lakes Tract and the 960-acre Indian River Tract from The Nature Conservancy. In order to facilitate immediate public access of the area, the DEC designated two access points with parking—one along the Chain Lakes Road (South) just outside the Indian River Tract, and one at an existing clearing on the Chain Lakes Road (North)—for those wishing to access the property before the development of any official facilities. At the time of the Interim Access Plan, much of the property was still subject to exclusive leases and closed to the public.

Fall 2013 Interim Access Plan

The exclusive leases that applied to most of the recently acquired lands expired in September 2013. On October 1, 2013, the exclusive leases shrank to a one-acre parcel around camp buildings. In order to facilitate appropriate public use of these new lands, the DEC released a second Interim Access Plan in the fall of 2013. This plan proposed the establishment of a parking area just north of Deer Pond for recreational access to the Essex Chain Lakes, established a paddling/rafting takeout near the Iron (Polaris) Bridge, and designated several canoe carries to facilitate access between the Essex Chain Lakes.

2014 Land Classification

As mentioned in the Introduction, the recently acquired lands were classified in early 2014. In addition, existing Forest Preserve lands were re-classified, contributing to the current configuration in place today and laying the groundwork for future recreational use of the area.

Summer 2014 Draft UMP

Upon classification of the lands within the Complex Area, the DEC was then able to develop a Draft UMP proposing recreational uses and facilities consistent with both the land's classifications and its ability to withstand such uses. The completion of the UMP was driven by the need to appropriately locate public uses and facilities in response to the high public interest in these newly acquired lands. Certain uses, in particular snowmobiling and mountain biking, required additional planning before being proposed in the Complex Area and were therefore not included in the Draft UMP. The nature of public comment received on the Draft Plan led the DEC to initiate a revision to the Draft Plan in order to fully analyze alternatives for all recreational uses, including snowmobiling and bicycling.

Fall 2014 Stewardship Plan

In order to facilitate appropriate public access and natural resource protection of the Complex Area prior to the release of a Complex Plan, the DEC released a Stewardship Plan authorizing the implementation of certain recreational uses and facilities. These included the creation of primitive tent sites, designation of equestrian trails and facilities, seasonal hunting access on portions of the Chain Lakes Road (South) and Camp Six Road, designation of parking at the former Outer Gooley clearing, and motorized access to the "Tube" (between Fourth and Fifth Lakes) for people with disabilities by permit.

Public access and use prior to the adoption of a Unit Management Plan (UMP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) required the DEC to undertake specific actions to guide public use in order to protect the ecological resources within the Complex Area. After acquisition of these lands, public visitation necessitated issuance of an "Interim Access Plan" (issued in September, 2013) which limited public access to protect the resource. The DEC then issued the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex Stewardship Plan in December 2014 which superseded the 2013 Interim Access Plan.

The Stewardship Plan outlined interim management actions which were intended to protect the natural resources and set the stage for how the Complex Area will be accessed by the public pending adoption of the Complex Plan.

Examples of the management actions within the Complex Area pursuant to the Stewardship Plan and prior to the adoption of a Complex Plan included:

- Public motor vehicle access into the Essex Chain Lakes and surrounding waterbodies via the Cornell Road to the Deer Pond Road;
- Designation of a parking area in the vicinity of Deer Pond, one side of the lot for day use (10 cars) and the other side for overnight use (15 cars);
- Motorized access to the Hudson River via the Chain Lakes Road (North) to the Drakes Mill Road, off of the Goodnow Flow Road;
- Designation of a parking area located on Drake's Mill Road at a point approximately 0.3 miles west of the Hudson River near the Iron (Polaris) Bridge;
- Seasonal access to primitive tent sites and parking during big game hunting season along Camp Six Road and Chain Lakes Road (South);
- Designation of a parking area for 6 cars within a pre-existing parking area at Outer Gooley;
- Identification, designation and establishment of 13 primitive tent sites (11 waterfront) on and around the Essex Chain Lakes and related waterbodies; access to these sites requires a permit administered in partnership with the Adirondack Interpretive Center in Newcomb;
- Posting of signs prohibiting fires within 500 feet of the waterbodies and at all permit-only tent sites;
- Creation and posting of signs indicating "Camping at designated sites only within the Essex Chain and Pine Lake Primitive Areas";
- Identification, designation and establishment of primitive tent sites throughout the remaining Complex Area including: 4 primitive tent sites along Camp Six Road, 4 primitive tent sites along Chain Lakes Road (South), 2 primitive tent sites along the Cornell Road within the Blue Mountain

Wild Forest, 2 primitive tent sites in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area to be located more than 500 feet from waterbodies and one primitive tent site on Pine Lake in a current location;
- Designation and establishment of canoe carries;
- Motorized access by CP-3 permit for people with disabilities to the Essex Chain Lakes at the "Tube" between Fourth and Fifth Lakes, including parking, camping, and waterway access;
- Additional camping opportunities for people with disabilities along Complex Area roads;
- Designation and marking of trails (former all-season roads) open for horses;
- Establishment of a horse trailer parking/turnaround/staging area with room for 5 horse trailers;
- Posting of signs prohibiting horses on canoe carries; and
- Posting of signs prohibiting the use of bicycles within the Essex Chain and Pine Lakes Primitive areas.

Summer 2015 Stewardship Plan Amendment

In July of 2015 the Stewardship Plan was amended to identify administrative roads in the Complex Area and designate a subset of those roads as open for bicycle use.

Summer 2015 Community Connector Trail Plan

In May of 2015 the DEC put forth a Proposed Final Community Connector Trail Plan (Trail Plan) for consideration of APSLMP compliance by APA. As approved, the Trail Plan also acts as an amendment to the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest UMP. The Trail Plan establishes a series of community connector multiple-use trails between the communities of Newcomb, Minerva, and North Hudson. The Draft version of this Plan, which was released for public comment in June 2014, contained a trail segment between the Polaris Bridge and Route 28N in Minerva. The proposal for that trail segment was removed from the Trail Plan and has been put forth as a proposal in this Complex Plan.

C. Environmental Review

The environmental review of UMP's and River Management Plans is conducted in accordance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR.) DEC fully integrates the planning and environmental review processes. This Complex Plan is accompanied by a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) which provides that review and compliance with SEQR.

D. State Historic Preservation Act of 1980

As required by the section 14.09 of the New York State Historic Preservation Act of 1980, the Department consulted with the of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) regarding the treatment of the Outer Gooley Club Farmhouse and the Inner Gooley Club buildings. OPRHP requested that the Department enter into ongoing consultation with that Office regarding the re-purposing of the Outer Gooley Club Farmhouse. The Department agrees to this and will continue to consult with OPRHP as detailed plans for the adaptation and use Outer Gooley Club

Farmhouse are developed and implemented. In regard to the removal of the Inner Gooley Club buildings, OPRHP requested that the Department record these buildings prior to demolition and consider relocating one or more of the structures to the site of the Outer Gooley Club in order to assure long term preservation. Further discussion of compliance with the New York State Historic Preservation Act of 1980 can be found in section *IV. HISTORICAL RESOURCES*.

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II. NATURAL RESOURCES

A. Geology

Approximately 1.3 billion years ago the Adirondack region was generally flat and covered by sedimentary rock at depths up to 30 kilometers. Extreme heat and pressure at these depths resulted in a layer of metamorphic granite gneiss. Massive domal uplifting followed by the erosion of the soft sedimentary layer left the Adirondack region much higher than the surrounding area. This geologic region, known as the Central Highlands, is part of the Grenville Province, a large area of bedrock which extends along the Appalachian Mountains from Labrador to Mexico. (Isachsen, 1991) The arrival of the Pleistocene epoch or "ice age" began approximately 1.6 million years ago. During this time, climates cooled and large glacial ice sheets covered the region. These sheets repeatedly advanced across the region and then retreated north. The last glaciation of the region began around 21,750 years ago and is known as the Wisconsian stage. The Laurentide ice sheet, which covered the region with up to 2 kilometers of ice, retreated around 10,000 years ago. The result of glacial activity is the Adirondack Mountains we know today. Characteristics of this area include gently curved ridges and valleys, long winding eskers, numerous lakes and ponds and radial drainage patterns. (Clarke, 1904.)

Notable geologic features of the Essex Chain Lakes Complex Area include several Grenville marble limestone outcrops that occur along the Hudson and Cedar Rivers. These areas are of scenic beauty and support a variety of plant and moss species that require limestone sites.

B. Soils

Soils are formed by the chemical and physical breakdown of parent material. In the Complex Area, soil composition is vastly different from the bedrock beneath. Soil characteristics are quite variable and fluctuate widely from location to location. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), under the U.S. Department of Agriculture, provides a publicly accessible Web Soil Survey that is searchable and provides detailed soil inventory/characteristic data.
(http://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm.)

The predominant soils on the Complex Area are Tunbridge, Lyman, and Becket series, which are found mostly on middle elevation areas formed in glacial till. Soil series descriptions paint an overall picture of the broadly-occurring soil conditions in the area, but soil conditions vary widely throughout smaller landscapes. All planning and implementation, including locations and types of human use, should (and will) consider soils and associated capacity to withstand use on a finer scale.

C. Topography

The areas surrounding the Essex Chain Lakes, and the Cedar and Hudson River stretches are low-lying and provide contrast to the peaks of Cedar Mountain (2,554 feet) and Sixth Lake Mountain (2,396 feet.)

There is also an east-west oriented ridgeline, located south of the Chain Lakes that includes five unnamed peaks over 2,000 feet in elevation.

D. Water Resources

The surface waters of the Complex Area are located in the Upper Hudson River watershed. The Essex Chain Lakes and surrounding waterbodies are located in the approximate center of the unit. In all, 18 lakes and ponds occur within, or border the unit. All of these surface waters are shown on the current U.S.G.S. 7.5-minute topographic maps. Surface waters are dispersed throughout the planning unit, and range in size from 3-acre Chub Pond to Third Lake with a surface area of 262 acres. Pond narratives for the Complex Area can be found in Appendix D.

Watercourses

The area contains prominent watercourses classified under the Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers System Act (WSRR Act) including the Rock River (Scenic), the Cedar River (sections of Scenic and Wild), the Hudson River (sections of Scenic and Wild), and the Indian River (Recreational.) It also features several small coldwater and warmwater beaver flows and streams.

Wetlands

There are several significant wetland types within the management area, including emergent marsh and deepwater marsh wetlands. The most valuable wetland areas are in the vicinity of the Essex Chain Lakes.

"The channels connecting Third Lake to Fourth Lake, Fourth Lake to Fifth Lake, and Fifth Lake to Sixth Lake are large (greater than 20 acres) emergent marsh and deepwater marsh wetlands. Due to their size, wetland covertypes present, diversity and abundance of aquatic macrophytes, and hydraulic connection to the main waterbodies, they have the highest rating of 1 as defined in NYCRR Part 578. Emergent marsh is the most valuable individual covertype and one of the highest in biological productivity. These wetlands provide nesting habitat, food and cover for wildlife, and capacity to stabilize lake sediment and cycle large quantities of nutrients. Deepwater marsh wetlands provide valuable fish spawning and nursery habitat and are a food source for waterfowl and other wildlife." (APA FSEIS p. 33.)

These valuable wetland communities require special attention for protection against overuse/degradation, and all proposed recreational management actions will reflect this objective. See the Recreational Resources and Public Use section for more information.

E. Vegetation

General Inventory

The vegetation of the unit has been shaped over the years through the effects of wind, fire, logging, and settlement, and influenced by soils, elevation, aspect, hydrological regimes, and many other processes.

The historical management of this area for a sustainable supply of timber is apparent throughout. The vast majority of the Complex Area is covered by varying successional stages of northern hardwood forest.

The area lies in the ecological transition zone between the temperate deciduous forest and the true boreal forest. The predominant, broad naturally occurring vegetative types include northern hardwood forests, hardwood-dominated mixed forests, conifer forests (mostly near waterbodies), and spruce flats. The influence of past logging has visible effects on the vegetative cover, and forest stands in a spectrum of (mostly hardwood) successional stages can be found throughout the Complex Area.

All plants on State Land are protected by the General State Land Use Regulations (6 NYCRR § 190.8) which state that:

> *"No person shall deface, remove, destroy or otherwise injure in any manner whatsoever any tree, flower, shrub, fern, moss, or other plant, rock, fossil or mineral or object of archaeological or paleontological interest found or growing on State land, except for personal consumption or under permit from the Commissioner of Environmental Conservation and the Commissioner of Education, pursuant to section 233 of the Education Law."*

Rare Plants and Ecological Communities

Notable Aquatic Communities

DEC and APA staff and Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP) staff visited the Essex Chain Lakes twice during the summer of 2013. These visits found a diverse wetland community, including the following species: watershield *(Brasenia schreberi),* bladderwort (*Utricularia spp.*), naiad (*najas spp.*), Farwell's milfoil (*Myriophyllum farwellii)*, Robbins pondweed (*Potamogeton robinsii*), Largeleaf pondweed (*Potamogeton amplifolius),* water marigold (*Bidens beckii*), white-stemmed pondweed *(Potamogeton praelongus),* bur reed (*Sparganium sp*), pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*), white water lily (*Nymphaea odorata*), yellow-lily (*Nuphar variegata*), pipewort (*Eriocaulon aquaticum*), threeway sedge *(Dulichium arundinaceum*),and rush *(Juncus spp.)*

Notable Terrestrial Communities

In 2000-2001, scientist Jerry Jenkins was commissioned by The Nature Conservancy for the Finch Pruyn Company to complete a biological survey (mainly flora) on Finch-owned lands in the Adirondack Park. Many wetland sites adjacent to waterbodies within the Complex Area were surveyed as part of this effort. These areas, while mostly absent of rare vegetation, provide significant ecological value when considering the natural resources of the Complex Area.

One site where species of interest were found is on the marble ledges along the Chain Lakes Road (South) in the former Indian River Tract (now Blue Mountain Wild Forest), just south of the Outer Gooley farmhouse. These are small, low marble ledges with a very high diversity hardwood stand below them. Species of interest found at this site include: leatherwood (*Dirca palustris*), Goldie's woodfern (*Dryopteris goldiana*), hairy honeysuckle (*Lonicera hirsute*), dropseed grass (*Milium effusum*), and

Braun's holly fern (*Polystichum braunii*.) There were also 48 species of mosses on or near the ledge bases[1].

Alluvial forest stands occur along the north shore of the Cedar River, and the open structure may be maintained by flooding, beaver activity, or a combination of the two. These attractive, open alluvial hardwood glades are comprised of fairly large sugar maple, red maple, and yellow birch.

Invasive Species

The negative impacts of invasive species on natural forest and aquatic communities are well documented. Colonization and unrestrained growth of invasive species can cause the loss of biodiversity, interruption of normal hydrology, suppression of native vegetation, and significant aesthetic, human safety and economic impacts. Terrestrial and aquatic invasive species have been identified at increasing rates of colonization along roadsides in campgrounds, and in water bodies of the Forest Preserve. Some of these species have the potential to colonize backcountry lands, lakes and ponds and degrade natural resources of the Forest Preserve.

The DEC Invasive Species Coordination Unit, within the Division of Lands and Forests, works with various universities, State agencies and non-profit groups in developing and coordinating a comprehensive framework to address invasive species. The DEC is a partner and will continue to collaborate with other partners of the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP) (Adirondack Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management [PRISM]) to support education, outreach, inventory, monitoring, citizen science, best management practices, and control of invasive species. iMap Invasives is an online invasive species database and mapping system that tracks invasive species populations and management efforts in the State (http://www.nyimapinvasives.org.) Partnerships like APIPP and tools like iMap Invasives help the DEC to inventory and analyze the current distribution of invasive species on Forest Preserve lands, which provides the basis for long term decision making.

In 2012 the DEC and the APA developed Inter-Agency Guidelines for Implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) for the Control of Terrestrial and Aquatic Invasive Species on Forest Preserve Lands in the Adirondack Park (see Appendix C.) These guidelines provide a template for the process through which terrestrial and aquatic invasive species management will take place on Forest Preserve lands in the Adirondack Park. Under the Guidelines and any future revisions thereto, the DEC shall be responsible for management of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species on Forest Preserve lands while the APA will be responsible for providing review of and advice on APSLMP compliance and permit jurisdiction.

Adoption of the guidelines and implementation through the Plan and site specific work planning process gives the DEC the basic tools needed to preserve, protect and restore the native ecosystems of the Forest Preserve.

[1] 2001. J. Jenkins, Finch-Pruyn Biological Survey: Summary of Results & Summary of Study Sites and Significant Species.

Efforts will be made to protect the native ecological communities in the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex through early detection and appropriate response efforts to eradicate or control any potentially existing or newly identified invasive species populations.

Invasive Insects

The invasive insects of most concern in New York State are: Emerald Ash Borer, Asian Longhorned Beetle, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, Gypsy Moth, and the Sirex Woodwasp. If allowed to spread to the Forest Preserve, these species could bring devastating effects. The Emerald Ash Borer has current regulations and quarantines in place to slow its spread, and specific information can be found at: http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7253.html. The movement of firewood has proven the most common and destructive vector of invasive insect movement in New York State, and visitors to the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex Area should be aware of the current firewood regulations, which can be found at: http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/28722.html. Bringing in locally sourced wood, or kiln dried firewood also reduces vegetation loss from the gathering of firewood on the Forest Preserve. While fires are not allowed at primitive tent sites within 500 feet of waterbodies in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area, they are allowed at other primitive tent sites in the Complex Area.

Invasive Plants

No aquatic invasive plant species were detected in the Essex Chain Lakes during field surveys. One small infestation of Japanese knotweed was found along the Chain Lakes Road (North), south of Fourth Lake, by Nature Conservancy staff prior to State ownership. Together with APIPP, this infestation was treated and determined to be eradicated prior to addition of the area to the Forest Preserve. Otherwise, no terrestrial invasive species have been detected in the Complex Area.

Regulations

In 2014 the DEC adopted new regulations which apply to all sites from which a watercraft can be launched that are under the jurisdiction of the DEC.

The following actions are prohibited:

- Launching, or attempting to launch a watercraft from a State boat launching site, a fishing access site, or any other site from which a watercraft may be launched, or leaving from these sites with any plant or animal, or parts thereof, visible to the human eye, in, on, or attached to any part of the watercraft, including livewells and bilges, the motor, rudder, anchor or other appurtenants; any equipment or gear; or the trailer or any other device used to transport or launch a watercraft that may come into contact with the water, unless a written permit is obtained from the DEC.

- No person shall launch, or attempt to launch a watercraft from a State boat launching site, a fishing access site, or any other site from which a watercraft may be launched, or leave from these sites without draining the watercraft, including bilge areas, livewells, bait wells and ballast tanks, unless a written permit is obtained from the DEC.

The waters within the Complex Area are motor-less (with the exception of lessees until 2018), but canoes, kayaks, and other human-powered watercraft are part of this regulation, because they may spread invasive species as readily as motorized watercraft.

In 2014, the DEC also adopted regulations intended to slow the spread of invasive plants and animals through trade, resulting in New York's first lists of prohibited and regulated invasive species. The list of prohibited species includes garlic mustard (*Allaria petiolata*), common reed (*Phragmites australis*), and purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*.) Under the new regulations, prohibited species may not be possessed with the intent to import, purchase, transport, or introduce them and may not be sold, imported, purchased, transported, or propagated except under special permit. Possession for the purposes of control, management, identification, or disposal is allowed; however reasonable precautions must be taken to avoid introduction.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Allow natural processes to play out their roles to ensure that the succession of plant communities is not further altered by human impacts.
- Enhance programs to identify and map rare species.
- Increase public awareness and advocacy for the spread prevention and early identification of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species.

Action Steps

- Support scientific research projects in the Complex Area that will not have impacts that are inconsistent with the management intent of the Forest Preserve. Research projects are typically handled through the issuance of Temporary Revocable Permits (TRPs.)
- Enforce existing policies and regulations that protect Forest Preserve (terrestrial and aquatic) vegetation.
- Utilize partnerships, where appropriate, to continue surveys to produce a more complete inventory of Rare, Threatened, and Endangered species.
- Ecological inventorying and mapping will be correlated with recreation and fish and wildlife project plans to prevent unintended and undesirable impacts to Rare, Threatened, and Endangered species.
- Minimum impact techniques will be used to revegetate sites where concentrated use may destroy natural vegetation. Native seedlings, trees, shrubs and grasses will be planted to accelerate return to natural conditions when necessary.
- Provide educational information about invasive species spread prevention at all trailheads and access points.
- Control any infestations of invasive species using Best Management Practices (BMPs), which can be found in Appendix C.
- Practice spread prevention techniques including the cleaning of all tools prior to beginning a project.
- Use straw, not hay, when stabilizing areas during construction.

F. Wildlife

Existing Conditions

Wildlife communities in the unit reflect those species commonly associated with northern hardwood and mixed hardwood/softwood forests that are transitional to the boreal forests of higher latitudes. . In particular, the ECLMC is dominated by deciduous forest with elevations ranging from approximately 1600-2500 ft. Terrestrial fauna are represented by a variety of bird, mammal, and invertebrate species. Amphibians and reptiles also occur on the unit, although species diversity is relatively low as compared with other vertebrates. The distribution and abundance of wildlife species on the unit is determined by physical (e.g., elevation, topography, climate), biological (e.g., forest composition, structure, and disturbance regimes, available habitat, population dynamics, species' habitat requirements), and social factors (e.g., land use.) It is important to note that wildlife populations occurring on the unit do not exist in isolation from other forest preserve units or private lands. The physical, biological, social, and historical factors that exist on these other lands can and do influence the abundance and distribution of wildlife species in the Complex Area.

With the exception of New York Natural Heritage Program (NYNHP) surveys, comprehensive field inventories of wildlife species have not focused specifically on the Complex Area, or Forest Preserve units in general. Statewide wildlife survey efforts conducted by the DEC have included two Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA) projects (1980-1985 and 2000-2005) and the New York State Amphibian and Reptile Atlas Project (1990-1999.) It is important to note that survey blocks (i.e., the sampling unit) for both atlas projects overlap and extend beyond the land boundary of the Complex Area. Therefore, these data do not necessarily reflect what is found on the unit, but on the survey blocks. However, these data should provide a good indication of the species found throughout the Complex Area and adjacent region. Additionally, the Bureau of Wildlife collects harvest data on a number of game species (those that are hunted or trapped.) Harvest data is not collected specific to Forest Preserve units, but rather on a town, county, and wildlife management unit (WMU) basis. Harvest data can provide some indication of wildlife distribution and abundance and is sometimes the only source of data on mammals.

This unit has a rich history of forest management, with a spectrum of habitat types, ranging from regenerating clearcuts to mature forests. The character of the unit's vegetation has a significant effect in determining the occurrence and abundance of wildlife species. This Complex Area is adjacent to forests of long-held Forest Preserve lands, which provide habitat for species that require complex forest structure. This Complex Area, now managed as Forest Preserve, will provide a range of habitats that will change with the passage of time. Additionally, adjacent working forest conservation easement lands provides habitat for species that prefer early successional habitats, depending on the silvicultural practices conducted.

Birds

The first and second NYS Breeding Bird Atlas identified 132 species (113 and 108 species, respectively; within or adjacent to the Complex Area. Of these species, 89 were common to both atlas periods.

Game birds include upland species such as turkey, ruffed grouse and woodcock, as well as a variety of waterfowl. Ruffed grouse and woodcock prefer early successional habitats which can be found throughout the unit due to the history of timber harvesting. Waterfowl are fairly common along the waterways and marshes and provide hunting opportunities.

Amphibians and Reptiles

The New York State Amphibian and Reptile Atlas Project (1990-1999) confirmed the presence of 23 species of reptiles and amphibians in USGS Quadrangles that overlapped the Complex Area. These included 2 species of turtles, 4 species of snakes, 9 species of frogs and toads, and 8 species of salamanders (Table 1.) These species are classified as protected wildlife and some may be harvested during open hunting seasons. Of the confirmed species, 1 special concern species (Jefferson salamander) was documented within a survey block (Newcomb quadrangle.)

Table 1. Amphibian and reptile species recorded in USGS Quadrangles overlapping the Complex Area during the New York State Amphibian and Reptile Atlas Project, 1990-1999.

Common Name	Scientific Name
Jefferson Salamander[1]	*Ambystoma jeffersonianum*
Spotted Salamander	*Ambystoma maculatum*
Red-spotted Newt	*Notophthalmus v. viridescens*
Northern Dusky Salamander	*Desmognathus fuscus*
Allegheny Dusky Salamander	*Desmognathus ochrophaeus*
Northern Spring Salamander	*Gyrinophilus p. porphyriticus*
Northern Two-lined Salamander	*Eurycea bislineata*
Northern Redback Salamander	*Plethodon cinereus*
Eastern American Toad	*Bufo a. americanus*
Northern Spring Peeper	*Pseudacris c. crucifer*
Gray Treefrog	*Hyla versicolor*
Bullfrog	*Rana catesbeiana*
Green Frog	*Rana clamitans melanota*
Mink Frog	*Rana septentrionalis*
Wood Frog	*Rana sylvatica*
Northern Leopard Frog	*Rana pipiens*
Pickerel Frog	*Rana palustris*
Common Snapping Turtle	*Chelydra s. serpentina*
Painted Turtle	*Chrysemys picta*
Northern Redbelly Snake	*Storeria o. occiptomaculata*
Common Garter Snake	*Thamnophis sirtalis*
Northern Ringneck Snake	*Diadophis punctatus edwardsi*
Smooth Green Snake	*Liochlorophis vernalis*

[1]Special Concern species.

Mammals

Large and medium-sized mammals known to occur in the central Adirondacks are also believed to be common inhabitants of the Complex Area and include white-tailed deer, moose, black bear, coyote, raccoon, red fox, gray fox, bobcat, fisher, American marten, river otter, mink, striped skunk, long-tailed weasel, short-tailed weasel, beaver, muskrat, porcupine, and snowshoe hare (Saunders, 1988.) Of these species, white-tailed deer, black bear, coyote, raccoon, red fox, gray fox, long-tailed weasel, short-tailed weasel, bobcat, and snowshoe hare can be hunted. Additionally, fisher, American marten, mink, muskrat, beaver, and river otter can be trapped. Hunting and trapping activities are highly regulated by NYSDEC, and the DEC Bureau of Wildlife collects annual harvest data on many of these species.

Deer

Important big game species within the area include white-tailed deer and black bear. Generally, white-tailed deer can be found throughout the Complex Area. From early spring (April) to late fall (November), deer are distributed generally on their "summer range". When snow accumulates to depths of 20 inches or more, deer travel to their traditional wintering areas. This winter range is characteristically composed of lowland spruce-fir, cedar or hemlock forests, and to a lesser degree, a combination of mixed deciduous and coniferous cover types. Often found at lower elevations along water courses, this habitat provides deer with protective cover from adverse weather and easier mobility in deep snows. A GIS model of potential deer wintering habitat (S. McNulty, Adirondack Ecological Center, unpublished data) suggest scattered areas of potential deer wintering habitat primarily within 3 general locations: the area between Mud, Clear, and Corner ponds and extending southeast to the complex boundary, an area between Eighth Lake, the Goodnow River and the Hudson River, and the region around First Lake and Grassy and Little Grassy ponds.

Bears

Black bears are essentially solitary animals and tend to be dispersed throughout the unit. The Adirondack region supports the largest black bear population in New York State (4,000 to 5,000 bears.) Hikers and campers in this region are likely to encounter a bear, and negative interactions between black bears and humans, mainly related to bears stealing food from humans, have been a fairly common occurrence in the Adirondack High Peaks for at least twenty years. In 2005 a new regulation was enacted, requiring all overnight campers in the Eastern High Peaks Wilderness Area to use bear-resistant canisters for food, toiletries, and garbage. In other areas of the Adirondacks, the DEC recommends the voluntary use of bear resistant canisters as well.

Moose

Moose entered the State on a continuous basis beginning in 1980, after having been absent since the 1860's. Currently, the moose population in New York State is estimated to be approximately 800-1,000 animals (Ed Reed, DEC, personal communication.) In the northeastern United States, moose use seasonal habitats within boreal and mixed coniferous/deciduous forests. The southern distribution of moose is limited by summer temperatures that make the regulation of body temperature difficult. Moose select habitat primarily for the most abundant and highest quality forage (Peek 1997.) Disturbances such as wind, fire, logging, tree diseases, and insects create openings in the forest that result in regeneration of important hardwood browse species such as white birch, aspen, red maple, and

red oak. Typical patterns in moose habitat selection during the summer include the use of open upland and aquatic areas in early summer followed by the use of more closed canopy areas (such as upland stands of mature aspen and white birch) that provide higher quality forage in late summer and early autumn. After the fall rut and into winter, moose intensively use open areas again where the highest biomass of woody browse exists (i.e., dormant shrubs.) In late winter when browse quantity and quality are lowest, moose will use closed canopy areas that represent the best cover available within the range (e.g., closed canopy conifers in boreal forest.) From late spring through fall, moose commonly are associated with aquatic habitats such as lakes, ponds, and streams. However, use of aquatic habitats can vary geographically over their range. It is believed that moose use aquatic habitats primarily to forage on highly palatable plants; however, moose may also use these areas for relief from insects and high temperatures.

Bats

On April 1, 2015 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the northern long-eared bat as a threatened species. Following is an update on bat species and their status in New York. It is unlikely that all of these species are present on the project site, but it is possible. Note that the nearest proposed trail to a known bat hibernaculum is approximately seven miles away.

Cave Bats

All six species of New York's cave bats spend the winter hibernating in caves and mines where they live off stored fat reserves. However, during the summer they live in a variety of places, including bridges, buildings, rock crevices, beneath loose bark, or in cracks or crevices in trees. Cave bats are identified by the lack of fur on their tail membranes and their rather plain brownish coloring. Indiana bats are more greyish and Pipistrelle bats can be nearly reddish yellow. Cave bats in New York have been devastated by White Nose Syndrome.

Northern long-eared Bat *(Myotis septentrionalis)*

- Federally threatened (4d)
- Once widely distributed in NY
- Population has declined 98-99% because of White Nose Syndrome (WNS)

Little Brown Bat *(Myotis lucifugus)*

- Severely affected by WNS
- Less than 10% of the population from pre-WNS time is left

Indiana Bat *(Myotis sodalist)*

- Federally endangered
- State of NY endangered
- Severely affected by WNS with less than 10% of the population left in NY

Eastern Pipistrelle (*Perimyotis subflavus)*

- Population has declined by 98-99% in New York due to WNS
- Potential to be listed as threatened or endangered in NYS

Small-footed Bat (*Myotis leibii)*

- Was proposed to be listed by USFWS as either threatened or endangered but listing was determined to be not warranted
- New York State population has not declined like it has in other northeastern States
- Therefore, New York is the only State in Northeast not to list this species

Big Brown Bat *(Eptesicus fuscus)*

- Largest and now the most common cave bat in NY
- Rarely show signs of WNS
- Increasing population trend

Tree Bats

As the name suggests, tree bats live year round in trees. They are more colorful than the generally brown cave bats, and red bats and hoary bats have distinct dark and tan wing membranes. Tree bats have fully furred tail membranes which they can curl up around their bodies like a blanket. Because tree bats do not typically enter caves or mines or form large colonies, these species are harder to study. It is known that red bats and hoary bats roost alone from branches, hiding among leaves, and silver-haired bats form small colonies and use crevices and hollows in trees. While most cave bats have one young per year, hoary bats and silver-haired bats typically have two; red bats as many as three or four. All three species fly south in winter to where warmer temperatures make finding a meal more reliable. Tree, or migratory, bats don't seem to be affected by WNS. DEC has seen no declines in these species over the last four years of monitoring.

Red Bat *(Lasiurus borealis)*

- Uncommon in New York
- More common in warmer southern States

Hoary Bat (*Lasiurus cinereus)*

- Uncommon in New York
- Most abundant in Adirondacks

Silver-haired Bat *(Lasyionicterius noctivagans)*

- Least common bat in NY and the northeast

Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species

New York has classified species at risk into three categories, endangered, threatened, and species of special concern (6 NYCRR §182.)The following section indicates the protective status of some vertebrates that may be in the unit:

Endangered: Any species that is either native and in imminent danger of extirpation or extinction in New York; or is listed as endangered by the US Department of Interior.

Threatened: Any species that is either native or likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future in New York; or is listed as threatened by the US Department of the Interior.

Special Concern: Native species not yet recognized as endangered or threatened, but for which documented concern exists for their continued welfare in New York. Unlike the first two categories, they receive no additional legal protection under the Environmental Conservation Law; but, they could become endangered or threatened in the future and should be closely monitored.

The following table lists those species that are classified as endangered, threatened, or special concern within the Complex Area.

Table 2. New York State listed endangered, threatened, and special concern species documented in survey blocks within, or partially within the Complex Area. Bird data were collected during the 1980-1985 and 2000-2005 Breeding Bird Atlas projects. Amphibian and reptile data were collected during the 1990-1999 Amphibian and Reptile Atlas Project. Additional data provided by the New York Natural Heritage Program (NYNHP.)

		Breeding Bird Atlas Project	
Common Name	Scientific Name	1980-1985	2000-2005
Birds			
Threatened			
Bald Eagle[1]	*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*		✓
Least Bittern	*Ixobrychus exilis*	✓	
Special Concern			
American Bittern	*Botaurus lentiginosus*	✓	
Common Loon[2]	*Gavia immer*	✓	✓
Cooper's Hawk	*Accipiter cooperii*		✓
Osprey	*Pandion haliaetus*	✓	✓
Red-shouldered Hawk	*Buteo lineatus*	✓	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	*Accipiter striatus*	✓	✓
Northern Goshawk	*Accipiter gentilis*		✓
Red-headed Woodpecker	*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*	✓	
Amphibians and Reptiles			
Special Concern			
Jefferson Salamander	*Ambystoma jeffersonianum*		

[1]Listed as endangered by the Federal Government.
[2]Also documented by NYNHP.

Wildlife Management Guidelines

The legal foundation for wildlife and fisheries management in New York State is embodied in Article 11 of the Environmental Conservation Law. Article 11 authorizes DEC to insure the perpetuation of fish and wildlife species and their habitats and to regulate hunting and trapping through the issuance of licenses,

the establishment of hunting and trapping seasons and manner of taking, and the setting of harvest limits. Game species will continue to be managed by appropriate regional or statewide hunting or trapping seasons.

Proposed Management

While all of the objectives and management actions outlined below are important, a management priority should be placed on increasing our understanding of the occurrence and distribution of many wildlife species and their habitats within the Complex Area. This priority is reflected under the list of potential management action projects outlined below.

Objectives

- To perpetuate, support, and expand a variety of wildlife recreational opportunities, including sustainable hunting and trapping and wildlife observation and photography as desirable uses of wildlife resources.
- To assure that wildlife populations are of appropriate size to meet the demands placed on them, including consumptive and non-consumptive uses.
- To increase our understanding of the occurrence, distribution, and ecology of game and nongame wildlife species and their habitats.
- To minimize wildlife damage and nuisance problems.
- To meet the public's desire for information about wildlife and its conservation, use, and enjoyment.

Action Steps

- Manage and protect wildlife through enforcement of the Environmental Conservation Law and applicable Rules and Regulations.
- Support traditional use of the unit's wildlife resources, particularly activities designed to perpetuate hunting and trapping programs and education efforts.
- Continue to monitor and inventory wildlife populations and their habitats, particularly game species and species classified as threatened, endangered or special concern.
- Conduct targeted surveys for threatened and special concern bird, reptile, and amphibian species.
- Follow standard guidelines for protecting deer wintering yards.
- Conduct surveys for American marten to better understand distribution and habitat use in the central Adirondacks.
- Monitor existing radio-collared moose and continue to collar new individuals on an opportunistic basis and as pertinent research questions arise.
- Support future state-wide survey efforts that increase our understanding of the occurrence and distribution of flora, fauna, and significant ecological communities (e.g., Breeding Bird Atlas, New York Natural Heritage Program surveys.)
- Active management of wildlife populations will be accomplished primarily through hunting and trapping regulations developed by the DEC Bureau of Wildlife for individual or aggregate Wildlife

Management Units. Continued input from Citizen Advisory Committees will be considered in determining desirable levels of wildlife.

- Re-establish, to the extent possible, self-sustaining wildlife populations of species that are extirpated, endangered, threatened or of special concern in habitats where their existence will be compatible with other elements of the ecosystem and human use of the area.
- Provide information, advice and assistance to individuals, groups, organizations and agencies interested in wildlife whose activities and actions may affect, or are affected by, the wildlife resources or the users of wildlife.
- Provide information, advice and/or direct assistance to requests for relief from, or solutions to reduce or alleviate problems with nuisance wildlife.
- Provide information to user groups on avoiding problems associated with black bears. Encourage the voluntary use of bear-resistant food canisters.
- Work cooperatively to assess problems associated with beaver-flooded trails and roads. Work with area trappers and encourage trapping at nuisance sites during the open beaver trapping season.

G. Fisheries

Fish Community Changes

A variety of nonnative species were distributed into the Adirondack uplands via stocking efforts described by George (1980) as "nearly maniacal". He notes that many species were " ... almost endlessly dumped upon the Adirondack upland." Nonnative species were introduced and the ranges of native species, which previously had limited distributions, were extended. The result has been a homogenization of fish communities. Certain native species, notably brook trout and round whitefish, have declined due to the introduction of other fishes. Other natives, brown bullhead and creek chubs, for example, are presently much more abundant than historically, having been spread to many waters where previously absent. Native-but-widely-introduced (NBWI) species often were introduced concurrently with the nonnatives. NBWI species are just as unnatural as nonnative introductions, and due to the lack of early surveys, it is often unknown which NBWI fishes were actually native to a pond or if they have been introduced.

Consequently, fish populations in the majority of waters in today's Adirondack wilderness areas have been substantially altered by the activities of mankind. Indeed, of the 1,123 Adirondack ecological zone waters surveyed by the Adirondack Lakes Survey Corporation (ALSC), 65% contained known nonnative species.

Barriers, high stream gradients, low stream fertilities, and rigorous climatic conditions following retreat of the glacier resulted in low species diversity for fishes in most Adirondack waters. Low diversity allowed the brook trout to occur in large areas of the Adirondack upland.

Past Management

The ponds in the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex have been under private ownership for nearly 150 years. Prior to 1948, the land had individual camps and homes and was managed for timber, agriculture, and recreation. In 1948, the Outer Gooley Club was formed, which included Pine Lake and Clear, Mud and Corner Ponds. In 1950 the Essex Chain Lakes was added and dubbed the Inner Gooley Club. Both club lease areas were owned by Finch, Pruyn & Co. and leased to the club. The first DEC surveys of these private waters began in 1952, during which time the first bass stocking request was denied by DEC. From the 1960's to today, the waters have been privately managed and stocked.

Fisheries Management Guidelines

DEC angling regulations are designed to conserve fish populations in individual waters by preventing overexploitation. The issuance of fishing licenses allows DEC to regulate fishing efforts and seasons/harvest limits for the perpetuation of fisheries. DEC monitors the effectiveness of angling regulations, stocking policies, and impacts of other management activities by conducting periodic biological and chemical surveys. Based on analysis of biological survey results, angling regulations may be changed as necessary to protect the fish populations of the management area. Statewide angling and special angling regulations provide the protection necessary to sustain or enhance natural reproduction where it occurs.

Fish stocking projects must be in compliance with the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Fish Species Management Activities of the Department of Environmental Conservation, dated December 1979.

Pond reclamation projects must comply with the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Fish Species Management Activities of the Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Fish and Wildlife, dated June 1980 as well as the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Undesirable Fish Removal by the Use of Pesticides Under Permit Issued by the Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Lands and Forests, Bureau of Pesticides Management, dated March 1981.

Liming projects must comply with the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement on the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Program of Liming Selected Acidified Waters, dated October 1990 as well as the Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources liming policy.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Restore native fish communities with emphasis on native species that have declined due to man's influences. This goal is consistent with the primary wilderness management guideline in the APSLMP. Implementation may include reclamations, liming, stocking and other activities as per the "Fishery Management Policy in Wilderness, Primitive, and Canoe Areas."

- Due to the impacts resulting from invasive species and climate change, every effort should be made to make suitable habitat available for native strains of fish historic to the Adirondacks.
- Protect native fish communities from the addition of undesirable non-native fishes. This goal is also consistent with the primary wilderness management guideline in the APSLMP.
- Maintain Adirondack brook trout populations in Eighth Lake, Jackson Pond, Deer Pond, Mud Pond, Grassy Pond, Little Grassy Pond and Pine Pond.
- Maintain the diversity of coldwater fish populations in the Complex Area.
- Encourage and promote angler use of the waters in the unit through routine fish management practices including on-line information, correspondence and contact with the public by DEC staff.

Action Steps

- Amend this Complex Plan if or when reclamation projects are deemed necessary. Concurrent with this shall be the revision of the pond narrative to reflect new survey data.
- Previously constructed fish barrier dams may be rebuilt if said structures will protect Adirondack brook trout populations from other non-native or other fish species. The Complex Plan will be amended when these projects are deemed necessary.
- Conduct biological surveys of waters within the unit as needed.
- Continue and monitor current stocking policies until further fisheries survey information warrants otherwise.

III. RECREATIONAL RESOURCES & PUBLIC USE

A. General Guidelines and Objectives for Management of the Complex Area

- Prepare a Work Plan for each construction or major maintenance project.
- Consult the APA in accordance with the current DEC/APA Memorandum of Understanding.
- Comply with the requirements of all applicable laws, regulations, and policies.
- Develop long-term partnerships with communities and other stakeholders for the stewardship of the Complex Area.
- Complete an inventory of structures and improvements within the Complex Area.
- Monitor for recreational impacts to natural resources within the Complex Area.

B. Partnerships & Volunteers

Temporary Revocable Permits

The DEC issues Temporary Revocable Permits (TRP) in its sole discretion for the temporary use of state lands and conservation easement lands for activities that have negligible or no permanent impact on the environment. Historically, TRP's have been issued for lean-to construction, cross country races, forest insect research, wildlife research, town road maintenance and utility line right-of-way work among many other purposes. Through the TRP review process, DEC avoids conflicting uses of State land and situations that could threaten health, public safety, or integrity of natural resources. TRP authorization does not provide exemption to any existing State laws and regulations. To hold any event, a sponsoring organization must request permission in writing at least 30 days in advance of the date of the proposed activity. The TRP applicant or sponsoring organization must provide proof of liability insurance. TRPs often have specific stipulations pertinent to the activity in question and TRPs are authorized by DEC policy.

Volunteer Stewardship Agreements

Many great things are accomplished on State lands through the volunteering of individuals and groups. There are instances where coordinating work through the DEC proves challenging due to logistics, staffing, or funding levels. In some of these instances, great work is able to be accomplished through the generosity of these volunteers.

The current DEC procedure that facilitates the use of volunteers to carry out work on State land is called a Volunteer Stewardship Agreement (VSA.) When a work project seems to be a good fit for volunteers and there is an individual or group willing to take on this project the Land Manager will help the potential volunteers through the VSA process, which consists of an application and then the final Agreement. This process is necessary, as it lays out the details of the project to make sure that the final

project is true to the intent of management of the area. The VSA also provides volunteers with liability and workers compensation insurance coverage while they are working on State land.

Student Conservation Association

DEC has an ongoing partnership with the Student Conservation Association (SCA) for trail crews and backcountry stewards. SCA trail crews provide labor to complete implementation of projects on State lands, including: trail construction, primitive tent site construction, bridge work, rehabilitation and maintenance of facilities, and much more. These crews allow DEC to accomplish a large amount of work. The backcountry stewards spend their time traversing the backcountry, protecting resources, monitoring usage, and providing public outreach. Both of these programs are indispensable in helping the DEC to accomplish its management objectives.

C. General Motorized Access and Parking

History

Before being acquired by the State, much of this Complex Area had been used by the public to access the remote wilderness areas, and later for timber production by Finch Pruyn Company who also provided access for recreation by lessees, licensees, invitees and the public. The local towns created and maintained a road network for public travel and recreation, and was later maintained by Finch Pruyn to facilitate access within and through the property. Use of these roads predates and continued regularly after the enactment of the WSRRS Act. Therefore, the operation of motor vehicles, including snowmobiles, is considered an existing land use on the roads within the Complex Area River Areas, and is permitted to continue by statute and regulation. Sections of the existing road system will remain accessible to lessees via car, truck, ATV and snowmobiles (during DEC-designated times of year) through September 30, 2018. Refer to Use Reservations section for lessee use reservations.

The DEC intends to limit motor vehicle use throughout the Complex Area in relation to the historical use of the existing road network.

Existing Conditions

Deer Pond Parking and Access Point

Public motor vehicle access to the Essex Chain Lakes and surrounding waterbodies is from the northwestern border of the Complex Area using Cornell Road and Deer Pond Road. The Cornell Road divides the Essex Chain Lakes Forest Preserve and Chain Lakes Conservation Easement tracts, and a portion serves as a snowmobile trail in the winter. The Chain Lakes Conservation Easement tract is a working forest conservation easement land. To reach the designated parking area near Deer Pond, travel south from NYS Route 28N in Newcomb on Goodnow Flow Road, turn right onto Woody's Road, left onto the Cornell Road, and left onto the Deer Pond Road.

This parking area, where there is an informational Type I kiosk and register box, is located 0.25 miles north of Deer Pond. The west side of the lot is marked for day-use parking only (10 cars), and the east side for overnight use only (15 cars.) The site was chosen because of its previous use for parking, size, slope, proximity to Deer Pond and appropriateness for gate installation. Improvements have had a minimal impact on the existing resources.

Hudson River and Iron (Polaris) Bridge Parking & Access Point

Public motor vehicle access to the Hudson River and Iron (Polaris) Bridge is from the northeastern border of the Complex Area using the Goodnow Flow Road and Chain Lakes Road (North). To reach the designated parking area near the Hudson River, travel south from Route 28N in Newcomb along the Goodnow Flow Road and turn left onto Chain Lakes Road (North), continuing 2.2 miles to the parking area.

The 6-car parking area is located at an existing log landing clearing, approximately 0.3 miles from the Iron (Polaris) Bridge over the Hudson River. There is also an informational Type I kiosk with a register box at the parking area. This site was selected because of its proximity to the Hudson River. It is close enough to provide reasonable access, but not so close as to adversely impact any river resources. The area has been continually used for parking, and the site required little modification to be designated as a parking area. At this location, the Hudson River is designated as a Scenic River pursuant to the WSRRS Act, and consistent with that Act and its implementing regulations, water access parking areas are allowed pursuant to a DEC issued permit (*See* section 666.13[J]1] of Title 6 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York (6 NYCRR)). Motor vehicle access to the Polaris Bridge predates, and continued regularly, after the enactment of the WSRRS Act, therefore continued motor vehicle use on this road within the Scenic River Area is authorized by statute and regulation. The APA and DEC permits do not impose any conditions of future use or disposition of the bridge.

Outer Gooley Parking and Access Point

Public motor vehicle access to the Complex Area in the vicinity of the confluence of the Hudson and Indian Rivers is from the southern end of the unit, using the Chain Lakes Road (South) to an area known as the former Outer Gooley clearing. The DEC research of historical documents, including local town records, and review of testimony from individuals with personal knowledge of the area, indicate that motor vehicle use of the Chain Lakes Road (South) and, seasonally, along this road through the Wild Forest Corridor north of this point, predates, and continued regularly after the enactment of the WSRRS Act. Compliance with the WSRRS Act is required because a portion of the Chain Lakes Road (South) proceeds within one half mile of the Hudson River near the Outer Gooley clearing. The Hudson River at this location is classified as a Wild River under the WSRRS Act. The WSRRS Act, and its implementing regulations, both recognize that existing land uses within classified river areas that are not altered or expanded may continue. (*See* Environmental Conservation Law (ECL) section 15-2709.2 and 6 NYCRR section 666.13[A][1]). Therefore, the DEC has determined that continued motor vehicle use on this road within the Wild River Area is an existing land use that is authorized to continue by statute and regulation. This existing land use, however, will be constrained by measures adopted by DEC in order to limit public motor vehicle access, and restrict parking to designated areas.

The 6-car parking area is located where motor vehicles have historically parked in the vicinity of the Outer Gooley farmhouse, along the Chain Lakes Road (South), approximately 3.9 miles north of State Route 28.

Upper Hudson Ski Loop Parking and Access Point

Public parking near the Upper Hudson Ski Loop Trail is located off of the Goodnow Flow Road, near the Goodnow Flow outfall dam and bridge. This small, 3-car lot is located in a formerly cleared landing on private lands and subject to a conservation easement held by the State. These conservation easement lands are not covered by this Complex Plan, but this parking area provides access to lands on the Forest Preserve subject to this Complex Plan. This previously cleared lot required no additional manipulation (except snow plowing) to make useable for a winter parking site.

General Winter Parking & Access Points

The Chain Lakes Road (South) is plowed in the winter up to the large parking area near the whitewater rafting put-in, approximately 1.4 miles north of State Route 28. The Town allows the public to park here during winter and mud season to access the Complex Area.

There is currently a designated public parking area along the Goodnow Flow Road, near the intersection with the Chain Lakes Road (North) on Blue Mountain Wild Forest land. Note: this lot may be full periodically until October 1, 2018, because lessees park here for winter and mud season access to their camps.

Parking near Fifth Lake

As described below under Proposed Management, and as approved in the 2014 Stewardship Plan, this Plan proposes a six-car parking area approximately 250 feet west of the “Tube” in conformance with the APSLMP.

Motorized access for persons with disabilities is discussed in more detail in the Recreational Access for Persons with Disabilities section.

Note: Seasonal hunting motorized access along the Camp Six Road and Chain Lakes Road (South) is discussed in the Hunting & Seasonal Hunting Access section.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Provide an adequate configuration of access points to the Area for people of all ages and abilities, with adequate parking areas and facilities that accommodate visitor needs while protecting the natural resources.
- Maintain safe public motorized access to designated parking areas, in compliance with requirements of all applicable laws, regulations, and policies.

Action Steps

- Maintain the existing designated parking areas and associated infrastructure to facilitate safe and orderly public access to the Complex Area.
- Encourage and engage in partnerships with local governments and outside volunteers to maintain and snowplow (if applicable) trailhead parking facilities.
- If allowed by the easement terms, expand the Upper Hudson Ski Loop parking area to accommodate 6 cars and allow year-round use.
- Encourage general winter parking for the northern end of the Complex Area at an existing parking lot near the intersection of the Chain Lakes Road (North)/Goodnow Flow Road intersection. However, this lot is currently shared with hunting camp lessees, who park there during winter and mud season to access their camps via snowmobile and ATV.
- Install a DEC gate on the road just north of the "Tube" between Fourth and Fifth Lakes. This gate will prevent vehicles from continuing past any designated parking area. Horse and wagon will be allowed through this gate to access the accessible Fifth Lake primitive tent site.
- Install a DEC gate on the north side of the Deer Pond Circle, where it loops west towards the gravel pit. There will be no public motorized access on the Deer Pond Circle. Adequate space will be left for recreation users to access the Deer Pond Circle road as a trail, in conformance with the APSLMP. The use of a gate here, instead of barrier rocks, will allow for administrative motorized access to the gravel pit for gravel extraction. When the gravel pit is deemed exhausted and reclaimed, the DEC may choose to replace this gate with barrier rocks.
- Place barrier rocks on the eastern end of the Deer Pond Circle, to prevent those driving to the "Tube" parking areas from driving on the Deer Pond Circle. Again, adequate space will be left so multiple user groups can use the Deer Pond Circle as a trail.
- Designate a six-car parking area west of the "Tube" in conformance with the APSLMP. This parking will be for day or overnight use (with a camping permit for a designated site.)

D. Roads

Existing Conditions

There are approximately 53 miles of former woods roads throughout the Complex Area. Some of these roads were all-season roads and some were winter use only roads.

Public Motor Vehicle Roads

Motor vehicle use in and of itself is not a program offered by the DEC. However, the public is authorized to travel by motor vehicle on approximately 10 miles of designated public motor vehicle roads within the Complex Area to provide access to recreation.

The Gooley Club's lease expires on September 30, 2018, and they have motorized access to their camp complex (within in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area) until that time. An additional year of motorized access is allowed by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in order to remove the camp buildings and other affiliated structures.

Administrative Use Roads (State Truck Trails)

Of the approximate 53 miles of former woods roads (all-season and winter roads) which exist within the Complex Area, approximately 30 miles are within the sections classified as Wild Forest or currently unclassified. Approximately .65 miles of the former all-season roads are designated as administrative roads within these sections of the Complex Area.

These administrative roads (see map in Appendix I) are from the gravel pit north of Deer Pond to the junction with Deer Pond Road and the Drake's Mill Road between the eastern-most parking area and the Polaris Bridge.

NOTE: This Plan supersedes the Stewardship Plan (as amended July 2015), which identified additional road segments as administrative.

The "Tube"

The "Tube" is the large culvert between Fourth and Fifth Lakes, located under the road connecting land north and south of the lakes, and is large enough for boats to paddle through. The section of road connecting the two shores is approximately 175 feet and constructed with fill. As such, the hydrology between the two lakes was greatly modified when the road was constructed.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Continue to provide public motorized use of designated roads in Wild Forest to accommodate access for recreational opportunities consistent with the APSLMP requirements.
- Provide for adequate maintenance of former all-season roads which are designated for non-motorized recreational trail use in compliance with the APSLMP.
- Prevent illegal motor vehicle use.
- Continue and/or develop partnerships with local municipalities to help maintain public and administrative roads.
- Restore the natural hydrology between Fourth and Fifth Lakes.

Action Steps

- Periodically maintain public and administrative roads using proper materials, tools, and techniques in a manner consistent with the APSLMP.
- Maintain former all-season roads which are designated as non-motorized recreational trails within the Essex Chain and Pine Lake Primitive Areas in a manner consistent with the APSLMP.
- Remove the "Tube" and replace with a bridge that can accommodate proposed recreational uses, including horse and wagon. This replacement bridge will be designed and installed in consultation with DEC programs, APA, and any other applicable jurisdictional agencies. See Bridges section for more information.
- Maintain gates, barriers, and associated signage that prevent motor vehicle trespass onto adjacent private lands or unauthorized areas.

- Gates that are part of the snowmobile trail system will be opened at the onset of winter and closed for mud season.

E. Bridges

History

Cedar River Bridge

The Chain Lakes Road (North) and the Chain Lakes Road (South) have been in existence since the mid to late 1800's. It became a Town Highway sometime near the turn of the 20th century. Initially, barges were used to cross the Cedar River and, later, bridges were constructed. In 1978 the last bridge collapsed from river ice buildup and was never replaced, although the Chain Lakes Road (North and South) on either side of the river—where bridges had been historically located—continued to be used until the land was purchased by the State in 2013. Snowmobiles, driven by both the public and the lessees, have continuously crossed the Cedar River since the last bridge collapsed in the vicinity of these earlier bridge locations.

Iron (Polaris) Bridge

The 1950's records indicate that a bridge was constructed at the current site of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge in order to provide motorized access to the east side of the Hudson River. That bridge was washed away after a few years. When the Polaris Club was established in the early 1960's, they accessed their camps by crossing a low point in the Hudson River. Finch Pruyn received permits to construct a bridge in 1983, but due to a change in timber harvest plans the bridge was not built at that time. Subsequently, permits were issued by DEC and the APA to Finch Pruyn and the current bridge was built in 1992. This bridge permitted motor vehicle access, including snowmobiles, to the east side of the Hudson River for timber harvesting and recreational activities.

Existing Conditions

Cedar River

There is currently no bridge crossing the Cedar River in the Complex Area. The 2014 classification of lands within the Complex Area contemplated the possibility of a bridge crossing in the vicinity of the previous bridge (where the Chain Lakes Road (North) and Chain Lakes Road (South) meet.)

There is an existing bridge over the Cedar River approximately 9 river miles from the proposed Cedar River Bridge in this Complex Plan. This multiple use recreational trail bridge was permitted by DEC and APA in 2001. The DEC permit (#5-2026-00103/00001) describes its purpose:

"The proposed multiple use recreational trail bridge will span a segment of the Cedar River designated "recreational" under the WSRRA. The bridge will link the hamlet of Indian Lake with the trail system of the Blue Mountain Wild Forest. It will provide direct access to an existing trail, whose main purpose is snowmobiling, which leads towards the hamlet of Blue Mountain Lake. Eventually the trail may be extended to connect with the hamlet of Long Lake."

Hudson River

The distance along the Hudson River between Route 28N in Newcomb and Route 28N in North Creek is 28 miles, and the Iron (Polaris) Bridge is the only crossing within this stretch. Currently the bridge serves as a motor vehicle crossing to the east side of the Hudson River.

The "Tube"

The "Tube" is the culvert between Fourth and Fifth Lakes, located under the road connecting land north and south of the lakes. It is large enough for boats to paddle through.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Continue to provide recreational access to State lands on the east side of the Hudson River.
- Re-establish a recreational link across the Cedar River, allowing for a multiple use, community connection trail between Indian Lake and Minerva.
- Eliminate the "Tube" culvert and re-establish a more natural hydrology between Fourth and Fifth Lakes.

Action Steps

- Continue maintenance of the existing Iron (Polaris) Bridge for recreational access to the east side of the Hudson River. No public motor vehicles, except for snowmobiles, will be allowed to cross the Iron (Polaris) Bridge. Establishing ADA accessible facilities on the east side of the Hudson River will be addressed in a future amendment to the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest UMP (see page 37.)
- Construct a new bridge over the Cedar River in the vicinity of a river crossing established in the early 1900's. The bridge will be built in conformance with the WSRRS Act and APSLMP, and be designed and installed in consultation with DEC, APA, and any other applicable jurisdictional agencies. No public motor vehicles, except for snowmobiles, will be allowed to cross the Cedar River Bridge. (Refer to Appendix E for an analysis of bridge location alternatives)
- Remove the "Tube" and replace with a bridge that can accommodate the proposed recreational uses, including horse and wagon. This replacement bridge will be designed and installed in consultation with DEC programs, APA, and any other applicable jurisdictional agencies.

F. Camping

History

The Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex became open to the public on October 1, 2013 for day use. At that time, there weren't any DEC-designated primitive tent sites in the areas surrounding the small lakes and ponds.

Prior to July 1, 2014, the area—the shoreline in particular—was inventoried for appropriate primitive tent site locations. There are significant amounts of undisturbed, emergent wetlands along the shorelines of the Chain Lakes and surrounding waterbodies, so the selection of sites in locations with the capacity to withstand use was critical to minimize natural resource impacts. Sites were located to be APSLMP compliant and the area became open to overnight use on July 1, 2014.

Existing Conditions

General

There are a total of 31 designated primitive tent sites in the Complex Area:

Primitive tent sites which currently require a permit:

- 11 sites dispersed throughout the Essex Chain Lakes vicinity (First through Eighth Lakes, Deer Pond, Jackson Pond, Mud Pond, Grassy Pond, Little Grassy Pond)

Primitive tent sites which do not require a permit:

- 6 sites along the Cornell Road and Deer Pond Road
- 1 site along the Boots to Cornell road approx. 0.2 mi south of the "Tube"
- 1 site on the northwest side of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge
- 4 sites along the Camp Six Road
- 1 site on Pine Lake (not including the floatplane site)
- 4 sites along the Chain Lakes Road (South), between the Outer Gooley parking area and the Cedar River

There are also 3 sites in the Complex Area that have been historically used by floatplane visitors and will continue to only be used by floatplane visitors. Two of these sites are located on First Lake, and one on Pine Lake. They are signed "Reserved for floatplane use only." See Proposed Facilities map in Appendix I.

Camping is allowed at designated sites only within the ECLPA. In order to protect the ecologically sensitive areas around the Chain Lakes and surrounding waterbodies, a camping permit is required for designated sites within 500 feet of the Essex Chain Lakes and surrounding lakes/ponds. This includes First through Eighth Lakes, Little Grassy Pond, Grassy Pond, Mud Pond, Deer Pond, and Jackson Pond. Fires are prohibited at these permitted sites, and are signed accordingly. Other designated sites within the Primitive Area do not require a permit, and are subject to general State Land backcountry camping regulations and allow fires.

Camping on public land outside of the ECLPA is subject to general State Land backcountry camping regulations, which allows at-large camping at least 150 feet from a road, trail, or water and also allow fires.

Camping Permit System

The Adirondack Interpretive Center (AIC), a SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry facility located off of Route 28N in Newcomb, is the location where camping permits are issued (during AIC business hours) for camping at the 11 designated primitive tent sites in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area which require a permit. The maximum length of stay at the same primitive tent site is 3 nights. The maximum overnight group size is 8 people. Permits are required and are issued by AIC staff between May 15 and October 15 each year. Outside of this time window, the maximum length of stay will still be 3 nights at the same primitive tent site, but use will not be subject to a permitting system. Reservations may be made up to 10 days in advance (based on a 10-day weather forecast window.) Visitors with a reservation permit may arrive after AIC hours, but must notify staff ahead of time, and arrange to receive their permit and area map.

Year 2014 was the first year that the public was allowed to camp in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area, and use levels were documented via the camping permit system records and the Deer Pond parking area kiosk. A total of 77 camping permits were issued between July 1 and October 15, 2014. The total number of overnight visitors was 216, with 453 total user nights. September was the month with the highest percent occupancy (14 %.) These use statistics suggest a lesser demand for camping than was anticipated. However, almost 1,000 day-users signed in at the Deer Pond parking area kiosk during that same time frame. Although the specific use numbers were not captured, visitors were found to have enjoyed roadside camping along the Cornell and Deer Pond Roads. The majority of users in the Complex Area were day users paddling the lakes.

Campfires

In other areas of the Forest Preserve, the number of visitors using portable gas stoves instead of campfires is increasing. The proliferation of fire blackened rocks, charcoal, and partially burned garbage, melted and broken glass, hacked trees, and litter has and continues to scar many primitive tent sites. In addition, campfires are improperly built in parking lots, in the middle of trails, inside lean-tos and trailhead registration shelters, and along shorelines of rivers, lakes and ponds. “There is no question that campfires have substantial environmental impacts” (Cole, Dalle-Moll 1982.)

Overall, there are currently few DEC rules and regulations that address fire use. Although actual fire sites are usually quite small, a more serious aspect involves firewood gathering, which by itself causes widespread and often severe impacts. This activity greatly increases the area of disturbance around primitive tent sites and it is common that the disturbed area can be 10-20 times greater in size than the actual primitive tent site zone. Campfires consume wood which would otherwise decompose and replenish soil nutrients. Excessive firewood gathering has resulted in the removal of all dead and down material and fostered the cutting of live and standing dead trees in many popular areas. The latter are habitats to many birds and insects and pulling off limbs scars primitive tent sites for other users. For example, in the Eastern High Peaks Wilderness Area, more than ¼ of the standing trees were cut for firewood around Marcy Dam, before fires were prohibited in the Eastern High Peaks management zone (HPWA UMP 1999.) Unburned refuse left in fire rings has attracted wildlife in search of food and leads to increased human/wildlife conflicts, especially with bears.

The lakes and ponds of the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area occupy only a small geographic area, and are surrounded in many places by emergent wetlands and pristine shorelines. APA has described many of these wetland areas as highly sensitive Class I wetlands, which require the highest degree of protection.

Due to the above considerations, fires are prohibited at all sites that require a permit in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area, which are the sites within 500 feet of a lake/pond (First through Eighth Lakes, Deer Pond, Jackson Pond, Mud Pond, Grassy Pond, and Little Grassy Pond.) Fires are allowed at the two floatplane primitive tent sites on First Lake. Fires are allowed within the Pine Lake Primitive Area and Blue Mountain Wild Forest areas, subject to general State land regulations.

There is currently a tentsite on the east side of the former all-season road 0.2 mi south of the "Tube" between Fourth and Fifth Lakes where fires are allowed. Visitors may paddle to Fourth/Fifth Lakes, exit the water at the "Tube", and carry along the former all-season road to access the tent site.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Reduce, eliminate, or mitigate any adverse impacts of camping on natural resources.
- Comply with the APSLMP primitive tent site and lean-to guidelines.
- Improve and enhance camping opportunities in the Complex Area.
- Direct the public to designated camping locations by providing information in publications, on webpages, and at trailheads.

Action Steps

- Designate one to two primitive tent sites in the vicinity of the north shore of the Cedar River, within the ECLPA.
- Designate one to two primitive tent sites along the west side of the Hudson River, between the Route 28N Bridge and the Iron (Polaris) Bridge.
- Upgrade the existing primitive tent site on the northwest side of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge to make accessible for persons with disabilities and equestrian users. This will incorporate an accessible privy, picnic table, fire ring, and horse mounting platform.
- Install a lean-to in the vicinity of Inner Gooley clearing – after the camp buildings are removed. This will incorporate accessible features, including a privy, access to the water's edge, and a mounting platform.
- Designated primitive tent sites may be closed temporarily because of overuse or other emergency or environmental reasons by the posting of "No Camping" signs. Site relocations and new site establishment will be done through the DEC work planning process, in consultation with APA, and in compliance with the APSLMP.
- If use levels remain similar to 2014, then the DEC may consider eliminating the permit system after year 2018, and manage the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area as "camping at designated sites only." Other management actions will also be considered as part of this decision-making

process, including the continuation of partnering with the AIC to remain an informational hub for the recreational opportunities within the Complex Area.

- Designate additional primitive tent sites in the ELCPA that are accessible from the waterbodies and located more than 500 feet from a lake/pond. These sites will not require a permit, and campfires will be allowed. They will be monitored, and fires may be discontinued or the sites closed if negative impacts are observed. A maximum of six sites will be designated.
- Monitor impacts of campfires and firewood gathering to identify potential degradation. Sites will be observed to ensure that fires only occur within designated fire rings, and that only dead and down wood is used for fuel.
- Monitor primitive tent site use. If sites remain unused, close or relocate them to other roadside locations.

- **Proposed Regulation**

  Statutory authority for regulatory change is found in ECL §9-0105(3) and ECL §9-0105(3) § 816.1 through 816.3. Section 816.3 of the Executive Law (APA Act) directs DEC to develop rules and regulations necessary to implement the APSLMP. Existing regulations relating to public use of State lands under the jurisdiction of the DEC are found in 6 NYCRR Part 190. These proposed regulations constitute the minimum level of direct regulation necessary to assure APSLMP compliance and directly influence visitor behavior to protect resources and the experiences of visitors.

  Currently, the no-fire provision will be managed and regulated pursuant to DEC regulations[2] which states that *"No person shall set, light, use or maintain a fire or campfire of any kind on State lands which are posted or designated by the department to prohibit campfires. Under no circumstances are campfires allowed on any forest access road, truck trail, road, trail or parking area on State lands."*

  Through this Complex Plan, the promulgation of a new regulation is proposed to prohibit fires within 500 feet of the Essex Chain Lakes and surrounding waterbodies, including: First – Eighth Lakes, Deer Pond, Jackson Pond, Mud Pond, Grassy Pond, and Little Grassy Pond. Fires are allowed at the two First Lake floatplane primitive tent sites.

G. Canoe Carries

Existing Conditions

Canoe carries allow paddlers to portage between adjacent lakes/ponds, or around rapid sections of watercourses. There are four existing canoe carries in the Complex Area, which are marked with yellow DEC "Canoe Carry" trail markers:

1. Deer Pond Parking Area to Deer Pond shore (0.25 mi)

[2] Section 190.8[v] of Title 6 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York.

2. Deer Pond shore to Third Lake shore (0.50 mi)

3. Second Lake shore to First Lake shore (0.10 mi)

4. First Lake shore to Grassy Pond shore (0.40 mi)

Paddlers park at the Deer Pond Parking Area. After signing in at the kiosk, it is a 0.25 carry along the former all-season road to the shore of Deer Pond. Stone steps lead to the edge of Deer Pond. Paddlers then may cross Deer Pond, and take out for a 0.50 mi carry along another former all-season road to the shore of Third Lake. If a wheeled canoe carrier is being used, it may be more convenient to skip Deer Pond and carry to Third Lake or to the "Tube" between 4th and 5th Lakes. Continuing along the former all-season road, instead of taking the stone steps to Deer Pond, a canoe may be wheeled on the former all-season road around the eastern end of Deer Pond, to Third Lake or to the "Tube" between 4th and 5th Lakes. The distance from the Deer Pond Parking Area to the shore of Third Lake or the "Tube" between 4th and 5th, via road and avoiding Deer Pond, is approximately 1.2 miles. This information will be provided on the parking area kiosk and via appropriate signage.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Facilitate safe public access between nearby waterbodies that are not connected via waterway.
- Allow for safe traverse around two rapid sections on the Hudson River between the Town of Newcomb (Lake Harris) and the Iron (Polaris) Bridge.
- Design and locate any new trail markers and trail signs in accordance with the unified system developed for Forest Preserve lands.
- Locate new canoe carries in sites that can withstand use to minimize the impact on natural resources.

Action Steps

- Maintain the existing canoe carries, which includes: maintaining signage/trail markers, removal of blowdown, and brush clearing.
- The APA will be consulted in any significant canoe carry management or construction activities in wetlands and in areas adjacent to wetlands to determine if an APA wetlands permit is required.
- Formalize and mark two pre-existing carries on the Hudson River, between Lake Harris and the Iron (Polaris) Bridge. The carry around Long Rapids is 0.30 miles, and the carry around Ord Falls is 0.50 miles. These carries are already flagged and utilized by the public, but will be marked with yellow DEC "canoe carry" trail markers, blowdown removed, and brushed out.
- Site and construct a canoe carry to Eighth Lake.
- Site and construct a canoe carry from Third Lake to Jackson Pond that does not enter the Inner Gooley Club's exclusive use envelope, or wait until 2018 to designate this carry, and use the landing at the Inner Gooley Club's current location. These options will be considered, and the route with the best balance of directness and capacity to withstand use will be selected and constructed.

- Relocate the beginning of the canoe carry from First Lake to Grassy Pond around the floatplane-only primitive tent site. Remove markers and brush in the relocated portion.
- Sign portions of canoe carry trails that do not follow former all-season roads as closed to horse and bicycle use. This will prevent both damage to the smaller carry trails and erosion at the water's edge.

H. Recreational Opportunities for People with Disabilities

History and Guidance

Application of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), along with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Title V, Section 504, have had a profound effect on the manner by which people with disabilities are afforded equality in their recreational pursuits. The ADA is a comprehensive law prohibiting discrimination against people with disabilities in employment practices, use of public transportation, use of telecommunication facilities and use of public accommodations. Title II of the ADA requires, in part, that reasonable modifications must be made to the services and programs of public entities, so that when those services and programs are viewed in their entirety, they are readily accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. This must be done unless such modification would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of the service, program or activity or an undue financial or administrative burden.

Title II also requires that new facilities, and parts of facilities that are newly constructed for public use, are to be accessible to people with disabilities. In rare circumstances where accessibility is determined to be structurally impracticable due to terrain, the facility, or part of facility is to be accessible to the greatest extent possible and to people with various types of disabilities.

Consistent with ADA requirements, the DEC incorporates accessibility for people with disabilities into the planning, construction and alteration of recreational facilities and assets supporting them. This Complex Plan incorporates an inventory of all the recreational facilities or assets supporting the programs and services available on the unit, and an assessment of the programs, services and facilities on the unit to determine the level of accessibility provided. In conducting this assessment, DEC employs guidelines which ensure that programs are accessible, including buildings, facilities, and vehicles, in terms of architecture and design, transportation and communication to individuals with disabilities.

Any new facilities, assets and accessibility improvements to existing facilities or assets proposed in this Complex Plan are identified in the section containing proposed action steps.

The DEC is not required to make each of its existing facilities and assets accessible as long as the DEC programs, taken as a whole, are accessible.

For copies of any of the above mentioned laws or guidelines relating to accessibility, contact the DEC Universal Access Program Coordinator at 518-402-9428 or UniversalAccessProgram@dec.ny.gov.

Universal Trail Assessment Process

The Universal Trail Assessment Process (UTAP) is an objective method of measuring such site conditions as average and maximum grade, minimum trail width, cross slope, trail length, and surface type. These variables can then be presented to the user at the trailhead to allow them to make an informed decision about whether they would like to use the facility or not.

Facilities

The 2014 Stewardship Plan for the Complex Area described recreational opportunities to be implemented, prior to formal Complex Plan adoption, to accommodate people with disabilities. This included: motorized access to camping and waterway access to Fifth Lake, and accessible roadside camping opportunities at three separate locations throughout the Complex Area. Although this UMP supersedes the Stewardship Plan, construction of these facilities will be completed in concurrence with the Stewardship Plan, and are therefore listed here as previously approved facilities.

Camping & Waterway Access at Fifth Lake

Pursuant to the Stewardship Plan and in conformance with the APSLMP, motor vehicle access will be provided for people with disabilities near the "Tube."

There is a primitive tent site located on Fifth Lake (north of the "Tube") that can be reserved using the existing camping permit system (see Camping section for more details.) The site will be made accessible for people with disabilities by offering designated parking, hardened access routes and camping surface, and an accessible privy. This site will be usable by the general public, but those without a disability are encouraged to use other sites, and leave this site for those that require accessible features. Monitoring use and satisfaction of users will occur to assess and determine long term management of this site.

The waterway access site is on the south side of the "Tube", and can be used by campers or day-users. It has a gradually sloping sandy shore, with a path from the road that will be widened and hardened.

Roadside Primitive Tentsites

Accessible camping opportunities will be provided at three additional locations throughout the Complex Area adjacent to publicly-accessible portions of public roads. Camping at these sites will be managed according to general State land backcountry camping regulations. The locations of accessible roadside tent sites will be carefully chosen, in order to provide attractive facilities in areas that can withstand use. These locations will have stable surfaces and include parking, hardened tent location, a privy, and a hardened access route to the accessible privy, and comply with the APSLMP. These sites will be located in appropriate locations along the Cornell Road, Deer Pond Road, Camp Six Road, Drake's Mill Road, Chain Lakes Road (South), or Chain Lakes Road (North). Exact locations of these sites will be provided on maps, at trailheads, on the DEC website and through other appropriate informational pathways. Monitoring use and satisfaction of users will occur to assess and determine long term management of these sites.

Proposed Management

Objective

- Maintain existing (and increase as appropriate) access opportunities for people with disabilities where such development does not alter the fundamental nature of existing programs, is compliant with DEC regulation and policy, and any improvements are conforming under the guidelines of the APSLMP.

Action Steps

- Maintain existing recreational access opportunities for people with disabilities, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.
- Publicize the locations and details of existing accessible facilities on DEC's public website and through other appropriate informational pathways.
- Create a day-use area in the vicinity of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge, which will include a picnic table.
- Construct accessible camping facilities and a horse mounting platform at the existing primitive tent site on the northwest side of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge, on BMWF land. Construct a 0.3 mi hardened accessible path from the Iron (Polaris) Bridge Parking Area to the camping facilities near the bridge. This path will comply with ADA standards, and be a path mostly through the woods that will provide people with disabilities a desirable trail experience.
- Establish accessible facilities on the east side of the Hudson River, in the Vanderwhacker Mountain WF. This may include: fishing access, waterway access, day-use or camping opportunities – depending on site conditions and feasibility. A future amendment to the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest UMP will be necessary for these facilities to be developed.
- Install an accessible lean-to in the vicinity of the Inner Gooley complex site. This site will include a mounting platform, accessible privy, and access for the public to the water's edge. Construct an accessible fishing and waterway access site south of the "Tube."
- Perform a UTAP assessment of the Deer Pond Circle and the primitive tent site at Deer Pond. Identify and carry through any additional opportunities to perform the UTAP process in the Complex Area.
- Provide accessible fishing opportunities on the bridge that will replace the "Tube." This will be evaluated and committed to through the design of the bridge.
- Construct an accessible fishing and waterway access site south of the "Tube."
- Construct a six-car parking area near the "Tube" in conformance with the APSLMP.

I. Fishing

Existing Conditions

Regulations

DEC angling regulations are designed to conserve fish populations in individual waters by preventing overexploitation. Angling regulations effectively control impacts of angler use. DEC monitors the effectiveness of angling regulations, stocking policies and other management activities by conducting

periodic biological and chemical surveys. Based on analysis of biological survey results, angling regulations may be changed as necessary to protect the fish populations of the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex Area. Statewide angling and special angling regulations provide the protection necessary to sustain or enhance natural reproduction where it occurs.

In addition to angling regulations, factors at work in the unit which serve to limit use include the relative remoteness of some waterbodies/waterways from roads, the seasonal nature of angling in coldwater ponds, and seasonal road closures.

Current fishing regulations prohibit the use or possession of baitfish in all Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area lakes and ponds.

The use of motorized watercraft (with the exception of the lessees until September 30, 2018) is prohibited. See the Use Reservations section for more lessee information.

Proposed Management

Objective

- Maintain and enforce regulations that prohibit the use of fish as bait in the Primitive Area lakes/ponds. The use of fish as bait is a potentially significant vector for introductions of disruptive non-native fish species.

Action Step

- Enforce current applicable Statewide and special fishing regulations in Complex Area waters.

J. Hunting and Seasonal Access

Existing Conditions

Regulations and Use

The Complex Area provides an opportunity for a variety of wildlife related recreational pursuits. These include hunting, trapping, bird watching and wildlife photography. A number of mammals and birds may be hunted or trapped during seasons set annually by the DEC. These species are identified in the Environmental Conservation Law (ECL), Section 11-0903 and 11-0908. The DEC has the authority to set hunting and trapping season dates and bag limits by regulation for all game species. The Complex Area is located within Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) 5H.

Wildlife related usage has historically centered around big game hunting, primarily for deer, although bear hunting, small game hunting and furbearer trapping are also prominent. Since the State took ownership of the area, white-tailed deer hunting during the regular big game season has been popular. Several seasonal hunting camp permits have been issued by local Forest Rangers since the addition of the land to the Forest Preserve.

Seasonal Motorized Access

Segments of two roads, one accessed from the Town of Newcomb and one accessed from the Town of Indian Lake, will be open for additional fall seasonal motorized access that coincides with regular big game hunting season. The gates on both the Camp Six Road in Newcomb and the Chain Lakes Road (South) in Indian Lake will be opened from October 1 until the first Sunday in December (road conditions and weather permitting.) This encompasses muzzle loading, archery, and rifle deer seasons. Holders of seasonal hunting camp permits (issued by the local Forest Ranger), may have pre-arranged access to remove their seasonal hunting camps until the second weekend in December.

Camp Six Road Seasonal Access

The gate at the beginning of the Camp Six Road will be open during big game season for motor vehicle use for an extended one mile to a small parking and turnaround area. There are currently four primitive tent sites located along this section of road.

The Camp Six Road is accessed from the Town of Newcomb. Turn south on the Goodnow Flow Road from Route 28N, and left onto the Chain Lakes Road (North). Continue left past the first closed yellow gate. The Camp Six Road is the second yellow gate, and will be opened during the fall regular big game season.

Chain Lakes Road (South) Seasonal Access

The gate at the Outer Gooley public parking area, along the Chain Lakes Road (South), will be open during big game season for motor vehicle use for an extended 1.5 miles to a small parking and turnaround area. There are currently 3 primitive tent sites located along this section of road, one further along the road, and one on the east side of Pine Lake. There is also a primitive tent site on the west side of Pine Lake that is used by those traveling by floatplane.

The Chain Lakes Road (South) is accessed from the Town of Indian Lake. Turn north onto the Chain Lakes Road (South) from Route 28, just east of the village. Continue along the Chain Lakes Road (South) (past the Lake Abanakee dam and the rafting put-in) to the Outer Gooley public parking area. The gate along the road after the parking area will be opened during fall regular big game season.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Maintain up-to-date public information regarding hunting and trapping opportunities and any associated regulation changes.
- Continue to provide additional fall seasonal access to the area during big game hunting season.

Action Steps

- Open segments of two roads, one accessed from the Town of Newcomb and one accessed from the Town of Indian Lake, to provide seasonal motorized access that coincides with regular big game hunting season.

- Support educational opportunities related to hunting and trapping, and enforce hunting and trapping regulations.
- Evaluate the primitive tent sites along both seasonal access routes. Those sites that see little use may be moved to more desirable roadside locations. For relocated sites on either road, motor vehicle pull offs may be constructed if site conditions warrant. In order to accommodate relocated sites, seasonal access along the Chain Lakes Road (South) may be extended up to an additional ½ mile north.
- Assess use levels of both seasonal access routes. If use levels remain relatively low then the option of discontinuing either one of these access routes will be explored and executed.
- Maintain seasonal access routes, signage, gates, and parking to an appropriate and usable standard.

K. Trails - General

Trail management involves not just the trail itself, but also the corridor it occupies. Trails are not self-sustaining. Once developed, all trails must receive a degree of maintenance; otherwise non-maintained trails will deteriorate and cause resource problems. The degree of maintenance a trail receives varies greatly depending on the designated use of that trail. Snowmobile and ski trails may require pruning of branches to a greater height to accommodate the snow pack. Horse trails also require greater pruning heights as riders are generally 6-8 feet or more above ground level. Maintenance of all trails should be conducted in a manner that is adequate for the desired use and has minimal impact on the character of the trail. DEC faces a backlog of unmet trail maintenance and reconstruction on Forest Preserve trails and relies on volunteers and trail contractors to close the gap. See the Partnerships and Volunteers section for more information.

L. Hiking, Cross-Country Ski & Snowshoe Trails

Existing Conditions

Existing former all-season roads are spread throughout the Complex Area, and serve as a network of unofficial hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoe trails.

There is one designated and marked cross-country ski/snowshoe loop in the Complex Area, known as the Upper Hudson Ski Loop. It is located on Blue Mountain Wild Forest land north of the Goodnow River. This loop is a “lollipop” layout trail, beginning and ending at the same location. The trail begins across the road from the Goodnow Flow outfall dam, off of the Goodnow Flow Road. A small 3 car parking area was designated in the winter of 2014/15, in a previously cleared area on private conservation easement land adjacent to the Forest Preserve.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Design and locate all trails in accordance with DEC guidance and trail best management practices that minimize environmental impacts.
- Design and locate all trail markers and signs in accordance with the unified system developed for Forest Preserve lands.
- Maintain current trail information on the DEC website and disseminate through other appropriate sources.
- Maintain trails to appropriate standards, which minimize resource degradation and provide safe public access.
- Add and enhance hiking, cross-country ski, and snowshoe trail opportunities as appropriate throughout the Complex Area.

Action Steps

- Evaluate existing and desired use of the Upper Hudson Ski Loop trail and parking area. Consult with the private landowner to upgrade the parking area to make useable for non-winter use and expand to accommodate 6 vehicles, while minimizing natural resource impacts.
- If approved by the private landowner, allow for bicycles to cross the very small distance of private land to access the BMWF and designate the Upper Hudson Ski Loop as a bicycle trail.
- Extend the Upper Hudson Ski Loop Trail. An existing, unmarked trail on Forest Preserve extends past the northern end of the existing loop trail (on the west side of the Hudson River) for approx. 3.5 miles to the Ord Road. The trail will then follow the Ord Road west to the Forest Preserve boundary, and cross the Chain Lakes conservation easement to reach the Goodnow Flow Road. Parking in the vicinity of the Ord Road will be approved and established before this will be opened to the public. Reroutes may be necessary where former all season roads are no longer suitable.
- Extend this same non-motorized trail further, directly to the Town of Newcomb. This existing, unmarked trail continues north from Ord Road approximately 2.5 miles to a gate near the Newcomb Transfer Station. However, the northernmost section crosses private land. Parking will be assessed through Forest Preserve work planning and any private land crossings will only be established with permission of the private landowners.
- Allow for (and encourage) hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing on appropriately designated multiple use trails in the Complex Area.
- Maintenance and construction will conform to trail best management practices.
- Collect recreational use data through register information.

M. Bicycle Trails

History

In 1993, APA and DEC signed an addendum to the APA/DEC MOU which addresses use of bicycles on wild forest classified lands, while prohibiting bicycling on all wilderness areas. The addendum adopted

was partly in response to the tourism, bicycling and regional planning interests which identified the economic and recreational potential for mountain bicycling in the Adirondack Park.

The APSLMP guidelines for wild forest areas (page 36) allow "all terrain bicycles" (bicycles) *"on roads legally open to the public and on state truck trails, foot trails, snowmobile trails and horse trails deemed suitable for such use as specified in individual unit management plans*."

The character of the former woods road network provides a more family-friendly bicycling experience, in comparison to a typical single track bicycle experience, which is what DEC understands that the public is seeking in the Complex Area.

Existing Conditions

In July 2015, the DEC amended the Stewardship Plan to allow for bicycling to occur on a subset of administrative roads in the Complex Area. Within the Essex Chain and Pine Lakes Primitive Areas, the Stewardship Plan allowed for bicycling to occur on the entire Chain Lakes Road (North), the road connecting the Chain Lakes Road (North) to the Deer Pond Parking Area, the Deer Pond Circle and the trails to Jackson Pond and Pine Lake. Within the Wild Forest, the Stewardship Plan allowed for bicycling on the Drake's Mill Rd to the Iron (Polaris) Bridge and the Chain Lakes Road (South).

NOTE: This Complex Plan supersedes the Stewardship Plan (as amended July 2015.)

Multiple-Use Trails & Etiquette

The literature suggests that the majority of shared use concerns stem from horses coming into contact with bicycles. Since horses are prey animals, they can sometimes perceive the unknown as a potential threat.

There are existing trail etiquette standards that guide multiple use, especially when pertaining to horses and bicycles. The main way to reduce the potential for conflict is to provide user awareness about what other uses they are likely to encounter on the trail. This information will be posted at parking areas/trailheads.

The US Forest Service (USFS), the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA), and other organizations have published trail etiquette guidance. Bicycles should always yield to horses. Motor vehicles and ATVs can be heard from afar, and usually won't startle a horse. Bikes are quieter and can startle a horse and rider. When approaching, and depending on the situation, bicyclists should slow down, verbally make their presence known, and (depending on the situation) dismount to allow the equestrian trail riders to pass by. Providing a verbal announcement not only alerts the rider that you are there, but lets the horse know that you are a human – which prevents startling them. The sign (below) is an example of signage that shows the proper right-of-ways for multiple use trails.

Example of Right-Of-Way Signage

Assessment of Trails

This Complex Plan calls for an assessment of future horse and bicycle use. This assessment will be conducted in a variety of ways, and will allow DEC to better understand use, potential problems and public desires. The DEC, in consultation with APA, will assess the condition of non-motorized recreational trails used by equestrians and bicyclists to measure the impact these activities have on natural resources.

It is understood that the public desires to have "family style" bicycling experiences throughout the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex Area. There are many factors, that when combined, result in an overall user experience. The assessment called for in this Complex Plan will attempt to measure these factors in a way that captures the overall public use as well as more subjective measurements. These subjective measurements will deal with: aspects of the trails that users find enjoyable or memorable and describe positive or negative interactions.

Methods used to conduct this assessment will utilize DEC staff, including SCA Backcountry Stewards, Forest Rangers, and Foresters, as well as DEC partners, including Towns, volunteers, colleges, and contractors. The assessment will likely provide use estimates through a combination of trail registers, trail counters, and observation. The assessment will also involve interviews with users in an attempt to capture more "experience" based information, to define what is important to individual users of the area.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Continue bicycling opportunities pursuant to the APSLMP.
- Maintain trails to an appropriate standard in order to minimize resource impacts and preserve recreational usability.
- Educate recreational users about respectful multiple use trail etiquette.
- Evaluate bicycling use and impacts.

Action Steps

- Designate approximately 9 miles of former all-season roads in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areain conformance with the APSLMP.
- Designate approximately 7 miles of bicycle trails on Wild Forest lands within the Complex Area, this will include trails on a portion of the Chain Lakes Roads (North), Chain Lakes Road (South), Deer Pond Road, and Drake's Mill Road to the Iron (Polaris) Bridge.
- Assess trail use and experiences using methods and criteria described above.
- Identify any potential additional bike trails, if appropriate, in Wild Forest areas of this Complex Area and propose their formal designation in a UMP Amendment.
- Install up-to-date trail maps at kiosks/register boxes.
- Install multiple use trail etiquette signage at all Complex Area parking areas/trailheads.
- Install signage where bicycling is not allowed within the Complex Area. This includes the smaller canoe carry trails that lead directly to the water's edge.
- Maintain trails to their existing character, in conformance with the APSLMP, using appropriate materials, tools, and techniques.
- Place and sign trail registers in a manner that encourages all user groups to register. Accurate trail register data is an indispensable tool for DEC to appropriately manage the area.
- Encourage and support partnerships that evaluate use of the Complex Area.

N. Equestrian Facilities and Trails

History

Prior to addition into the Adirondack Forest Preserve, almost all of the land in the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex Area was historically owned by Finch Pruyn, and primarily managed for a sustainable timber supply. A network of all-season roads was used for access throughout the property. This network provides a unique opportunity for multiple use trails, including equestrian use. Equestrian trail riding provides a broad range of visitors with the opportunity to experience the Complex Area in an interesting way.

Facilities

Equestrian Parking & Staging Area – on Chain Lakes Road (North)

A parking and staging area, designed for five correctly-parked trucks/trailers, has been sited along the Chain Lakes Road (North), 0.25 miles from the Goodnow Flow Road intersection (see map in Appendix I.) This former log landing was chosen because it is already cleared, is reasonably level, and can accommodate the necessary space for this type of parking situation. Additionally, designating this site specifically for equestrian parking limits any parking conflicts with the public and adjacent landowners, and minimizes the distance that horse trailers must be driven on narrow gravel roads. Establishment of this parking area will require surface leveling and hardening to withstand the weight of trucks and large trailers. This parking area will also include a horse mounting platform and informational kiosk with a trail map. Horse mounting platforms will be installed near the Iron (Polaris) Bridge, at the accessible primitive

tent site at Fifth Lake, and, in consultation with APA, any other sites deemed necessary. Mounting platforms located at points of interest allow the area to be more accessible to a wider spectrum of recreationists. People will be able to dismount from their horse to use a privy and take in the scenic vistas. A preferable option for manure disposal will also be chosen and implemented.

The addition of a pull-in lane on the north side of the equestrian parking area will allow for a greater turning radius for trucks entering with trailers, and more room in the parking area itself. This was contemplated, but not proposed in the 2014 Stewardship Plan, and is being proposed as part of this UMP. This additional lane will require surface hardening and some tree cutting on Blue Mountain Wild Forest land adjacent to the Chain Lakes Road (North). Several trees bordering the Chain Lakes Road (North) will not be cut, in order to preserve naturalness of the site and guide use of the pull-in lane.

Equestrian Trail Opportunities

Approximately 21 miles of former all-season roads within the Complex Area will be designated as horse trails (see map in Appendix I.) Consideration for trail designation includes: capacity to withstand use, scenic vistas, loop trails, and long-term maintenance considerations. Designated trails will be marked with standard DEC trail markers. The Camp Six Rd corridor is not being proposed for horses at this time. While appropriate for winter use, the rocky and seasonally wet nature of the road makes it unusable for horses – without significant tread and drainage work.

All of the trails designated for horse use in the Complex Area allow for saddle horse use. Horse and wagon use will, however, be allowed on a portion of the trail network. Horse and wagon may ride to just north of the "Tube" and the Fifth Lake tent site, but will not be allowed to continue west to the Deer Pond Circle. Six Lake Road must be forded for a section near Fifth Lake, and therefore horse and wagon use will also not be allowed on that trail. Trails will be marked accordingly, and distinguished on kiosk and webpage maps.

Horses require water sources along trails and near facilities designed for their use. In order to prevent undue environmental impacts to shorelines, the DEC will designate locations where equestrian trail riders will be able to get water for their horses.

Multiple Use Trails & Etiquette

Multiple use trails accommodate several recreational uses including equestrian trail riding, bicycling, hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing. Several sections of trails may also be designated for snowmobile use. See Snowmobile Trails section for more information about area snowmobile trails. The literature suggests that the main concerns regarding multiple use trails for equestrian trail riders are safety related, specifically horses becoming spooked by other users. Since horses are prey animals, they may be spooked by the unknown. Vehicles and ATVs are typically safe, since the mechanical noise can be heard from a distance, and they realize that is isn't a predator. Bicycles, which are quieter, are the main concern, since a horse may perceive it as an unknown threat.

There are other places on State land where horses (including horse and wagon) and bicycles share trails without conflict. An example is the Otter Creek trail system in both the Independence River Wild Forest

and Independence River State Forest. This trail system is mainly oriented toward equestrian use, however, bicycling, hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling are also allowed on many of the trails. Otter Creek is heavily used by equestrian trail riders, whose experience is not reportedly diminished by these shared trail uses.

The Complex Area multiple use trail network has been historically managed as a road network. Since roads are typically flatter and wider than trails, with a considerably longer line of sight, the equestrian concerns (discussed above) are mostly alleviated. Moreover, when combined with a deliberate multiple use trail etiquette program, these uses should prove compatible in the Complex Area.

There are certain trail etiquette standards that guide multiple use, especially when pertaining to horses and bicycles. The main way to reduce the potential for conflict is to provide user awareness about what other uses they are likely to encounter on the trail. Given the proper etiquette information and shared trail expectations, all users should yield to equestrian trail riders. Hikers and bicyclists should be prepared to provide a verbal announcement to equestrian users - coming from either direction. The verbal announcement by bicyclists is paramount to dispel any potential threat to horses, and etiquette information will be provided to that effect. Equestrian trail riders should also be prepared to offer additional guidance when necessary. This information will be posted at parking areas/trailheads.

Equestrian Trail Maintenance

Equestrian trail riding is a compatible use of Forest Preserve lands when the trails are properly located, designed and maintained. It is important to bear in mind that without adequate maintenance, these trails will become eroded, wet and deteriorate. Trails in such a condition are environmentally unacceptable, unsafe and unpleasant to use, especially for multiple-use purposes.

Horse trails within the Essex Chain and Pine Lake Primitive Areas will be maintained pursuant to the APSLMP. Horse hitching posts and rails, and horse trail bridges constructed of natural materials are allowed by the APSLMP in Primitive Areas. Horse barns are conforming structures in Wild Forest and opportunities for the placement of these structures at staging areas will be explored in consultation with APA.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Provide recreational opportunities for equestrian trail riders in suitable locations.
- Maintain trails to appropriate usable standards, while minimizing environmental impacts.
- Provide information about uses allowed on and appropriate etiquette for multiple use trails.

Action Steps

- Install a Type II register box with map at the equestrian staging area.
- Provide multiple use trail etiquette information at all parking areas and trailheads.
- Install up-to-date trail maps at all Complex Area parking areas and trailheads.
- Designate and mark horse trails with DEC trail markers.

- Install signage where equestrian trail riding is not allowed within the Complex Area. This includes the smaller canoe carry trails that lead directly to the water's edge.
- Construct a pull-in lane adjacent to the equestrian parking area along the Chain Lakes Road (North).
- Evaluate the condition of the historic well at the historic Outer Gooley farmhouse, and consider installing a hand pump at the existing well, primarily for equestrian use.
- Identify locations for equestrians where water is available for horses and install signage at these locations. Hitching posts may also be provided at these locations.
- Establish a method for horse drawn wagons to pass through the gates along the former all season roads designated for their use. This includes the following gates: at the Outer Gooley Parking Area, along the Chain Lakes Road (North), at the "Tube", and at the Iron (Polaris) Bridge Parking Area. This will most likely be a combination lock – but the method of passage will be identified and published on the DEC webpage and kiosk at the equestrian staging area.
- Install mounting platforms near the Iron (Polaris) Bridge and near Fifth Lake.
- Install a mounting platform near the proposed Cedar River Bridge, along the north side of the Cedar River.
- Maintain trails to their existing character, in conformance with the APSLMP, using appropriate materials, tools, and techniques.
- Place and sign trail registers in a manner that encourages all user groups to register. Accurate trail register data is an indispensable tool for DEC to appropriately manage the area.
- Encourage and support partnerships that capture use of the Complex Area.
- Promulgate a regulation which prohibits horses from being tethered to trees.
- Promulgate a regulation which prevents horse from entering wetlands and water bodies (except through fords on designated trails.)

O. Snowmobile Trails

History

In the late 1960's until sometime in the 1980's, Finch Pruyn allowed public snowmobile use on roads within their properties, including those on the Essex Chain Lakes Tract. In the winter months, these roads allowed snowmobiles to travel between the communities of Indian Lake, Newcomb, Inlet, Long Lake and others. Many of these routes closed in the 1980's but some, such as a trail from Newcomb to Long Lake and a trail from Indian Lake to the Moose River Plains, remained open, and are still open to the public today, and some, like the trail from Indian Lake to Blue Mountain Lake, Long Lake, and Newcomb along the O'Neil Flow and Cornell Roads, have been reopened.

Guiding Documents

Statewide Context

In 1985, the New York State Legislature required the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) to plan for and establish the means to fund a statewide snowmobile trail system.

In 1989, The Plan was completed and the Snowmobile Trail Development and Maintenance Fund was established.

Today, many DEC snowmobile trails are included in the OPRHP statewide snowmobile trail network. Trails designated by OPRHP as "corridor" or "secondary" trails are eligible for OPRHP funding to support maintenance and grooming, which is typically carried out by local governments and snowmobile clubs.

2006 Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondack Park

The 2006 Adirondack Snowmobile Plan provided a concept for creating a system of snowmobile trails between communities in the Adirondack Park, thereby allowing them to take advantage of the many economic benefits of snowmobiling. The Plan also identified key concepts that would ensure the creation of these trails would be a net benefit to the Forest Preserve. This includes shifting snowmobile trails to the periphery of the Forest Preserve and re-designating interior trails for non-motorized uses.

2009 Snowmobile Management Guidance

As a way of more specifically defining the broad recommendations of the 2006 Adirondack Snowmobile Plan and clarifying several key provisions of the APSLMP, in 2009 the DEC drafted the Management Guidance: Snowmobile Trail Siting, Construction and Maintenance on Forest Preserve Lands in the Adirondack Park ("Management Guidance", see Appendix B.) This Management Guidance was found to be compliant with the APSLMP by APA at that time.

The Management Guidance established a trail classification system, which is described as follows:

Class II (Community Connector Trails) - Snowmobile trails or trail segments that serve to connect communities and provide the main travel routes for snowmobiles within a unit are Community Connector Trails. These trails are located in the periphery of wild forest or other Forest Preserve areas. They are always located as close as possible to motorized travel corridors, given safety, terrain and environmental constraints, and only rarely are any segments of them located further than one mile away from the nearest of these corridors. They are not duplicated or paralleled by other snowmobile trails. Some can be short, linking communities to longer Class II trails that connect two or more other communities.

Class I (Secondary Snowmobile Trails) - All other snowmobile trails that are not Community Connector Trails are Secondary Snowmobile Trails. These trails are located in the periphery of wild forest and other Forest Preserve areas where snowmobile trails are designated. They may be spur trails—perhaps leading to population areas and services such as repair shops, service stations, restaurants and lodging—, short loop trails or longer recreational trails. If directly connected to Class II trails, new and rerouted Class I trails are always located as close as possible to - and no farther than one mile from - motorized travel corridors, although some - with high recreational value - may be located beyond one mile and may approach a remote interior area.

Snowmobile Use on Roads – Designated snowmobile routes can exist on Forest Preserve roads, such as the Chain Lakes Road (South). DEC management of all such roads for motor vehicle use, including snowmobiles, is guided by the DEC "CP-38 Forest Preserve Roads" policy.

Existing Conditions

Lessees have the right to use snowmobiles to access their camps through the winter of 2017-18. The Gooley Club can access their camps near Third Lake via the Chain Lakes Road (North). The Polaris Club can access their camps on the eastern side of the Hudson River via the Chain Lakes Road (North), the Drakes Mill Road and the Iron (Polaris) Bridge. As outlined in the 2006 Adirondack Snowmobile Plan, establishing snowmobile trails that connect communities continues to be a goal of the DEC. Currently, the route for snowmobilers to travel between Indian lake and Newcomb is by heading west out of Indian Lake on the Cedar River Trail across the Cedar River Bridge towards Blue Mountain Lake, then heading north through the Township 19 Conservation Easement on the O'Neil Flow and Cornell Roads.

As indicated on DEC's 2001 application for a permit to construct a bridge over the Cedar River near the hamlet of Indian Lake, the Cedar River Trail and associated bridge were constructed for the purpose of connecting Indian Lake to the Blue Mountain Lake area. Since public snowmobiling has been established on the conservation easement lands to the north, those trails and the Cedar River trail have also been utilized as a means of traveling to Long Lake and Newcomb. Significant terrain, water and land classification constraints have historically prevented the identification of a suitable route directly between Indian Lake and Minerva. With the 2013 classification of the lands in the vicinity of the Essex Chain Lakes, a new opportunity has emerged to create a connection between these two communities.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Provide snowmobiling opportunities in the Complex Area that are consistent with the APSLMP, the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act (WSSRA), the 2009 Management Guidance, other DEC Policies and Guidelines and are compatible with the resource protection objectives for the unit.
- Establish a community connector trail between the communities of Indian Lake and Minerva.
- Classify existing trails in the Blue Mountain Wild Forest, both within and outside of the Complex Area, to bring the unit into compliance with the 2009 Management Guidance.

Action Steps

Trail Closure

- Rock River Trail (1.8 miles) – This trail is currently not used by snowmobiles, but has never been officially closed. The trail will remain open to non-motorized uses.

Classification of Existing Trails

There are several snowmobile trails in the Blue Mountain Wild Forest in need of classification pursuant to the Management Guidance:

- Old Stage Trail (2.1 miles) – This trail runs between the Lake Durant Public Campground and private lands in the hamlet of Blue Mountain Lake. It will be a Class II Trail.

- Cedar River Trail (7.4 miles) – This trail connects Benton Road in the hamlet of Indian Lake to the Old Stage Trail and the O'Neil Flow Road, a private right-of-way that provides snowmobile access to the Township 19 Conservation Easement lands to the north. This trail serves as a community connection between Indian Lake and Blue Mountain Lake, and will be a Class II trail.
- Benton Road Trail (0.3 miles) – This short spur connects Benton Road to private lands in the hamlet of Indian Lake, and is part of the Indian Lake to Blue Mountain Lake connection. It will be a Class II trail.
- Elm Island Trail (1.6 miles) – This trail is designated for snowmobile use, but its current level of use is not currently known, as an adjacent private landowner has closed the trail once it leaves State land. As described in the following paragraphs, this trail will be incorporated into a new community connector Class II trail, and the private land section will be rerouted on to State land.

New Trail Proposal – Indian Lake to Minerva Community Connector

The classification of the lands within the Complex Area includes a wild forest corridor connecting larger portions of the Blue Mountain Wild Forest at the north and south ends of the unit. Combined with an approved (but not yet constructed) trail connecting Newcomb and Minerva, this corridor enables a critical snowmobile trail connection to be made between the communities of Indian Lake and Minerva.

The new trail will be classified a Class II Community Connection trail and will be on wild forest or currently unclassified lands within the Complex Area between the hamlet of Indian Lake and Iron (Polaris) Bridge, where the route will continue into the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest.

A full analysis of alternatives considered for this trail connection can be found in the in Appendix E.

This new trail will be comprised of the following segments, from south to north:

- Elm Island Trail - (State [2.5 miles], and Town [0.5 miles], total of 3.0 miles) – The trail begins at a parking area on Pelon Road. The first 1.6 miles of this trail segment are currently designated (but not used) as a snowmobile trail and in excellent condition. As the trail approached private land, a new trail would keep the route on State land for a 0.9 miles before heading onto a parcel owned by the Town of Indian Lake. The route would then head directly to the Chain Lakes Road (South), near the Bullhead Pond Trail parking area.
- Chain Lakes Road (Town Road) (0.1 miles) – The route would utilize a short section of the plowed Town road before reaching the unplowed section of the road under DEC's jurisdiction.
- Chain Lakes Road South (DEC Road) (3.7 miles) – Beginning where the Town Road (and plowing) ends and heading north to the point where seasonal hunting access and public motor vehicle use ends.
- Chain Lakes Trail (1.3 mile) – This former all-season road is closed to public motor vehicle use, but is very suitable as a Class II trail. It extends from the point where motor vehicle access ends at the Chain Lakes Road (South), to the Cedar River. The route then crosses the Cedar River on a bridge that is also proposed in Section III-C of this Complex Plan.
- Camp Six Trail (3.0 miles) – After crossing the Cedar River, the route heads northeast on this former all-season road. Several short re-routes will be needed where the condition of the trail is not suitable for use by snowmobiles. A 0.5 mile section of the Camp Six Road was not classified

as Wild Forest in the 2014 Classification of the Complex Area. APA has agreed to make this map correction.

- Camp Six Road (1.3 miles) – This section begins at the southern terminus of the seasonal hunting access on the Camp Six Road and ends at the intersection with the Drakes Mill Road.
- Drakes Mill Road (1.1 miles) – The route continues east to a point where motor vehicle access ends.
- Drakes Mill Trail (0.3 miles) – This short segment utilizes an old road from the end of Drakes Mills Road until reaching the Iron (Polaris) Bridge.
- Polaris Bridge to Chaisson Road (5.0 miles of new trail on VMWF, 0.1 mile on private land)

  From the Iron (Polaris) Bridge the trail would follow the former all-season road to the east in order to exit the Scenic River corridor as efficiently as possible. Once out of the corridor the trail would proceed generally north through the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest to a point approximately 0.6 miles south of Chaisson Rd where it would proceed onto private land until it meets the Chaisson Rd. Public snowmobile use historically occurred on this private land before the Vanderwhacker Mountain trail was closed to snowmobiling. The DEC and the Town would work with the landowner to re-establish this use.

  Approximately 1/3 of the trail could be built on former all-season roads and access trails to a previously existing private inholding. For these reasons, the tree cutting, rock removal, and ground work could be kept to a minimum. The remaining portion of the trail would need to be newly constructed. It would be located in a mixture of upland hardwoods and mixed woods stand, with occasional bridge crossings in lowland areas and across streams. This trail would require approximately 10 bridges, and would allow flexibility to construct it in the best possible location in order to minimize the ecological impacts and maximize the long term sustainability.

  As indicated in the 2005 Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest UMP, a GIS model indicates potential deer yard habitat along portions of this trail segment in the extensive softwood wetlands north of Vanderwhacker Mountain along the North Branch of Wolf Creek and the Hudson River. The majority of the proposed trail that intersects the potential deer yarding area is located on the outer edges of the model. Field work conducted in 2015 in the peripheral location indicated that trail use may not significantly impact deer yards.

Once the community connector trail system is complete, a trail monitoring system will be developed to track snowmobile use. This may be done in partnership with another organization also attempting to gather use statistics.

Duplicate or Parallel Class II Community Connection Trails

The description of Class II trails in the Management Guidance states that “they are not duplicated or paralleled by other snowmobile trials.”

The principle considerations in the Management Guidance relevant to consideration of Alternatives 1A and 1B as a potential snowmobile trail are:

- That Class II Trails be located on the periphery, with rare exceptions, by shifting them away from the remote interior and not duplicate or parallel other snowmobile trails and, in fact, recommends closing trails which are redundant or part of a dense network. New community connector trails should be located near motorized travel "corridors unless terrain or environmental constraints dictate otherwise."
- The trail siting standards also require that trails be located to "avoid areas considered environmentally sensitive."

The 2009 Guidance does not give priority to any of these considerations.

Applying these considerations to Alternatives 1A and 1B requires an evaluation of the distance from other Class II trails (generally about 5 miles), the environmentally sensitive area in the central part of the VMWFA, the constraints posed by the scenic river corridor of the upper Hudson River that prevent the trail from being located nearer the public highway, and the higher maintenance costs.

The existing north/south Class II trail to the west of the proposed Class II trail runs between two parallel east/west Class II trails, one which connects Indian Lake to Blue Mountain Lake and one which connects Long Lake to Newcomb. Thus, these trails were intended to connect Indian Lake to Blue Mountain Lake; Indian Lake and Blue Mountain Lake to Long Lake; and Long Lake to Newcomb but not Indian Lake to Minerva. All of these connections lie in the Blue Mountain Wild Forest and in conservation easement lands west of the Complex Area. The proposed community connector trail is intended to connect the communities of Indian Lake to Minerva.

Alternative 1B has significant environmental constraints because of the number of wetland crossings and the probable impacts to wetlands. In addition, because this alternative can be very wet in many sections, the costs of maintaining the trail are inordinately high.

For all of these reasons, Alternative 1A, is the preferred alternative because it conforms best to the Management Guidance.

No Material Increase

In March of 2008 the APA adopted a resolution which found that existing DEC policy, which places a limit on the total snowmobile trail mileage on all wild forest units in the Adirondack Park at 848.88 miles, is consistent with the APSLMP Wild Forest Basic Guideline #4. The resolution also outlined the format in which snowmobile trail mileage should be presented in UMP's to ensure continued compliance with Basic Guideline #4.

This information is presented below, and only includes mileage within what is currently classified as the Blue Mountain Wild Forest and Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest, on roads and trails under DEC's jurisdiction, that are proposed in this UMP to be designated as snowmobile trails, and of existing trails to remain open.

Blue Mountain Wild Forest Snowmobile Trail Mileage

Base Snowmobile Trail Mileage (pre-UMP):	13.3 miles
Proposed Closure Mileage:	1.8 miles
Proposed New Trail Mileage:	12.0 miles
Total Proposed Trail Mileage (post-UMP):	23.5 miles

Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest Snowmobile Trail Mileage

Base Snowmobile Trail Mileage (pre-UMP):	24.6 miles
Proposed Closure Mileage:	0 miles
Proposed New Trail Mileage:	5.0 miles
Total Proposed Trail Mileage (post-UMP):	29.6 miles

Park-wide Snowmobile Trail Mileage

1972 Mileage	Estimated Existing Mileage in All Wild Forest Units	Proposed Net Gain/(Loss) of Mileage in BMWF and VMWF	New Total Estimated Mileage in All Wild Forest Units	Total Allowable Wild Forest Mileage * *Mileage beyond which would be considered a "material increase"
740	762.14	15.2	777.34	848.88

P. Floatplanes

History

Based on information obtained from commercial floatplane operators, floatplanes have used First and Pine Lakes to land, taxi, takeoff, and to unload and load passengers, gear, necessary provisions, and any game lawfully taken, for the purpose of providing access to the remote areas of the Blue Mountain Wild Forest and the Complex Area since the mid-twentieth century. Floatplane access on these two lakes has also required the use of docks to safely transfer passengers and their gear, necessary provisions, and any game lawfully taken. The use of docks is necessary due to the rocky shoreline, and the proximity of the tree line in relation to the waterline of the lakes. The State acquired the remaining portions of these two lakes subject to private deeded easement-rights to the Towns of Indian Lake and Newcomb. Pursuant to these deeded rights, DEC issues permits to the towns and floatplane business owners on a yearly basis. The DEC-issued permit is a Temporary Revocable Permit (TRP), which outlines both general and specific conditions that must be adhered to by the towns and floatplane operators.

Existing Conditions

There are two primitive tent sites on both First and Pine Lakes which are only available for use by members of the public using floatplanes to access the lakes. The use of both First and Pine Lakes for floatplane access and any floatplane operations, including, but not limited to, landing, taxiing, takeoffs, and the unloading and loading of passengers, gear, necessary provisions, and any game lawfully taken, and the use of docks to effectuate these operations, may continue pursuant to the Pine Lake Primitive Area description in the APSLMP and deeded-easement rights.

Floatplane operations on First Lake are not within a WSRRS Act-designated river corridor; however, floatplane use on Pine Lake does occur within the boundaries of the Cedar River Wild River Area. (See ECL section 15-2713.1[a]). The use of floatplanes and docks for the purpose of providing access to the remote areas of the Complex Area predates, and continued regularly after the enactment of the WSRRS Act. Therefore, the DEC has determined that continued floatplane operations and the use of docks as a necessary component of floatplane operations on Pine Lake are existing uses, and they are authorized to continue by statute and regulation. (*See* ECL section 15-2709.2 and 6 NYCRR section 666.13[A][1]). Staff intend to remove one of two existing primitive tent sites on Pine Lake. The existing primitive tent sites are adjacent to each other, and do not meet the separation requirements of the APSLMP guidelines for the siting of primitive tent sites.

Campfires are allowed on First Lake, but only at the two designated primitive tent sites accessed by floatplanes. Campfires are allowed on Pine Lake. Those traveling to First and Pine Lakes will be encouraged to bring their own locally-sourced firewood or kiln-dried firewood (in compliance with current State firewood regulations) in order to reduce the environmental impact of gathering firewood on site. Cutting of live trees on Forest Preserve is prohibited. Extended length of stay permits may be issued for primitive tent sites by local Forest Rangers.

Proposed Management

Objective

- Continue to allow floatplane operations on First and Pine Lakes through the issuance of TRPs to the Towns of Indian Lake and Newcomb, and float plane operators.
- Bring the primitive tent sites into conformance with the APSLMP.

Action Steps

- Issue yearly TRPs to the Towns and floatplane operators for use of First and Pine Lakes.
- Monitor for compliance with TRP standard terms and special conditions.
- Require (through annual TRPs) flight reports from floatplane operators. This recreational opportunity can be more effectively managed if the DEC understands the timing and number of flights taken to each lake.
- Close one primitive tent site on Pine Lake. The existing primitive tent sites accessed by floatplanes on Pine Lake are directly adjacent to one another, and therefore do not meet separation requirements. Keep the remaining site as “floatplane use only.”

- Remove debris, and any personal items at all three remaining primitive tent sites (two on First, one on Pine).

IV. HISTORICAL RESOURCES

A. Outer Gooley Farmhouse

History

The Outer Gooley farmhouse is located in the former Indian River Tract, along the Chain Lakes Road (South), northwest of the confluence with the Indian and Hudson Rivers. The Indian River Tract was purchased from Finch Pruyn by The Nature Conservancy and sold to New York State in April 2013 for addition into the Forest Preserve. The Gooley Club, which included both the Outer Gooley and Inner Gooley areas, was formed in 1946.

The Outer Gooley house and surrounding area were classified as Wild Forest, and added to the Blue Mountain Wild Forest unit. The site also formerly included a woodshed, a cabin, an open garage, and an outhouse. The farmhouse is the only remaining structure on site.

Existing Conditions

The Outer Gooley farmhouse is located within the Blue Mountain Wild Forest, along the Chain Lakes Road (South). The main public access parking area is located adjacent to the house, in an area that has been historically used for parking. Since the State took ownership, DEC has performed maintenance necessary to maintain structural integrity, and keep out weather and animals.

The Town of Indian Lake and several stakeholder groups have expressed an interest in having the structure continue to be maintained and used for a compatible purpose.

Management Guidelines

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) is the State Historic Preservation Office. OPRHP has determined that the Outer Gooley building meets eligibility criteria for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Therefore, DEC must adhere to §14.09 of the New York State Historic Preservation Act (SHPA), which states, in part, that DEC *"shall fully explore all feasible and prudent alternatives and give due consideration to feasible and prudent plans which avoid or mitigate adverse impacts on such property."* This contemplation of alternatives and invitation for public comment takes place through the UMP process. In this context, a decision has been made with regard to the future of the building.

Proposed Management

Objective

- Comply with SHPA, the APSLMP, ECL, and DEC Rules and Regulations when considering the disposition of the Outer Gooley farmhouse

Action Steps

- For the immediate future, maintain the Outer Gooley farmhouse as a historic structure and use as an outpost for administrative and emergency personnel until a final disposition of the building is determined.
- For the long term purpose of the farmhouse, the following uses are being considered:

    - Interior Outpost
    - Incorporation into a hut-to-hut ski/snowmobile/equestrian touring system.
    - Historical museum
    - Outdoor museum

  The alternatives under this section overlap to some degree, and are not intended to be mutually exclusive, since several might be accommodated in the building. One or more of these may require statutory changes or APSLMP amendments. After the approval of this Complex Plan, DEC will rely on other organizations and/or citizen groups to come forward and partner with DEC for the long term future management of the structure. If this does not happen, or a viable solution is not found, DEC may decide to remove the structure. A full analysis of alternative uses of the Outer Gooley farmhouse, including those that involve the removal of the structure, can be found in Appendix E.

- As required by the Section 14.09 of the New York State Historic Preservation Act of 1980, the DEC consulted with the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) regarding the treatment of the Outer Gooley Club Farmhouse (see Appendix H.) OPRHP requested that the DEC enter into ongoing consultation with that Office regarding the re-purposing of the Outer Gooley Club Farmhouse. The DEC agrees to this and will continue to consult with OPRHP as detailed plans for the adaptation and use Outer Gooley Club Farmhouse are developed and implemented.

B. Inner Gooley Complex

History

The Inner Gooley area is located on the south shore of Third Lake in the Essex Chain. A bridge over the Cedar River historically connected the two camp areas via the Chain Lakes Road (North) and Chain Lakes Road (South). There are 7 buildings and several small sheds located in the Inner Gooley camp complex. The lessee exclusive use area shrank to a contiguous 7-acre parcel around the camp buildings on October 1, 2013.

Existing Conditions

The Inner Gooley buildings are located on the south shore of Third Lake, in the approximate center of the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area. The Inner Gooley Club currently functions within their exclusive use camp envelope. They have certain motorized use and access rights that extend beyond public use

(see Use Reservations section for more lessee information.) Their lease ends on September 30, 2018. After that, the buildings and all materials will be removed (no later than October 1, 2019.)

The Inner Gooley Club camp buildings are located in a remote location, with no nearby existing public motorized access. The classification of the area as Primitive and the remote location were major factors in the proposed future management of the buildings.

Management Guidelines

As with the Outer Gooley farmhouse, OPRHP has determined that the Inner Gooley complex meets eligibility criteria for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Therefore, DEC must adhere to §14.09 of the New York State Historic Preservation Act (SHPA), which states, in part, that DEC *"shall fully explore all feasible and prudent alternatives and give due consideration to feasible and prudent plans which avoid or mitigate adverse impacts on such property."* This contemplation of alternatives and invitation for public comment takes place through the UMP process. In this context, a decision has been made with regard to the future of the building.

Proposed Management

Objective

- Comply with SHPA, the APSLMP, ECL, and DEC Rules and Regulation when considering the disposition of the Inner Gooley structures

Action Steps

- The proposed management action regarding the Inner Gooley camp complex calls for the removal of the Inner Gooley camp buildings. This is due to their remote location in the Primitive Area, and the Leasehold Agreement which specifies the requirement for structure removal upon expiration of the lease in 2018.

  According to the APSLMP guidelines for Primitive Areas, *"non-conforming uses resulting from newly classified primitive areas will be removed as rapidly as possible..."* (pg. 27.) The Inner Gooley camp buildings are not of an essentially permanent nature, since they are small hunting camps formerly on leased land. The lack of ownership (lease) of the land signifies that the camps were not placed and constructed to last in perpetuity.

  In accordance with the 2012 "Reservation of Leasehold Estate and Management Agreement" between The Nature Conservancy and New York State, all of the camp structures and property in the Inner Gooley complex will be removed by the end of the lease-phase out period. Once the structures have been removed, the site will be allowed to return to its natural vegetative state.

  A full analysis of alternatives, including those that involve the removal of the structures, can be found in Appendix E.

- As required by the Section 14.09 of the New York State Historic Preservation Act of 1980, the DEC consulted with the of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) regarding the adverse impact resulting from the removal of the Inner Gooley Club buildings (see Appendix H.) OPRHP requested that the DEC record these buildings prior to demolition and consider relocating one or more of the structures to the site of the Outer Gooley Club in order to assure long term preservation.

  The DEC commits to recording the buildings of the Inner Gooley Club buildings to the appropriate Historic American Building Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) standard - level to be determined in consultation with OPRHP. The record created will be deposited with New York State Archives, OPRHP and an appropriate local institution.

- The DEC will explore the feasibility of relocating one or more of the Inner Gooley Club buildings to an alternate site, either that of the Outer Gooley Club or another site. If relocation proves feasible, the DEC will allocate appropriate funding and undertake relocation within a reasonable time frame. If relocation proves infeasible, the DEC will consult with OPRHP regarding possible alternate impact mitigation strategies.

- After the structures have been removed, construct a lean-to in a cleared area at the former Inner Gooley site.

V. USE RESERVATIONS

A. Sportsmen's Clubs

History

There are two lessee groups, the Gooley Club and the Polaris Mountain Club, who leased large portions of the Complex Area from Finch Pruyn prior to the addition of the lands to the Forest Preserve. Both clubs have access and use rights that are different from the general public's access and use provisions. Their leases expire on September 30, 2018, and all lessee camp buildings and property must be removed no later than October 1, 2019.

Existing Conditions

Gooley Club

The Gooley Club camp buildings are located on the south shore of Third Lake. Members and guests of the Gooley Club use the Chain Lakes Road (North) to access their camp buildings year-round. This use both predates and postdates the enactment of the WSRRS Act. This includes use of snowmobiles in winter, ATV's during mud season (defined by DEC based on weather conditions) and cars and trucks the remainder of the year. Car, truck and ATV use is also be allowed on designated gravel roads during hunting season. Gooley Club members are also allowed to use motorized boats (with certain restrictions) on Second through Sixth Lakes and Jackson Pond. Their camp buildings are tightly clustered together; therefore their exclusive use area is a contiguous parcel. Non-conforming structures and storage of property outside the seven-acre envelope is not permitted.

Polaris Mountain Club

The Polaris Mountain Club's camp buildings are located on the east side of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge, in the Polaris Mountain Primitive Area. This area will automatically become part of the Hudson Gorge Wilderness Area after the Polaris Mountain Club lease expires in 2018.

Members and guests of the Polaris Mountain Club use the Chain Lakes Road (North) and Drake's Mill Road to cross the Iron (Polaris) Bridge and access their camp structures year-round. This use both predates and postdates the enactment of the WSRR Act. This includes snowmobiles in winter, ATV's during mud season (defined by DEC based on weather conditions) and automobiles the remainder of the year. Car, truck and ATV use is also allowed on designated gravel roads during hunting season. Polaris Club members are also allowed to use motorized boats (with certain restrictions) on the Blackwell Stillwater section of the Hudson River. The camp buildings are spread out, and each camp building is surrounded by a one-acre exclusive use envelope; non-conforming structures and storage of property outside the one-acre envelopes is not permitted. The rest of the area east of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge is publicly accessible.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Ensure compliance with Leaseholder Management Agreement.
- Reduce the potential for conflict between lessees and the general public.

Action Steps

- Monitor lessees and the general public for compliance with access and use provisions and restrictions on Forest Preserve lands in the Complex Area.
- Show exclusive lease camp envelopes on DEC maps, especially at trailhead kiosks and access points, to educate the public of the private leases.

B. Floatplane Use

History

Based on information obtained by the DEC from local commercial floatplane operators, floatplanes have used First and Pine Lakes for floatplane operations since the mid-twentieth century. In December 2012, a Deed of Easement was granted to the Towns of Newcomb and Minerva from The Nature Conservancy, the landowners prior to the sale to the People of the State of New York, to allow floatplane access in the Complex Area.

Existing Conditions

Use of floatplanes on First and Pine Lakes will be managed on a yearly basis pursuant to a DEC-issued TRP to the Towns of Newcomb and Minerva, and the commercial floatplane operators. The TRPs set forth the special terms and conditions to safely allow floatplane operations while minimizing impacts to the area's natural resources. Please refer to the *Floatplanes* section (*III. Recreational Resources & Public Use, P. Floatplanes*) for information regarding recreational use of floatplanes.

Proposed Management

Objective

- Ensure compliance with Forest Preserve regulations, guidelines, policies, terms set forth in the Deed of Easement, and any DEC-issued TRP.

Action Steps

- Gather use data and ensure compliance with DEC regulations and policies through the issuance of yearly TRP's to the individual floatplane operators and the Towns of Newcomb and Minerva.
- Monitor for compliance with TRP standard terms and any applicable special

C. Gravel Extraction

History

In December 2012, a Deed of Easement was granted to the Towns of Newcomb and Minerva from The Nature Conservancy for use of three gravel pits in the Complex Area. The Chain Lakes Pit is located along the Chain Lakes Road (North), the Deer Pond Pit is located just north of Deer Pond, and the Outer Gooley Pit is located along the Chain Lakes Road (South), north of the former Outer Gooley farmhouse. These three gravel pits are classified as State Administrative.

Existing Conditions

The Towns of Newcomb and Minerva have a non-exclusive right to access and mine gravel from Chain Lakes, Deer Pond, and Outer Gooley Pits. A yearly TRP issued by DEC to the Towns names the roads in the Complex Area that the gravel may be used to maintain. The gravel pits may each not exceed one-acre in size, and when deemed exhausted by DEC, will be reclaimed and allowed to return to their natural state. Upon reclamation of the gravel pits, these State Administrative Areas will be reclassified to the classification category of its surrounding land.

Proposed Management

Objectives

- Ensure compliance with Forest Preserve Regulations, Guidelines, Policies, and terms set forth in the Easement.

Action Steps

- Issue TRPs to the Towns of Newcomb and Minerva for gravel pit access and extraction.
- Monitor for compliance with TRP standard terms and any applicable special conditions.
- Delineate the boundaries of each gravel pit, which will discourage the lateral spread of extraction outside the one-acre boundaries.
- Monitor gravel pits in consultation with DEC Minerals Staff, and reclaim each gravel pit after DEC deems it exhausted.

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VI. SCHEDULE OF IMPLEMENTATION

Annual Maintenance and Other Activities
Maintain publicly accessible roads within the Complex Area north of the Cedar River (Approx. 10 miles) in partnership with the Town of Newcomb.
Maintain publicly accessible roads within the Complex Area south of the Cedar River (Approx. 5 miles) in partnership with the Town of Indian Lake.
Road maintenance to Fifth Lake (Approx. 1.5 miles) in partnership with the Town of Newcomb.
Maintain seasonal access routes (Camp Six Road and Chain Lakes Road (South)) in partnership with the Towns of Newcomb and Indian Lake.
Maintain administrative roads in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area.
Other routine trail maintenance, including: brushing, blowdown removal, replacement of trail markers and signage.
ADA facility compliance assessment and maintenance.
Conduct biological, chemical, and/or physical surveys of selected unit waters to assess management needs and to determine progress towards the objectives stated in this Complex Plan.
Stock fish in unit waters consistent with Bureau of Fisheries policies and the *Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Fish Species Management Activities of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Fish and Wildlife (1980.)*
Annual boundary line maintenance including signing and painting lines.
Annual primitive tent site and/or lean-to monitoring and assessments.
Work with APIPP to implement continuum of early detection invasive plant inventories focusing on all trails, parking areas, primitive tent sites, lean-tos, roads, and water bodies. Take immediate and appropriate action to eradicate or contain terrestrial and aquatic invasive plant infestations. Train DEC staff and participate in efforts to educate the public about invasive species identification, prevention, and management.

Year One
Add one to two tentsites in the ELCPA that are located more than 500 from shorelines.
Establish an equestrian staging area along the Chain Lakes Road (North), including an accessible mounting platform, privy, and register box with map.
Designate and mark multiple use trails throughout the Complex Area.
Create a trails map and install trail signage for multiple use trails at all trailheads.
Establish accessible parking, camping, and waterway access near the Fifth Lake. This includes an accessible horse mounting platform, privy, waterway access, and hardened access routes.
Establish a motor vehicle route past the Deer Pond parking area to both a 4 car accessible parking area north of the Fifth Lake and a 4-car permitted parking area for the general public approximately 0.50 miles from Fifth Lake. Develop a mechanism to permit general public parking at this area.
Install a gate on the north side of the Deer Pond Circle, to prevent motor vehicles from driving into the Primitive Area, while allowing for access to the gravel pit.
Install barrier rocks on the southern side of the Deer Pond Circle, to prevent motor vehicles from driving into the Primitive Area.
Install a gate just north of the “Tube”.
Establish 3 roadside accessible primitive tent sites on publicly accessible roads in the Complex Area.
Cut out and formally designate Upper Hudson River canoe carries around Long Falls and Ord Falls.
Establish two primitive tent sites on the west shore of the Hudson River, between Newcomb and the Iron (Polaris) Bridge.
Install accessible privy at the Outer Gooley parking area.
Complete an inventory and impact assessment for waterfront primitive tent sites in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area.
Move the Shadow Dam gate at the Forest Preserve boundary on the Cornell Road approx. 0.2 mi west along the road. This will facilitate public parking during mud season and avoid trespass onto adjacent private land.
Construct accessible facilities at the existing primitive tent site near Iron (Polaris) Bridge, including an accessible horse mounting platform, privy, fire ring, and picnic table.

Year Two
Inventory and assess all roads, culverts, and bridges in the Complex Area.
Construct a pull-in lane on the north end of the Chain Lakes Road (North) equestrian staging area.
Construct a bridge over the Cedar River.
Install an accessible horse mounting platform in the vicinity of the Cedar River Bridge.
Construct snowmobile trail connecting Elm Lake Trail to portions of trail on land owned by the Town of Indian Lake. Bring existing Elm Lake Trail to Class II standards.
Place an additional picnic table near the Iron (Polaris) Bridge for day use.
Establish accessible facilities at the existing primitive tentsite near the Iron (Polaris) Bridge. Construct a 0.3 mi ADA- compliant trail from the Parking Area to the tentsite.

Year Three
Promulgate proposed campfire regulation for the waterfront primitive tent sites in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area.
Extend the Upper Hudson Ski Loop Trail north to the Ord Road, including parking in the vicinity of the Ord Road.
Extend the Upper Hudson Ski Loop Trail to the Town of Newcomb, near the Transfer Station. This includes parking near the Transfer Station.

Year Four
Perform UTAP analysis for the Deer Pond Circle and to the primitive tent site area at Deer Pond.
Delineate, mark, and assess the three one-acre gravel pits.
Evaluate usage of the primitive tent sites along the seasonal access routes, and close or relocate sites that have apparent low use levels.

Year Five
Begin draft revisions for this Complex Plan.
Construct a lean-to in the vicinity of the Inner Gooley complex on the south shore of Third Lake. This includes a horse mounting platform, privy, and access to the water's edge.

VII. APPENDICES

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Appendix A – Bibliography and References

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Appendix B – Snowmobile Management Guidance

(Snowmobile Trail Siting, Construction and Maintenance on Forest Preserve Lands in the Adirondack Park)

I. Adirondack Park Snowmobile Trail System

The October 2006, *Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondack Park/Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement* (2006 Snowmobile Plan) presents a conceptual snowmobile plan with the goal of creating a system of snowmobile trails between communities in the Adirondack Park. The 2006 Snowmobile Plan outlines the concept of reconfiguring the existing snowmobile trail network across the Forest Preserve through the UMP process. Implementation is supported by this "Management Guidance…" establishing a new DEC snowmobile trail classification system with new standards and guidelines for snowmobile trail siting, construction and maintenance.

The designation of a new class of snowmobile trail to establish and improve community connections (Class II trails) will be complemented by the designation of another new class of trail (Class I trails) intended to preserve a more traditional type of Adirondack snowmobiling experience. Some existing snowmobile trails (most likely within the interior of Wild Forest areas or adjacent to private inholdings) will be redesignated for non-motorized use or abandoned as trails altogether. These actions will serve to ensure available, wintertime recreational opportunities in Wild Forest areas are not dominated by snowmobile use to the exclusion or near exclusion of passive recreational uses. All snowmobile trails, regardless of class, will be carefully sited, constructed and maintained to preserve the most essential characteristics of foot trails and to serve, where appropriate, hiking, mountain biking and other non-motorized recreational pursuits in spring, summer and fall. Additionally, this guidance helps ensure protection of sensitive natural resources on public lands and the minimization of snowmobiling safety hazards.

Implementing the broad recommendations of the 2006 Snowmobile Plan will also result in the establishment of important new routes on private lands through the acquisition of easements or other access rights from willing sellers. This Guidance does not address the management of those trails, but instead provides standards and guidelines solely for the management of DEC snowmobile trails on Forest Preserve lands throughout the Adirondack Park.

In many locations, designated snowmobile routes of varying lengths exist on Forest Preserve roads, rather than on trails. DEC's management of all such roads for motor vehicle use, including snowmobiles, is guided by DEC's "CP-38 Forest Preserve Roads" policy and not by this Guidance.

Snowmobile Trail Classification

The classification system for designated snowmobile trails (not on roads) in the Forest Preserve is presented below. It establishes two classes of trails,[1] for which the following definitions apply:

"Motorized travel corridor" – non-snowmobile public motor vehicle routes[2] and motorized waterbodies.

"Motorized waterbodies" – waterbodies upon which year-round, public motorized uses (including snowmobiling) occur to a moderate or great extent, typically facilitated by direct motorized route access to shorelines and boat launching facilities.

"Periphery" – the geographic area within two miles of a motorized travel corridor.

"Remote interior" – the geographic area more distant than two miles from the nearest motorized travel corridors in all directions.

Class II Trails: ***Community Connector Trails***

Snowmobile trails or trail segments that serve to connect communities and provide the main travel routes for snowmobiles within a unit are Community Connector Trails. These trails are located in the periphery of Wild Forest or other Forest Preserve areas. They are always located as close as possible to motorized travel corridors, given safety, terrain and environmental constraints, and only rarely are any segments of them located further than one mile away from the nearest of these corridors. They are not duplicated or paralleled by other snowmobile trails. Some can be short, linking communities to longer Class II trails that connect two or more other communities.

Class I Trails: ***Secondary Snowmobile Trails***

All other snowmobile trails that are not Community Connector Trails are Secondary Snowmobile Trails. These trails are located in the periphery of Wild Forest and other Forest Preserve areas where snowmobile trails are designated.[3] They may be spur trails (perhaps leading to population areas and services such as repair shops, service stations, restaurants and lodging), short loop trails or longer recreational trails. If directly connected to Class II trails,

[1] The classification scheme outlined in the 2006 Snowmobile Plan differed from the scheme presented here. Class I trails were presented as snowmobile trails on Forest Preserve roads, Class II trails (of two subtypes) as secondary trails and Class III trails as community connector trails.

[2] Including routes where rights for motorized access to private in-holdings exist, but generally not including DEC administrative roads.

[3] Snowmobile trails may also be located in some Primitive areas and in Wilderness areas within 500 feet of the Wilderness boundary.

new and rerouted Class I trails are always located as close as possible to – and no farther than one mile from – motorized travel corridors. If not directly connected to Class II trails, they are generally located within one mile of motorized travel corridors, although some – with high recreational value – may be located beyond one mile and may approach a remote interior area.

II. Reconfiguration of the Snowmobile Trail System

Establishment of Community Connections

The establishment of a Park-wide community-connection snowmobile trail system will provide north-to-south and east-to-west routes that will link many Adirondack communities together. Designation of Class II, Community Connector snowmobile trails on Forest Preserve lands will create essential portions of the system, the use of which will result in a significant shifting of snowmobile use away from some remote interior areas of these lands to the periphery. Within the periphery, these Class II trails will intentionally be located as close to motorized travel corridors as practicable without locating them within – nor within sight of – road rights-of-way wherever such locations can be avoided. The actual, on-the-ground routes that establish the connections through Forest Preserve will be determined through the UMP process. Many of the connections already exist and the focus will be on improving them through proper siting, construction and trail maintenance work.

A small number of existing[4] DEC snowmobile trails in the Park shown to be located partly within remote interior areas may receive Class II designation due to their importance and may be retained and kept open, as long as either of the following conditions are met: 1) the remote interior area of concern is small – no more than 750 acres in area; or, 2) the trail segments of concern are located very near the boundary of the remote interior area, with no trail segment located further than one-half mile into the interior from any boundary. DEC will give high priority to relocating out of the remote interior area any Class II trails or trail segments so retained.

No existing DEC snowmobile trails in the Park that receive Class I designation may be retained and kept open with any portion of the trail located within a remote interior area.

Redesignation and Abandonment of Existing Trails

Actions taken under this Guidance will also include the re-designation of some existing Forest Preserve snowmobile trails as either Class I, Secondary Snowmobile Trails or as non-snowmobile trails (such as foot trails or horse trails) for non-motorized recreational uses. The re-designation of some snowmobile trails for non-motorized uses will occur consequent to management actions called for in adopted UMPs or UMP amendments and will be guided by the primary goal: *To provide a net benefit to the Forest*

[4] "Existing," as used here and in the paragraph immediately below, means existing at the time of DEC's adoption of this guidance.

Preserve through reconfiguring the trail system and revising trail management practices[5]. In some instances, the re-designation of particular snowmobile trail segments – such as the far portions of some dead-end trails – may be the preferred alternative over re-designation or abandonment of the entire trail. Such actions can provide for a new type of recreational opportunity – a combined or hybrid type (motorized/non-motorized), in which the last stretches of some routes are undertaken by means of skis or snowshoes.

Snowmobile trails that receive the new Class I designation or are re-designated for non-snowmobile use will be revegetated to narrower widths that conform to their specific trail classification standards where they are wider. In many locations, this will serve to restore a more consistently closed canopy, thereby improving the aesthetic experience of trail users and enhancing ecological integrity.

Criteria for Redesignation or Abandonment of Trails

Removing some snowmobile trails or trail segments from the existing network is central to the balance sought in providing a net benefit to the Forest Preserve while also providing for key improvements in snowmobile riding in the Park. In proposing trails or trail segments for redesignation or abandonment, management will seek to eliminate those that:

- do not provide safe snowmobiling conditions;
- ·penetrate the more remote areas of large Wild Forest parcels[6] or traverse an existing undeveloped forest corridor connecting two or more remote interior areas in the Forest Preserve;
- are located near Wilderness area boundaries;
- are redundant trails, or are part of an unnecessarily dense, local snowmobile trail network where opportunities for quiet, non-motorized use of trails are rare or nonexistent;
- are no longer used or receive only minimal public use;
- might encourage illegal motorized access to public and private lands or create significant potential conflicts with adjacent property owners;
- incur unusually high snowmobile trail maintenance costs.

Additional Environmental Benefits

By restricting use of tracked groomers to the more developed Class II trails (see "Motor Vehicle Use Guidelines"), and by allowing Class I snowmobile trails to acquire a less developed and less maintained character, this Guidance is intended to clearly distinguish between two important types of snowmobiling opportunities in the Adirondacks while shifting the highest snowmobile use to the outer periphery of Forest Preserve lands. Consequently, the wilder, more remote areas of the Forest Preserve

[5] For a discussion of the "net benefit" concept, see page 187 of the Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondack Park/Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement, October 2006.

[6] Trails providing access to frozen surfaces of waterbodies located wholly or partly within remote interior area should be rerouted or abandoned to prevent possible incursion into the remote areas via the frozen surfaces.

will be less impacted by motorized traffic. There will be lower noise levels, lower exhaust emission levels, decreased impacts on wildlife and reduced user conflicts between users participating in motorized and non-motorized forms of recreation. DEC's responsibility to manage and monitor snowmobile use and impacts will also be made easier.

III. Standards and Guidelines for Snowmobile Trail Siting, Construction and Maintenance on the Forest Preserve

The following standards will apply to siting and designating snowmobile trails on Forest Preserve lands in the Adirondack Park and carrying out construction and maintenance activities on them.

Specific Trail Siting Criteria for New and Rerouted Snowmobile Trails

Class I Trails: ***Secondary Snowmobile Trails***

New and rerouted Class I trails will be sited within the periphery of State lands and may only be sited beyond one mile from motorized travel corridors when the recreational value of the newly sited or rerouted trail segment is high and potential impacts to sensitive interior areas are minimal as carefully assessed and described in a UMP.

All new and rerouted Class I trails directly connected to Class II Trails will be sited as close as possible to motorized travel corridors and, without exception, will be sited no farther than one mile from these corridors.

Class II Trails: ***Community Connector Trails***

New and rerouted Class II Trails on State lands will be sited as close as possible to motorized travel corridors. No new or rerouted trail segments will be sited farther than one mile from these corridors unless terrain or environmental constraints dictate otherwise, or such siting of a new or rerouted trail segment within the periphery is necessary to connect important, existing trail segments that together will form the same Community Connector Trail.

Snowmobile Trail Siting Standards

1. In cases where closure or abandonment of a motorized travel corridor results in an existing snowmobile trail location being inconsistent with these guidelines, such trail will, if practicable and as soon as possible, be relocated or reclassified to comply with these guidelines.

2. New and rerouted snowmobile trails will be sited, when possible, along existing routes or previously existing old routes such as foot trails, roads, utility rights of way and abandoned railroad beds in lieu of constructing entirely new trails.

3. New and rerouted snowmobile trails will be sited with an objective to avoid locations that present safety hazards such as the edges of ravines or ledges, major highway crossings and crossings of frozen surfaces of water bodies such as rivers, lakes and ponds. If suitable alternative routes are designated or developed, trails that lead riders to unsafe locations will be closed to snowmobile use in favor of the alternative routes in order to lower risks and eliminate unnecessary snowmobile trail mileage.

4. New and rerouted snowmobile trails will be sited with an objective to avoid areas considered environmentally sensitive, such as: wetlands; endangered plant or animal populations that might be harmed by the trails and/or their use; remote interior areas as defined by these guidelines and forested corridors connecting such remote interior areas; and deer wintering areas and other significant habitats, so that the values of these areas are not diminished.

5. New and rerouted snowmobile trails will not be established without an evaluation of potential significant impacts on adjacent private holdings.

6. New and rerouted snowmobile trails, including spur trails, will not provide access to private lands where public snowmobile access is not permitted.

7. New and rerouted snowmobile trails, through the acquisition of easements or other access rights from willing sellers, will be sited on private lands rather than State lands wherever possible to minimize impacts on the Forest Preserve.

Snowmobile Route Design, Construction and Maintenance Standards

Snowmobile route design, construction and non-ordinary maintenance activities[7] will be carried out pursuant to Snowmobile Trail Work Plans developed by DEC staff in consultation with APA staff. The following standards will be followed and reflected in the development of these Work Plans in order to preserve the trail-like character of snowmobile trails while ensuring they are appropriately safe to ride. When undertaking any of the types of work described below with motorized landscaping equipment (almost exclusively on Class II Trails), only careful use of appropriate low-impact landscaping equipment will be approved, as determined by a "minimum requirement" decision making approach set forth in the Snowmobile Trail Work Plan. For example, use of bulldozers and creation of "dugways" will not be approved. Operators of low-impact landscaping equipment will conduct their work in optimal environmental conditions and in a manner that will not contribute to any potential degradation of the wild forest setting. All work will be done with appropriate DEC oversight.

For new snowmobile trails of both classes to retain essential characteristics of foot trails, management practices must integrate thorough knowledge of the standards and guidance below, with efforts to

[7] Ordinary maintenance activities are defined in the "Memorandum of Understanding Between the Adirondack Park Agency and the Department of Environmental Conservation Concerning Implementation of the State Land Master Plan for the Adirondack Park" (APA/DEC MOU.)

appropriately balance them and the underlying concerns as the trails are sited, constructed and maintained thereafter. The end result should be trails that are both enjoyable and safe to ride for essentially the same reason – for the way the trails snake through the wild landscape of the Adirondacks in a natural fashion… construction and maintenance practices having altered the terrain enough to allow for an acceptable degree of riding comfort, but not so much as to create potential for high-speed, disruptive and unsafe snowmobiling experiences.

Many existing snowmobile trails are sited on old roads and other routes originally constructed and maintained for use of motor vehicles other than snowmobiles. In such cases, the standards set forth below may also be used to reroute or otherwise minimally alter such trails with the objective to achieve the same end result.

Alignment and Grade:

Trail alignment will not result in blind curves and abrupt changes in either horizontal or vertical direction; trails will be designed to ensure:

a) Sight distance will be 50 feet or more wherever possible;
b) Curves will have a radius of at least 25 feet;
c) The maximum grade of trails will not exceed 20% unless deemed necessary to minimize environmental impacts associated with trail construction;
d) Trails will not normally be laid out on existing cross slopes greater than 12%;

1. To the greatest extent possible, trails will not be aligned with long straight sections. Trails will follow the natural contours of the terrain as much as possible and will be laid out to balance and minimize necessary tree cutting, rock removal and terrain alteration.

2. Trails will be laid out to avoid rocky areas and drainage features such as wetlands and streams to the greatest possible extent.

3. In locations where serious environmental or safety conditions exist along a trail, the trail will be rerouted rather than rehabilitated at that location.

Trail Width:

1. Class I Trails may be maintained to an 8-foot maximum cleared trail width.

2. Class II Trails may be maintained to a 9-foot maximum cleared trail width except on sharp curves (inside turning radius of 25-35 feet) and steep running slopes (over 15%) where they may be maintained to a 12-foot maximum cleared trail width.

Class I and II trails wider than their classification allows will be actively restored to these limits.

Tree Cutting:

DEC policy requires that cutting trees should be minimized, but where cutting is required, trees must be identified, tallied and included in a Work Plan in accordance with *DEC Program Policy LF91-2 Cutting and Removal of Trees in the Forest Preserve.*

1. Cutting of overstory trees will be avoided in order to maintain a closed canopy wherever possible. Large and old growth trees should be protected.

2. Cutting trees to expand a trail from its current width or otherwise improve a trail will be carried out only pursuant to a Work Plan.

3. All snowmobile trails may be kept clear to a height of 12 feet, as measured from ground level.

4. No trees, except trees that due to structural problems or fallen/tipped conditions present an immediate hazard to the safe use of the trail by snowmobilers, will be cut outside the cleared trail width.

5. Trees should be felled away from the trail to minimize the amount of material that needs to be moved. If the tree trunks are not used to help delineate the trail, felled trees should be delimbed and cut into short enough lengths to lie flat on the ground. Once delimbed and cut up, the short lengths should be dispersed and not left in piles next to the trail. If the tree trunks are used to help delineate the trail, the cut ends of the trunks should be located outside the intended edge of the trail by at least one foot for safety reasons.

6. When trees are cut within the cleared trail width, they will be cut flush with the ground, and the preference will be to leave the root masses in place.

a) On Class II trails, if it is important to remove a root mass because it presents an obstacle in the trail surface, the preference will be to grind the stump and roots. If grinding is not feasible, the root mass may be dug up, rolled or placed off the trail into the woods without removing intervening vegetation and organic matter; the root mass will be set down so as to have the lowest profile possible.

b) Grinding will not occur on Class I trails.

7. No brushing will occur outside the cleared trail width of any snowmobile trails.

Trail Surface:

1. Grading:

a) Class I Trails. Trail surfaces should generally follow the existing contours of the natural forest floor and not be graded flat. While limited leveling and grading may be undertaken, this work will be done using hand tools almost exclusively. In rare circumstances, appropriate low-impact landscaping equipment may be used as specified in a Work Plan.

b) Class II Trails. Trail surfaces should generally follow the existing contours of the natural forest floor and not be graded flat. Limited leveling and grading may be undertaken using appropriate low-impact landscaping equipment as specified in a Work Plan.

2. Rock Removal:

a) Removal of boulders and rocks from snowmobile trail surfaces will be minimized to the greatest extent possible and will be described in a Work Plan. Methods of removal will be specified in the Work Plan. No boulders or rocks will be removed outside the cleared trail width.

i. On Class I Trails, rock removal will occur using hand tools only, except in rare circumstances in new trail construction and trail reconstruction when use of low-impact landscaping equipment may be approved. Rock removal on Class I trails will be primarily limited to uncommon, major obstacles that present demonstrable safety hazards to snowmobile riders and which cannot be avoided by appropriate trail layout or rerouting.

ii. On Class II Trails, rock removal may occur using low-impact landscaping equipment and may include removal of rocks determined to present demonstrable safety hazards to snowmobile riders or to be very likely to damage grooming equipment. Many rocks in snowmobile trails, due to their specific shapes and/or locations, do not present themselves so as to cause these problems, and these may not be removed regardless of how high above the trail surface they project. Conversely, some rocks in snowmobile trails – while small – do present themselves so as to cause these problems, and if they are identified in an approved Work Plan, they may be removed.

b) Boulders and rocks removed from trails will preferably be buried in the trails to minimize disturbance. Earth moved to dig the holes into which the boulders or rocks are to be placed will be used to fill the holes that result from the rock removal. When removed boulders and rocks are not buried, but are instead set to the side of the trail, they will be dispersed with care and not left in windrows or piles next to the trail. If a boulder or rock is used to help delineate the trail, it should be placed outside the intended edge of the trail by at least one foot for safety reasons.

c) Alternatives to rock removal should be considered to minimize the need for disturbance of the ground, to reduce the likelihood of creating drainage problems and to reduce the potential need for fill. Such alternatives may include covering or minor relocation of the trail where a boulder or rock may be too large or the number too great to deal with by any other method.

d) Removal of boulders and rocks from the surrounding natural, wild forest setting for use in snowmobile trail construction and maintenance work will be minimized and may occur only on a limited, carefully selective basis for small-scale projects. On Class II

trails, where large-scale trail construction projects using stone material may be approved, importation of native stone from appropriate, specified sources may occur.

3. Side Slope Management:

   a) On Class I trails, elimination or reduction of side slopes by means of bench cuts will be accomplished using hand tools exclusively. The need for bench cuts will be minimized through proper trail layout. The maximum amount of cut, measured vertically, will be 20% of the tread width. Side slopes of newly constructed trails and reroutes will be dressed and tapered within the cleared trail width; side slopes of some existing, degraded trails may be dressed and tapered outside the cleared trail width if this is determined the best way to address the degradation and restore environmentally sound, safe conditions.

   b) On Class II trails, elimination or reduction of side slopes will be accomplished primarily by means of full bench cuts for which appropriate landscaping equipment may be used. The need for bench cuts will be minimized through proper trail layout. The tapering of side slopes will be allowed outside the cleared trail width. The areas dressed and tapered will be re-vegetated to restore stability and natural site conditions after the full bench cut is created.

Drainage:

1. Adequate drainage will be provided within the cleared trail width to prevent trail erosion and washout and to maintain a safe trail. All snowmobile trails will be constructed so as not to intercept groundwater to the greatest extent possible; natural drainage patterns will be maintained. In areas where the natural drainage patterns may be affected, bridges will be the preferred method for crossing wet areas as authorized in a Work Plan. Bridges will be constructed pursuant to approved snowmobile trail bridge designs.

2. Water bars and broad-based dips may extend beyond the cleared trail width to the extent necessary to effectively remove water from the trail surface, provided that no trees are cut outside the cleared trail width. Culverts will not be installed as drainage devices. Any existing culverts will be removed unless the culverts are very large and their removal is essentially not possible.

Wetlands:

1. Wetlands will be avoided to the greatest extent possible.

2. When wetlands crossings or trail locations adjacent to wetlands are proposed, the trail will be designed to minimize potential adverse impacts.

3. Any activity in a wetland or that may impact a wetland will be undertaken with prior consultation with the APA and with recognition of Army Corps of Engineers' permit requirements.

Motor Vehicle Use Guidelines

1. Snowmobile route design, construction and non-ordinary maintenance will be carried out pursuant to Snowmobile Trail Work Plans (Work Plans) developed by DEC staff in consultation with APA staff.
2. Administrative personnel, equipment and materials will be brought to work sites by the least intrusive means possible, as determined by a "minimum requirement" decision making approach set forth in the Snowmobile Trail Work Plan and as identified in priority order below:

    a) By non-motorized means or, during periods of sufficient snow and ice cover, by snowmobile.

    b) By aircraft.

    c) By appropriate motor vehicles other than snowmobiles. Such motor vehicle use will only be approved when alternative means of transportation (non-motorized means, snowmobiles, aircraft) are not feasible or are inadequate. The motor vehicles used will be those which are suitable for the particular activities but have the least potential adverse impact on the environment. Even when such motor vehicle use has been approved, administrative personnel will utilize motor vehicles only to the minimum extent necessary.

3. Proposed motor vehicle or aircraft use will also be described in a Conceptual Use Plan, per CP 17, "Record Keeping and Reporting of Administrative Use of Motor Vehicles and Aircraft in the Forest Preserve" or any successor policy.

4. Any motor vehicle used will display an official "DEC Administrative Use" sign, unless otherwise prominently identified as a DEC vehicle.

5. All motorized uses will be supervised by an individual who has attended and completed DEC training concerning guidelines and policies for snowmobile trail construction and maintenance.

6. All activities involving landscaping equipment will be directly supervised by DEC staff.

7. A detailed Work Plan, approved by DEC Lands & Forests staff must be prepared for all work to be done on snowmobile trails except for the Initial Annual Maintenance Trips described below and immediate removal of fallen or tipped trees that present safety hazards as described above, under "Tree Cutting."

8. A Snowmobile Trail Maintenance Log (Trail Log) will be used to record all work done on snowmobile trails.

9. Work requiring use of aircraft or motor vehicles other than snowmobiles should be done, whenever possible, when environmental conditions allow during the months of August, September, and October.

Maintenance Trips involving Snowmobiles and other Motor Vehicles:

1. **Initial Annual Maintenance Trips.** These trips will be authorized under an AANR or TRP and are undertaken solely for the purpose of removing fallen branches and trees that obstruct the trail and maintaining drainage features.
    a) AANRs and TRPs will identify trail names, trail class and authorized motor vehicles to be used for Initial Annual Maintenance Trips.
    b) Motor vehicle use will be limited to one trip per trail per year.
    c) Trips will only be conducted when environmental conditions allow in the months of August, September, and October.
    d) All activities undertaken during Initial Annual Maintenance Trips will be recorded in Snowmobile Trail Maintenance Logs.
    e) During Initial Annual Maintenance Trips an assessment of necessary trail construction and maintenance work will be conducted. Necessary work will be recorded in Snowmobile Trail Maintenance Logs by specific location and will be used to develop Work Plans.

2. **Maintenance, Rehabilitation and Construction Trips.** These trips include all work trips on snowmobile trails except for "Initial Annual Maintenance Trips," described above, and "Grooming and Associated Winter Maintenance Trips," described below. They are undertaken primarily for the purposes of snowmobile route design, construction and non-ordinary maintenance activities (i.e., most "trail work," bridge construction, etc.) and so are a primary focus of the standards and guidelines set forth earlier in this section of the Guidance.

    a) All motor vehicle use associated with work of this type will be undertaken by the least intrusive means possible, as identified in priority order set out under "Motor Vehicle Guidelines," Section 1.

    b) All work of this type will require an approved, detailed Work Plan as describe under "Snowmobile Route Design, Construction and Maintenance Standards," above.

3. **Grooming and Associated Winter Maintenance Trips**. Grooming will be tailored to the Class of the snowmobile trail; it must not alter a trail's width or physical character and will not be used to gather snow from outside the allowable cleared width of the trail. Grooming equipment will be operated only by administrative personnel including DEC staff or volunteers under an agreement with the DEC (AANR or TRP) and covered by appropriate insurance. The type of equipment allowed will be as follows:

Class I Trails: Snowmobile with a drag, as the 8-foot cleared width and layout of the trail will allow[8] and as approved in an AANR, TRP or pursuant to a Work Plan.

Class II Trails: Snowmobile with a drag, or, grooming equipment with tractor and drag width sufficiently less than the 9-foot to 12-foot trail width[9] to allow for grooming that

[8] The drag should not be wider than 7 ½ feet on Class I trails.
[9] The drag should not be wider than 8 ½ feet on Class II trails.

will not cause tree damage. Type and dimensions of grooming equipment to be identified and approved in an AANR, TRP and pursuant to a Work Plan.

Associated Winter Maintenance Trips will occur only when snow and ice cover is sufficient to protect the trail. They will normally be performed by use of snowmobiles but may also involve use of tracked groomers or other motor vehicles, where appropriate, as approved in an AANR, TRP and pursuant to a Work Plan. These trips may include any of the following activities:

a) Removing fallen or tipped trees that present immediate safety hazards as described above, under "Tree Cutting."
b) Placing trail signs or markers.
c) Pruning vegetation.
d) Taking building materials, supplies and tools to a construction site for immediate work or for staging them for an upcoming construction season;
e) In rare instances, installing temporary trail safety or natural resource protection features or structures.
f) Removing materials from the Forest Preserve that were staged during previous work projects.

<u>Department Oversight of Motor Vehicle Use</u>:

1. The Regional Natural Resource Supervisor, or a Departmental designee, will be notified no less than 48 hours prior to commencement of motor vehicle use and will determine whether or not trail conditions are suitable for such work and vehicle use prior to such use.

2. The Regional Natural Resource Supervisor, or a Departmental designee, will be responsible for ensuring Department staff periodically monitor and inspect all construction and maintenance work to ensure compliance with approved Work Plans.

    a) Department staff shall inspect the snowmobile trail work at times which are intended to coincide with the use of equipment that has the greatest potential to cause environmental damage.
    b) All construction activities involving landscaping equipment will be directly supervised by DEC staff.
    c) Within seven days of completion of authorized construction and maintenance activities, the Regional Natural Resource Supervisor will verify the work was satisfactorily completed according to Standards and Guidelines for Snowmobile Trail Construction and Maintenance and, if applicable, that any AANR or TRP terms and conditions were met.
    d) If the terms and conditions of an AANR, TRP and associated Work Plan are violated at any time, the AANR/TRP may be amended or revoked, with the determination to be made by the Director of the Division of Lands and Forests.

IV. Implementation and Review

Implementation of this Guidance – and the appending of it to the APA/DEC MOU – is intended to establish snowmobile trail management practices that conform to the guidelines and criteria of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan.

Some activities may require a freshwater wetlands permit from the Agency. Some activities will qualify by MOU definition as ordinary maintenance, rehabilitation, and minor relocation of snowmobile trails. In addition to these considerations, implementation of this Guidance may occur through: authorization granted directly via an approved UMP or UMP amendment; interagency consultation on Work Plans authorized by UMP's or UMP amendments; and APA/DEC staff observations and monitoring of off-season snowmobile trail management practices and trail character.

This Guidance does not prevent DEC, via individual UMP's or other means, from providing more restrictive management where necessary to protect the character of Forest Preserve lands.

Staff of both the APA and DEC will document examples of the implementation of this guidance in order to: 1) verify that implementation is producing the desired results; and, 2) identify specific aspects of the guidance that may need to be clarified or otherwise revised by APA and DEC in order to achieve, or more fully achieve, the desired results. APA staff will report regularly to the Agency State Land Committee concerning such review and any recommendations that may stem from it.

Appendix C – Invasive Species Guidelines

(Interagency Guidelines for Implementing Best Management Practices for the Control of Terrestrial and Aquatic Invasive Species on Forest Preserve Lands in the Adirondack Park – 2010)

Prepared By
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
and
the Adirondack Park Agency

I. Introduction

The negative impacts of invasive species on natural forest and aquatic communities are well documented (Appendix F). Colonization and unrestrained growth of invasive species cause the loss of biodiversity, interruption of normal hydrology, suppression of native vegetation, and significant aesthetic, human safety and economic impacts. Terrestrial and aquatic invasive species have been identified at increasing rates of colonization along roadsides in campgrounds, and in water bodies of the Forest Preserve within the past 10 years. Some of these species have the potential to colonize backcountry lands, lakes and ponds and degrade natural resources of the Forest Preserve.

These guidelines apply to Adirondack Forest Preserve lands, which are protected by Article XIV, Section 1 of the New York State Constitution. This Constitutional provision, which became effective on January 1, 1895 provides in relevant part:

> *"The lands of the state, now owned or hereafter acquired, constituting the Forest Preserve as now fixed by law, shall be forever kept as wild forest lands. They shall not be leased, sold or exchanged, or be taken by any corporation, public or private, or shall the timber thereon be sold, removed or destroyed."*

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC or Department) has jurisdiction over the Forest Preserve, and its management of these lands must be in keeping with this Constitutional provision.

Furthermore, the DEC's management of the Adirondack Forest Preserve is governed by the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP), which was initially adopted in 1972 by the APA, with advice from and in consultation with the Department, pursuant to Executive Law §807 (recodified as Executive Law §816). The APSLMP provides the overall general framework for the development and management of State lands in the Adirondack Park. The APSLMP sets forth the following classifications for State land within the Adirondack Park: Wilderness, Primitive, Canoe, Wild Forest, Intensive Use, Historic, State Administrative, Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers, and Travel Corridors, and sets forth management guidelines for each of these major land classifications.

Executive Law §816 requires the Department to develop, in consultation with the Agency, individual UMP's for each unit of land under the Department's jurisdiction which is classified in one of the nine classifications set forth in the Master Plan. The UMPs must conform to the guidelines and criteria set forth in the Master Plan. Thus, UMPs implement and apply the Master Plan's general guidelines for particular classifications of State Land within the Adirondack Park.

Executive Law §816(1) provides in part that "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.

Article XIV, Section 1 of the New York State Constitution does not specifically address the issue of invasive species. However, since Article XIV directs that Forest Preserve lands be "forever kept as wild forest lands" and prohibits the removal or destruction of timber, care must be taken to ensure that decisions to eradicate invasive species do not result in a material cutting of Forest Preserve timber or adversely impact the wild forest character of Forest Preserve lands.

Although there are no explicit references to active invasive species management on Forest Preserve lands in the Master Plan, the Master Plan provisions are consistent with the concept of actively managing invasive species to protect the "wild forest" character of the Forest Preserve. For instance, page 1 of the Master Plan (2001 Update) states that, "If there is a unifying theme to the Master Plan, it is that the *protection and preservation* of the natural resources of the state lands within the Park must be paramount" (emphasis added). Surveys of Forest Preserve lands document the continued importation and expansion of invasive plants into and throughout the Adirondack Park (see Section II below). Given that models indicate that eradication of an invasive species becomes progressively more difficult, more expensive, and less effective the longer the species is allowed to grow without intervention (Chippendale 1991; Hobbs and Humphries 1995), it is critical for the Department and APA to address this problem in an expeditious manner.

The goal of these guidelines is to establish parameters known as best management practices (BMPs) for the control of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species while ensuring that such management activities do not alter the "forever wild" character of Forest Preserve lands. These guidelines are intended to harmonize the Constitution's "forever wild" provisions with the Master Plan's overriding directive to manage forest preserve lands for their protection and preservation. They have been developed pursuant to, and are consistent with, relevant provisions of the New York State Constitution, the Environmental Conservation Law (ECL), the Executive Law, the State Environmental Quality and Review Act (SEQR), the Master Plan, and all other applicable rules and regulations, policies and procedures.

It is also important to determine if any regulatory jurisdictions or permits are triggered by a proposed management activity. For example, any management activities than may involve wetlands on private or public lands may require a permit from APA.

II. Present Extent of Terrestrial and Aquatic Invasive Species on Forest Preserve Lands

An inventory of invasive species that are present and a measure of the extent of the invasive species populations is essential to determining the correct course of action. The Department conducts ongoing regular, systematic surveys to identify and quantify the extent of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species on Forest Preserve units in the Adirondack Park. The results of this continued survey have been included in Appendix E of these guidelines and documented in UMPs. Appendix E and UMPs should be updated at

the end of each calendar year to reflect the survey data from the previous growing season. DEC will present an annual report on the survey data from the previous growing season. The tabular information will include Forest Preserve land unit name, species name, total number of populations and area affected, and other pertinent information as identified by the Office of Invasive Species Coordination (OISC). Detailed location and population information shall be provided to the Regional Land Manager for each Region and be included in the iMap Invasive Species Database.

The Department shall seek to develop and foster a relationship with private landowners adjacent to or connecting Forest Preserve land units to share information regarding existing and potential invasive species populations or threats.

III. BMPs for the Control of Terrestrial and Aquatic Invasive Species and Procedure for Implementation
The general parameters or BMPs for the control of invasive species that apply regardless of the targeted species are set forth below. Specific control methods for select terrestrial and aquatic invasive species are attached as Appendix B. These BMPs will be implemented through site specific work plans with corresponding SEQR compliance, which must be approved by the Department's Central Office Bureau of Forest Preserve. Adopt-A-Natural Resource (VSA) Agreements with outside parties to conduct invasive species management must incorporate site specific work plans with corresponding SEQR compliance. It is anticipated that if the proposed activities conform to these guidelines, they will be consistent with constitutional directives and authorized pursuant to the APA/DEC MOU, and will not require approval through the UMP process. However, if the Department determines during its review of a proposed site specific work plan that proposed management activities may potentially have a material effect on the character or use of the land or the vegetation thereon, DEC and APA staff will then consult to determine if the activity should be reviewed and approved as part of an individual UMP or UMP Amendment. Furthermore, application of these guidelines to all such management activities on Forest Preserve lands throughout the Adirondack Park will ensure that cumulative impacts will be avoided due to the fact that the BMPs being implemented through these guidelines avoid and mitigate impacts to native ecological communities.

The following BMPs apply to the control and management of invasive species.

1. **Prevent the introduction of invasive plants and animals to uninfested sites.**
   Invasive species can be introduced to a site by moving infested equipment, sand, gravel, borrow, fill and other off-site material. Monitoring disturbed areas and proper sanitation of equipment will help prevent new infestations. BMPs to prevent the introduction of invasive species include:
   - Clean all clothing, boots, and equipment prior to visiting site.
   - Begin activities in uninfested areas before operating in infested areas.
   - Use native plants and weed-free seed and mulch (straw, wood fiber).
   - Use fill that does not have invasive plant seeds or material.
   - Keep equipment on site during the entire project.
   - Incorporate invasive plant prevention into road work layout, design, and decisions. Use uninfested areas for staging, parking and cleaning equipment. Avoid or minimize all types of travel through infested areas, or restrict to those periods when spread of seed or propagules are least likely.
   - When possible, to suppress growth of invasive plants and prevent their establishment, retain relatively closed canopies.

2. **Contain and treat new invasive plants and animals or those not yet well established.**
   Controlling small infestations is more effective and economical than trying to control well-established, rapidly spreading infestations. Selected control measures need to be based on species biology and the individual characteristics of an infestation.

3. **Minimize transport of invasive plants and animals from infested to uninfested areas.**
   Invasive species can be spread by moving infested materials and equipment. Cleaning vehicles and equipment (usually with steam or hot water) is the most effective method of preventing an introduction. BMPs involving the transport of off-site material and equipment include:
   - Determine the need and identify sites where equipment can be cleaned. Seeds and plant parts need to be collected when practical and effectively disposed of (e.g., burned, dried, bagged and taken to landfill, etc.). Remove mud, dirt, and plant parts from project equipment before moving it into a project area and clean all equipment before leaving the project site, if operating in infested areas.
   - Check, clean, and, when appropriate, dry all clothing, boots, and equipment (e.g., boats, trailers, nets, etc.) prior to visiting site.
   - Don't move firewood. All cut tree material should be either chipped or dispersed onsite.
   - Inspect material sources at site of origin to ensure that they are free of invasive plant material before use and transport. Treat infested sources for eradication, and strip and stockpile contaminated material before any use.
   - Inspect and document the area where material from treated infested sources is used annually for at least three years after project completion to ensure that any invasive plants transported to the site are promptly detected and controlled.
   - Minimize roadside sources of seed that could be transported to other areas.
   - Periodically inspect roads and rights-of-way for invasion. Inventory and mark infestations and schedule them for treatment.
   - Avoid working in infested areas if possible. Postpone such work until invasive plants have been eliminated from the site.
   - Perform road maintenance such as road grading, brushing, and ditch cleaning from uninfested to infested areas to help prevent moving seeds and plant material from infested areas into adjacent uninfested areas.
   - Clean road graders and other equipment immediately after operating in infested areas.
   - Clean all dirt and plant parts from the top and underside of mower decks.

4. **Minimize soil disturbance.**
   Invasive plants prefer and often thrive under disturbed conditions. Do not disturb the soil unless absolutely necessary. BMPs for activities involving soil disturbance include:
   - Before starting ground-disturbing activities, inventory invasive plant infestations both on-site and in the adjacent area.
   - Minimize soil disturbance and retain desirable vegetation in and around area to the maximum extent possible.
   - Monitor infested areas for at least three growing seasons following completion of activities. Provide for follow-up treatments based on inspection results.
   - Do not blade roads or pull ditches where new invaders are found, if possible.

• When it is necessary to conduct soil work in infested roadsides or ditches, schedule activity when seeds or propagules are least likely to be viable and to be spread.
• Do not move soil from infested area to prevent off-site spread.

5. **Maintain desirable species.**
Establishing and maintaining competitive, desirable plants along roadsides and disturbed areas prevents or slows establishment of invasive plants. BMPs for revegetating disturbed areas include:
• Revegetate all disturbed soil, except on surfaced roads, in a manner that optimizes plant establishment for that specific site, unless ongoing disturbance at the site will prevent establishment of invasive plants.
• Use native material where appropriate and available. Revegetation may include planting, seeding, fertilizing, and mulching.
• Monitor and evaluate success of revegetation in relation to project plan.
• When revegetating areas that were previously dominated by invasive plants, try to achieve at least 90% control of the invasive before attempting restoration.

IV. General Practices

1. **Minimum Tool Approach** – State land stewardship involving invasive species management practices should always incorporate the principles of the Minimum Tool Approach. Any group or individual implementing such practices on State land should only use the minimum tools, equipment, devices, force, actions or practices that will effectively reach the desired management goals. Implicit in this document is the stricture to implement a hierarchy of management practices based upon the target species and site conditions starting with the least intrusive and disruptive methods. <u>For the management of aquatic invasive species, hand harvesting and benthic matting are to be used unless a different approach has been reviewed and approved by the Department and the Agency.</u>

2. **Erosion Control** - Some of the species specific methods described in Appendix B require digging or pulling of plants from the soil. Where vegetation is to be removed, it must be determined if the proposed control method and extent of the action will destabilize soils to the point where erosion is threatened. Generally if more than 25 square feet of soil surface is cleared or plant removal occurs on steep slopes, staked silt fencing should be installed and maintained as a temporary erosion control practice. In some cases seeding and organic, non-hay mulching may be required.

3. **Revegetation** - Although not required, replanting or reseeding with native species may sometimes be necessary. All of the species specific control methods described in Appendix B are aimed at reducing or eliminating invasive species so that natives are encouraged to grow and re-establish stable conditions that are not conducive to invasive colonization. In most cases, removal or reduction of invasive populations will be enough to release native species and re-establish their dominance on a site. The site specific work plan for treatment of invasive species should include monitoring provisions and contingency plans for revegetating the site.

4. **Composting** - Because of the extremely robust nature of invasive species, composting terrestrial invasive plants in a typical backyard compost pile or composting bin is not appropriate. However, methods can be used whereby sun-generated heat can be used to destroy the

harvested plant materials, such as storage in a sealed 3 mil thickness (minimum) black plastic garbage bags on blacktop in the sun until the plant materials liquefy. If a larger section of blacktop is available, make a black plastic (4 mil thickness minimum) envelope sealed on the edges with sand bags. The plant material left exposed to the sun will liquefy in the sealed envelope without danger of dispersal by wind. The bags or envelopes must be monitored to make sure the plants do not escape through rips, tears or seams in the plastic. **When composting is suggested later in the text it is understood that liquefying the plant material in or under plastic is the desired action; not disposal in backyard composters or open landfill composting piles.**

5. **Material Collection and Transportation** – While on the control site, place all cut plant material in heavy duty, 3 mil or thicker, black contractor quality plastic clean-up bags. Securely tie the bags and transport from the site in a covered vehicle in order to prevent spread or loss of the plant material during transport from the control work site to the appropriate staging or disposal location. The main root structure, root fragments and/or horizontal rhizomes from harvested controlled Japanese, giant or bohemian knotweed infestation should be bagged only to facilitate transport to an appropriate staging area. All knotweed root structure, root fragments and rhizome propagules should be separately bagged from any cut, aerial canes and crowns. Over an open bag, remove as much adherent soil as possible from the root/rhizome structure prior to spreading the root/rhizome parts out onto a secure, impervious surface. Once completely dried out, the root/rhizome structure may be burned or disposed of in an approved landfill.

   The mature, upright stems and canes of common reed and the knotweeds can be cut, formed into bundles and securely bound with rope or twine. The bundles may then be transported to an appropriate staging or disposal location that has an impervious or near-impervious surfaced area. After the bundles have completely dried out they may be burned at an approved incinerator or burn pit with an appropriate permit.

V. Management Protocols

a. All Department personnel whose duties involve outdoor field work on State land (e.g., UMP Planners and State Land Managers, Forest Rangers, ECOs, Operations, etc.) will report the location of suspected terrestrial and aquatic invasive species encountered during the course of their ordinary work and to implement BMPs when conducting or supervising work to remove invasive species from State land. Terrestrial and aquatic invasive species identification and management training will be provided as needed.

b. All site specific work plans must include a site map, an inventory of target and non-target species, an estimate of the size and age of the infestation, target species impacts and concerns, a Natural Heritage review, adjoining land uses and nearby State land units, a proposed treatment method and probability of success, treatment impacts and concerns, an assessment of treatment alternatives, a history of past treatment methods used on site, a timeframe by which the work will be undertaken and completed, a schedule of anticipated future work, and monitoring provisions to determine the effectiveness of the management action.

c. All work on State land will be conducted using the BMPs and species specific control methods listed in Appendix B, pursuant to the DEC – APA Memorandum of Understanding.

d. Any individual or group demonstrating an interest and appropriate expertise in implementing the species specific control methods may apply for a VSA agreement to manage terrestrial and aquatic invasive species.

e. The treatment of invasive species by Department personnel or any other party will only be undertaken pursuant to a site specific plan for the treatment of invasive species and pursuant to all applicable State, federal and local regulations regarding pesticide use, residue removal and disposal.

f. A VSA and a site specific work plan for treatment of invasive species are required for all non-Department personnel to implement species specific control methods and BMPs on State land.

g. All site specific work plans and applications for VSAs for the treatment of invasive species will be noticed in the Environmental Notice Bulletin for a 15 day public comment period prior to final approval by the Department.

h. Appropriate certification (NYS pesticide applicator certification) is required for pesticide applications. The only pesticide application allowed under these guidelines is spot treatment to individual plants using a back pack or hand sprayer, wick applicator, cloth glove applicator, stem injection or herbicide clippers. **No broadcast herbicide applications using, for example, a truck-mounted sprayer, are allowed. In all cases, all herbicide directions for use and restrictions found on the label shall be followed by a New York State Certified Applicator or Technician in an appropriate category.** The application methods described and allowed are designed to reduce or eliminate the possibility that non-target species will be impacted by the pesticide use. All pesticide treatments require follow-up inspection later in the growing season and/or the following year to assess and document effects and possibly re-treat any plants that were missed. The following guidelines apply with respect to the application of herbicides, which must be applied according to respective labels under federal and state law:

    - In wetlands with standing water, only the RODEO® glyphosate formulation may be used. If the standing water is greater than one acre in size and/or has an outlet to surface waters, an aquatic pesticides permit is required pursuant to ECL 15-0313(4) and (6) NYCRR327.1 in which case application can only be made by a Certified Applicator or Technician or supervised Apprentice licensed in "Category 5 – Aquatic Vegetation Control". In wetlands with no standing water, either the RODEO®, ROUNDUP ® or the AQUAMASTER® formulation may be used.
    - In uplands either ROUNDUP®, AQUAMASTER® or GLYPRO® may be used.
    - The propose use of herbicides must be detailed in a work plan.

i. All appropriate and applicable signage and public notification required for pesticide application by or on behalf of the Department shall be used, including adjacent landowner notification, newspaper notice, and temporary on and off-site signs.

j. These guidelines do not authorize the use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or aircraft. All use of motorized equipment on State lands under the jurisdiction of the Department within the Adirondack Park shall be in compliance with Commissioner's Policy Number 17 (CP-17), and

other pertinent Department policy regarding the use of motorized equipment on Forest Preserve Lands.

k. A UMP or UMP Amendment may be required if the proposed implementation of an activity identified in these guidelines is considered to cause a potential material change to the use of the land or the vegetation thereon due to its extent, intensity or duration.

l. Invasive species management materials and methods evolve; any deviation from the BMPs and species specific control methods must be approved by the Department after consultation with the Agency.

m. Any invasive species management action proposal that involves tree cutting for control or access must comply with constitutional requirements and will be carried out pursuant to LF-91 and a site specific work plan.

n. Appendix A of these guidelines contains a list of species that are considered terrestrial or aquatic invasive species. Other species may be added over time recognizing the constant threat of new invasive species. Note that to be eligible for management actions under these guidelines, species specific control methods must be accepted by the Department after consultation with the Agency. New or revised control methods may be developed by other entities, but also must be reviewed and accepted by the Department after consultation with the Agency.

o. Those individuals or groups applying for a VSA to manage any invasive species without an approved species specific control method must develop and submit a control method for the species of concern. The submitted control methods will be reviewed and must be approved by the Department and the Agency before the approval of a site specific work plan or issuance of the VSA agreement. Those individuals or groups applying for an VSA to manage aquatic plants identified in Appendix A are limited to hand-harvesting or benthic matting as described in a site specific work plan describing the full course of work.

VI. Potential Environmental Impacts

The control methods and BMPs contained in these guidelines restrict the use of herbicides so that adverse impacts to non-target species are avoided and native plant communities are restored. Aquatic invasive species will be managed using non-mechanical harvesting techniques (hand-pulling) and temporary benthic matting as described in the guidelines. Use of pesticides for aquatics is not a part of this guidance.

The removal of these species reduces the potential for disruption and harm to the native ecosystem. It is expected that by using the guidelines invasive species populations will be managed, and hopefully eradicated, in a timely manner before significant impact to the Forest Preserve resource occurs. Successful implementation of these control methods and BMPs or other recommended control methods will allow natural processes to take place undisturbed by the impacts of invasive species colonization and proliferation.

Any of the control actions described in the guidelines has the potential for environmental impact. For example, the use of pesticides may cause mortality to non-target species and cutting tress may have both visual and ecological impacts on the landscape. It is recognized that although the BMPs and species

specific control methods seek to mitigate these impacts, the potential for impact is real and must carefully be weighed against all other possible actions, including the no-action alternative. It is believed that the protection, preservation, and restoration of native flora and fauna in the Adirondacks is an action that is worth reasonable associated risk. These guidelines represent a tool for land managers to reduce the potential for disruption and harm to Forest Preserve lands from terrestrial and aquatic invasive species. It is expected that these actions will lead to the preservation and restoration of native ecological communities on State lands within the Adirondack Park.

VII. Effect of This Action

The guidelines seek to lay the ground rules for managing terrestrial and aquatic invasive species on Forest Preserve lands. It identifies certain species that, if left untreated, have the potential for colonizing backcountry land and water bodies causing severe disruption and degradation of natural systems. The guidelines set out a protocol for action and recommend a set of comprehensive BMPs and specific control methods for dealing with invasive species of concern, and sets out a process for developing and incorporating new control methods for additional species. The control methods provide detailed guidance on the use of several techniques for managing terrestrial and aquatic invasive species including hand pulling, cutting, digging, matting and pesticides. Finally, the guidelines identify a host of additional terrestrial and aquatic invasive species that require surveillance, early detection and, after appropriate consultation with the Regional Supervisor of Natural Resources a rapid response to protect Forest Preserve lands.

Adoption of the guidelines and implementation through the UMP and site specific work planning process, gives the Department the basic tools needed to preserve, protect and restore the natural native ecosystems of the Forest Preserve.

VIII. Definitions

a. Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP) – A partnership including the Department, the Agency, Department of Transportation, and the Adirondack Nature Conservancy whose goals are:

    1. to coordinate a regional early detection and monitoring program in cooperation with staff, volunteers and the public;

    2. to facilitate invasive species management and control with public and private landowners; and,

    3. to increase public awareness and involvement to prevent the spread of invasive species through education and outreach.

c. Agency – APA, its officers and employees.

d. Aquatic Invasive Plant Species – A plant that is typically found in wetland or riparian settings (including lakes, ponds, rivers or streams) that is capable of rapid reproduction and displacement of native species.

e. Area – Lands under the jurisdiction of the Department.

f. Best Management Practice (BMP) – Best management practices are state-of-the-art mitigation measures applied on a site specific basis to reduce, prevent, or avoid adverse environmental or social impacts.

g. Biological Control – A method of controlling pests (including insects, mites, weeds and plant diseases) that relies on predation, parasitism, herbivory, or other natural mechanisms. It can be an important component of integrated pest management (IPM) programs.

h. Certified Applicator – An individual who has successfully completed the course of training and licensing and who holds a valid, appropriate pesticide applicators certificate in New York State.

i. Control Method – A field tested recommendation for the most effective control of invasive species. Species specific control methods for terrestrial invasive species are attached in Appendix B. As of this writing, only hand harvesting and/or benthic matting are approved control methods for aquatic invasive species.

j. Department – The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), its officers and employees.

k. Herbicide – A pesticide that is registered in New York State that kills plants. Due to the sensitive nature of Forest Preserve lands, only selected herbicides are included for use under these guidelines. Glyphosate in the Roundup®, Rodeo®, Aquamaster ®, and Glypro® formulations are the herbicides of choice. In wetlands with standing water only the RODEO® formulation may be used. In wetlands with no standing water either the RODEO®, ROUNDUP ® or the AQUAMASTER® formulation may be used. In uplands either ROUNDUP®, AQUAMASTER® or GLYPRO® may be used. In all cases herbicides will be used in strict compliance with label precautions and the species specific control methods found in Appendix B.

l. Herbicide Application Method – The method of herbicide application will be by backpack sprayer, wick applicator, handheld spray or dropper bottle applicator, stem injection, or cloth glove applicator. No application will be allowed by broadcast sprays or by equipment permanently mounted on a vehicle.

m. Inter-Agency Guidelines ("Guidelines") – The document agreed to by the Adirondack Park Agency and the Department of Environmental Conservation that outlines regulated management of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species on State land.

n. Invasive Species – "invasive species" means a species that is:

   (a) non-native to the ecosystem under consideration; and

   (b) whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. For the purposes of this paragraph, the harm must significantly outweigh any benefits.

o. Pest – "Pest" means (1) any insect, rodent, fungus, weed, or (2) any other form of terrestrial or aquatic plant or animal life or virus, bacteria or other micro-organism (except viruses, bacteria

or other micro-organisms on or in living man or other animals) which the Department Commissioner declares to be a pest.

p. Pesticide – Any substance or mixture of substances that is registered in New York State to kill pests. A pesticide may be a chemical substance, biological agent (such as a virus or bacterium), antimicrobial, disinfectant, plant regulator, defoliant, or other device used against a pest.

q. Site Specific Work Plan – A detailed description of work to be performed at a specific site, the Best Management Practices that will be used to perform the work and the desired final condition of the site once the work is complete.

r. Terrestrial Invasive Plant Species – A plant that is typically found in upland settings that is capable of rapid reproduction and displacement of native species.

s. Volunteer Stewardship Agreement – The agreement for the Department's program to foster public participation to preserve, maintain and enhance the lands and facilities under the Department's jurisdiction.

IX. Goal of the Guidelines

The goal of the guidelines is to restore and protect the native ecological communities on Forest Preserve lands in the Adirondack Park through early detection and rapid response efforts to eradicate or control existing or newly identified invasive species populations.

X. Objectives of the Guidelines

These guidelines provide a template for the process through which comprehensive active terrestrial and aquatic invasive species management will take place on Forest Preserve lands in the Adirondack Park. The guidelines provide protocols for implementing BMPs on Forest Preserve land. The protocols describe what management practices are allowed and when they can be implemented, who can be authorized to implement the management practices, and which terrestrial and aquatic invasive species are targeted. The guidelines are a living document and should be revisited and revised periodically to reflect the dynamic nature of invasive species and the state of knowledge of best management practices.

Reference to these guidelines will be included in UMPs as they are drafted or revised. UMPs will also include available inventory information on the distribution of invasive terrestrial and aquatic species on or in close proximity to the Unit. The guidelines will guide invasive terrestrial and aquatic species management activities on Forest Preserve units. The site specific plan for treatment of invasive species will contain up-to-date invasive species inventory data, specific location information, and specific management recommendations for each species on each site including control actions, materials and methods, monitoring, contingencies and restoration actions.

The guidelines also describe a process by which the Department may enter into VSA Agreements with and facilitate individuals or groups to manage terrestrial and aquatic invasive species on Forest Preserve lands using the listed best management practices, including pesticide use, in the appropriate circumstances. The VSA will be accompanied with a site specific plan for treatment of invasive species based on the BMPs in the guidelines and include provision for monitoring and additional actions to

restore natural communities. As noted above, the site specific plan for treatment of invasive species will provide the detail regarding the selected management options on a site specific basis.

XI. Responsibilities

The responsibility for interpretation and update of these guidelines and overall management shall reside with the cooperating agencies. The Department shall be responsible for management of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species on Forest Preserve lands while the Agency will be responsible for providing review of, and advice on, the management activities contained in the guidelines and the assessment of materiality of proposed actions and the management recommendations in UMPs.

Appendix D – Pond Narratives

History Overview:

The ponds in the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex have been under private ownership for nearly 150 years. Prior to 1948, the land had individual camps and homes and was managed for timber, agriculture, and recreation. In 1948, the Outer Gooley Club was formed, which included Pine Lake and Clear, Mud and Corner Ponds. In 1950 the Essex Chain Lakes was added and dubbed the Inner Gooley Club. Both club lease areas were owned by Finch, Pruyn & Co. and leased to the club. The first DEC surveys of these private waters began in 1952, during which time the first bass stocking request was denied by DEC. From the 1960's to today, the waters have been privately managed and stocked. Studies during this time were completed by researchers Flick, Simkins, and Field. Finch sold the land to The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and New York State purchased it from TNC. Proper management of this area for recreation as well as the maintenance of ecological integrity is paramount.

Individual Pond Descriptions

A brief description of each pond in the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex follows. Definitions of fisheries management classifications referred to in this section of the unit management plan are noted below:

Adirondack Brook Trout Ponds - Adirondack Zone ponds which support and are managed for populations of brook trout, sometimes in company with other salmonid fish species. These waters generally lack warmwater fishes but frequently support bullheads. The majority of these waters are stocked.

Coldwater Ponds and Lakes - Lakes and ponds which support and are managed for populations of several salmonids. These waters are stocked and lack warmwater fishes but frequently support bullheads.

Other Ponds and Lakes - Waters containing fish communities consisting of native and non-native fishes which will be managed for their intrinsic ecological value without any new species introductions.

Two-Story Ponds and Lakes - Waters which simultaneously support and are managed for populations of coldwater and warmwater game fishes. The bulk of the lake trout and rainbow trout resource fall within this class of waters. The majority of these waters are stocked.

Unknown Ponds and Lakes - Waters which could not be assigned to the subprogram categories specifically addressed in this document due to a lack of or paucity of survey information. These waters usually contain native and non-native nongame fishes which will be managed for their intrinsic ecological value without any new species introductions.

Warmwater Ponds and Lakes - Waters which support and are managed for populations of warmwater game fishes and lack significant populations of salmonid fishes. Selected waters are stocked to introduce these species to waters where they do not already exist.

First Lake (P625):

First Lake (56.4 acres) is located within the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area. Floatplane use has been a historically popular use of this lake, and this use will continue. The maximum depth is 62.0 feet, and the average depth is 20.3 feet. The most recent survey was by the Adirondack Lakes Survey Corporation (ALSC) in 1987. It had a ph 7.72 and an ANC of 380.6 µeq/l. However, DEC has surveyed First Lake in years 1980, 1979, 1964, 1962, and 1952. Brown trout were stocked in 1980, and rainbow smelt in 1973. Rainbow trout are present in the lake from historic stocking efforts, along with lake trout, brook trout, brown bullhead, creek chub, redbreast sunfish, slimy sculpin, and white sucker. Minnows found during the ALSC 1987 survey were golden shiner and banded killifish.

Floatplane use will continue on First Lake, and it will be managed as a coldwater fishery.

Management Class: Coldwater

Second Lake (P626):

Second Lake, which is contiguous with First and Third Lakes, was last surveyed in 1987 by the Adirondack Lakes Survey Corporation. This 22.7-acre pond had a pH of 7.78 and an ANC of 411 µeq/l. The same survey found the following species: Landlocked salmon, brook trout, rainbow smelt, golden shiner, bluntnose minnow, blacknose dace, creek chub, white sucker, brown bullhead, banded killifish, redbreast sunfish. The species stocked in Third Lake (landlocked salmon and brook trout) likely immigrated to Second Lake, which explains their presence in the survey.

Second Lake will be managed to preserve the native coldwater fishery.

Management Class: Coldwater

Third Lake (P626A):

Third Lake (261.9 acres) is the largest lake in the Essex Chain itself, and in the entire Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area. Historically, it has been stocked yearly by the Gooley Club. Species stocked include: brook trout, landlocked salmon, rainbow trout, and perhaps Arctic char. Rainbow smelt were stocked once, in year 1973. The maximum depth is 80.1 feet, and the average depth is 20.7 feet. The most recent chemical survey was completed by DEC in late summer of year 2012. Third Lake was found to have characteristics that are acceptable for trout survival, and a pH of 7.86 and an ANC of 476 µeq/l. A survey was completed by the ALSC in October 1987, where the species caught were: landlocked salmon, brook trout, rainbow smelt, golden shiner, northern redbelly dace, bluntnose minnow, creek chub, brown bullhead, banded killifish, and redbreast sunfish. Stocked rainbow trout have also been caught. Third Lake also has a native lake trout population, a slow-growing species with no known stocking history. A 2013 DEC survey caught 4 lake trout and 1 white sucker. The Gooley Club buildings lie on the southern shore of Third Lake.

Third Lake will continue to be stocked with landlocked salmon and rainbow trout, and managed in order to protect the native lake trout population.

Management Class: Coldwater

Fourth Lake (P626B):

Fourth Lake is 27.0 acres in size, and likely contains species that are emigrants from Third and Fifth Lakes, which have both been stocked. There is no recorded biological survey for this lake. The most recent survey was a chemical survey by DEC in the summer of 2012. It had a pH of 7.82 and an ANC of 401 µeq/l. A large culvert connects Fourth Lake to Fifth Lake of the Essex Chain.

A biological survey is needed on Fourth Lake, and will be managed as a coldwater fishery.

Management Class: Coldwater

Fifth Lake (P626C):

Fifth Lake (70.9 acres) has a stocking history much like Third Lake. Both have been stocked yearly by the Gooley Club with landlocked salmon, brook trout, and rainbow trout. The 2012 DEC chemical survey found that Fifth Lake is suitable for trout survival, with a wide depth zone of favorable dissolved oxygen conditions. It also has a pH of 7.67 and an ANC of 305 µeq/l. in 1971,a survey was completed by researcher Simkins, where the species recorded were: lake trout, rainbow trout, brook trout, creek chub, brown bullhead, and unspecified sunfish species. Despite the believed presence of lake trout in Fifth Lake, a 2013 DEC survey caught only 1 white sucker and 1 rainbow smelt.

There is a culvert between Fourth and Fifth Lakes that allows for water and species flow, and is also large enough to accommodate paddlers.

Fifth Lake will continue to be stocked rainbow trout and salmon, and managed for its coldwater fishery.

Management Class: Coldwater

Sixth Lake (P631):

Sixth Lake does not have a recorded biological survey. However, the 2012 DEC chemical survey shows that Sixth Lake does not possess temperature and dissolved oxygen characteristics that would be sufficient for trout survival. This 36.4- acre lake has a ph of 7.63 and an ANC of 285 µeq/l.

Sixth Lake will be managed to preserve its aquatic community for its intrinsic value.

Management Class: Coldwater

Seventh Lake (P631A):

Seventh Lake, like Sixth Lake, does not have a recorded biological survey, but may also contain emigrant species due to the interconnectivity of the Essex Chain of Lakes. Seventh Lake was also found to be

unsuitable for trout populations, based on the 2012 DEC chemical survey. It has a pH of 7.63 and an ANC of 342 µeq/l. This lake is also relatively small, only 9.0 acres in size.

Sixth Lake will be managed to preserve its aquatic community for its intrinsic value.

Management Class: Coldwater

Eighth Lake (P633):

Eighth Lake (17.0 acres) is the final lake in the Essex Chain Lakes, and is located northeast of Jackson Pond. A spur road off of the road that leads to the Gooley Club buildings runs to the south of Eighth Lake. A biological survey was completed by Thomas Field of Fernwood & Linme, Inc. in 1984. The fish species found were: brook trout, creek chub, golden shiner, redbreast sunfish, and brown bullhead. Brook trout were stocked by the Gooley Club as recently as year 2011, and the 2012 DEC chemical survey shows that there is a depth range that is favorable for trout. Eighth Lake has a pH of 7.82 and an ANC of 422 µeq/l.

Eighth Lake will be managed as an Adirondack brook trout pond to preserve its native fish community.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Jackson Pond (P634):

Jackson Pond is 29.2 acres in size, and located southeast of Third Lake, to the east of the Gooley Club camp complex. When surveyed in late summer 2012, Jackson Pond was found to have a narrow (2-3') zone suitable for trout, and therefore average trout growth. The maximum depth is 23.0 feet. It has been suggested for reclamation, but DEC surveys in 2012 show that there is not a good barrier site. Jackson Pond was surveyed in 1971 by Simkins, and the gill net sampling yielded only 1 rainbow trout and 9 brook trout. Brook trout have been previously stocked yearly by the Gooley Club. The most abundant species caught in the Simkins survey were creek chub, golden shiner, sunfish (unspecified species). Brown bullhead were also found in the lake. The 2012 DEC chemical survey yielded a pH of 8.02 and an ANC of 627 µeq/l.

Brook trout were stocked in Jackson Pond by DEC in Fall 2013, and will be managed as an Adirondack brook trout fishery in the presence of non-native and historically associated species.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Deer Pond (P629):

In 1973, Deer Pond was reclaimed and a barrier was built. It was restocked with British Columbian strain brook trout and Temiscamie hybrids after completion. The barrier failed in 1977, and gill lice presence was also detrimental to trout survival. It is 48.4 acres in size and has a maximum depth of 54 feet. The last biological survey for Deer Pond occurred in late summer 1985 by Thomas Field, of Fernwood-Limne, Inc. The most abundant species were landlocked salmon, brook trout, and creek chub. Smelt,

unspecified sunfish, and unspecified dace species were also present. Field suggested that Deer Pond be reclaimed again and the barrier rebuilt, but the 2012 DEC survey did not find a suitable barrier site.

Brook trout were stocked in Deer Pond by DEC in Fall 2013, and will be managed as an Adirondack brook trout fishery.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Mud Pond (P630):

Mud Pond is located just to the southeast of Deer Pond, and just north of Third Lake. It is a shallow pond with a maximum reported depth of 10.5 feet, and an area of 21.7 acres. According to the 1984 biological survey by T. Field, Mud Pond is shallow enough that light penetrates through the water column, causing the whole lake to be oxygenated by photosynthesis in summer. Due to this high level of biological demand, it is likely that "winterkill" is why there is a relatively unproductive fishery in Mud Pond. "Winterkill" occurs under ice cover, and is the depletion of dissolved oxygen due to high biological demand. Field (1984) does not speak definitively about this phenomenon occurring in Mud Pond, but physical characteristics suggest that this can be used to explain the low populations of fish in the pond. Mud Pond has historically discussed as a candidate for reclamation, but the 2012 DEC survey did not find the pond to have suitable barrier potential.

Mud Pond will be managed to preserve its aquatic community for its intrinsic value.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Chub Pond (P632):

Chub Pond is a very small pond (3.0 acres in size) and located just east of Seventh and Eighth Lakes of the Essex Chain, in the Newcomb 7.5' Quadrangle. There are not any recorded stocking, biological, or chemical survey records. However, it is possible to infer that it may have been fished in the past (if sustaining populations exist), due to its proximity to Seventh and Eighth Lakes and the Gooley Club Road.

Mud Pond will be managed to preserve its aquatic community for its intrinsic value.

Management Class: Unknown

Grassy Pond (P627):

Grassy Pond is a 31-acre pond located just to the north of First Lake. It was located in the Blue Mountain Wild Forest prior to the 2013 reclassification, and it is now located in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area. It has a maximum depth of 41 feet. In 1991, DEC surveyed Grassy Pond as a potential reclamation candidate, but was found not to be suitable due to lack of barrier sites. The ALSC sampled Grassy Pond in 1987, and caught creek chub and brown bullhead. A 1980 DEC survey found brook trout to be present.

Grassy Pond will be managed as an Adirondack brook trout water, and will be surveyed again to assess the presence of brook trout.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Little Grassy Pond (P628):

Little Grassy Pond is a 5.4-acre Adirondack brook trout water that is a tributary to Grassy Pond. The stream that connects the two waters flows through a large wetland. It has a maximum depth of 11 feet and a mean depth of 6 feet. A survey in 1991 found that it was not a suitable candidate for reclamation. A 1983 survey in Little Grassy Pond found: brook trout, creek chub, brown bullhead, pumpkinseed, banded killifish, and northern redbelly dace.

Little Grassy Pond will be surveyed again and will be managed as an Adirondack brook trout pond to preserve its native fish in the presence of nonnative species.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Pine Lake (P655):

Pine Lake, like First Lake, has a history of floatplane use. It is located south of First Lake, and is 91.4 acres in size with an average depth of 25.6 feet. In terms of fisheries, Pine Lake contains a variety of species, including brook trout, golden shiner, white sucker, rock bass, brown bullhead and redbreast sunfish. These findings came from the ALSC 1987 database and the lake is currently in the Adirondack Brook Trout management class.

Floatplane use will continue on Pine Lake, and will be surveyed again to determine trout presence and survival.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Mud Pond (P624):

This is the second Mud Pond in the management area. It is located to the north of Clear Pond and to the south of the Cedar River. Mud Pond is relatively unknown, but it was surveyed for chemical properties in August 2012 and found to be unsuitable for trout sustainability. This 10.0-acre pond has also never been stocked. Mud Pond is quite shallow, with an average depth of approximately 10 feet. It also has a pH of 7.72 and an ANC of 350 µeq/l.

Mud Pond will be managed to preserve its aquatic community for its intrinsic value.

Management Class: Unknown

Clear Pond (P616):

Clear Pond (23.2 acres) is located in the Pine Lake Primitive Area, between Mud Pond and Corner Pond. There is a trail to Clear Pond that extends southwest from the Chain Lake Road South. Clear Pond

contains a sustained native lake trout population with satisfactory growth characteristics, and may be sensitive to increased fishing pressure. It was historically stocked, because brown trout were caught in 1965, and kokanee salmon and rainbow trout in 1996. Current fisheries management calls for the continued stocking of rainbow trout. A pre-reclamation survey was completed in 1991, which also noted an abundance of frog species observed. Clear Pond has undergone biological surveys by DEC in years 1932, 1957, 1965, 1996, and 2012. The most recent biological survey caught lake trout, redbreast sunfish, and brown bullhead. Historical surveys have also caught brook trout, creek chub, eastern blacknose dace, golden shiner, and northern redbelly dace. DEC also completed a chemical survey in 2012 and found a pH of 7.58 and an ANC of 197 µeq/l.

Clear Pond will continue to be stocked by DEC with rainbow trout, and managed as a coldwater fishery.

Management Class: Coldwater

Corner Pond (P659):

Corner Pond is located south of Clear Pond in the Pine Lake Primitive Area. This 20.3 acre pond is very shallow, with a maximum depth of 4 feet and a mean depth of 2 feet. The most recent biological survey was done by DEC in 1957, and the only species reported was brown bullhead.

Corner Pond will be surveyed to determine its chemical and biological characteristics.

Management Class: Unknown

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Appendix E – Analysis of Alternatives

Snowmobile Trails

Maps of each alternative can be found in Appendix I.

Alternative 1 – *Preferred Alternative*

This alternative is described in more detail in Section III of the UMP. It begins at Pelon Road in Indian Lake, follows the Elm Island Trail until reaching private land, where a new section of the Elm Island Trail will be constructed. The route then enters land owned by the Town of Indian Lake until reaching Chain Lakes Road (South). The route follows the road to the point where seasonal hunting access ends, which coincides with the end of the wild forest classification along the road. From there, the route follows the old road to the Cedar River, crosses the river, and continues northwest on the Camp Six Trail. The Camp Six Trail becomes the Camp Six Road where seasonal hunting access terminates. The Camp Six road intersects Drakes Mill Road, which the route follows to the east. The road becomes a trail approximately 1/3 of a mile from the Hudson River. The route crosses the river over the Iron (Polaris) Bridge then follows one of two alternatives to reach 28N.

Alternative 1A – *Preferred*

From the Polaris Bridge the trail would follow existing haul roads to the east in order to exit the Scenic River corridor as efficiently as possible. Once out of the corridor the trail would proceed generally north through the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest to a point approximately 0.6 miles south of Chaisson Rd where it would proceed onto private land until it meets the Chaisson Rd. The route would then follow Chaisson Road until crossing Route 28N and connecting with the proposed Newcomb to Minerva trail.

As indicated in the 2005 Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest UMP, a GIS model indicates potential deer yard habitat along portions of this trail segment in the extensive softwood wetlands north of Vanderwhacker Mountain along the North Branch of Wolf Creek and the Hudson River. The majority of the trail that intersects the potential deer yarding area is located on the outer edges of the model. The fringe location coupled with the relatively large area of potential habitat nearby suggests that trail use may not greatly impact deer yarding since there is a great deal of potential habitat in the area. Field work conducted in 2015 in the peripheral location indicated that trail use may not significantly impact deer yarding.

While this alternative is less direct to Minerva than Alternative 1B, it is preferred because it would require much less modification to the land to construct, require fewer bridges, and would be much easier to maintain over the long-term. This is especially important considering one of the uses of this route would be a community connector snowmobile trail, which would need to be constructed to a width of nine feet. This route allows for a trail of this width to be constructed and maintained sustainably for four-season use, unlike Alternative 1B which contains significant water management issues.

Alternative 1B

This segment would utilize old haul roads closer to the bridge, but new trail construction would be necessary for most of this trail segment. The trail would continue easterly along the old Vanderwhacker Mountain snowmobile trail until it hits the current Vanderwhacker Mountain multi-use trail, at which point it would continue along the multi-use trail to the trailhead on the Moose Pond Club Road. From the Vanderwhacker Mountain trailhead the route would merge with and continue easterly on the Moose Pond Club road to Route 28N. It will require a crossing of Route 28N to connect to the proposed Newcomb to Minerva community connector trail. This alternative provides a more direct route to Minerva, but because of the challenges to both construction and long-term maintenance, it was discarded. The need for this trail to be nine feet in width to accommodate snowmobiles and groomers makes it especially problematic, as this route is considerably wet in many places (the base of Vanderwhacker Mountain has several seeps and Wolf Creek is generally located within a wetland throughout most of this area) and management of water on a wide trail during the warmer months would be a perpetual challenge.

Alternative 1A is the Department's preferred alternative.

Alternative 2

This alternative follows the same route as Alternative 1 until reaching the intersection of Drakes Mill Road and Camp Six Road. At this point, the route heads north on Drakes Mill Road and Chain Lakes Road (North) until reaching the State land boundary and Goodnow Flow Road. From here two alternatives were considered to complete the connection to Route 28N:

Alternative 2A

This alternative would use Goodnow Flow Road, or a new path just off the Road, until the point where the road intersects an existing snowmobile trail on CE lands. The route would then follow that trail into Newcomb where it would connect with the proposed Newcomb to Minerva trail. This alternative was discarded because there is a history of private land issues related to snowmobiling in this area, and the use of a Town road for a long distance is not ideal when other alternatives exist.

Alternative 2B

This alternative would utilize a portion of the recently designated Upper Hudson Ski Loop Trail until a point where the ski trail circles back towards the west. The snowmobile trail would head north on an undesignated trail (herd path) parallel to the Hudson River until reaching private land. The route would continue on to Route 28N, then use Route 28N and Campsite Road to connect to the proposed Newcomb to Minerva trail. This alternative was discarded because of the long distance the trail would travel in close proximity to the Hudson River.

Alternative 3

This alternative would use the existing Cedar River Trail heading northwest out of Indian Lake and the O'Neil Flow Road on the Township 19 Conservation Easement. Rather than continuing north on the Cornell Road, the route would follow a new trail heading east into Blue Mountain Wild Forest until reaching an unclassified corridor. It would then cross the Chain Lakes Road (North), and then proceed along the same route as Alternative 2A or 2B for the remainder. This alternative was discarded because of its indirect approach towards reaching Minerva, and because of the uncertainty surrounding the use of the conservation easement roads during timber harvesting activities.

Alternative 4

This alternative begins in the same way as Alternatives 1 and 2. At the intersection of Chain Lakes Road (North) and Drakes Mill Road, the route heads west on Chain Lakes Road (North), then north on a road circling around Sixth and Seventh Lake. Instead of following the road into the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area, a new trail would be used to cross the Blue Mountain Wild Forest heading east until reaching the Cornell Road on the conservation easement lands. From here the route would follow an existing snowmobile trail through the easement until reaching the hamlet of Newcomb and connecting with the proposed Newcomb to Minerva community connector trail. This alternative was discarded primarily because of the indirect nature of the route considering the goal of connecting Indian Lake to Minerva. Additionally, the wild forest section between the Chain Lakes Road (North) and Cornell Road would be challenging in terms of water management, especially when considering summer uses. Finally, as mentioned previously, the use of conservation easement trails come with a level of uncertainty as timber management activities can disrupt snowmobile use.

Alternative 5 – No Action

The no action alternative would result in the continued use of the Cedar River Trail (Indian Lake to Blue Mountain Lake), the O'Neal Flow and Cornell Roads in the Conservation Easement lands to the west of the Complex Area, and an existing trail on Conservation Easement lands to the north of the Complex Area. The use of these road and trail segments eventually connects Indian Lake and Newcomb, and then connect to an approved trail between Newcomb and Minerva. Adopting the no action alternative would result in the use of a more circuitous route as a substitute for an Indian Lake to Minerva connection, and would therefore increase the travel time between Indian Lake and Minerva.

Land Ownership of Each Alternative (in miles)

	Total Mileage	DEC Lands	CE Lands	Private/Town
Alternative 1, 1A	**20.69**	18.68	0	2.02
Alternative 1, 1B	**22.63**	22.15	0	0.47
Alternative 2, 2A	**20.69**	13.4	1.98	4.9
Alternative 2, 2B	**21.11**	19.42	0	1.69
Alternative 3	**31.75**	20.4	6.9	4.44
Alternative 4	**33.22**	19.2	12.21	1.82
Alternative 5	**31.02**	7.3	20.69	3.03

Ground Conditions for Each Alternative (in miles)

	Total Mileage	New Trail	Existing Trail	Old Road/Trail (minimal tree cutting)	Motor Vehicle Road	Potential wetland impact for trail considered New or Old Road
Alternative 1A	**20.69**	3.1	1.52	6.86	9.21	0.59
Alternative 1B	**22.63**	3.57	1.52	7.97	9.55	1.1
Alternative 2A	**20.69**	1.36	4.25	4.12	10.54	0.57
Alternative 2B	**21.11**	1.36	4.24	8.37	7.14	0.61
Alternative 3	**31.75**	6.34	16.11	4.13	5.15	1.29
Alternative 4	**33.22**	2.59	15.46	8.99	6.18	0.81
Alternative 5	**31.02**	NA	22.08	NA	8.94	NA

Compliance with the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act (WSRRSA:)

One of the purposes of the WSRRS Act is to grant to the DEC the authority to adopt regulations in order to place "primary emphasis on protecting ecological, ***recreational***, aesthetic, botanical, scenic, geological, fish and wildlife, historical, cultural, archeological and scientific features of the area." (*See* ECL Section 15-2709.1) (emphasis added.) DEC staff has proposed the location of the multiple use trail in the river corridor area that minimizes the potential for adverse environmental impacts by locating the trail within the BMWF and VMWF, limiting the number of trees cut, avoiding wetlands, and minimizing stream crossings consistent with the snowmobile Management Guidance. The preferred alternative utilizes an area in the river corridor that accesses the “destination” in as short a distance as possible and that does not have a reasonable alternative. The location of this trail will be placed so as to take advantage of an existing motor vehicle bridge over the Hudson River. For this reason, the DEC has determined that this trail crossing the river will not affect the river resource.

One segment of two alternatives begins at the Hudson River, which in this vicinity is designated as a Scenic River pursuant to the WSRRS Act (ECL section 15-2713.2(f.) The WSRRS Act, and its implementing regulations found in Part 666 of Title 6 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the

State of New York (6 NYCRR), regulate activities within a Scenic River Area, defined geographically as the river and the area within ½ mile from the river on both sides. The construction of a multiple-use trail within a Scenic River Corridor requires the DEC to issue a permit in accordance with 6 NYCRR section 666.13[E][3] (for the construction of a new trail) and section 666.9 [d] (to allow *motorized* open space recreational uses). A variance for the width of the trail may also be needed pursuant to 6 NYCRR section 666.9[a][2] because the term "trail" is defined by the WSRRS Act implementing regulations as a "path or way four feet or less in width." (*See* 6 NYCRR section 666.3[lll]). Current state snowmobile guidance requires a snowmobile trail to be nine feet in width to allow for the safe passage of snowmobiles traveling in opposite directions. This permit will be subject to the public notice requirements of the Uniform Procedures Act (UPA) as set forth in Article 70 of the ECL and its implementing regulations found in 6 NYCRR Part 621. The application requirements, and the applicable criteria for the issuance of the permit, are found in section 666.8 of the WSRRS Act implementing regulations. A permit will be issued if the proposed land use is consistent with the purposes of the WSRRS Act and its implementing regulations, the river resources are protected, the proposed activity will not have an undue adverse environmental impact, and no reasonable alternative exists for modifying or locating the proposed activity outside of the designated river area, among others.

The use of bridges and trails at the location of the existing Polaris Bridge, predates and continued regularly after the enactment of the WSRRS Act. DEC records indicate that a bridge existed at this location previously, and both DEC and the APA issued permits to allow the construction of the existing bridge which subsequently allowed motor vehicle use for timber harvesting and recreational purposes. Therefore, the operation of motor vehicles, including snowmobiles, on the trail leading to and over the Polaris Bridge is considered an existing land use and is allowed to continue pursuant to the WSRRS Act statute and its implementing regulations (ECL section 15-2709.2 and 6 NYCRR section 666.13[A][1]; *see also* 6 NYCRR section 666.2[i][3]&[4]).

One segment of the proposed snowmobile trail in the Complex Area, the Elm Island Trail, is an existing snowmobile trail located within the Cedar River Wild River area. (*See* ECL section 15-2713.1[a]). The Cedar River Wild River area extends one-half mile from each bank. (See 6 NYCRR sections 666.6[f] & 666.3[yy]). The Elm Island Trail was sited with the purpose of minimizing adverse environmental impacts to the greatest extent practicable. In order to allow the continued use of the trail, the DEC and the Agency agree to establish a new boundary of the river area. The authority and procedures for amending river area boundaries are found in ECL section 15-2711, 6 NYCRR section 666.6, and 9 NYCRR section 577.3.

The new river area boundary will extend one-quarter mile from the east bank of the river starting from the existing boundary with the Cedar River Recreational River area, and end where the Elm Island Trail is no longer within the river area at a location more commonly known as the "four corners" as referenced in the 1995 Blue Mountain Wild Forest Unit Management Plan. The west bank of the river area in this vicinity will remain one-half mile.

Cedar River Bridge Location

History

The Chain Lakes Road (North and South) has been in existence since the mid-nineteenth century, and became a Town Highway sometime in the mid to late 1800's. The road starts from present-day Route 28 in the Town of Indian Lake, runs northeast along the western shore of the Indian River, continues north past the Hudson River, and then turns northwest toward the Cedar River. Initially, barges were used to cross the Cedar River, and at least one bridge was constructed to span the river. The last known bridge was improved in the 1940's and again in the 1950's to allow for motor vehicle access. In 1978 the bridge collapsed from river ice buildup and was never replaced. The Chain Lakes Road (North and South) on either side of the Cedar River continued to be used for motor vehicles until the land was purchased by the State in 2013. Snowmobiles crossed on the frozen river surface after the bridge washout until State acquisition.

There is an existing bridge over the Cedar River approximately 9 river miles from the proposed Cedar River Bridge in this Complex Plan. This multiple use recreational trail bridge was permitted by DEC and APA in 2001. The DEC permit (#5-2026-00103/00001) describes its purpose:

> *"The proposed multiple use recreational trail bridge will span a segment of the Cedar River designated "recreational" under the WSRRA. The bridge will link the hamlet of Indian Lake with the trail system of the Blue Mountain Wild Forest. It will provide direct access to an existing trail, whose main purpose is snowmobiling, which leads towards the hamlet of Blue Mountain Lake. Eventually the trail may be extended to connect with the hamlet of Long Lake."*

Current Situation

The 2013 APA Resolution (with Respect to the 2013 Classification Package) committed to considering revising the APSLMP to allow for the construction of a bridge over the Cedar River in the vicinity of the previous bridge using non-natural materials.

The Complex Plan proposes to construct this bridge over the Cedar River, in the vicinity of the previous bridge, to reconnect the Chain Lakes Road (North and South) in conformance with the APSLMP. The alternatives for the exact location of the bridge are contemplated here. A map of the location alternatives is located in the Appendix.

Compliance with the WSRRS Act: each alternative of the proposed multi-use trail enters into the Cedar River Corridor. The Cedar River, in this vicinity, is designated as a Scenic River pursuant to the WSRRS Act. (*See* ECL section 15-2713.2[e]). The WSRRS Act, and its implementing regulations found in Part 666 regulate the activities within a Scenic River Area, defined geographically as the river and the area within ½ mile from the river on both sides. The construction of a bridge and a multiple use recreational trail within the Cedar River Scenic Corridor requires the issuance of a permit in accordance with 6 NYCRR sections 666.13[E][3] (for the multiple use trail) and section 666.13[E][5][b] (for the construction of a bridge). Section 666.13[E][5][b] allows the construction of a bridge over a classified river for "public

roads" or for "non-motorized open space recreational uses" such as hiking, cross-country skiing, and travel by horse and wagon. The DEC intends to allow the use of snowmobiles on this bridge, therefore, a permit is required in accordance with 6 NYCRR section 666.9[d]. A variance for the width of the trail may also be needed pursuant to 6 NYCRR section 666.9[a][2] because the term "trail" is defined by the WSRRS Act implementing regulations as a "path or way four feet or less in width." (See 6 NYCRR section 666.3[lll]). Current state snowmobile guidance requires a snowmobile trail to be nine feet in width to allow for the safe passage of snowmobiles traveling in opposite directions. These permits are subject to the public notice requirements set forth in Article 70 of the ECL and its implementing regulations found in 6 NYCRR Part 621. The application requirements, and the applicable criteria for the issuance of the permit, are found in section 666.8 of the WSRRS Act and its implementing regulations. A permit will be issued if the proposed land use is consistent with the purposes of the WSRRS Act, the river resources are protected, the proposed activity will not have an undue adverse environmental impact, and no reasonable alternative exists for modifying or locating the proposed activity outside of the designated river area, among others.

DEC staff has proposed the location of the bridge and recreational trail in the river corridor area that minimizes the potential for adverse environmental impacts by limiting the number of trees cut, avoiding wetlands, and minimizing stream crossings consistent with the 2009 Snowmobile Management Guidance. Public motor vehicle use of the bridge will be limited to snowmobiles, and administrative motor vehicle use of the bridge will be limited to snowmobile trail groomers and those activities required for bridge maintenance.

Alternative 4 was selected as the preferred alternative because, among other reasons, it avoids or minimizes adverse environmental impacts to the greatest extent practicable.

Alternative 1 – No Action

The no action alternative would not propose bridge construction at any of the selected alternative sites. The no action alternative is not feasible because it does not support the State's plan to provide a balanced approach to allow recreational uses in the unit while minimizing impacts to natural resources. By not constructing a bridge, the DEC would then allow the construction of a multiple-use trail that would lead to the west and dissect two areas classified as Primitive in the vicinity of Pine Lake.

Alternative 2

This alternative would use a narrow point in the Cedar River, downriver (east) of Alternatives 3 and 4. The banks of this site are high, with boulders on either bank for any potential bridge stabilization. However, this alternative does not use a direct connection between the Chain Lakes Road (North and South). For construction, short road sections would have to be built to access either side of the river bank. Additionally, this alternative is located within the boundaries of the Hudson Gorge Wilderness Area, and would require a map change or reclassification if selected. This alternative will not be considered.

Alternative 3

This alternative would use the site of the Cedar River Bridge that was built sometime in the 1930's and washed out in 1978 from river ice buildup. The location was found using a 1968 aerial photo and field confirmation. An approximate 750 foot section of trail (on the former all-season road accessing the river bank) would need to be rehabilitated in order access the river bank from the Chain Lakes Road (South). This short section of trail is within the 100 year floodplain. It is also located within lands currently classified as wilderness by the APSLMP. The river span at this location is approximately 175 feet. The elevations on the southern shores of Alternatives 3 and 4 are similar, but Alternative 3 does not have the rock outcrop, so the southern shore would need to be armored and potentially hardened. In the field, it appears that the south shore was partially eroded or washed away with the wood abutments from the old bridge. The elevation of the northern end of this site may already be above flood water elevation.

Alternative 4 – *Preferred Alternative*

This alternative is located approximately 800 feet west (using the centerline of the river) of the Alternative 3 location. The distinguishing characteristic of this site is the large rock outcrop on the southern shore that has a benchmark on it. A 1901 topographic map shows a crossing of the Cedar River at this location. Between 1978 (when the old bridge washed away) and State acquisition, snowmobiles routinely entered the Scenic River Corridor from the Essex Chain Road South and crossed the river at this location. This location is also within the lands classified as wild forest by the APSLMP.

The existing trail that leads to the Cedar River shore from the south goes directly to this location. The span was surveyed to be 145 feet, narrower at this location than the Alternative 3 location. The high rock outcrop at this location provides a desirable anchor point for the southern edge of the bridge abutment. The northern end of this site would need to be built up to be out of the flood water elevation. This is the preferred alternative for the Cedar River Bridge proposed in this UMP.

Outer Gooley Farmhouse

History

The Outer Gooley farmhouse is located in the former Indian River Tract, along the Chain Lakes Road (South), northwest of the confluence with the Indian and Hudson Rivers. The Indian River Tract was purchased from Finch Pruyn by The Nature Conservancy and sold to New York State in April 2013 for addition into the Forest Preserve. The Gooley Club, which included both the Outer Gooley and Inner Gooley areas, was formed in 1946.

The Outer Gooley farmhouse and surrounding area were classified as Wild Forest, and added to the Blue Mountain Wild Forest unit. The site also formerly included a woodshed, a cabin, an open garage, and an outhouse. The farmhouse is the only remaining structure on site.

Management Guidelines

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) is the State Historic Preservation Office. OPRHP has determined that the Outer Gooley building meets eligibility criteria for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Therefore, DEC must adhere to §14.09 of the New York State Historic Preservation Act (SHPA), which states, in part, that DEC *"shall fully explore all feasible and prudent alternatives and give due consideration to feasible and prudent plans which avoid or mitigate adverse impacts on such property."* This contemplation of alternatives and invitation for public comment takes place through the UMP process. In this context, a decision will be made with regard to the future of the building.

Alternative 1 – No Action

The no action alternative would mean allowing the building to deteriorate, without maintenance performed or decision-making about any potential uses or demolition. This deterioration is an adverse impact according to the SHPA, and would result in a public health and safety hazard. This alternative will not be considered.

Alternative 2 – Structure Removal

The Outer Gooley farmhouse meets eligibility criteria for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Alternatives considered as part of conformance with the SHPA includes this alternative to demolish the building. Historical and natural history interpretation could be provided, without the building, using kiosks and panels. Ongoing future maintenance and staff costs are eliminated with the demolition of the building.

Alternative 3 – *Preferred Alternative*

The preferred alternative would retain the Outer Gooley farmhouse as a historic structure and for other compatible uses, discussed below. The uses under this section overlap to some degree, and are not intended to be mutually exclusive, since several might be accommodated in the building. One or more of these may require statutory changes or APSLMP amendments. Many of the alternatives listed could be accomplished by DEC if appropriate staff and resources were made available. Some could be done in partnership with local government or non-profit organizations. Another possibility would be to consider transferring management jurisdiction to another State agency, such as ORPHP. DEC will rely on public comment to guide the decision-making process.

Potential uses could include:

- Manage as an interior outpost, like Lake Colden or John's Brook Lodge. This would provide a DEC presence, but would require significant and ongoing budgetary and maintenance allocations. Also, the building is located directly adjacent to the public Outer Gooley parking area. Therefore, it is not a remote or interior location. It is, however, located at a strategically important location where paddlers can last exit the Hudson River before entering the Gorge.
- Incorporate the building into a hut-to-hut/snowmobile/bike/equestrian touring system. Within this use category is an array of possible sub-options involving the use of the

building in various ways and to varying degrees for any of the above purposes. This would enhance the overall tourism economy, but would have budgetary impacts from staffing and maintenance. This option also has numerous legal issues, from housing the public on the Forest Preserve.

- Use the building as a historical museum for hunting camp tradition and river driving exhibits. This could be accomplished through a variety of management arrangement options, depending on appropriate and willing partners.
- Use only the exterior of the building to provide an interpretive experience. This could be accomplished through a variety of management arrangement options, depending on appropriate and willing partners.
- Establish the building as a bed and breakfast. There are significant legal (and potentially constitutional) issues with this option.
- Use the building site as a natural/cultural history outdoor exhibit, after the building is demolished. This would eliminate any budgetary obstacles from ongoing maintenance of the building.

Inner Gooley Structures

History

The Inner Gooley area is located on the south shore of Third Lake in the Essex Chain. A bridge over the Cedar River historically connected the two camp areas via the Chain Lakes Road (North) and Chain Lakes Road (South). There are 7 buildings and several small sheds located in the Inner Gooley camp complex. The lessee exclusive use area shrank to a contiguous 7-acre parcel around the camp buildings on October 1, 2013.

Existing Conditions

The Inner Gooley buildings are located on the south shore of Third Lake, in the approximate center of the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area. The Inner Gooley Club currently functions within their exclusive use camp envelope. They have certain motorized use and access rights that extend beyond the public use (see Use Reservations section for more lessee information). Their lease ends on September 30, 2018. After that, the buildings and all materials will be removed (no later than October 1, 2019).

The Inner Gooley Club camp buildings are located in a remote location, with no nearby public motorized access. The classification of the area as Primitive and the remote location were major factors in the proposed future management of the buildings.

Alternative 1 – No Action

The no action alternative would mean allowing the buildings to be abandoned in 2018, without removal. This deterioration is an adverse impact according to the SHPA, and would result in a public health and safety hazard. This alternative will not be considered.

Alternative 2 – Interior Outpost

Manage as an interior outpost, like Lake Colden or John's Brook Lodge. This would provide a DEC presence in a relatively remote area, but would require significant and ongoing budgetary and maintenance allocations. These structures are non-conforming in primitive areas (as explained in the preferred alternative), therefore this alternative is not considered viable.

Alternative 3 – *Preferred Alternative*

The preferred alternative calls for the removal of the Inner Gooley camp buildings. This is due to their remote location in the Primitive Area, and the Leasehold Agreement which specifies the requirement for structure removal upon expiration of the lease in 2018.

According to the APSLMP guidelines for Primitive Areas, *"non-conforming uses resulting from newly classified primitive areas will be removed as rapidly as possible..."* (pg. 27.) The Inner Gooley camp buildings are not of an essentially permanent nature, since they are small hunting camps formerly on leased land. The lack of ownership of the land signifies that the camps were not placed and constructed to last in perpetuity.

In accordance with the 2012 "Reservation of Leasehold Estate and Management Agreement" between The Nature Conservancy and New York State, all of the camp structures and property in the Inner Gooley complex will be removed by the end of the lease-phase out period.

Equestrian and Bicycle Trail Configuration

All proposed equestrian and bicycle trails in the Complex Area utilize the former all season road and/or administrative road network. There are approximately 50 miles of mapped "road" in the Complex Area. This includes maintained gravel roads, summer roads, winter roads, former ATV trails, and skid trails. As part of DEC's role as land manager - recreational facilities, including trails, use mitigation by design. In the case of the Complex Area equestrian and bike trail system, a subset of the all-season road network was selected that will be able to withstand use, and that also provide an enjoyable recreational experience.

Alternative 1 - *Preferred Alternative*

The preferred alternative, which is proposed in the Complex Plan, will designate a subset of the former all season road and/or administrative network as multiple-use trails, to include horse use and bicycle use in conformance with the APSLMP. The trails selected will be those that have been historically utilized by motor vehicles and have been maintained to a higher standard than others. These typically have better surfaces, better drainage, and travel to points of interest in the Area. The horse and bicycle trail systems will largely overlap. Equestrian trail riders can ford a section of washed out road near Fifth Lake to loop back into the main trail system. This fording opportunity was enjoyed be several groups of equestrian riders in the last couple years, and users have expressed interest in this unique riding opportunity. Bicycle trails will be designated in conformance with the APSLMP.

Alternative 2 – No Action

The no action alternative would not designate any horse or bicycle trails in the Complex Area. This alternative will not be considered for several reasons. The first is that the 2014 Stewardship Plan for the Complex Area committed to designating a subset of the all-season road and/or administrative road network as equestrian trails and establishing an equestrian parking and staging area along the Chain Lakes Road (North). The second reason is that public comment displayed a strong desire for both horse and bicycle trails in the Area.

Alternative 3 – Open Entire Network

This alternative would designate and open the entire universe of former all-season road and/or administrative road network to horse and bicycle use, regardless of the actual on-the-ground conditions. This would include gravel roads, summer roads, winter roads, former ATV trails, and skid trails. This alternative will not be considered because the condition of most of the secondary roads and trails that may exist in the Area are not suitable for sustainable use as a trail, especially horse (with possible horse and wagon use) and bicycle use. Unfavorable conditions may be due to: lack of use/deterioration, poor drainage, seasonality of previous use, overgrowth, or poor siting. The preferred alternative designates a subset of the universe, which are improved gravel roads that have withstood historic use, that travel to points of interest, and will provide for sustainable horse and bicycle trails.

Alternative 4 – Site and Build New Trails

This alternative would site and build new horse and bicycle trails, and not use any of the former all-season road and/or administrative road network. This alternative will not be considered because of the economic and natural resource costs involved with appropriately siting and constructing a new network of trails. With the extensive all-season road network already in existence, it would not make reasonable sense to abandon the use of the network in order to build new trails that would ultimately bring the user to the same points of interest.

Alternative 5 – Separate Uses

This alternative would use the former all season road and/or administrative road network, but would separate horse and bicycle uses. This alternative will not be considered for several reasons. The first reason is logistical, in that there are not enough appropriate all-season roads in the network to separate the uses, while still providing a desirable recreational experience to both user groups. The second reason is that shared use between equestrian trail riders and bicyclists has been proven successful in other areas of the Forest Preserve and beyond. A nearby example is the Newcomb Lake Road, which leads to the Great Camp Santanoni Historic Area. Equestrian use (including horse and wagon) and bicycle use have shared this road for decades without incident. In fact, this area continues to grow in popularity, which suggests that user experiences are not diminished with shared trails. A book published in 1997 by Anne O'Dell, a renowned equestrian trails expert, is entitled "Ride New York: 35 Horse and Multiple Use Trails in the Empire State." This book provides information on horse destinations, many of which share trails with bikes and other uses. O'Dell encourages this shared use, and also authored a presentation advocating for and providing education on designing shared use trails. On the other side, the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) encourages shared use, and

has published proper etiquette for bicyclists sharing trails with equestrian trail riders. Additionally, since the proposed trail network in the Complex Area uses all-season roads, the trails are wider with longer sight lines than most other multiple use trails in the Forest Preserve.

Administration of Camping Permits

Background

Camping in the Complex Area became open to the public for overnight use on July 1, 2014. Prior to July 1, 2014, the area—the shoreline in particular—was inventoried for appropriate primitive tent site locations. There is a significant amount of undisturbed, emergent wetlands along the shorelines of the Chain Lakes and surrounding waterbodies, so the selection of sites in locations with the capacity to withstand use was critical to minimize natural resource impacts. Sites were located so as to be reasonably screened from trails, bodies of water, and other primitive tent sites.

Since public interest was piqued prior to opening of the Area for overnight use, the DEC established a free camping permit system for primitive tent sites in the Complex Area that are located within 500 feet of lakes/ponds in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area, including: First through Eighth Lakes, Little Grassy Pond, Grassy Pond, Mud Pond, Deer Pond, and Jackson Pond.

Current Situation

The Adirondack Interpretive Center (AIC), a SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry facility located off of Route 28N in Newcomb, is the location where camping permits are issued (during AIC business hours) for camping at the 11 designated primitive tent sites in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area which require a permit. The maximum length of stay at the same primitive tent site is 3 nights, and the maximum day use group size is 15 people and overnight group size is 8 people. Permits are required and are issued by AIC Staff between May 15 and October 15 each year. Outside of this time window, the maximum length of stay will still be 3 nights at the same primitive tent site, but use will not be subject to a permitting system. Reservations may be made up to 10 days in advance (due to the 10-day weather forecast window.) Visitors with a reservation permit may arrive after AIC hours, but must notify staff ahead of time, and arrange to have their permit and area map emailed to them, or pick it up at the outdoor kiosk at the AIC.

Fires are prohibited at these permitted primitive tent sites. Other designated sites within this Primitive Area do not require a permit, and are subject to general State Land backcountry camping regulations. Camping at-large is not allowed in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area, but is allowed on the Blue Mountain Wild Forest, subject to general State land backcountry camping regulations.

Usage Data

Year 2014 was the first year that the public was allowed to camp in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area, and use levels were documented via the permit system records and the Deer Pond access point kiosk. A total of 77 camping permits were issued between July 1 and October 15, 2014. The total number of overnight visitors was 216, with 453 total user nights. September was the month with the highest percent occupancy (14%.) These use statistics indicate a lesser demand for camping than was

anticipated. However, almost 1,000 day-users signed in at the Deer Pond access point kiosk during that same time frame.

Alternative 1 – *Preferred Alternative*

The preferred alternative, which is proposed in the UMP, is to continue the existing camping permit system through 2018. This will give five years of camping data – which will inform the decision to remove the system if numbers do not justify the permit system. In 2014, day use proved to be much more popular than overnight use. This could be attributed to a number of factors, including the relatively small area occupied by the lakes/ponds, the campfire prohibition, or the permit system itself. The camping permit system used in the ELCPA is unlike any other in the Forest Preserve, and uses scarce staff time and resources. If and when the camping permit system is discontinued, camping in the entire ECLPA will be at designated primitive tent sites only, and the no-fires rule will remain for primitive tent sites within 500 feet of the lakes/ponds.

Alternative 2 – No Action: Discontinue Permit System Immediately

The no action alternative would include discontinuing the camping permit system immediately (ie. not requiring or issuing camping permits for year 2015.) This alternative is not being considered because it is prudent to gather more than one year of usage/permit data prior to discounting the system. Year 2014 was the first year the public was allowed to camp in the Area, an additional five years of data is needed before conclusions about use can be made. This alternative will not be considered.

Alternative 3 – Continue Permit System Indefinitely

This alternative would continue the camping permit system for the foreseeable future, regardless of usage data. This would require continued allocation of staff time and resources – to implement a system that may be found not to be critical. This alternative is not being considered.

Alternative 4 - Consider Other Camping Regulation Systems

Prior to opening the ECLPA to the public for camping in 2014, DEC staff and partners considered a variety of options for managing high use of the area. Options considered were: an online reservation system called Reserve America, a tag system at the access point, among others. The Reserve America system has overhead costs and usually require payment by the visitor, so it was not pursued. The tag system for primitive tent site reservation at the access point was tried at the Whitney Wilderness Area, and was found to be ineffective and difficult to manage/enforce. The current free camping permit system, administered in partnership with the Adirondack Interpretive Center (AIC) in Newcomb was the preferred method at the time, and worked effectively in 2014. Additionally, changing from the existing permit system to another system will likely confuse the public and result in even less camping use of the area. This alternative will not be considered.

Appendix F – Potential Environmental Impacts and Proposed Mitigation Measures

I. MITIGATION BY DESIGN

The design and siting of the multiple-use trails proposed herein is based on the 2006 Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondack Park/Final Environmental Impact Statement and the 2009 Management Guidance for Snowmobile Trail Siting, Construction and Maintenance on Forest Preserve Lands in the Adirondack Park. These documents are incorporated by reference and portions are reiterated herein as appropriate. Multiple-use trail siting and design is accomplished using the guidance documents and inherent in the process is the avoidance of valuable natural resources such as wetlands and wildlife habitat and use of appropriate slopes, avoidance of trees and rocks and reuse of existing skid trails or old all-season roads or existing trails. This approach results in mitigation by design to avoid potential significant environmental impacts. Through the planning process, significant adverse environmental impacts of both a temporary and long-term nature are avoided or minimized by utilizing the established design criteria.

In terms of trail design for the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex, using established design standards for the trails ensures that they will be sited and constructed to be sustainable for all of the proposed uses, including horseback riding, mountain biking, snowmobiling, cross country skiing and show shoeing.

The 2006 Snowmobile Plan included a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement that recommended a conceptual plan to create a system of snowmobile trail connections between communities in the Adirondack Park. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation were co-lead agencies and the Adirondack Park Agency and the New York State Department of Transportation were Involved Agencies in the SEQR process. Key to the conceptual plan that was developed is the reconfiguration of the existing system to ensure protection of sensitive resources on both public and private land. The 2006 Plan outlines guidelines and criteria for how snowmobile trails and trail segments will be developed and maintained, particularly when and if they are located on Forest Preserve lands within the Park. The concepts in the 2006 Plan/EIS are put forth in recognition that snowmobiling is a winter recreation activity that is critical to supporting the economies of the communities in the Park. It recognizes that motorized winter recreation in and among the wild lands that make up the Forest Preserve and on sensitive private lands must be configured in a manner that protects the wild forest. The 2006 Plan/EIS proposed the concept that, in establishing a snowmobile trail system that connects communities in the Park, it is essential to create a new benefit to the Forest Preserve lands. This net benefit will result through the reconfiguration of the existing snowmobile trail system, with a focus on

shifting snowmobile trails to the periphery of the Forest Preserve, re-designating existing snowmobile trails in the interior for non-motorized use and avoiding sensitive private lands.

The 2006 Snowmobile Plan outlines the concept of reconfiguring the existing snowmobile trail network across the Forest Preserve through the UMP process. Implementation is supported by the 2009 Management Guidance, establishing a new DEC snowmobile trail classification system with new standards and guidelines for snowmobile trail siting, construction and maintenance.

The designation of a snowmobile trail to establish and improve community connections (Class II trails) will be complemented by the designation of trail (Class I trails) intended to preserve a more traditional type of Adirondack snowmobiling experience. Some existing snowmobile trails (usually within the interior of Wild Forest areas or adjacent to private inholdings) will be re-designated for non-motorized use or abandoned as trails altogether. These actions will serve to ensure available, wintertime recreational opportunities in Wild Forest areas are not dominated by snowmobile use to the exclusion or near exclusion of passive recreational uses. The 2009 Management Guidance notes that all snowmobile trails, regardless of class, will be carefully sited, constructed and maintained to preserve the most essential characteristics of foot trails and to serve, where appropriate, hiking, mountain biking and other non-motorized recreational pursuits in spring, summer and fall. The guidance helps ensure protection of sensitive natural resources on public lands and the minimization of snowmobiling safety hazards.

As stated in the 2009 Management Guidance beginning on page 7:

"Snowmobile Trail Siting Standards

1. In cases where closure or abandonment of a motorized travel corridor results in an existing snowmobile trail location being inconsistent with these guidelines, such trail will, if practicable and as soon as possible, be relocated or reclassified to comply with these guidelines.

2. New and rerouted snowmobile trails will be sited, when possible, along existing routes or previously existing old routes such as foot trails, all-season roads, utility rights of way and abandoned railroad beds in lieu of constructing entirely new trails.

3. New and rerouted snowmobile trails will be sited with an objective to avoid locations that present safety hazards such as the edges of ravines or ledges, major highway crossings and crossings of frozen surfaces of water bodies such as rivers, lakes and ponds. If suitable alternative routes are designated or developed, trails that lead riders to unsafe locations will be closed to snowmobile use in favor of the alternative routes in order to lower risks and eliminate unnecessary snowmobile trail mileage.

4. New and rerouted snowmobile trails will be sited with an objective to avoid areas considered environmentally sensitive, such as: wetlands; endangered plant or animal populations that might be harmed by the trails and/or their use; remote interior areas as defined by these guidelines and forested corridors connecting such remote interior areas; and deer wintering areas and other significant habitats, so that the values of these areas are not diminished.

5. New and rerouted snowmobile trails will not be established without an evaluation of potential significant impacts on adjacent private holdings.

    a. New and rerouted snowmobile trails, including spur trails, will not provide access to private lands where public snowmobile access is not permitted.

    b. New and rerouted snowmobile trails, through the acquisition of easements or other access rights from willing sellers, will be sited on private lands rather than State lands wherever possible to minimize impacts on the Forest Preserve."

Trail siting goals include the following:

- For safety reasons, trails should be kept off highways (especially major highways) and water bodies whenever possible.
- Trails should be free of dangerous obstructions, such as trees and boulders.
- Trails must also be sited with environmental considerations in mind; rare and endangered plant and animal species and their habitats should be avoided;
    - deer wintering yards should be avoided;
    - vegetative disturbance should be minimized;
    - wetlands, areas with poor drainage and steep slopes should be avoided;
    - tree cutting should be minimized and the trail canopy preserved; and
    - user group conflicts should be avoided.
- The Department will not place snowmobile trails on private land without the owner's permission. Where an owner of private property agrees to allow a snowmobile trail on their property, the Department should, whenever possible, secure a permanent snowmobile trail easement which binds the owner's successors in title.

Snowmobile Route Design, Construction and Maintenance Standards

Snowmobile route design, construction and non-ordinary maintenance activities[3] will be carried out pursuant to Snowmobile Trail Work Plans developed by DEC staff in consultation with APA staff. The following standards will be followed in order to preserve the trail-like character of snowmobile trails while ensuring they are appropriately safe to ride. When undertaking any of the types of work described below with motorized landscaping equipment (almost exclusively on Class II Trails), only careful use of appropriate low-impact landscaping equipment will be approved, as determined by a "minimum requirement" decision making approach set forth in the Snowmobile Trail Work Plan. For example, use of bulldozers and creation of "dugways" will not be approved. Operators of low-impact

[3] Ordinary maintenance activities are defined in the "Memorandum of Understanding between the Adirondack Park Agency and the Department of Environmental Conservation Concerning Implementation of the State Land Master Plan for the Adirondack Park" (APA/DEC MOU.)

landscaping equipment will conduct their work in optimal environmental conditions and in a manner that will not contribute to any potential degradation of the wild forest setting.

For new snowmobile trails of both classes to retain essential characteristics of foot trails, management practices must integrate thorough knowledge of the standards and guidance below, with efforts to appropriately balance them and the underlying concerns as the trails are sited, constructed and maintained thereafter. The end result should be trails that are both enjoyable and safe to ride for essentially the same reason – for the way the trails snake through the wild landscape of the Adirondacks in a natural fashion and because construction and maintenance practices having altered the terrain enough to allow for an acceptable degree of riding comfort, but not so much as to create potential for high-speed, disruptive and unsafe snowmobiling experiences.

Many existing snowmobile trails are sited on old roads and other routes originally constructed and maintained for use of motor vehicles other than snowmobiles. In such cases, the standards set forth below may also be used to reroute or otherwise minimally alter such trails with the objective to achieve the same end result.

Alignment and Grade:

1. Trail alignment will not result in blind curves and abrupt changes in either horizontal or vertical direction; trails will be designed to ensure:

    a) Sight distance will be 50 feet or more wherever possible;
    b) Curves will have a radius of at least 25 feet; The maximum grade of trails will not exceed 20% unless deemed necessary to minimize environmental impacts associated with trail construction;
    c) Trails will not normally be laid out on existing cross slopes greater than 12%

2. To the greatest extent possible, trails will not be aligned with long straight sections. Trails will follow the natural contours of the terrain as much as possible and will be laid out to balance and minimize necessary tree cutting, rock removal and terrain alteration.

3. Trails will be laid out to avoid rocky areas and drainage features such as wetlands and streams to the greatest possible extent.

4. In locations where serious environmental or safety conditions exist along a trail, the trail will be rerouted rather than rehabilitated at that location.

<u>Trail Width:</u>

1. Class I Trails may be maintained to an 8-foot maximum cleared trail width.

2. Class II Trails may be maintained to a 9-foot maximum cleared trail width except on sharp curves (inside turning radius of 25-35 feet) and steep running slopes (over 15%) where they may be maintained to a 12-foot maximum cleared trail width.

Class I and II trails wider than their classification allows will be actively restored to these limits.

Tree Cutting:

DEC policy requires that cutting trees should be minimized, but where cutting is required, trees must be identified, tallied and included in a Work Plan in accordance with ***DEC Program Policy LF91-2 Cutting and Removal of Trees in the Forest Preserve.***

1. Cutting of overstory trees will be avoided in order to maintain a closed canopy wherever possible. Large and old growth trees should be protected.

2. Cutting trees to expand a trail from its current width or otherwise improve a trail will be carried out only pursuant to a Work Plan.

3. All snowmobile trails may be kept clear to a height of 12 feet, as measured from ground level.

4. No trees, except trees that due to structural problems or fallen/tipped conditions present an immediate hazard to the safe use of the trail by snowmobilers, will be cut outside the cleared trail width.

5. Trees should be felled away from the trail to minimize the amount of material that needs to be moved. If the tree trunks are not used to help delineate the trail, felled trees should be delimbed and cut into short enough lengths to lie flat on the ground. Once delimbed and cut up, the short lengths should be dispersed and not left in piles next to the trail. If the tree trunks are used to help delineate the trail, the cut ends of the trunks should be located outside the intended edge of the trail by at least one foot for safety reasons.

   When trees are cut within the cleared trail width, they will be cut flush with the ground, and the preference will be to leave the root masses in place.

   a) On Class II trails, if it is important to remove a root mass because it presents an obstacle in the trail surface, the preference will be to grind the stump and roots. If grinding is not feasible, the root mass may be dug up, rolled or placed off the trail into the woods without removing intervening vegetation and organic matter; the root mass will be set down so as to have the lowest profile possible.

   b) Grinding will not occur on Class I trails.

7. No brushing will occur outside the cleared trail width of any snowmobile trails.

Trail Surface:

1. Grading:

   a) Class I Trails. Trail surfaces should generally follow the existing contours of the natural forest floor and not be graded flat. While limited leveling and grading may be undertaken, this work will be done using hand tools almost exclusively. In rare

circumstances, appropriate low-impact landscaping equipment may be used as specified in a Work Plan.

b) Class II Trails. Trail surfaces should generally follow the existing contours of the natural forest floor and not be graded flat. Limited leveling and grading may be undertaken using appropriate low-impact landscaping equipment as specified in a Work Plan.

2. Rock Removal:

a) Removal of boulders and rocks from snowmobile trail surfaces will be minimized to the greatest extent possible. No boulders or rocks will be removed outside the cleared trail width.

i) On Class I Trails, rock removal will occur using hand tools only, except in rare circumstances in new trail construction and trail reconstruction when use of low-impact landscaping equipment may be approved. Rock removal on Class I trails will be primarily limited to uncommon, major obstacles that present demonstrable safety hazards to snowmobile riders and which cannot be avoided by appropriate trail layout or rerouting.

ii) On Class II Trails, rock removal may occur using low-impact landscaping equipment and may include removal of rocks determined to present demonstrable safety hazards to snowmobile riders or to be very likely to damage grooming equipment. Many rocks in snowmobile trails, due to their specific shapes and/or locations, do not present themselves so as to cause these problems, and these may not be removed regardless of how high above the trail surface they project. Conversely, some rocks in snowmobile trails – while small – do present themselves so as to cause these problems, and if they are identified in an approved Work Plan, they may be removed.

b) Boulders and rocks removed from trails will preferably be buried in the trails to minimize disturbance. Earth moved to dig the holes into which the boulders or rocks are to be placed will be used to fill the holes that result from the rock removal. When removed boulders and rocks are not buried, but are instead set to the side of the trail, they will be dispersed with care and not left in windrows or piles next to the trail. If a boulder or rock is used to help delineate the trail, it should be placed outside the intended edge of the trail by at least one foot for safety reasons.

c) Alternatives to rock removal should be considered to minimize the need for disturbance of the ground, to reduce the likelihood of creating drainage problems and to reduce the potential need for fill. Such alternatives may include covering or minor relocation of the trail where a boulder or rock may be too large or the number too great to deal with by any other method.

d) Removal of boulders and rocks from the surrounding natural, wild forest setting for use in snowmobile trail construction and maintenance work will be minimized and may occur only on a limited, carefully selective basis for small-scale projects. On Class II trails, where large-scale trail construction projects using stone material may be approved, importation of native stone from appropriate, specified sources may occur.

3. Side Slope Management:

a) On Class I trails, elimination or reduction of side slopes by means of bench cuts will be accomplished using hand tools exclusively. The need for bench cuts will be minimized through proper trail layout. The maximum amount of cut, measured vertically, will be 20% of the tread width. Side slopes of newly constructed trails and reroutes will be dressed and tapered within the cleared trail width; side slopes of some existing, degraded trails may be dressed and tapered outside the cleared trail width if this is determined the best way to address the degradation and restore environmentally sound, safe conditions.

b) On Class II trails, elimination or reduction of side slopes will be accomplished primarily by means of full bench cuts for which appropriate landscaping equipment may be used. The need for bench cuts will be minimized through proper trail layout. The tapering of side slopes will be allowed outside the cleared trail width. The areas dressed and tapered will be re-vegetated to restore stability and natural site conditions after the full bench cut is created.

Drainage:

1. Adequate drainage will be provided within the cleared trail width to prevent trail erosion and washout and to maintain a safe trail. All snowmobile trails will be constructed so as not to intercept groundwater to the greatest extent possible; natural drainage patterns will be maintained. In areas where the natural drainage patterns may be affected, bridges will be the preferred method for crossing wet areas. Bridges will be constructed pursuant to approved snowmobile trail bridge designs.

2. Water bars and broad-based dips may extend beyond the cleared trail width to the extent necessary to effectively remove water from the trail surface, provided that no trees are cut outside the cleared trail width. Culverts will not be installed as drainage devices. Any existing culverts will be removed unless the culverts are very large and their removal is essentially not possible.

Wetlands:

1. Wetlands will be avoided to the greatest extent possible.

2. When wetlands crossings or trail locations adjacent to wetlands are proposed, the trail will be designed to minimize potential adverse impacts.

3. Any activity in a wetland or that may impact a wetland will be undertaken with prior consultation with the APA and with recognition of Army Corps of Engineers' permit requirements.

II. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND MEASURES PROPOSED TO MITIGATE SUCH IMPACTS

SEQR requires an objective description of potential significant environmental impacts, to the degree possible and include both quantitative and qualitative information to determine how likely it is that an impact will occur, how large the impact will be, how important the impact will be and the time frame in which the impact is anticipated.

One of the basic purposes of SEQR is to incorporate the consideration of environmental factors at an early stage of project development. This often means that an EIS will be prepared before final plans are available. As a general rule, the amount of detail regarding a specific impact in an EIS should depend on the magnitude and importance of the impact. For instance, in terms of ground disturbance, the EIS should use accepted methods of calculating the area of ground disturbance, identify the structural and non-structural best management practices (BMP's) for minimizing ground disturbance and identify the approximate location and size of structures. Although final plans are not necessary, the EIS should contain enough detail on size, location and elements of the proposal to allow an understanding of the proposed action, the associated impacts and the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation.

In order to allow the full range and magnitude of the environmental, social and economic impacts which could result from the adoption of the proposed management actions, the descriptions of the impacts given below reflect the assumption that the alternative is fully implemented.

In terms of beneficial impacts which are foreseen as a result of the implementation of the Complex Plan, it is anticipated that there may be a minor reduction in the level of public use and associated impacts in other areas of the Forest Preserve as new recreational trails are provided. Adoption of this Plan in coordination with UMP's for neighboring Forest Preserve lands will provide an opportunity for a significant expansion of the regional economy, a substantial increase in trail-based recreational and educational opportunity and the improved utilization of a public resource.

In terms of potential adverse impacts, adoption of this Complex Plan in addition to UMP's for neighboring Forest Preserve lands could lead to minor pollution of surface waters and minor disturbance of wetlands related to trail construction and maintenance, and the removal of minimal vegetation related to trail construction and maintenance activities. Minor negative effects on fish and wildlife populations related to trail construction and maintenance activities are anticipated. In addition, implementation of the Complex Plan could cause a minor increase in highway use and traffic congestion in communities where trailheads and support facilities are located. There may be a moderate increase

in the public use of neighboring Forest Preserve lands with subsequent moderate increase in the need for law enforcement, fire protection and search and rescue services. Noise levels are not anticipated to be significantly more noticeable than that generated by existing uses and are discussed in more detail below in order to supplement earlier planning documents. Adoption of the Complex Plan could lead to a minor increase in the likelihood of trespass onto neighboring private lands and related new costs to State agencies and taxpayers associated with management of the Complex Area.

Refer to the 2006 Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondack Park/Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement for a thorough discussion of potential impacts and mitigation measures during construction and operation and use of trails, primitive tent sites, etc. relating to soils, air quality, wildlife, water quality and economic impacts (see Appendices E, F and H.)

Supplemental Information on Potential Operational Phase Noise Effects

With regard to the effects of snowmobile noise on people and wildlife, as stated in the International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association Snowmobiling Fact Book (2013), since 1974, sound levels for snowmobiles have been reduced 94%. At full throttle, pre-1969 snowmobiles were noisy and emitted sound levels as high as 102 dB(A) from a distance of 50 feet.

Snowmobiles produced since February 1, 1975 and certified by the Snowmobile Safety and Certification Committee's independent testing company emit no more than 78 dB(A) from a distance of 50 feet while traveling at full throttle. Snowmobiles manufactured after June 30, 1976 (and similarly certified) emit no more than 73 dB(A) at 50 feet while traveling at 15 mph. For comparison purposes, normal conversation at three feet produces approximately 70 dB(A.) Note that illegal modification of a snowmobile exhaust system can produce excessive noise levels.

Other examples of decibel levels are as follows:

Sound	dB(A)
75-Piece Orchestra	130
Car Horn, Snowblower	110
Blow-dryer, Diesel truck	100
Electric Shaver, Lawn Mower	85
Garbage Disposal, Vacuum	80
Alarm Clock, City Traffic	70
Dishwasher	60
Leaves Rustling, Refrigerator	40

From the Snowmobiling Fact Book, “In a paper written by Greg Davis and Neil Marietta of Michigan

Technological University, tests were performed comparing sound emissions of production trail-ridden snowmobiles to that of other everyday vehicles that ravel by road such as passenger cars, motorcycles and semi tractor/trailers. The test show in many cases, snowmobiles are noticeably quieter. A snowmobile under full throttle emits the same sound level as a truck pulling a camper or an off-road Jeep traveling at constant highway speeds applying very little throttle. …in the worst case scenario, a snowmobile leaving a stop sign and applying full throttle, the noise produced is still about the same as a very common vehicle simply cruising down the road.

… (for relative comparison,) some motorcycles accelerating and applying nearly full throttle produces nearly 6 times the noise… that a snowmobile driving the same way produces. In a more common example, a logging truck pulling a loaded trailer down the highway traveling at 45 mph will produce twice the noise of a snowmobile applying full throttle. A 4X4 pickup truck pulling a boat on a trailer at a constant speed makes more noise than a snowmobile…

Operated in a normal, considerate manner, snowmobiles are barely audible from inside a home. From a distance of 50 feet, snowmobiles generate between 68—73 dB(A) at 15 mph. Since doors and windows are almost always closed in winter, snowmobiles operating outside at a distance of 50 feet only create an interior sound level between 41 and 47 dB(A). From a distance of 200 feet, snowmobiles produce an interior sound level between 29 and 35 dB(A), This is well below the average evening household sound level of 47 dB(A).

Natural sound barriers, careful trail planning and reduced speed limits in residential areas further reduce snowmobile noise. Snowbanks or trees can cause a 20 dB drop in sound levels if they are between the machine and listener.

U.S. Forest Service researcher Robin Harrison reported that under usual wildland conditions, snowmobile operation is undetectable to the human ear at distances of more than 750 feet. He reported that snowmobiles were barely detectable above normal campground sound levels at a distance of 400 feet."

With regard to the effect of snowmobiles on wildlife, per the Fact Book, "Dr. Andres Soom participated in the University of Wisconsin's comprehensive three-year study on the effects of snowmobile sound levels on deer and cottontail rabbits. His report, titled Emission, Propagation and Environmental Impact of Noise from Snowmobile Operations, concluded that 'only minor reactions were noted in the movements of cottontail rabbits and white tailed deer to moderate and intensive snowmobiling activity.' He stated that it had not been possible to determine sound levels at which there is a clear reaction on the part of the deer 'because snowmobiles must be so close to deer to generate the higher levels that other factors such a visible presence…are likely to be more important.'

The Wisconsin study also compared the reaction of deer to the presence of cross-country skiers. When cross-country skiers replaced snowmobiles on the test trail systems, the deer moved away from the trail more frequently.

A three-year study, Response of White-Tailed Deer to Snowmobiles and Snowmobile Trails in Maine, conducted by wildlife scientists for the Maine Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife revealed that *'Deer consistently bedded near snowmobile trails and fed along them even when those trails were used for snowmobiling several times daily. In addition, fresh deer tracks were repeatedly observed on snowmobile trails shortly after machines had passed by, indicating that deer were not driven from the vicinity of these trails…The reaction of deer to a man walking differed markedly from their reaction to a man on a snowmobile…This decided tendency of deer to run with the approach of a human on foot, in contrast to their tendency to stay in sight when approached by a snowmobiler, suggests that the deer responded to the machine and not to the person riding it.'*

In a study entitled Snow Machine Use and Deer in Rob Brook, conducted by the Forest Wildlife Biologists of White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire, snowmobile operations and deer movement were monitored. A summary of the study indicated that deer travel patterns were not affected by periodically heavy snowmobile use. In addition, continued use of established snowmobile trails was recommended.

The University of Minnesota issues a study by Michael J. Dorrance entitled Effects of Snowmobiles on White Tailed Deer which found no meaningful difference in the deer's home range during periods of snowmobile use and non-use.

Addressing the subject of snowmobile operations in Yellowstone National Park, Jack Anderson, a former Superintendent of Yellowstone commented, *'We found that elk, bison, moose, even the fawns wouldn't move away unless a machine was stopped and a person started walking. As long as you stayed on the machine and the machine was running, they never paid any attention. If you stopped the machine, got off and started moving, that was a different story. The thing that seemed to be disturbing to them was a man walking on foot*.'

Because the use of snowmobiles is limited to a narrow defined corridor and is sporadic, intermittent and isolated, no significant adverse long-term impacts from the operation of snowmobiles are anticipated in the Complex Area. The very limited extent of snowmobile trails within the management area and on adjacent management areas limits the potential for adverse impacts.

Mitigation Measure Proposed for Construction Phase Impacts on Topography, Soils and Drainage

The alternative A trail layout is 20.7 miles long, and is located on 20 miles of state land and .07 miles of private property, some of which is owned by the towns. Alternative A requires 3.1 miles of new trail, as the remainder consists of existing trail (1.5 miles), old road (6.86 miles) and existing motor vehicle road (9.2 miles.)

The alternative B trail layout is 22.6 miles long, and is located on 22 miles of state land and .06 miles of private property, some of which is owned by the towns. Alternative A requires 3.6 miles of new trail, as

the remainder consists of existing trail (1.5 miles), old road (8.0 miles) and existing motor vehicle road (9.6 miles.)

In the appendix are maps which show the topography, soil drainage classes and potential wetlands present in the area of each alternative layout for each trail section that constitute the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex. As can be seen in these maps, the trail layouts avoid steep slopes and wetlands and utilize well drained soils, to the maximum extent practicable. By avoiding wetlands, the experience of trail users other than snowmobilers is improved, since trails will be better suited for non-winter seasonal use. The wetland map layer is a model provided by the APA and exact locations need to be delineated in the field.

It is anticipated that there will be minor, temporary impacts to soils and slopes during construction. A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) utilizing best management practices will be in place and maintained on-site during trail construction. Proper trail design and construction will limit the need for significant maintenance efforts during the public use of the trails.

The trail plan lays out the location of trail modification, bridges, water bars and other trail structures. The SWPPP designates the procedures and BMPs to be used in construction of these structures. The SWPPP is an integral part of the trail project plans.

Water is by far the worst enemy of a sustainable trail. Through proper layout the trail is designed to avoid or minimize developed drainage devices. Using water bars, broad-based dips, trail hardening and other trail building methods, water will be diverted off the trail tread and minimize down-trail water travel to reduce erosion and sedimentation and create a sustainable trail tread. New construction where possible will be built in a method that results in water being shed to the side of the trail, preventing “trail rutting.” Bench-cut areas will be out-sloped to encourage lateral shedding of water.

Trail construction will consist of three main phases:

- Tree cutting and blowdown removal.
- Bridge construction
- Terrain modification and installation of erosion control best management practices.

Tree cutting as a first step will remove identified and marked trees which fall inside the trail corridor. Trees will be cut flush to the ground with chainsaws and removed from the trail.

Bridge construction will be another step of the trail construction process. Once the trees have been removed from the trail bed, bridge materials will be brought to the bridge sites either during the winter or during times when the soil conditions will support the transportation of these materials.

Terrain modification and installation of water control devices performed by the mini excavator will be another step of the trail construction process. During this process the mini excavator will make one planned trip along the trail length. This trip will allow for terrain modification in select locations consisting of bench cuts, rearrangement of specific rocks, installation of water bars, and repair of any eroded portions of pre-existing roads that may have been utilized during placement of this trail.

Water/sediment control structures will be installed at locations of bridge construction and terrain modification locations as required to minimize any potential sources of erosion or sedimentation. When active work is complete, disturbed portions of this trail will be seeded and mulched and any temporary erosion and sediment control structures will be left in place until the site is stabilized.

Refer to the Schedule of Implementation provided in Section VI of this Complex Plan for a discussion of the estimated timing for construction of trail segments. It is expected that clearing of vegetation from trail bed will be completed, followed by installation of water/erosion/sediment control structures as necessary for bridge construction or terrain modification. Then trail segments will be completed with various portions being put to bed, with seeding and mulch as they are individually completed. Temporary drainage/erosion/sediment control structures will remain in place until the areas have stabilized.

Description of the minimum erosion and sediment control practices:

All erosion and control practices will be installed during the terrain modification or bridge construction phases of the project. Areas targeted for ground manipulation or rehabilitation and subject to erosion will be identified and control practices will be installed to avoid, minimize, or repair erosion hazards. All temporary practices will remain in place until the areas have stabilized.

The following sedimentation and erosion control practices will be utilized:

- **DRAINAGE**

- Proper drainage will carry the water either over the trail, under the trail, or will intercept the water before it crosses the trail.
- Surface runoff which is intercepted by erosion-control measures must be collected by drainage ways and discharged in stabilized areas or sediment basins.
- The drier the terrain, the more stable the trail, which keeps potential erosion problems at a minimum, and also minimizes the need to perform maintenance.
- Examine topography, surface flow patterns, soils, and the water table to help determine the area's potential wetness, preferably during the wettest months of the year, to help prevent future erosion problems.
- The ideal trail would be located on soil which has a seasonal high water table of two to four feet below the surface.
- Poor drainage is the primary cause of a majority of trail maintenance problems which can be avoided with proper planning.
- Cross-drainage techniques, such as swales, and water bars should be utilized to divert water off of the trail as soon as possible.
- Attempts should always be made to maintain natural drainage patterns.

Outsloping

- Outsloping will be used on bench cuts and other locations prescribed in the work plan.
- Outsloping is a process where the trail surface is sloped in the same direction (with) as the slope on which it is located

- Outsloping is appropriate in areas where the grade of the slope is relatively high and in areas where the amount of water flow is relatively low.
- Be sure to maintain the slope pitch at approximately 1-2%.
- No intermittent or perennial streams should cross over the trail.
- No drainage ditches should be laid on the upslope side of the trail.
- Make sure the water is not being diverted towards streams or other bodies of water. If water drainage is unavoidable in areas adjacent to streams, make sure there are vegetative buffers.
- If water flow is more extensive than outsloping can control, larger structures such as diversion ditches may be necessary.

Swales, Dips and Berms

- These features constitute a depression constructed across a slope, above and in conjunction with an earthen berm.
- These features are used in areas where surface runoff might create erosion problems running across a trail.
- These features are used on slopes which have a trail grade less than 10%.
- Install swales at the top of any slope and at proper spacing along sloping sections of the trail.
- The swale can be as shallow or as deep as necessary, taking into consideration the expected trail use and the conditions.
- Soil should be removed from the swale and transferred to the downhill side to form the berm.
- The swale should be constructed at a 30-45 degree angle downslope from a line perpendicular to the direction of the trail.
- The downhill end of the swale should extend far enough to disperse the water flow away from the trail.
- If erosion is a potential problem at the outlet (downhill end) of the swale, riprap or other velocity dissipaters should be utilized.
- The uphill end of the swale should extend far enough beyond the trail in order to fully intercept the flow of water.
- Alternative water drainage techniques may be required if the swales are consistently becoming filled or breached.
- The frequency that the swale and the berm may need to be cleaned or restored depends on the amount of sedimentation which occurs.
- A broad-based dip is the recommended practice on trails where distinct bumps pose an erosion problem.

Water Bars

- These features consist of a rock, earthen, or log barrier, or excavated channel, angled across a trail to divert the runoff water off of a trail.
- In general, the greater the slope and the higher the velocity or volume of water, the greater the need for water bars as opposed to other drainage techniques.
- Earthen water bars will be the preferred method of construction.
- Place each rock or log solidly into the ground, preferably using flat rocks or rot-resistant logs.

- Water bars will be installed at locations prescribed and as needed in other locations to prevent erosion of the trail tread.
- All water bars prescribed in the work plan will be constructed according to New York State Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality 2011 Edition.
- All water bars prescribed within 100 feet of a stream will have a catchment basin/rock trap to prevent sedimentation of the stream.
- Install water bars at the top of slopes and at steep sections of the trail as needed.
- The water bar should be constructed at a 30-45 degree angle downslope from a line perpendicular to the direction of the trail.
- Extend the outlet end of the water bar beyond the edge of the trail and place rocks or logs there to filter the water.
- Construct the water bar so that it extends at least 12 inches beyond both sides of the trail.
- As a minimum, the water bar should drain at a 3% outslope.
- In a rock water bar, each rock should overlap the rock below it and be overlapped by the rock directly above it.
- A log water bar should be constructed with peeled logs at least 10 inches in diameter.
- Log water bars should be held in place with large stones.
- Observe the trail during a rainstorm to more accurately determine the need for water bars.
- The channel created by the water bar outlet and the water bar itself can be lined with stone to reduce erosion.
- Tree species appropriate for log water bars include spruce, hemlock, beech and oak.
- Consider using box culverts where the bumps caused by water bars pose a problem.

<u>Spacing for Water Bars</u>

Road/Trail Grade (percent)	Spacing Between Water Bars (feet)
2 %	250 ft.
5	135
10	80
15	60
20	45
30	35

Open Top Culverts

- Open top culverts constructed of 4”x4”s will be used where small drainages and seeps cross high traffic sections of the trail.
- Open top culverts will be in place before machinery crosses small drainages.
- Larger drainage crossings will follow BMP guidelines appropriate for the site.
- Crossing streams prior to bridge construction will follow BMP guidelines.

- Open top culverts can be constructed of either stone or sawn timber, depending on the availability of materials.
- Log culverts may be constructed with two 6-10" logs set into the trail and pinned to prevent movement.
- Line the base of the culvert with riprap and install spreaders if necessary.
- Sawn timber open-top culverts are usually constructed of two 3" x 8" planks set on a 3" x 12" plank, spiked at the bottom. This would create a water flow area 8" deep x 6" wide.
- Open-top culverts are most appropriate when water runoff is light.

➢ **SEDIMENT BARRIERS**

Silt Fences

- Silt fences will be used around all bridge foundations where possible to keep sediment from entering the stream. Silt Fences will remain in place until the area is firm and stable. After the area has stabilized the silt fence can be removed. If silt fences will not fit beneath and around bridge foundations, any exposed soil will be covered with native stone to slow runoff and prevent erosion until the area is stabilized with grass seed and mulch.
- The filter fabric should be purchased in a continuous roll and cut to the length of the carrier to avoid the use of joints. When joints are unavoidable, filter cloth should be spliced together only at a support post, with a minimum of a six-inch overlap, and sealed.
- When wire support is used, a standard-strength filter cloth may be used. When wire support is not being used, extra-strength cloth should be used.
- The fabric should be stapled or wired to the fence and a minimum of 4 inches of the fabric should be extended into the trench.
- The trench should be backfilled and the soil compacted over the filter fabric.
- Inspect bales and barriers after heavy rains.
- Sediment deposits should be removed when the level of deposits reaches one-half of the height of the bale or the silt fencing.
- Barriers should be removed when the area has re-vegetated and the barriers are no longer needed. The sediment should be removed or graded out before removal.
- Straw (weed free) barriers require more maintenance than geotextiles due to the permeability of the bales being less than that of silt fencing.
- Silt fences should be removed when they have served their useful purpose, but not before the upslope area has been permanently stabilized.

➢ **STABILIZATION**

Mulching and Seeding

- Upon completion of the trail, the area will be seeded with a DEC approved conservation mix and mulched with straw to stabilize the trail tread. Disturbed areas outside of the trail tread may also be additionally mulched with woody debris from on site to aid in stabilization.
- Active work areas will not require mulch, until work in the area is completed.
- Seed will be non-invasive grass species.

- Seeded areas should be inspected periodically and after heavy rain events to check for erosion and loss of vegetative cover.
- Areas that have lost mulch prior to establishment of vegetation will be re-established.

➢ **Water Crossings**

- Water crossings are a major concern in the construction and use of trails because of the potential for large amounts of sediment to enter a stream.
- Avoid water crossings if at all possible. Rerouting the trail away from water crossings will save construction time and money, as well as create less of an impact to the environment.
- When needed, crossing sites should be selected at right angles to the stream and should not interfere with natural water flow.
- Erosion and sedimentation-control devices should be utilized whenever trail construction occurs in or near a wetland, stream, or water body.

Before constructing any type of water crossing on trails, a permit or notification from the APA is needed.

Fords

- A ford is a shallow stream crossing that utilizes the hardened streambed.
- Fords will only be used as a temporary crossing for machinery, until a bridge is constructed.
- Fords will be used only on perennial streams having intermittent flow.
- Fording should be a last resort due to the potential impacts on water quality.
- Fords will be used only where the streambed is hard or easily hardened.
- Fords will be used where recreational use is non-motorized.
- Fords will be used when no other stream crossing alternative is viable or permitted.
- Attempt to minimize extensive work within the streambed.
- Provide for a hardened stream bank to prevent bank erosion.
- Fording can generate bank erosion, disturb aquatic life and may be potentially dangerous for the user.
- Fords will be closed if water turbidity is increased.

Boardwalks

- Boardwalks are used in wet or seasonally wet areas, to allow for sustainable travel by non-winter users. Winter users will not use the boardwalks, as they will have a frozen and snow covered surface to travel over.
- Boardwalks are constructed of 6”x6”x4’ pressure treated lumber that is set on top of the wet area. The 4”x4” stringers are placed across them, and then 2”x4” decking back across the stringers.
- Decking is spaced at 1” intervals to allow for a sufficient amount of light to enter under the structure in order to allow vegetation to flourish.

Constructed Bridges

- Bridges will be constructed to cross streams at prescribed locations according to the Department's snowmobile bridge design and in accord with APA policy (Agency Guidance, State Land -2.)
- Culvert bridges will not be used as a permanent structure, and will be used only for temporary crossings during the first winter if bridges are not able to be constructed (not anticipated.)
- A constructed bridge will be used only when the terrain is not conducive to any other type of construction or there is a need to protect/maintain the stream bed in an unaltered condition.
- Place the sills back from the top of the bank and have no work or materials within the banks (bank-to-bank bridge).
- Bank-to-bank bridges (outside top of banks) are preferred. The bridge should span the total width of a stream and its adjacent flood plain.
- It is a good idea to be prepared for washouts by anchoring one end of the bridge with a cable, so that in the event of the bridge being swept away, it can be retrieved and reset.
- Use large rocks or ledges as abutments whenever possible.
- For larger streams, complete hydrologic studies to compute peak flow rates for proper design of the bridge.
- A dredge and fill permit or notification is required for work within the body of a stream or water body, or within the banks of a stream and in any adjacent seasonal wetlands.
- Bridges should use native materials compatible with the adjacent trail environment whenever possible.
- Because of the proximity to wetlands, it is especially important to have erosion-control measures in place before bridge work begins.
- Rocks or logs should be used as fill around logs to bring the trail surface up to the level of the bridge deck to allow for drainage.
- Abutments, such as rock, logs, and sawn timbers should be firmly anchored into the stream bank and placed parallel to the stream thread.

Wet Soil Crossings

- Avoid constructing new trails through wet soils and consider rerouting those sections of existing trails that cross wet soils.
- Trails located on wet soils may not be appropriate for frozen ground conditions.
- When designing trails, attempt to provide alternative routes during wet seasons.
- Rake out ruts caused by machinery.

Corduroy

- Corduroy is a structural unit composed of a series of logs or other material placed perpendicular on the trail to provide a method of crossing wet areas.
- Corduroy can be used as a temporary means of stabilizing a wet area of a trail until more extensive construction can be arranged.

- Corduroy can be used on winter-use trails to protect wet areas which are usually frozen but may soften occasionally during the winter months.
- Lay a mat of green brush, posts, or small logs parallel to the direction of the trail.
- Use geotextile fabric or other appropriate bedding if needed.
- Cover the mat with a series of logs laid side by side, perpendicular to the trail.
- The corduroy should be removed in the spring to prevent damage to the area and should be left in place during the summer until drainage problems can be corrected or until trail rerouting can be completed.
- Cover logs with gravel or native material to create the treadway.
- An alternative to constructing corduroy is geotextiles with gravel cover.

Temporary Culverts

- Temporary culverts consist of a metal, plastic, cement, or wood pipe placed under a trail to permit crossing an intermittent or active stream.
- Temporary culverts are used on trails where water consists of small or intermittent flows that have not been bridged before winter.
- In general, cross-drainage culverts are more effective for drainage areas under ten acres.
- Culverts should be of a size appropriate to carry potential maximum water flow. The minimum size recommended is 12" to facilitate cleaning with a shovel.
- The culvert should extend one foot beyond the base of the trail on either side.
- Culverts should be sloped at least 6% to produce water velocities that will prevent the pipe from becoming unduly silted.
- It may be necessary to construct a berm across the side ditch to assist in water removal.
- Stream alignment should be straight at the point of crossing and of uniform profile so as not to obstruct the flow of water.
- For larger water flows, a corrugated metal culvert is recommended.
- Seat the pipe, backfill to half the diameter with clean fill, and tamp.
- Then fill over and around the culvert with snow and tamp at six inch intervals to pack in, add strength to the pipe, and to prevent seepage along the pipe. Cover the pipe with 12” of snow.

Temporary and Permanent Soil Stabilization Plan:

Trail construction will begin with clearing of identified and marked trees, clearing of blowdown and grubbing. All water/sediment control structures will be installed on the first pass of the mini excavator or around bridge sites if bridge construction begins before the pass of the mini excavator. When active work is complete on the trail, it will be mulched and seeded. Any temporary structures will be removed only after the trail is stabilized.

Bridge materials will be transported to identified sites during winter or times when soil conditions allow. Installation of water/erosion/sediment control structures or other terrain manipulation will take place when soil conditions permit and will be stabilized section by section as work is completed. Upon completion of the trail, temporary water/erosion/sediment control structures can be removed once the trail has become firm and stable.

Maintenance Inspection Schedule:

No contractors will be used in construction of the facility. Maintenance inspections will be carried out by Departmental personnel on a weekly basis and after significant rain events and after the spring thaw. After completion, the trail will be inspected seasonally.

Pollution Prevention Measures:

- All equipment and machinery will be maintained in accordance with manufacturer's maintenance recommendations.
- All equipment will be inspected for leaks.
- Care will be taking during refueling of equipment to avoid spills.
- Refueling will be done at least 100 feet from wetlands and streams.
- A spill kit will be available on site in case of fuel spills.
- Carry it in, carry it out. All materials and litter not used in construction of the trail or trail structures will be removed from the site.
- Work areas will be inspected for litter at the end of each day.

Conformance with New York State Standards and Specifications for Erosion and Sediment Control:

All proposed structures are in conformance with required standards.

Construction Plans

Note that thorough site specific construction level work plans are developed prior to each segment of trail construction which detail (step by step in hundredths of a mile) every area of proposed work, including leveling of each hummock, padding at each rock approach as deemed necessary, every relocation of a protruding rock or boulder, installation of boardwalks or other methods of water crossing, and areas which need APA wetland delineation and potentially a permit. During this process it is important to note that the least intrusive method of construction is always preferred, for instance, if a wet area has several rocks in it, the rocks are padded around instead of being removed, if possible.

Work plans identify that all aspects of the trail construction are covered, including brushing, tree cutting, rock removal, drainage, terrain modifications, tread development and bridging activities. In the case of the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex, work plans will state that the trail segment is being developed following the Snowmobile Trail Management Guidance. The core objective of the Guidance is to balance tree cutting, rock removal and terrain modification, using careful layout to design a trail that has the character of a foot trail and can be safe and sustainable for the multiple users of the trail. Specific All Terrain Bicycle and hiking accommodations will be made, as the trail will be used for that purpose in non-winter months. Through a thorough examination of the trail corridor as it is laid out and developed the Department will further adjust, as needed, the plan and actions to build the trail through work plan modifications. Using this method allows for necessary flexibility as staff look at each section of trail as trees are cut or tread defined. Snowmobile Trail Work Project Plan Modification reports will be submitted to document changes. These reports will amend this Complex plan so the complete process of the design and thinking process and work completed are pulled together in a document that captures the entire story of the construction of each trail segment.

a) Tree Cutting- A tally of proposed tree cuts by species and size (diameter at breast height) is detailed by a DEC Forester. Notice of this is provided in the DEC Environmental Notice Bulletin as required by regulation. The trees to be cut are marked with orange paint. The work plan notes the number of trees that are healthy, distressed, diseased, or dead snags. ALL STUMPS WILL BE CUT FLUSH with the GROUND. High stumps will result in safety hazards to workers and future snowmobile use, once the ground around them is compacted and they stick out more. Cutters will take the time to flush stumps as they go. Trees will be dispersed off the trail; however tree trunks of larger sized trees may be used to delineate the trail at certain locations or may be used to modify the trail tread through a future work plan.

b) Brushing and Pruning- The width of the trail is defined. Brush will be cleared to a specified width and overhead branches trimmed to a specified height. All brush and stumps will be cut level or with the slope of the terrain. Branches will be pruned with proper cuts to avoid leaving branch stubs and allow for trees to heal properly. Small brush that hangs into the trail width from beyond the specified width can be cut at the base instead of creating "hedge" cuts. Any brush to be cut on a curve or slope will be marked to delineate the allowable width.

c) Rock Removal- Rock Removal is included in the list of terrain modifications below. Any additional rock work that is needed will be identified in a Snowmobile Work Project Plan Modification Report.

d) Drainage Devices- Through proper layout the trail is designed to avoid or minimize developed drainage devices. Using water bars, broad-based dips, cross drains, trail hardening and other trail building methods we will divert water off the trail tread and minimize down-trail travel of water to create a sustainable trail tread. Areas along that trail that have slope or potential drainage needs will be built in a method that results in water being shed to the side of the trail, preventing "Trail Rutting." Bench-cut areas will be out-sloped to encourage lateral shedding of water. Drainage devices will be installed when deemed necessary and in accordance with the BMP guide. Any more substantial work that may be needed will be identified in a Snowmobile Work Project Plan Modification Report.

e) Terrain Modification- When trails are built through unbroken forest, there needs to be a balance of what trees are cut and what dirt is moved or areas leveled. The balance of tree cutting and terrain modification is important to achieve, to help the trail have the character of a foot trail and be sustainable to multiple users. Where there is moderate side slope present there will be full bench cuts and have proper and sustainable upslope cuts that can re-vegetate to a natural forest cover. Any additional work that may be needed will be identified in a Snowmobile Work Project Plan Modification Report. Due to the fact that this will be a multiple-use trail used by snowmobiles, hikers, and bicycles, there will need to be some hardening done throughout the trail. Although this is a more intensive trail manipulation, it will only be implemented on a smaller 36" to 48" (depending on specific site needs, and in accordance with guidelines) wide path on necessary sections. Any hardening will also be done in accordance with standards to insure proper installation.

f) Trail Markers and Signs- This trail will be marked with Blue trail markers. These will either be DEC Snowmobile Trail Markers or markers that say TRAIL.

g) Trail Rehabilitation- any rehabilitation work necessary, will be performed by the work crews as they make their way out of the work area. Ruts caused by All Terrain Vehicles will be raked smooth and drainage areas impacted by ruts will be restored to working order. Areas disturbed around the bridge sites during the construction process will be raked out, seeded with native grasses, and covered in straw. All scraps of lumber will be removed from bridge sites.

h) Bridges- The number of bridges and boardwalks required for the trail are detailed. The work plans note that the bridges will conform to the adopted Forest Preserve Bridge Design. Bridge materials will be transported to each bridge site via an ATV, snowmobile, landscaping equipment or groomer. Each bridge will be built to allow for the transportation of materials for any bridge construction that may occur beyond that location, unless a method can be used to create zero impacts on stream bed and banks. The construction of bridges will involve the mud sills being placed on exposed mineral soil or rock. Boardwalks will be 4 feet wide and will be decked with 2x4's in 1" spacing in order to allow light to pass through to the soil and vegetation below.

The final construction level work plans also provide a list of materials required to complete the specific segment of trail, enumerating the type and size of all lumber, hardware and other materials needed. A schedule for the work and a location map is provided.

IMPACTS OF PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

• Short-Term Impacts

The immediate short-term impact of implementing the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex will be in the form of increased DEC staff time and materials necessary to plan and construct the trails. Similarly, the adjacent and neighboring communities will spend staff and volunteer time as well as materials to plan and construct the trail connections to merge with recreational facilities in the individual towns. Noise will be generated on a short term, temporary basis during construction of trails and a bridge. During the construction phase there will be a temporary interruption in the use and enjoyment of the river resources and trails in the immediate vicinity of the trail and bridge work, as well as temporary impacts to wildlife.

• Long-Term Impacts

Long-term impacts include a possible increase in overall levels of bicycle, cross-country ski, snow shoe, horseback and snowmobile traffic, and in the number of campers and hunters who access the project site, with an attendant increase in economic benefit to local communities. Persons with disabilities will have a greater opportunity to access state forests and waterways. Increasingly stringent EPA emissions standards for snowmobiles should mitigate any increase in emissions and impacts to air quality. The need for law enforcement services will be minimized through the posting of informational signs and educational outreach. The need for search and rescue services will be minimized by educating trail users, providing trail maps and marking intersecting roads and trails. Designation, management and maintenance of trails for recreational use should decrease user conflicts and wildlife impacts. Adherence to design, construction and maintenance standards should reduce the potential for soil impacts and water quality impacts.

• Cumulative Impacts

Full implementation of the entire Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex will occur over a number of years and in coordination with unit management plans for neighboring state land. Due to the many points of access to the multiple-use trail system, the increase in use will be dispersed throughout the communities to be connected by the trail system. Therefore, significant impacts to any one area are not likely.

It is anticipated that there will be continued use of campsites, trails and water access points by the public. However, the level of use is not estimated to be so high as to have a negative impact on the natural or man-made resources of the project site or environs, including neighboring state land and private land. It is planned that there will be a suitable number of campsites, parking areas, trails and water access points without the occurrence of over-crowding or over use. DEC will continue to monitor the level of use and will enforce all applicable regulations. The development of the Complex Area will provide a greater opportunity for enjoyment of recreation by persons with disabilities. Continuation of land uses lawfully existing on the project site on the effective date of the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act (February 24, 1986) can proceed without the need for any additional permitting. This includes the continued use of floatplanes and snowmobiles. It is anticipated that the level of use of snowmobiling and motor vehicles will decrease somewhat after the hunting club leases for the Gooley and Polaris Clubs expire in 2018.

While an increase in snowmobile traffic within the Adirondack Park may increase exhaust emissions above what they would be without implementing the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex, stricter emissions standards will reduce the overall impact of this increase. In particular, the EPA regulations regarding three-phase reduction in snowmobile emissions requires that current 2015 emissions can be only 30 percent of 2006 levels. The level of use is very small compared to the overall size of the project site and environs within the Park and the extremely high quality of existing air resources, so significant adverse impacts on air quality are not anticipated.

Increased education and law enforcement efforts are anticipated to reduce unauthorized use of both public and private lands. Utilization of trail siting guidelines should result in reduced potential for trespass onto private lands and wilderness areas.

Safety is expected to improve as a result of implementation of trail design and construction guidance. Improved education efforts should allow the public to better anticipate the conditions likely to be encountered on the Adirondack Forest Preserve trail system; trail surface guidelines allow for removal of protruding rocks that could pose safety hazards: tree cutting standards allow for expedient clearing of hazard trees and trees that have fallen across trails.

The UMP process includes SEQR analysis of the alternatives for trail alignment and provides for public input. The environmental impacts of designating trails, developing additional trails and designating campsites, parking areas and water access points are evaluated through this process. Elements considered within this process include but are not limited to:

- Soils/Wetlands

- Drainage
- Vegetation
- Fish/Wildlife
- User Conflicts
- Relationships with adjacent landowners and other public lands
- Tourism/Economic impacts.

The evaluation considers both short and long term impacts. Short term impacts will primarily relate to those associated with the construction of new trails and long term impacts related to the operation and maintenance of the trail system, campsites and parking areas, as noted above. DEC will enforce the area in relation to compliance with the no fires rule at the campsites and length of stay limits at campsites, fishing regulations, etc.

III. UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

New trail layout and trail re-designation decisions made in the UMP process are guided by sound environmental principles. Multiple-use trail siting and design is accomplished using established guidance documents and inherent in the process is the avoidance of valuable natural resources such as wetlands and wildlife habitat and use of appropriate slopes, avoidance of trees and rocks and reuse of existing skid trails or old roads or existing trails. This approach results in mitigation by design to avoid potential significant environmental impacts.

During the trail construction process, resources including staff time and materials will be utilized. Grading will occur as deemed necessary and soils and surface water resources will be subject to short term impacts. Vegetation will be removed. The number, species and size of trees to be removed is calculated carefully during the formulation of specific work plans for each trail segment. Tree density (number of trees per acre) varies with stand age, species composition and site quality. The number of trees cut will be mitigated by re-vegetation of some current access ways.

IV. IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

The planning, development and implementation of this Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex will involve irreversible and irretrievable commitments of public funds in the form of time, labor and materials. Also, there is a commitment to the long-term maintenance of a multiple-use trail system for the Adirondack Park. This commitment will be made by all state agencies, local municipalities, snowmobile groups/clubs and private landowners involved in the administration of this trail system. Acquisition of trail corridors through easement, or fee title by the State will lead to a commitment to expend time, labor and materials to establish these trail corridors for snowmobile use.

V. GROWTH INDUCEMENT

SEQR requires that public need and other social, economic and environmental benefits of the project be weighed and balanced against identified environmental harm. Implementation of the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex may result in increased snowmobile use as well as other users of the multi-use trails throughout the region. These community connector trails are meant to link Adirondack communities that offer travelers services such as food, lodging, fuel, repair service and other support services. The creation of community connector trails may increase the Adirondack Park's attractiveness to the touring market as well as increase the local recreational enthusiasts' territory. This will bring positive, on-going, economic impacts to the Adirondack communities. Impact will be in the form of increased business investment in the community, increased tax revenue, and possibly more year-round business and employment opportunities. No negative effects from public use of the facility are anticipated, for example, area roadways have ample capacity to handle any increase in visitor traffic. The area will be monitored for any effects of over use and addressed accordingly.

VI. NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Taking no action at this time would result in the continuation of snowmobile traffic at current levels in interior areas of Wild Forest areas, with an anticipated continuation of the trend of increasing traffic as the sport of snowmobiling grows. Conflicts with other winter users of the Forest Preserve and adjacent land owners would likely increase with the increase in snowmobile traffic. Potential positive economic impacts from use of the multiple-use trail system would not accrue to the local communities. State grants provided to the communities would not have the desired effect of increased economic opportunities from increased recreation traffic.

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Appendix G – Consultation with OPRHP

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Division of Lands and Forests, Bureau of State Land Management
625 Broadway, 5th Floor, Albany, New York 12233-4250
P: (518) 402-9428 I F: (518) 402-9028 I Landsforests@dec.ny.gov
www.dec.ny.gov

Ms. Ruth Pierpont, Deputy Commissioner
Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Peebles Island State Park, PO Box 189
Waterford, New York 12188-0189 June 16, 2015

RE: Essex Chain Lakes and related state land units
Unit Management Plan and Draft EIS
Hamilton and Essex Counties

Dear ~~Mrs. Pierpont~~ Ruth,:

Pursuant to Article 14 of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law and its implementing regulations, I am requesting your comments on the enclosed draft Unit Management Plan for the Essex Chain Lake Primitive Area which includes an Environmental Impact Statement. These documents are currently circulating for public comment and are under review by the Adirondack Park Agency. I am also providing GIS shape files which delineate the corridor. All are being uploaded through the CRIS.

In addition to comments on the various projects proposed in the draft plan the unit contains two properties which have been determined eligible for the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

1) The Outer Gooley Club Farmhouse, determined eligible for Register listing in 2012(file 12PR04317). The Department proposes to retain the building and explore possible administrative uses.
2) The Inner Gooley Hunting Fishing Club, determined eligible for Register listing in 2013 (file 13PR04428). The Department proposes to remove these buildings as part of an effort to restore the remote primitive character of the area.

The Department believes that the removal of the Inner Gooley Club buildings constitutes an adverse impact on the register listed property. We are prepared to enter into discussions with OPRHP as to how best to mitigate this impact.

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY | Department of Environmental Conservation

Should you or your staff have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Charles E. Vandrei
Agency Historic
Preservation Officer

Enc.

cc: F. Sheehan
C. O'Dea
K. Prickett

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. | Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ROSE HARVEY
Commissioner

July 23, 2015

Mr. Charles E. Vandrei
NYS DEC
Bureau of State Land Management
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4255

Re: DEC
Essex Chain Lakes and Related State Land Units/
Unit Management Plan and Draft EIS
Hamilton and Essex Counties
15PR03210

Dear Mr. Vandrei:

Thank you for requesting the comments of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). We have reviewed the project in accordance with the New York State Historic Preservation Act of 1980 (Section 14.09 of the New York Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law). These comments are those of the OPRHP and relate only to Historic/ Cultural resources.

Based upon our review of the Draft UMP the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation concurs with your agency's opinion that enactment of the plan will have an Adverse Impact on known historic resources. Specifically, the proposed demolition of the camps known as the Inner Gooley Club, which were determined eligible for inclusion in the New York State and National Registers of Historic Places.

Our office agrees that the next steps in the 14.09 process should be a discussion of appropriate mitigation measures. At this early stage in this process we would suggest that your agency consider:

- Full documentation of all buildings and the current setting of the Inner Gooley Club complex.
- The relocation of one or more of the small Inner Gooley Club camps to the site of the Outer Gooley Club site for interpretation and possible adaptive reuse.
- Documentation of the Outer Gooley Club Farmhouse prior to any work being undertaken on it.
- Ongoing consultation for future rehabilitation for at the Outer Gooley Club Farmhouse.
- Ongoing consultation if a component or components of the Inner Gooley Club are relocated and adapted.

Division for Historic Preservation
P.O Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189 • (518) 237-8643 • www.nysparks.com

Lastly, we are unsure as to what extent if any the UMP will require ground disturbing activity to implement. As a result, we cannot provide any comments regarding impacts to potential archaeological deposits. We would recommend that as any agreement includes an ongoing assessment of archaeological impacts as the plan is implemented.

If I can be of any further assistance I can be reached at (518) 268-2166.

Sincerely,

John A. Bonafide
Director,
Technical Preservation Services Bureau

Cc: Corrie O'Dea, NYS DEC

RESOURCE EVALUATION

Date:	9/25/2013	Staff:	Nancy Todd
Property:	Inner Gooley Hunting/Fishing Club, house and 6 cabins	MCD:	MINERVA
Address:	Goodnow Flow Rd, Third Lake	County:	Essex
Project Ref. No.:	**13PR04428**	USN:	03108.000189

I. ☐ Property is individually listed on SR/NR :

Name of listing :

☐ Property is a contributing component of a SR/NR district:

Name of District:

II. ☑ Property meets eligibility criteria

☐ Property contributes to a district which appears to meet eligibility criteria.

Pre SRB: ☑ Post SRB: ☐ SRB Date

Criteria for inclusion in the National Register.

A ☑ **Associated** with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;

B ☐ **Associated** with the lives of persons significant in our past;

C ☑ Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or represents the work of a master; or possess high artistic values; or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose component may lack individual distinction;

D ☐ **Have** yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Based on the limited information provided (including the lack of a context statement about private sportmen clubs in New York State), it appears that the Inner Gooley Club (main house and six cabins) is historically and architecturally significant as a relatively intact example of an early twentieth century hunting-fishing club in the Adirondacks. Throughout the region, many private logging or mining companies offered long-term leases to groups of private individuals to build and maintain a broad range of sports clubs deep in the wilderness. Like other camp complexes of its type, the Inner Gooley buildings are rustic and utilitarian in design and materials.

If you have any questions concerning this Determination of Eligibility, please call Nancy Todd at 518-237-8643. ext 3262

RESOURCE EVALUATION

Date:	3/23/2002	Staff:	Nancy Todd
Property:	GOOLEY CLUB	MCD:	MINERVA
Address:	off of NY 28 near Indian Lake	County:	Essex
Project Ref. No.:	**12PR04317**	USN:	03108.0109

I. ☐ Property is individually listed on SR/NR :

Name of listing :

☐ Property is a contributing component of a SR/NR district:

Name of District:

II. ☑ Property meets eligibility criteria

☐ Property contributes to a district which appears to meet eligibility criteria.

Pre SRB: ☑ Post SRB: ☐ SRB Date

Criteria for inclusion in the National Register.

A ☑ **Associated** with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;

B ☐ **Associated** with the lives of persons significant in our past;

C ☑ Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or represents the work of a master; or possess high artistic values; or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose component may lack individual distinction;

D ☐ **Have** yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Based on the information provided, the Gooley Club appears to be eligible for listing as an intact example of a typical late 19th-early 20th century private hunting/fishing club in the Adirondacks. Established in the the 1870s by Michael Gooley, this club began as a private retreat for hunters and fishermen. In 1905, Gooley sold the property to the Finch-Pruyn lumber company, who granted long-term leases to club members. In 1928, the original house built by Mr. Gooley burned; club members then built the current house. The buildings and setting of the Club reflect the importance of men's hunting and fishing clubs in the Adirondacks.

If you have any questions concerning this Determination of Eligibility, please call Nancy Todd at 518-237-8643. ext 3262

Appendix H – Public Comment

The DEC held three SEQRA public hearings on July 7, 9 and 22, 2015 and the public comment period remained open until July 27, 2015. Below is a summary of the comments that were received at the hearings and from comment letters and emails, with the DEC response.

General

COMMENT: DEC must also schedule hearings on this issue outside of the Adirondack Park. The Adirondack Park belongs to (and is paid for) by all New York citizens yet DEC rarely if ever holds hearings on this incredibly important resource anywhere outside the park's boundary.
RESPONSE*: An additional public hearing was held in Albany at DEC headquarters at 625 Broadway on July 22, 2015.*

COMMENT: While my greatest love of the Adirondacks is based around the motor-less wilderness and primitive area experience, I applaud, respect, and welcome the DEC choice to apply balance with the unit designations for the newly acquired lands near Newcomb. Since the Master Plan was written, I've witnessed a disproportional amount of land acquisitions assigned as wilderness. While I applauded this trend years ago, I now believe this practice has become grossly unbalanced at the expense of local public support. As an environmentalist, I believe there is no environmental benefit to managing the forest area in a way that alienates so much of the public against every environmental initiative, law and policy. Designating all newly purchased land as wilderness with no balance does exactly that. Allowing such a small percentage to be wild forest goes a long way for defusing those who might spend their lives fighting other worthy environmental initiatives. In other words, ideology on one end of a political view spawns the same at the other extreme. As a society, we need balance or we'll never cooperate effectively for the benefit of the environment.
RESPONSE *Noted.*

COMMENT: Please add to this draft a proposal to allow ATV access on designated access roads for the purpose of camping, fishing and hunting. The local area can gain a great deal of tourist dollars and visitors by allowing registered and insured ATV's into this area. Please consider this as a way to boost dollars into this area. As a multi parcel land owner I feel not addressing this is a big miss on the state of New York and the DEC groups who oversee this land. There should be equal use of the land for all tax payers, not just hikers who pay no fees to use this land. Please look at states like Pennsylvania and Maine and see what they are doing with ATV use to bring in dollars to the local economy.
RESPONSE: *DEC has considered this comment and declines to make this revision. ATVs are not proposed as an allowed use in this Complex Plan, nor are they a conforming use in Primitive Areas. The public may use motor vehicles to access the Wild Forest tent sites along the Cornell Road, Deer Pond Road, and seasonally along the Camp Six Road and Chain Lakes Road (South). Additionally, hunting and fishing access is allowed along those same road segments.*

COMMENT: Opposes allowing all-terrain vehicles on any multi-use trails in the Complex. Any multi-use trail that includes snowmobile use must remain otherwise motor-free, and not include any possible future use of any other off-road motor vehicles.

RESPONSE: *Aside from snowmobiles, no other public motorized uses are proposed for the multiple-use trails identified in this Complex Plan.*

COMMENT: In regard to wheeled transit: bicycles yes, ATV's a strong NO.
RESPONSE: *ATVs use is not proposed in this Complex Plan.*

COMMENT: Support for the DEC managing several Forest Preserve units as a complex, as they have long-advocated for this complex-planning approach.
RESPONSE: *This Complex Plan takes a more "complex" approach to planning in order to identify where proposals continue beyond unit boundaries.*

COMMENT: I commend the planners for the comprehensive nature of the plan and their outstanding effort to provide public access to this beautiful area while preserving its integrity.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: As a senior citizen hunter and fisherman I would like to see as much access as possible to this land. For too long the environmentalists have succeeded in getting the overwhelming majority of land locked up for the benefit of the fit few. In my opinion it is wrong to preclude the less fit and disabled from the ability to enjoy this land. This means making available the existing access roads on the land. The Finch lands include an extensive road and bridge network that could be utilized for recreation access. Notably the Polaris Bridge being targeted by the environmentalists should be left intact and maintained for access by the public and DEC. There needs to be a way to make this happen. Furthermore snowmobiling, bicycling and even RV traffic should be allowed on these well-constructed haul toads which were built to withstand log truck traffic for many years. The time has come to stop the environmental lobby before the whole park is off limits to almost everyone.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: As an organizer of Lean2Rescue projects, the commenter notes that they have learned to see such infrastructure as is proposed as a huge cost saver and carbon footprint reducer for maintenance of the interior, especially the Wilderness areas. There have been several incidents where they have been able to have materials carried by groomer to the edge of the wilderness area, where volunteers have then been able to drag the materials the final miles to the site. This avoids the need for a helicopter which processes so much more fossil fuel per hour as compared to the groomer or snowmobile.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: The campfire ban should not be implemented. The carries to reach the Chain Lakes make for a very effective filter, generally removing those less motivated individuals that have a tendency to be irresponsible campers. Those likely to visit the Chain Lakes can certainly be trusted to observe the "dead and down" firewood regulations.
RESPONSE: *DEC believes that the documented ecological impacts of fires in other areas of the Forest Preserve lend themselves to the prohibition of fires at waterfront sites in the Complex Area.*

COMMENT: An advance campsite reservation system will be very cumbersome and limiting in nature. The designated campsites should be first come first served, as all other backcountry sites are. Exclusive set aside campsites for floatplane customers should not be implemented. Again, all designates sites should be first come first served, set aside campsites exclusively for floatplane customers on public land,

is illegal. Are these specific campsites on State land or not? If so, they should be open to all. If not, revise the plan and collect taxes from the floatplane operators.
RESPONSE: *The need for the camping permit system will be assessed after the 2018 camping season. If the five years of permit data do not justify a permit system, it will be discontinued, and the sites will become first come, first served.*

COMMENT: Increase the number of campsites on the Chain Lakes Road (South), and include ADA sites.
RESPONSE: *Accessible roadside camping opportunities will be provided along the Chain Lakes Road (South).*

COMMENT: More should be done to protect against invasives, especially against aquatic invasives.
RESPONSE: *DEC will support scientific research, work with our partners, provide educational information, and enforce existing policies that protect Forest Preserve vegetation.*

Bicycle and Horse Trails

COMMENT: With regard to the use of bicycles on the roads around the Essex Chain, although I am happy to see riding opportunities for bicycles in the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex, these routes must be legitimately designated as DEC administrative roads before allowing bicycle use of these roads.
RESPONSE: *The Department's proposal is to identify bicycling opportunities on former all-season roads in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas, and manage such use in conformance with the APSLMP. On Wild Forest lands within the Complex Area, the Department proposes to designate for bicycle use a portion of the Chain Lakes Roads (North), Chain Lakes Road (South), Deer Pond Road, and Drake's Mill Road to the* Iron (Polaris) *Bridge.*

COMMENT: The comment was made that the justification for the designation of administrative roads should be provided. It appears that the Department decided where it wanted the bike trails and then designated these as administrative roads.
RESPONSE: *See Response above.*

COMMENT: Plans for mountain bike use on roads in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive area should be based on natural resource and market studies to determine feasibility, public interest, maintenance costs, and natural resource damage. There is no evidence that mountain biking is desirable on former logging roads anywhere else in the Forest Preserve.
RESPONSE: *In the Stewardship Plan, the DEC designated certain former woods roads open for bicycling. Based on feedback from users of these trails, The Complex Plan proposes to identify bicycling opportunities on former all-season roads in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas, in conformance with the APSLM In addition, the Plan calls for a continued assessment of both bike and horse trail use and experiences. This assessment will be conducted in a variety of ways, and will allow DEC to better understand use, potential problems and public desires. The DEC, in consultation with APA, will assess the condition of non-motorized recreational trails used by equestrians and bicyclists to measure the impact these activities have on natural resources.*

It is understood that the public desires to have "family style" bicycling experiences throughout the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex Area. There are many factors, that when combined, result in an

overall user experience. The assessment called for in this Complex Plan will attempt to measure these factors in a way that captures the overall public use as well as more subjective measurements. These subjective measurements will deal with: aspects of the trails that users find enjoyable or memorable and describe positive or negative interactions.

Methods used to conduct this assessment will utilize DEC staff, including SCA Backcountry Stewards, Forest Rangers, and Foresters, as well as DEC partners, including Towns, volunteers, colleges, and contractors. The assessment will likely provide use estimates through a combination of trail registers, trail counters, and observation. The assessment will also involve interviews with users in an attempt to capture more "experience" based information, to define what is important to individual users of the area.

COMMENT: I particularly support the use of the existing road network for bicycles.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: The Adirondack Council supports allowing mountain biking and equestrian use in certain areas of the Complex.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: I am opposed to allowing mountain biking on trails frequented by hikers as they are dangerous to pedestrians and destructive to trails.
RESPONSE: *DEC has considered this comment and has specifically included sections on "trail etiquette" to remind users that these are shared use trails.*

COMMENT: I support the use of the roads in the area for horse trail riding.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: I have skied and mountain biked the Upper Hudson Ski Loop for over 25 years. It is a great wonderful area and the path was built to support logging trucks. I have no idea why bikes were excluded from this area in the proposed plan. Perhaps there is an excellent reason, but none was offered at the meeting nor was there an opportunity to ask questions at the hearing. Newcomb could provide that same opportunity if one could ride the trail from the Upper Hudson Ski Loop down to Ord Falls and into Town on existing trails or on newly created trails being considered to extend the Upper Hudson Ski Loop into Town.
RESPONSE: *The Upper Hudson Ski Loop crosses private land (working forest conservation easement land) between the parking and the register box location. DEC has proposed to open the Ski Loop (located on Blue Mountain Wild Forest land) for bicycling, and try to gain approval from the private landowner for the crossing.*

Cedar River Bridge

COMMENT: I firmly support the proposed bridge over the Cedar River at the recommended site.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: The Adirondack Council supports the building of a replacement bridge over the Cedar River for hiking, mountain biking, snowmobiling, and equestrian traffic, but not for any other motorized use. This bridge must be legally and irrevocably closed to any motorized use other than snowmobiles.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: I support DEC's plan to build the Cedar River Bridge and to maintain the Polaris Bridge in the Essex Chain Lakes Complex.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: I strongly support a Cedar River Bridge as described in Alternative 4.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

Economic Development and Enjoyment of the Outdoor Experience

COMMENT: I attended last night's meeting at the Newcomb school. As a former part time resident on the Goodnow Flow for more than 30 years, and now a full time resident for the past 8 days, I want to express my appreciation for the thoughtful balance your recommended plan achieves. One of the most troubling aspects of home ownership in the park is the continuing decline of many of the hamlets in our area including Newcomb, Long Lake, Blue Mountain Lake, North Hudson, Minerva, Indian Lake, etc. The proposed plan addresses requirement to provide wilderness experience while also recognizing the importance of economic development in the affected communities. I firmly support proposed snowmobile trail that crosses the Hudson on the Polaris Bridge and continues up the east side of the Hudson to Newcomb, where it will join the Newcomb to Minerva trail. I also firmly support the proposed bridge over the Cedar River at the recommended site.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: The Nature Conservancy / Finch Pruyn lands represent a very special collection of unique outdoors opportunities on land that was previously an important economic engine for these communities. The proposed horse trails, mountain bike trails and limited vehicular traffic are certainly appropriate for this area. All of those activities together represent a mere fraction of the disturbance caused by chain saws, skidders, chippers and logging trucks. In the 30 years on the Goodnow, we had several summers with the wakeup call of logging trucks rattling down the Goodnow Flow Road at 5:00 am to get their first load of the morning. I won't miss that particular aspect of the logging operations, but am a strong supporter of town's effort to be a place where the children of town residents will have a viable place to live, work and raise a family.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: Mountain bikes, horses, snowmobiles, airplanes and other motorized vehicles should all have a place in the park. Many hunters, fisherman, and outdoor folks are older and need to use these areas that allow wheeled access. The local economy relies on all types of outdoor recreation and the park is large enough to allow everyone with any interest in the outdoors to enjoy it. If people of all interests don't enjoy the area and learn first-hand of its beauty and importance of open space, it will die a slow death of disinterest and neglect with future generations.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: I write to express my support for the overall Complex plan. The plan should support the efforts and the desire of the five surrounding towns to become a "Recreational Hub." I also believe that the Polaris Bridge should stay in place and serve multi-trail interests in the Complex. I also strongly support Alternative 1B for a snowmobile trail that will connect Indian Lake to Minerva and a Cedar River Bridge as described in Alternative 4.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: I am very excited about the progress that has been made as a lifelong resident of the greater Adirondack region. The economic benefit to our area from the snowmobile industry alone has been proven by the research at our neighboring institution, the State University of Potsdam, in Potsdam, NY.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: The only business that could profit from a major connector in Minerva is Sporty's Iron Duke Saloon until they get to Newcomb. There is no gas, restaurant, bar, rest room, mechanical or first aid help for 25 miles through the forest.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: I've been snowmobiling for 25 years in the Old Forge area and travel to Indian Lake and have used the Newcomb trail. It opens new areas to see and we do not have to return the same way from Old Forge to Indian Lake. I know I speak for all of my snowmobile friends in supporting the trail and all bridges concerned. By keeping this trail open it will boost the economy in the entire area. Snowmobiling has tripled in my tenure in Old Forge and this recreational sport helps the town make it through the winter. By keeping this trail open and removing the tracks from Old Forge to Tupper Lake would make the entire area from Old Forge to Indian Lake to Newcomb and loop to Tupper Lake and back to Old Forge possible and boost the winter economy in these northern towns.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: I recognize the economic value of having a community connector snowmobile trail network in this area, and support those efforts.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: I understand the importance of stimulating the economy within communities of the Adirondack Park, so I support the proposed community connector snowmobile trail network. And that should also include the Vanderwhacker Wild Forest Area. Please don't listen to the misguided people who think this plan will destroy the area.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: To who it my concern, as outdoors enthusiasts and snowmobilers since 1973, my wife and I are all for the upgrades to the area. The upgrade should help generate more revenue for the area from hunters, fishermen, skiers, campers, snowmobilers, etc. New York State and or government have taken so much from locals already that hundreds have packed and moved out of state. Keep promoting the importance of the outdoors experience because it is relaxing for people after a hard week at work, and will also give children an opportunity to be outside instead of behind a computer.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: Support the comprehensive Essex Chain of Lakes Plan as proposed. Specifically, they are strongly supportive of the provisions in the plan pertaining to snowmobile trails. They note that in New York State alone, snowmobilers spend over $1 billion on snowmobiling each year. This includes expenditures on equipment, clothing, accessories, vacations, gas, food, etc. Surveys show that snowmobiling families go on 27 snowmobile outings on average each winter. Snowmobiling is responsible for significant economic benefits such as: jobs for thousands of people, jobs which enable those people to further stimulate the economy through additional expenditures on goods and services, jobs which provide significant income tax revenues to state and federal treasuries and dramatically reduce unemployment and welfare payments; millions of dollars in tax revenues derived from snowmobile-related businesses including manufacturers, suppliers, distributors, resort and hotel facilities, restaurants, service stations, insurance agencies, hardware stores, banks and credit unions; millions of dollars in winter tourism spending which support upstate economics, and; thousands of dollars in local/state sales and gas tax revenues. ARCC states that snowmobiling has rejuvenated the economies of many communities and is an important segment of the active outdoor recreation economic engine in Upstate NY. The New York State Snowmobile Association, in cooperation with SUNY Potsdam, conducted an economic impact analysis in 2003 showing the economic impact of snowmobiling in New York State to be estimated at $476.2 million. In 2008 the state of New York surveyed snowmobilers in New York and calculated the economic impact of snowmobiling in New York had increased to $875 million annually – an increase of 84% in 5 years. ARCC notes that on a local level, many businesses have reported a significant increase in business during the 2014 snowmobile season. Restaurants, taverns and hotel/motels have reported that their business increased two-fold over the 2012-13 season. The NYS Department of tourism actively promotes snowmobile tourism and has established a website with information on snowmobiling opportunities and conditions. ARCC states that the comprehensive proposals in the ECLMC Plan will play a significant role in the increase in economic activities in the region, and that without the ability to connect people – whether hiking, biking, snowmobiling or by motor vehicle – to the recreational opportunities and businesses in the respective counties, businesses would realize a measureable decline in sales with a corresponding increase in unemployment. Businesses need the support of all sectors, including government. Approval of the ECLMC Plan will insure the businesses will remain strong and provide employment and tax revenues for the region.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

Goodnow Flow

COMMENT: From the perspective of the Goodnow Flow Association, Inc., the commenter notes that for over 60 years the Association leased much of the land in the northern section of the purchase. For the past ten or so years, they have been involved in an effort to rebuild the spillway to protect and preserve the Goodnow Flow along with the surrounding areas and wildlife habitat that depend on it. The Association is close to being able to commence this project and hopes to complete the replacement of the spillway during the summer months within the next couple of years. The Association hopes that the area proposed for the hiking parking lot can be used as a summer construction season staging area so that the spillway can be replaced.
RESPONSE: *DEC will contact and work with the Goodnow Flow Association during the spillway construction.*

Outer Gooley Farmhouse and Inner Gooley Buildings

COMMENT: The buildings at the former Outer Gooley Club should be removed.
RESPONSE: *The Complex Plan calls for further consideration of potential uses of the Outer Gooley Club building.*

COMMENT: The Outer Gooley Club buildings should remain. The Inner Gooley Club buildings should also remain, like Santanoni, for use in emergencies and for interpretive opportunities. Information for displays and related websites should be developed to appeal to younger users.
RESPONSE: *DEC agrees that the Outer Gooley Club buildings warrant further consideration for use as an administrative building, an interpretative center, or possibly a historical landmark. DEC disagrees with the commenter in regard to the Inner Gooley Club structures and buildings. The Plan calls for the removal of these facilities at the end of the lease arrangements with the Gooley Club. DEC recognizes that historic preservation and the provision of wild recreational lands are both matters of state policy. In the case of the Inner Gooley Club buildings, these public values are directly in conflict with one another. In this case, it was DEC's judgement that the value of recreational lands outweigh the value of preserving the historic buildings. The Plan calls for the removal of these facilities at the end of the lease arrangements with the Gooley Club.*

COMMENT: Supports the plan to retain the farmhouse as an historic structure and other compatible uses. However, AARCH asks the Department to acknowledge that the Inner Gooley Club buildings have also been deemed to be eligible for listing under the National and State Registers of Historic Places and provides the listing reference #13PRO4428 dated 9/25/13. The Department needs to acknowledge that this complex of seven buildings is National Register eligible, that it has obligations under the State Historic Preservation Act (SHPA), and it must explore alternatives to the proposed demolition of the Inner Gooley Club buildings. The 2012 "Reservation of Leasehold Estate and Management Agreement" calling for the demolition of the buildings doesn't negate the Department's legal obligations under the SHPA.
RESPONSE: *DEC has complied with the State Historic Preservation Act in its determination to remove the Inner Gooley Club buildings. See Appendix G which contains the record of correspondence with the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation on SHPA compliance matters.*

COMMENT: With regard to the Outer Gooley Club buildings, the Environmental Conservation Law currently would not allow these structures to remain. They can stay only if the state purchased it prior to the enactment date of the law. The structures should be removed or relocated.
RESPONSE: *DEC has considered this comment and determined not to make a change the Complex Plan.*

COMMENT: It is our belief that this would constitute a crime against the history of the Town of Minerva and the Adirondacks in general. The Gooley Club, incorporated in 1946, has been one of the largest and most prestigious Adirondack Sportsman's Clubs for many decades, truly an iconic landmark within the Blue Line. The Gooley Club has hosted several generations of sportsmen including many prominent New Yorkers, as well as being an important part of the logging history with Finch, Pruyn & Co. in the Adirondacks. The buildings that make up the Chain Lakes Camp are an ingrained component of Adirondack architectural heritage. We urge you to follow the legal obligations regarding the identification and protection of historic resources required by NYS Environmental Conservation Law (ECL 9-0109) to evaluate these facilities as to their historic

importance. As is presently being arranged for the Gooley Farmhouse south of the Hudson River, the Chain Lakes Camp can provide an ideal location for interpretive use as well as a sub-station for DEC management of the Complex and a point of refuge for users in distress.
RESPONSE: *DEC has considered this comment and declines to make this revision.*

Management of the Complex Area

COMMENT: The principal management objective for the Essex Chain Lakes area should be forest restoration and natural resource preservation. Retention of roads for recreational use will undermine these objectives.
RESPONSE: *The Complex Plan was prepared by the State of New York to allow for appropriate public access to the lands within the complex area and to protect natural resources. The proposed management actions were chosen because they seek to allow access while protecting the area's natural resources, and will be implemented through a series of protecting measures and administrative and management practices.*

COMMENT: ECLMC should have been classified as Wild Forest. The patchwork of classifications is problematic and doesn't satisfy any of the stakeholders and leaves the process legally vulnerable.
RESPONSE: *After careful consideration of all viable and possible alternatives, and involving major stakeholders through various forms of outreach efforts, the State has determined that the current classification best represents a management plan that provides for reasonable public access while protecting the natural resources of the Complex Area.*

COMMENT: I support the Department of Environmental Conservation's plan to manage multiple and adjoining Adirondack Forest Preserve area as one "complex" unit. Managing the area in this way will allow better integration with natural resource protection, community engagement, and recreation.
RESPONSE: *DEC agrees with this comment.*

COMMENT: The Forest Preserve is replete with former land uses long made illegal under the Constitution and statutory and executive law. DEC commonly asserts that when land becomes Forest Preserve, the State buys all fee simple rights and extinguishes all prior underlying rights of ownership - absent a reserved and deeded right. There are no reserved, deeded rights in this case. Yet, DEC illogically argues here for "grandfathered" rights.
RESPONSE: *Lands purchased by the State within its geographical and political boundaries are managed by the DEC and the APA for the benefit of the people of the State of New York. Unless encumbered by a reserved right, the State can exercise its discretion to determine how best to manage the property while seeking a balance between protecting the natural resources of the area, and allowing reasonable public access. "'Grandfathered' rights" is a term ordinarily associated with land use law, but the language that appears in the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act is whether existing land uses are allowed to continue without expanding or altering the historical use. DEC has determined that current law and regulation allow the continued use of certain structures and improvements located in the Complex Area.*

COMMENT: The "Schedule of Implementation" provides a column for 'Estimated Cost' [page 61 *et seq*.], but no estimated cost is provided, not to mention the source of funds. Purchase of a snow groomer tractor can reach $150,000 not including the attachments, maintenance, and operating expenses.

Whence cometh the funds for this? (Please do not cite the NYS Snowmobiles Trails Grant-in-Aid program without specifically listing the amount allocated to the Adirondack region, the manner of allocation, and other pertinent information). We are asked to buy a pig-in-a-poke. "Approve this. We will bill you for the costs later. After all you approved this. Nonsense. Provide the costs, real estimates: best case and worst case.
RESPONSE: *The DEC is not always able to provide estimated costs for specific activities listed in the schedule of implementation because it is sometimes difficult for DEC to project costs without completed design plans, and costs are susceptible to changing economic conditions.*

COMMENT: DEC should undertake feasibility, public interest, maintenance cost and natural resource damage studies for your proposed roads in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive area.
RESPONSE: *DEC undertakes a thorough analysis of all available resources when determining the use of existing roads and the construction of new roads or trails.*

COMMENT: I would like to submit that I am a frequent tourist to the Adirondack Park from CT. I also visit VT and NH, but find the wilderness quality of the Adirondacks a better "deal" for my tourist, and eventually 2nd home dollars. I spend about $10,000 a year on family vacations to the Adirondacks because it's "forever wild" clause. I hike, camp, canoe and ski. I do not snowmobile nor mountain bike, which I feel should be severely restricted and not expanded because they ruin the isolated, non-mechanical aspect that I feel so appealing. Please do not allow more snowmobile and mountain bike access or improved trails in the park.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: In regards to the Essex Chain Snowmobile plan, I am writing to encourage keeping the proposed plan that the Department of Environmental Conservation released last month. These lands should be "used" by the public. I agree with Governor Cuomo's desire to make the Adirondacks more accessible.
RESPONSE: *Many of the previous determinations regarding snowmobile trails have remained the same.*

COMMENT: Last week there were news stories about the average age of the population in the US. Hamilton County, with an average age of 54, is one of the oldest counties in the United States! (New York State was about 33 years old). This area needs more flexibility to live. New York cannot afford to keep the Adirondacks pristine without local support. If that local support evaporates simply because there is no population, we may have wild lands, but what are we saving it for?
RESPONSE: *DEC believes that this Complex Plan strikes the appropriate balance between recreational access and resource preservation.*

COMMENT: While the description and inventory of fish, wildlife and habitats in this UMP is significantly improved over last year's draft, this UMP still lacks the requisite analysis and assessment required under the SLMP. The majority of priority recommendations are generally stated, as in "monitor and inventory wildlife populations and their habitats." For an area noted for its ecological importance, including highly-rated and vulnerable wetlands, and with populations of breeding birds, amphibians, mammals and plants vulnerable to this higher intensity of human presence and uses, this UMP should recommend particularly needed or important wildlife studies , how these will be conducted and by whom, and any management implications**.**
RESPONSE: *DEC believes they have complied with the APSLMP with regard to an assessment of existing fish, wildlife and habitat within the complex area, and further analysis will be conducted when necessary.*

COMMENT: This Draft UMP does not comply with the SLMP. DEC should re-write this UMP to forthrightly address and comply with all existing law, regulation, policy and guidance documents. We encourage DEC and APA to form a citizen advisory committee or stakeholder task force that brings the agencies together with the five towns, recreational interests and Forest Preserve advocates together to discuss the legal obstacles, alternative management recommendations, and other constructive forward steps to achieving SLMP compliance.
RESPONSE: *DEC believes the proposed management objectives and action steps comply with the APSLMP, existing law, regulation, policy and guidance documents. DEC and APA participated in numerous outreach sessions to stakeholder groups, and the Forest Preserve Advisory Committee was another forum that allowed the exchange of information on the Complex Plan.*

COMMENT: The area is classified Primitive regardless of the existing road infrastructure.
RESPONSE: *This Complex Plan addresses management objectives in lands classified as primitive and wild forest.*

COMMENT*:* The priority for management of the property should be to protect natural resources and the secondary consideration is the recreational use. There is no grandfathering provision to allow continued use of the roads and abridges. Activity on the land while under private ownership does not mean the uses can continue now that it is public land.
RESPONSE: *Current law and regulations specifically allow existing land uses to continue within designated river areas notwithstanding any laws or regulations to the contrary. DEC and the Agency retain the discretion to determine management actions that are the most appropriate to balance public access and natural resource protection.*

COMMENT: The current Draft UMP should be withdrawn and all stakeholders should be consulted to come up with a new management plan together. Most of the Park is already located within one to two miles of main roads and people should not be able to drive up to the 4th and 5th Lakes area. Historically, the Indians allowed all tribes to access the wild lands of the Adirondacks with the basic understanding that the wilderness was to be preserved and protected. The process to determine their use should be public.
RESPONSE: *DEC does not intend to withdraw the UMP, and will instead present the Complex Plan to the APA to seek a conformance determination consistent with the process set forth in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Adirondack Park Agency and the Department of Environmental Conservation Concerning Implementation of the State Land Master Plan for the Adirondack Park. With regard to the commenter's reference to historical Indian practice, traditional Indian Nation concepts such as "one bowl, one spoon" did not recognize political boundaries of land, therefore their use of land is inapposite to the discussion of how the state manages the land of the Complex Area.*

COMMENT: Comment was made that the towns and communities understood at the time of the discussion of the land purchase that there would be opportunities for those who like quiet paddling areas and those who like to snowmobile and mountain bike and hunt and fish. These uses can all be accommodated without the need for extensive work by using the existing road infrastructure. The communities want to believe that there is an opportunity for economic benefit from tangible public recreational opportunities from the land purchase that will help to make the communities more economically sustainable. The road network on the site should be used to increase access to the Forest Preserve for the public so they can learn about and appreciate the Forest Preserve.

RESPONSE: *The Complex Plan does not propose public access to the entire existing road network, but rather in the interest of seeking a balance between access and the protection of the Complex Area's natural resources, an overwhelming percentage of the existing roads will not be utilized for recreation.*

Motorized Use

Comment: The commenter says the existing roads on the property should be allowed to be used by sportsmen who hunt, fish and trap. These roads have been used for 150 years without damage to the environment and should continue to be used. When the land was being purchased it was said that a parking area for the public, not just CP3, would be constructed near the tube to allow for access. Also, DEC says they will monitor use and could close the parking lot that is proposed for the public and he is concerned if the area is not marketed well, use numbers will be low and the lot will be closed. The ECLMC has 50 miles of road and should not be classified as Primitive.
RESPONSE: *The Complex Plan proposes a six-car parking west of the "Tube" in conformance with the APSLMP.*

COMMENT: I urge DEC to dramatically cut back on motorized uses within these lands, providing only for limited access by handicapped people and holding to the deal struck with the towns for snowmobile passage, which never included the Polaris Bridge, but did include a legal bridge across the Cedar.
RESPONSE: *DEC believes that this Complex Plan strikes the appropriate balance between recreational access, including access for people with disabilities, and resource preservation.*

COMMENT: I support keeping the Essex Chain of Lakes motor-free to protect the rivers and lakes from the introduction of invasive species. This is a unique, ecological area and protecting the waters from invasive species should be a priority.
RESPONSE: *Motorized boats are equipment not allowed in the Essex Chain Lakes.*

COMMENT: Driving to the Essex Chain of Lakes by permit violates the State Land Master Plan and the APA Classification Resolution: The Draft UMP recommends that the general public, by permit, be allowed to drive past Deer Pond parking lot for 2 miles to a 4- car parking lot at "the Wild Forest-Primitive boundary" near Fifth Lake. By doing so, the Draft undermines the APA classification resolution for a "motorless" Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area. Even 4-cars by permit throughout the year encourage the very things DEC does not want: introduction of invasive species into the lakes, and introduction of baitfish into the lakes. The easier DEC makes motor vehicle access for the general public, the more likely that the lakes will become polluted. The proposed action violates the Master Plan's Primitive Area guidelines by proposing a motor vehicle road to the heart of a Primitive area. Further, it undermines the very purpose of the DEC's CP-3 program designed to provide exclusive motorized access to persons with disabilities or mobility limitations so that they have an opportunity to experience the same solitude and connection to nature that the general public enjoys. Finally, the APA classification decision in 2013 clearly intended to limit motor vehicle use of this road only to those qualifying for CP-3 access: "Wild Forest access… to the south shore of Fifth Lake was established for the sole purpose of providing access to persons with disabilities."
RESPONSE: *DEC has considered this comment and has determined not to make a change in the Complex Plan. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires, in part, that reasonable modifications must be made to the services and programs of public entities, so that when those services and programs are viewed in their entirety, they are readily accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. This*

must be done unless such modification would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of the service, program or activity or an undue financial or administrative burden.

COMMENT: An area of about 27,000 acres purchased had approximately 40 miles of 2-wheel drive accessible roads which were cut back to less than 3 miles. Try to call that real access and you will find it is little more than a non-substantive appeasement. Much of the 40 miles of roads were of the quality that withstood the travel of logging trucks. Now they cannot be used for a pickup truck; cutting back from 40 to 3 miles does not make sense.
RESPONSE: *The Complex Plan calls for 10 miles of the approximate 30 miles of former woods roads (a combination of all season and winter use only roads) to be open for public motor vehicle access within the lands classified as Wild Forest. These 10 miles of public motor vehicle roads are those which most suitable for travel by motor vehicle.*

COMMENT: Some items such as proposed parking lots and non-CP3 access were mentioned and then somehow lost between the initial proposals and the management use plan. These should be corrected in the UMP as it pertains to the Essex Chain Lakes Complex.
RESPONSE: *The Complex Plan proposes a six-car parking area west of the "Tube" in conformance with the APSLMP.*

Non-Motorized Use

COMMENT: I believe that there are aspects of the draft plan that fail to take into account a more long-term vision for the Park. I believe that allowing motorized access on the Essex Chain Complex would greatly harm the unique ecosystems found here. Thus, I fully support management of the Complex as motor-free. In line with this view, I do not support expanding motorized access in the Hudson Wild and Scenic River Corridor, or the building of new snowmobile trails in the Vanderwhacker Wild Forest Area. Both of these areas contain habitats and organisms that would be put in danger by the damage motor vehicles can cause. In addition, this area will also be threatened by the likely introduction of invasive species as a result of motorized vehicle use. Consequently, I believe that the Polaris Bridge should be removed. I also support replacing the bridge over the Cedar River for hiking, mountain biking, snowmobiling and equestrian use, but believe the bridge must remain irrevocably closed to all motorized use with the exception of snowmobiles. In addition, I support providing special access for persons with disabilities, such as the creation of parking lots near Fourth and Fifth Lake, as I believe it is essential that all are able to experience the beauty that the Complex has to offer.
RESPONSE: *The use of motor vehicles in the Complex Area has continued for nearly a century, and DEC believes that the continued use of motor vehicles subject to the restrictions within the Plan, will not adversely affect the natural resources present in the management area.*

COMMENT: The Wild Forest corridor to 4th-5th Lakes on the Essex Chain violates the State Land Master Plan because it does not facilitate legal motor vehicle use. This road is an illegal peninsula into the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive area and DEC should abandon plans for motor vehicle access on this corridor. The "tube" that allows motor vehicle access across 4th-5th lakes should be removed and that channel ecologically restored.
RESPONSE: *The road to the "Tube" is classified Wild Forest and motor vehicle use is a permitted use within lands classified as Wild Forest. The Complex Plan proposes to remove the "Tube" when it becomes no longer usable, and replace with a bridge, which will provide for a more natural channel.*

Iron (Polaris) Bridge

COMMENT: Please take this letter as my public input in favor of keeping the Polaris Bridge and to designate the area as Wild Forest.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: I do not own a snowmobile, and I try to avoid the noise and smoke whenever and wherever I can. I do see some value in the machines as a tool, but that's not the purpose of the Polaris Bridge. Nevertheless, connecting different snowmobile regions with corridors (and such novel infrastructure as the Polaris Bridge) provides such great benefit for the snowmobile economy for so little land and infrastructure cost. We all need to get along and respect the other side if we are to effectively manage our resources. The decision to designate the area as a wild forest is a sound investment in that direction. It gives the snowmobilers a little consideration with a little land and infrastructure.
RESPONSE: *The comment is noted and the Complex Plan proposes a Class II community connector snowmobile trail that utilizes the existing Iron (Polaris) Bridge in order to connect the communities of Indian Lake and Minerva.*

COMMENT: Use of the bridge after the expiration of the Polaris Club's leases would be a violation of the APSLMP and WSRRSA.
RESPONSE: *The DEC agreement with the former landowner allows lessee access until September 30, 2018, and the Nature Conservancy access until September 30, 2019. The future of this bridge may be determined prior to these dates and acted upon afterwards. Note that this bridge was constructed under a WSRRSA permit issued by the APA.*

COMMENT: One of the most significant issues is the fact that the Iron (Polaris) Bridge is currently designated for motorized use in this UMP so that snowmobiles can access one of two proposed trails in the Vanderwhacker Wild Forest. The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) must not allow motorized use of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge and should remove this temporary bridge which was installed by Finch Pruyn for logging in 1992. There is no need for a snowmobile trail across the Polaris Bridge into the Vanderwhacker Wild Forest and in fact, motorized use of the bridge would not be in the best interest of the resource because this action would site motorized use in the edge of the defined Remote Interior areas in the Vanderwhacker Wild Forest. Further, DEC has explained that the two routes that are proposed to cross the Iron (Polaris) Bridge have major construction issues. The two proposed routes in the Vanderwhacker Wild Forest that would cross the bridge are very wet or have major construction issues. I am also very concerned that either one of these proposed routes will create a redundant snowmobile corridor because of the existing snowmobile route to the west of the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex that utilizes the Cornell Road and connects Indian Lake to Newcomb and Minerva.
RESPONSE: *The Complex Plan proposes to allow the continued use of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge for snowmobile access and to support a CP-3 designated route. Pursuant to current law and regulations, DEC has determined that the use of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge can continue as an existing land use.*

COMMENT: As snowmobilers in NY, we support the overall Complex plan as submitted by the Department of Environmental Resources. We believe the Polaris Bridge should remain in place. Also, we support a Cedar River Bridge. We are snowmobilers from PA that visit NY to snowmobile several times each winter.

RESPONSE: *Comment is noted and the Complex Plan currently proposes the continued use of the Polaris Bridge, and the construction of a bridge over the Cedar River, to support a Class II community connector snowmobile trail linking the Towns of Indian Lake with Minerva.*

COMMENT: The Opalescent Hunting and Fishing Club has 75 members who also hike, bike and snowmobile. As snowmobilers we support the overall plan and support any effort for the trails to become a hub for the five surrounding towns. We believe the Polaris Bridge should stay open and serve multi-trail function. We STRONGLY support Alternative 1B for a snowmobile trail that will connect Indian Lake to Minerva and a Cedar River bridge as you outlined in Alternative 4. This area has long been neglected and can serve to open up the recreational possibilities like those in Old Forge/Inlet area.
RESPONSE: *Comment is noted; with regard to the use of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge, please see the response above. In regard to Alternative IB, DEC has concluded this alternative has the potential for greater adverse environmental impacts due to terrain constraints and the presence of wetlands areas. Alternative 1A can be constructed using fewer bridges and terrain manipulation.*

COMMENT: The connection of these towns and the use of both proposed bridges will be a great way to enjoy these wonderful chunks of land that would otherwise only be enjoyed by a few. I know this land better than most and would love to see the next generation get off their phones and get into the woods.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: I firmly support the proposed snowmobile trail that crosses the Hudson on the Polaris Bridge and continues up the east side of the Hudson to Newcomb, where it will join the Newcomb to Minerva trail.
RESPONSE: *Comment is noted and the Complex Plan currently supports the use of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge.*

COMMENT: The Adirondack Council opposes expanding motorized recreational use in the Hudson Wild and Scenic River corridor and opening for new public motorized use what the Council refers to as the "temporary" Polaris Bridge installed in 1992 by Finch Pruyn for logging.
RESPONSE: *DEC believes the proposed use of the Chain Lakes Road (South) and the Iron (Polaris) Bridge do not constitute an alteration or expansion from the current levels of existing land use.*

COMMENT: I DO NOT believe that the Polaris Bridge, which crosses the Hudson River, should be removed. The Polaris Bridge should be retained and repaired when necessary.
RESPONSE: *Comment noted and the Complex Plan currently supports the continued use of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge*.

COMMENT: Any bridges that are currently in place should remain such as the Polaris Bridge. Removing already in place structures in this area is just plain not a good idea.
RESPONSE: *Comment noted, see above response.*

COMMENT: The Polaris Bridge should be removed. It is a nonconforming use in a Wild, Scenic, and Recreational River Area. It was never intended to be permanent. The APA permit allowing its' construction stated that the bridge was to be used temporarily until logging was completed. It was never a public road or open to use by the public. The Draft Complex's statements to the contrary are an

attempt to rewrite history and are misleading. To comply with the law, once this property came into State ownership, the State – through its appropriate agency, which in this case is DEC, is required to take the bridge away.

RESPONSE: *The APA permit issued on February 27, 1992 does not contain a condition that the bridge be removed after the property is logged. As stated in the APA permit Conclusions of Law: "The project would not cause an undue adverse impact upon the natural, scenic, aesthetic, ecological, wildlife, historic, recreational or open space resources of the Park or upon the ability of the public to provide supporting facilities and services made necessary by the project, taking into account the economic and social benefits that might be derived therefrom." DEC has determined that the Iron (Polaris) Bridge is an existing land use, and the continued use of the bridge by the public does not constitute an expansion or alteration of its use.*

COMMENT: The justification for the continued use of the Polaris Bridge and the construction of the Cedar River Bridge should be provided.
RESPONSE: *The Complex Plan includes additional information relating to the justification to support the determination that allows the continued use of the Iron (Polaris) Bridge and the construction of a bridge over the Cedar River.*

Snowmobiling

COMMENT: The two options for new class II community connector snowmobile trails proposed to be cut through the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest area will violate the NYS Constitution because of the great number of trees to be cut and the vast alteration of the natural terrain which undermines constitutional protections that these lands be "forever kept as wild forest lands."
RESPONSE: *DEC believes the construction of the proposed Class II community connector trail through the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest area will not violate Article XIV of the New York State Constitution because an immaterial amount of three cutting is anticipated. The location of the new trail will be sited in a manner which minimizes impacts to the environment to the greatest extent practicable.*

COMMENT: The alternatives for snowmobile trails which could be located to the west of the Hudson River need additional analysis. Related to this, the assertion that the Chain Lakes Road (North) is a town road is incorrect. The commenter says there is no evidence that the Town of Newcomb maintains this road. The DEC should refer to Highway Law 212 and disallow ATV's on this road.
RESPONSE: *DEC has considered this comment and declines to make this revision with regard to the snowmobile trails located to the west of the Hudson River. The location of the trails to the west of the Hudson River result in the potential for adverse impacts to the river resources in the area greater than the preferred alternative. With regard to the ATV use, the Complex Plan does not propose any public ATV use on roads.*

COMMENT: I would like to see at least consideration for a trail from Indian lake to Minerva. The trail from Indian lake to Newcomb was one of the best things that ever happened to the area.
RESPONSE: *The Complex Plan establishes a trail between Indian Lake and Minerva.*

COMMENT: The Adirondack Council supports establishing appropriate snowmobile use and snowmobile trail alternatives that limit impacts to the natural resources and serene recreational

experience that this wild area offers. The Council opposes the building of new snowmobile trail in the interior of the Vanderwhacker Wild Forest Area. The Council states that this would unnecessarily open this wild and remote area to disturbances given other trail alternatives to the west, and put at risk sensitive wetlands and wildlife habitats.
RESPONSE: *DEC has determined that the preferred alternative for the segment of the Indian Lake to Minerva Class II community connector trail located within the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest area minimizes adverse environmental impacts to the greatest extent practicable. Locating the trail within the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest area provides the most direct and reasonable route for creating a community connector route between the communities of Indian Lake and Minerva. Existing haul roads will be utilized for a portion of the segment, and DEC will seek to avoid, consistent with the 2009 snowmobile guidance, wetlands and sensitive wild life habitat.*

COMMENT: How will ATVs be prevented from using snowmobile trails?
RESPONSE: *DEC will enforce against unauthorized ATV use within the Complex Area.*

COMMENT: I have been snowmobiling the area for over 33 years and my family enjoys all the area has to offer. We usually stay in the area 8 weekends in the winter and 1-2 weekends in the summer.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: Snowmobiles trails should stay on the periphery of management areas and stay near existing roads.
RESPONSE: *The Complex Plan proposes to locate snowmobile trails in accordance with the 2009 snowmobile guidance. Careful consideration will be given to site trails in locations that minimize adverse environmental impacts to the greatest extent practicable. Locating snowmobile trails next to existing roads can sometimes diminish the snowmobile experience and create potential safety issues.*

COMMENT: I strongly support Alternative 1B for a snowmobile trail that will connect Indian Lake to Minerva.
RESPONSE: *Alternative 1B has the greater potential for adverse environmental impacts to the natural resources of the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest area, therefore the preferred location of the trail is Alternative 1A.*

COMMENT: As nature and snowmobile enthusiasts, we support the complex plan and believe a "recreational hub" would not only be beautiful, but also could provide needed winter revenue for these communities. We support Alternative 1B and Alternative 4 and feel that the Polaris Bridge should stay in place to serve the multi-trail system in the Complex. We also support ALL of the efforts and energies of the DEC and applaud your work as you serve and protect our beautiful Adirondack Park!
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: The commenter supports both options 1A and 1B for the snowmobile trail, but prefers 1B as they like the direct connection between the towns. Parking areas should be in the hamlets and not in the interior of the management areas, so the people who access the management areas will have access to food and lodging.
RESPONSE: *DEC believes that the most direct route would result in an unacceptable level of adverse impacts to the natural resources within the area, therefore Alternative 1A is the preferred alternative. The DEC has provided for a limited number of parking spaces in the interior of the management area*

with the full understanding that demand will exceed the capacity and parking areas within the hamlets and towns will be utilized.

COMMENT: I was at the hearing in Newcomb and was disappointed that we could not ask questions. I was also disappointed that you are still showing Alternative B as a possible route, and concerned that snow trends in the park and climate change in general were not discussed. Minerva has not had reliable snow cover in the last ten years, enough for heavy use by groomers and half ton snowmobiles. The commenter asks who would maintain the marshy route through the wild forest. The commenter asks if DOT has been contacted about constructing a bridge at Route 28N over the Boreas River. The commenter asks what chemicals are used on bog bridges, such as fungicides, and asks if these chemicals would come in contact with the water. The commenter asks for a picture or specification for bog bridges and asks if these are in use on private land. The commenter asks to see an easement contract for a connector trail going over private land, preferably a form that is completed.
RESPONSE: *The purpose of the hearing is for DEC to receive public comment on the proposed Complex Plan. In order to conduct the hearing in a manner that is fair to all participants, DEC is unable to respond to questions or comments in that forum because of the time it would take to answer all questions received.*

COMMENT: DEC's plans to retain and utilize the Iron (Polaris) Bridge and build new multi-use snowmobile trails through the interior of the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest area violates the Snowmobile Trail Guidance because it is duplicative and will be cut through a wild, interior area of the Forest Preserve. No new snowmobile trails should be cut through the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest area east of the Hudson River. These trails are redundant since the APA has approved a Minerva to Newcomb trail and there is already a trail from Indian Lake to Newcomb, so there is already an Indian Lake to Minerva connection. The existing snowmobile trail through the conservation easement needs to be assessed. **RESPONSE:** *The existing trails to the West in the Blue Mountain Wild Forest connect Indian Lake to Blue Mountain Lake, Indian Lake and Blue Mountain Lake to Long Lake, and Long Lake to Newcomb, but not Indian Lake to Minerva. The proposed snowmobile trail in this UMP is intended to connect Indian Lake to Minerva.*

COMMENT: I support the recreational use of snowmobiles on a dedicated trail network as long as these recreational uses do not impact recreational uses of other visitors, wildlife, and habitat in the wilderness area. However, I oppose building a snowmobile trail into the interior of the Vanderwhacker Wild Forest Area as it would unnecessarily disturb the area and put sensitive wetlands and wildlife at risk.
RESPONSE: *DEC has selected the preferred alternative for the snowmobile trail in a location that minimizes adverse environmental impacts to the greatest extent practicable. The analysis by DEC took into account impacts to other uses on this multiple use trail, as well as impacts to wildlife, habitat, and other natural resources. DEC has chosen Alternative 1A because it avoids environmentally sensitive areas within the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest which includes many wetland areas.*

COMMENT: We are a family of 4 avid snowmobilers. My wife and I and our children absolutely love Adirondacks. We are members of the NYSSA and travel 6 ½ hours every weekend each way to enjoy what the Adirondacks have to offer for our sport. We support the overall Complex plan as it should support the efforts of the five surrounding towns to become a "Recreational Hub" and generate much needed income for the area. We would love to see the proposed 1B alternative for a snowmobile trail that would link Minerva to Indian Lake. We also believe the Polaris Bridge should stay in place and serve all seasonal uses for recreation. We would also support a new Cedar River Bridge as described in

Alternative 4. We own a property in upstate Pennsylvania where we have snowmobiled for years and we prefer to make the much longer trip to the Adirondacks because of the involvement and planning such as this that makes the experience that much more enjoyable.
RESPONSE: *Alternative 1B was rejected by DEC because of the significant environmental constraints caused by the existing terrain, number of wetland crossings and probable impacts to wetlands. DEC estimates that Alternative 1B would require twice as many bridges built than Alternative 1A, and would require more terrain modification such as the construction of water bars, bench-cutting, ditching, and the construction of a turnpike through a wetland.*

COMMENT: Please allow/keep the Essex Chain of Lakes trails open to snowmobile use. I also strongly urge the DEC to make the necessary upgrades to any bridges, crossings, signage and maintenance of trails to enhance the system for all types of activities. Snowmobilers' economic impact is considerable and reaches past NY State borders. Please keep the trails open and maintained.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: As a snowmobiler, I support the overall Complex Plan. The plan should support the efforts and the desire of the five surrounding towns to become a "Recreational Hub." I believe that the Polaris Bridge should stay in place and serve multi-trail interests in the Complex. I strongly support Alternative 1B for a snowmobile trail that will connect Indian Lake to Minerva.
RESPONSE: *Alternative 1B was rejected by DEC due to the greater potential for adverse environmental impacts to the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest.*

COMMENT: Remember that snowmobile trails are designed for multiple uses, including horses and bikes, not just snowmobiles.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: It should be explained how the proposed location and design of the proposed snowmobile trails comply with the snowmobile guidance documents.
RESPONSE: This has been addressed in Section O on the Complex Plan – Snowmobile Trails

COMMENT: In assessing various alternative management recommendations this Draft UMP fails to take Climate Change into account. The decline in the number of weeks of snow pack and the loss of ice cover even in the central Adirondack Park over the past 50 years is very well-documented. The failure of any Adirondack Forest Preserve UMP to take these facts into account in how winter sports like snowmobiling are planned and managed should be viewed by the DEC and APA as a serious UMP deficiency.
RESPONSE: *DEC has considered the effects of climate change on the proposed Complex Plan, but declines to make any changes to the current version of the document*.

Universal Access

COMMENT: I am glad to see a section devoted to handicapped and elderly people. I am 82 years old, a year round resident of Newcomb living at Goodnow Flow on Woodys Road and have a DEC handicap permit. Please speed up your plans for handicap use at Fourth and Fifth Lakes. Traffic in front of my home has increased ten-fold. The DEC Ranger told us that people going to and from Deer Pond would use the Cornell Road all the way to and from Route 28N. The state spent our tax dollars to buy this

easement, so please grade that road to make it the access to Deer Pond and not Woodys Road. Safety is important.
RESPONSE: *The accessible parking, camping, and waterway access for people with disabilities will be constructed this field season.*

COMMENT: For over 30 years I have enjoyed fishing the Stillwater area of the Hudson River. The gate was erected 0.80 miles from the river. There is no way I can haul my canoe up that long hill. We were told the gate was going to be moved closer to the river as permitted, so as to eliminate the hill. If this cannot be done, then let handicapped people go around the existing gate. Snowmobiles can. How do handicapped people get to Third Lake? Do we have to paddle all the way to get to the best fishing? Will the Management plan permit battery powered bicycles? They have no motors, and can travel the proposed bicycle trails. They are used by pedaling on level ground and then assist when going up hills. They have a far less impact on the trails than horses and snowmobiles and require less expense for trail maintenance.
RESPONSE: *The parking for the Hudson River at the Iron (Polaris) Bridge has been moved down the hill, and is now 0.30 mi from the River, on a much flatter grade. Accessible parking and waterway access will be provided at Fifth Lake, and from Fifth Lake there are no carries to Third Lake, one can paddle seamlessly.*

COMMENT: The Adirondack Council supports providing special access for persons with disabilities, including a parking lot close to Fourth and Fifth Lake for those seeking an authentic wild lands experience.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: I believe that the Hudson Wild and Scenic River corridor must remain open to people of all abilities to enjoy. And, I support keeping the Polaris Bridge across the Hudson River. The Adirondack Park is vast. There are enough totally wild areas to preserve the natural resources. Its beauty should not be completely closed off from people with limited mobility.
RESPONSE: *Noted.*

COMMENT: Efforts should be made to provide the maximum four-season motorized access for the most people.
RESPONSE: *DEC believes that this Complex Plan strikes the appropriate balance between recreational access, including access for people with disabilities, and resource preservation.*

Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act (WSRRSA)

COMMENT: Use of the Polaris Bridge and crossing of the Boreas River by snowmobiles is not permissible under the WSRRSA.
RESPONSE: *DEC has determined that existing statutory and regulatory authorities allow a permit to be issued to locate a trail, designed for use by snowmobiles, within a WSRRSA-designated river corridor, and allow the construction and use of a bridge over a river designated as Scenic.*

COMMENT: DEC must ensure that the planning, implementation, and construction of the bridge over the Cedar River complies with NYS Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers Act (WSRRA) Regulations. DEC

must follow the law in creating this new recreational resource in the Essex Chain Lakes Management Complex.
RESPONSE: *DEC will adhere to existing statutory and regulatory authority for the planning, implementation and construction of a bridge over the Cedar River Scenic River.*

COMMENT: DEC's plans for motor vehicle use within designated Wild and Scenic River corridors violates the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Act and violates long established management principles, practices, and precedents in long-standing Unit Management Plans, such as the Blue Mountain Wild Forest UMP.
RESPONSE: *DEC has interpreted existing statutory and regulatory authority to allow the continued use of motor vehicles, primary snowmobiles, within designated river areas as an existing land use.*

COMMENT: I support wild lands restoration and to that end, oppose expansion of motorized recreational use in the Hudson Wild and Scenic River corridor. I also support the removal of the Polaris Bridge to bring the area back to the wild quality its name suggests.
RESPONSE: *The State realizes that constructing program goals, such as the protection of natural resources and providing public access to recreational opportunities , are sometimes unavoidable, however, experience DEC strives to seek a balance among these priorities in order to provide as broad experience as possible to all members of the public.*

COMMENT: The Essex Chain Complex UMP should comply with the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Act, which prohibit a motor vehicle bridge over the Cedar River, prohibits retention of the Polaris Bridge for use by motor vehicles, and prohibits motor vehicles, such as float planes on Pine Lake or automobiles on the Chain Lake Road South, within the .5-mile corridor of classified Wild rivers.
RESPONSE*: The Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act and its implementing regulations were enacted and adopted, respectfully, to preserve rivers in their free-flowing condition and to protect their immediate surroundings for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. The act and implementing regulations identified certain activities that were allowed and prohibited, but also acknowledged that certain land uses, in existence when the act and its regulations first took effect, could continue. Such is the case for the use of the Polaris Bridge, the Chain Lakes Road (North), the Chain Lakes Road (South), and floatplane use on Pine Lake. The construction of a bridge over the Cedar River Scenic River is permitted for roads and non-motorized open space recreational uses. The regulations also allow DEC to permit motorized open space recreational uses, namely snowmobiles, to use the bridge if the DEC determines that the use will not adversely impact any river resource and meets all other applicable standards.*

COMMENT: When the purchase of the land was being considered, the understanding at that time was that the WSRRS was going to be amended to allow the uses and their locations that are proposed in the Draft UMP. If the Cedar River Bridge is important, then the regulations should be amended.
RESPONSE: *DEC has determined that existing statutory and regulatory authorities allow the proposed Action Steps in the UMP to be implemented without the need for a regulatory amendment.*

COMMENT: Comment was made that when the WSRRS Act was enacted it was not understood that all existing structures had to be removed.
RESPONSE*: DEC has interpreted the WSRRS Act to conclude that existing structures and improvements can continue to be used in the Complex Area in compliance with the WSRRS Act.*

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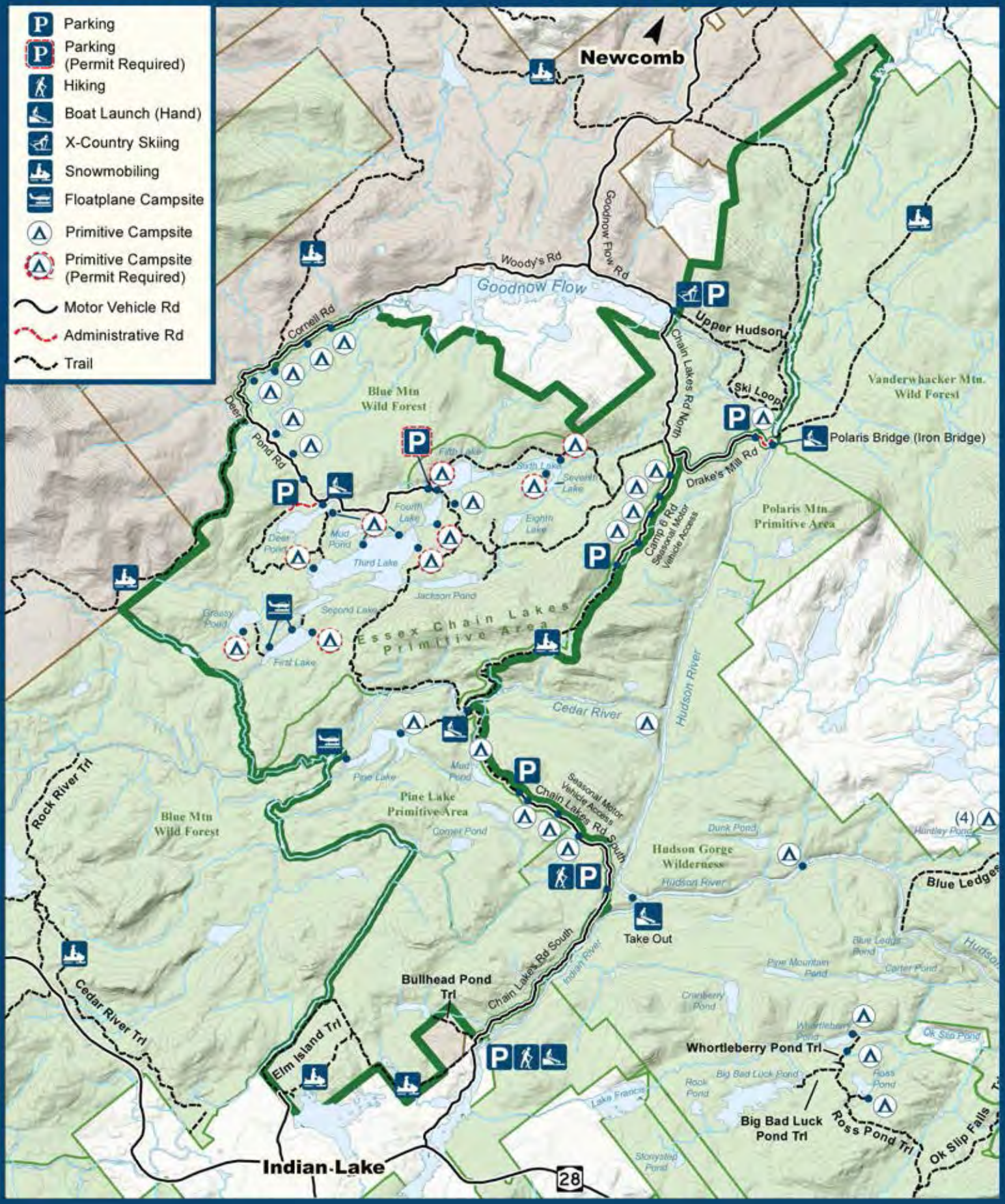
Appendix I - Maps and Photos

New York State's Forest Preserve

Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan

Proposed Facilities



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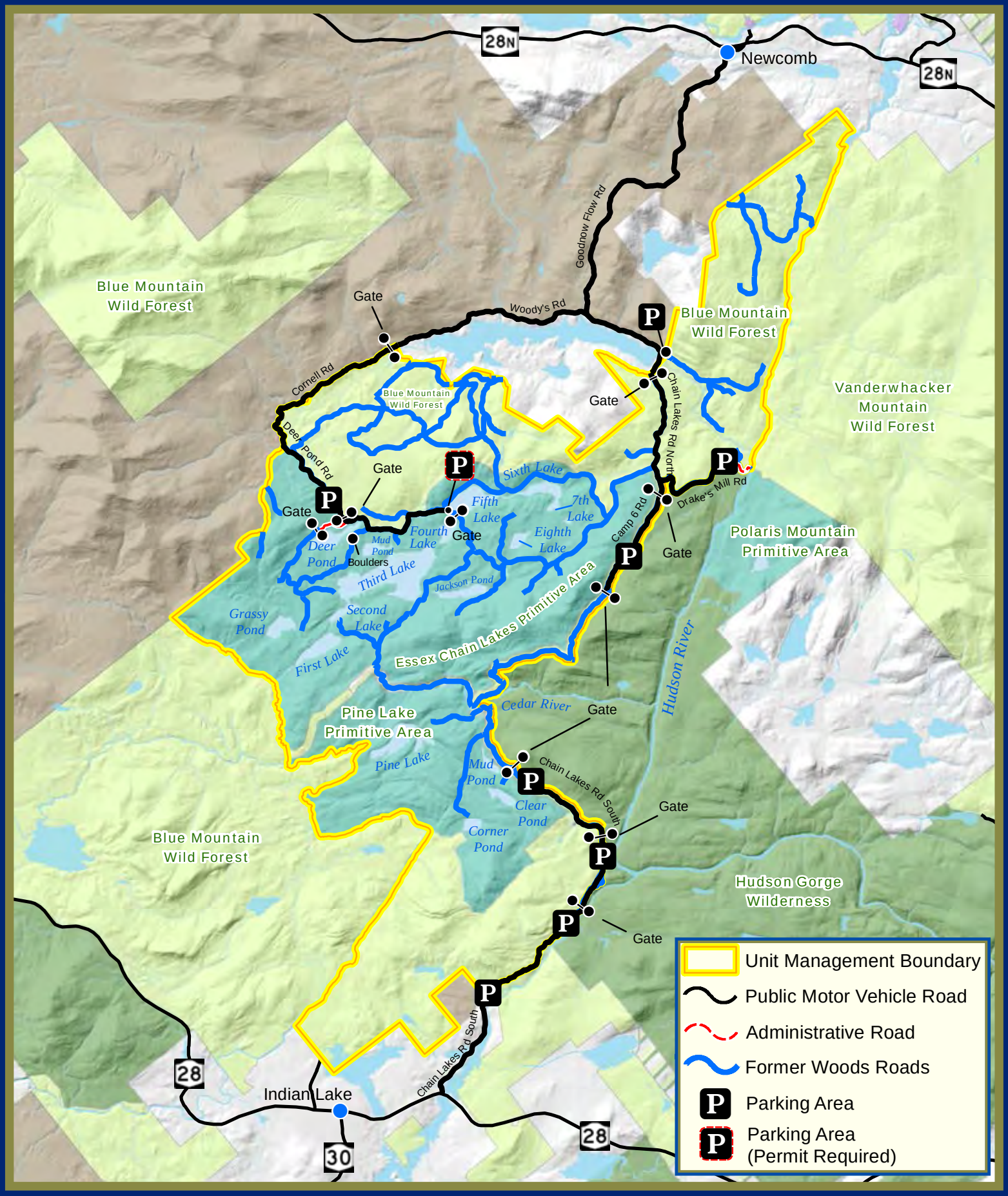
New York's Forest Preserve

Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan

Proposed Gates & Administrative Roads



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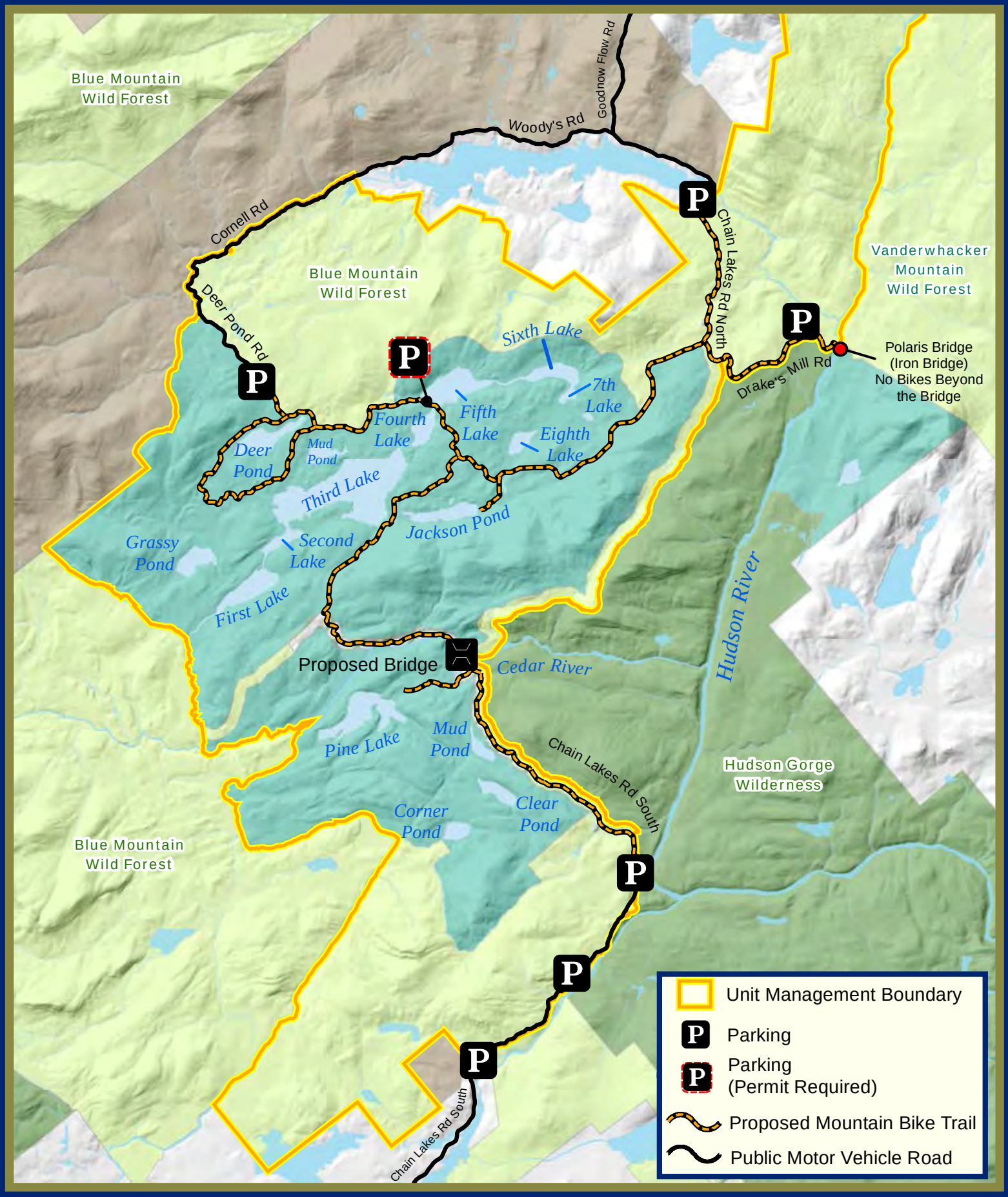
New York's Forest Preserve

Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan

Proposed Bicycle Trails



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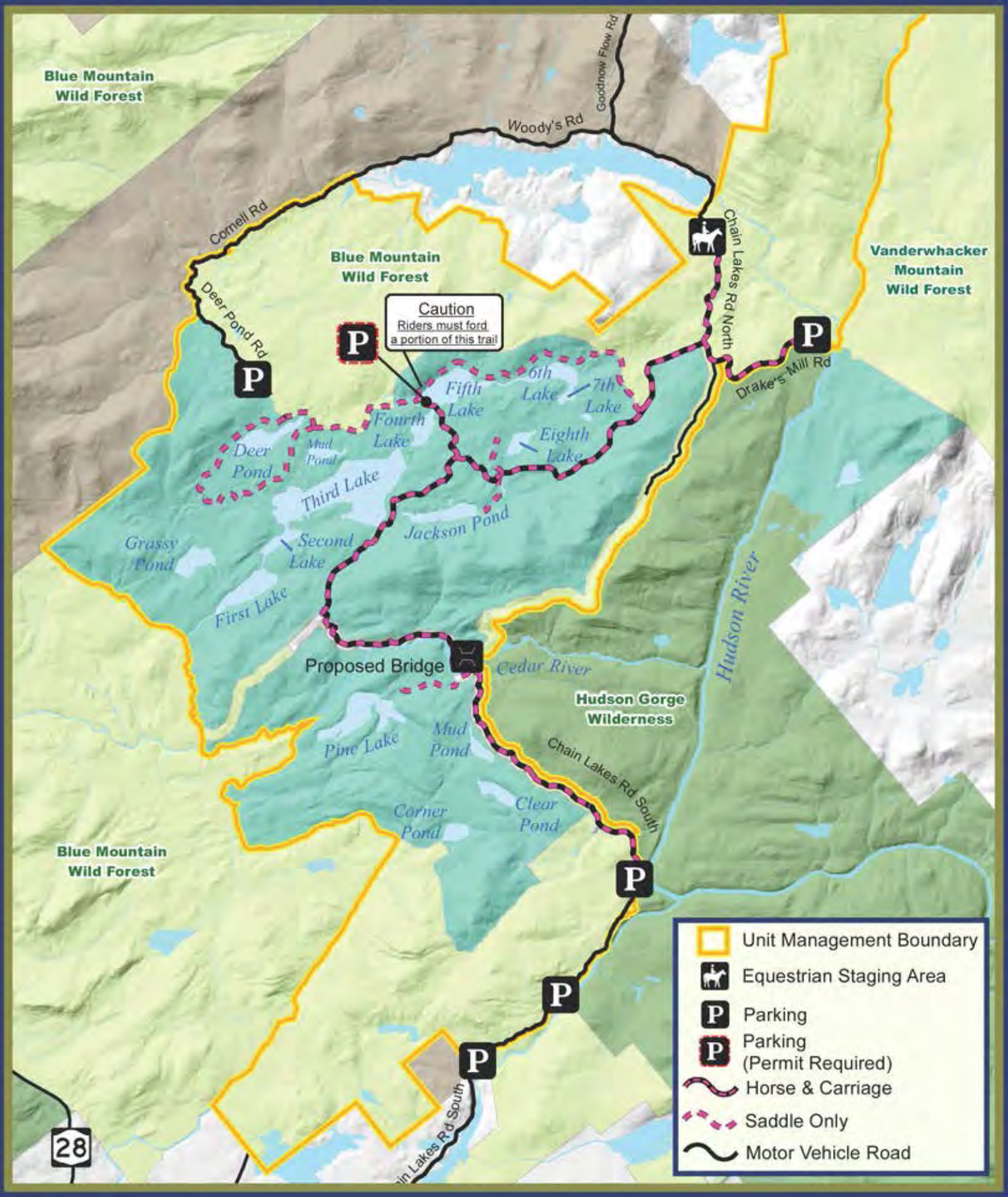
New York's Forest Preserve

Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan

Proposed Equestrian Trails



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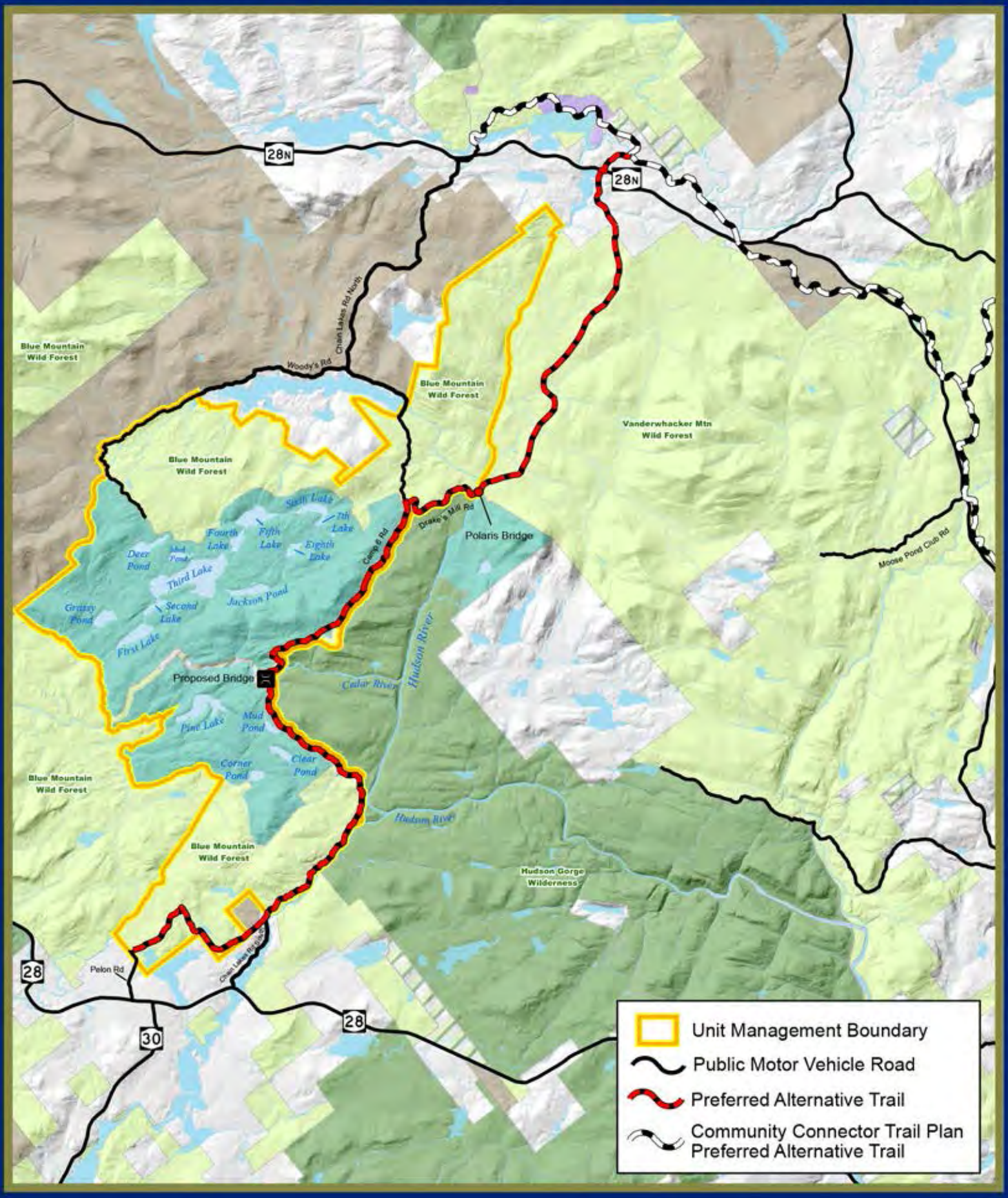
New York's Forest Preserve

Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Mangement Plan

Proposed Snowmobile Trail



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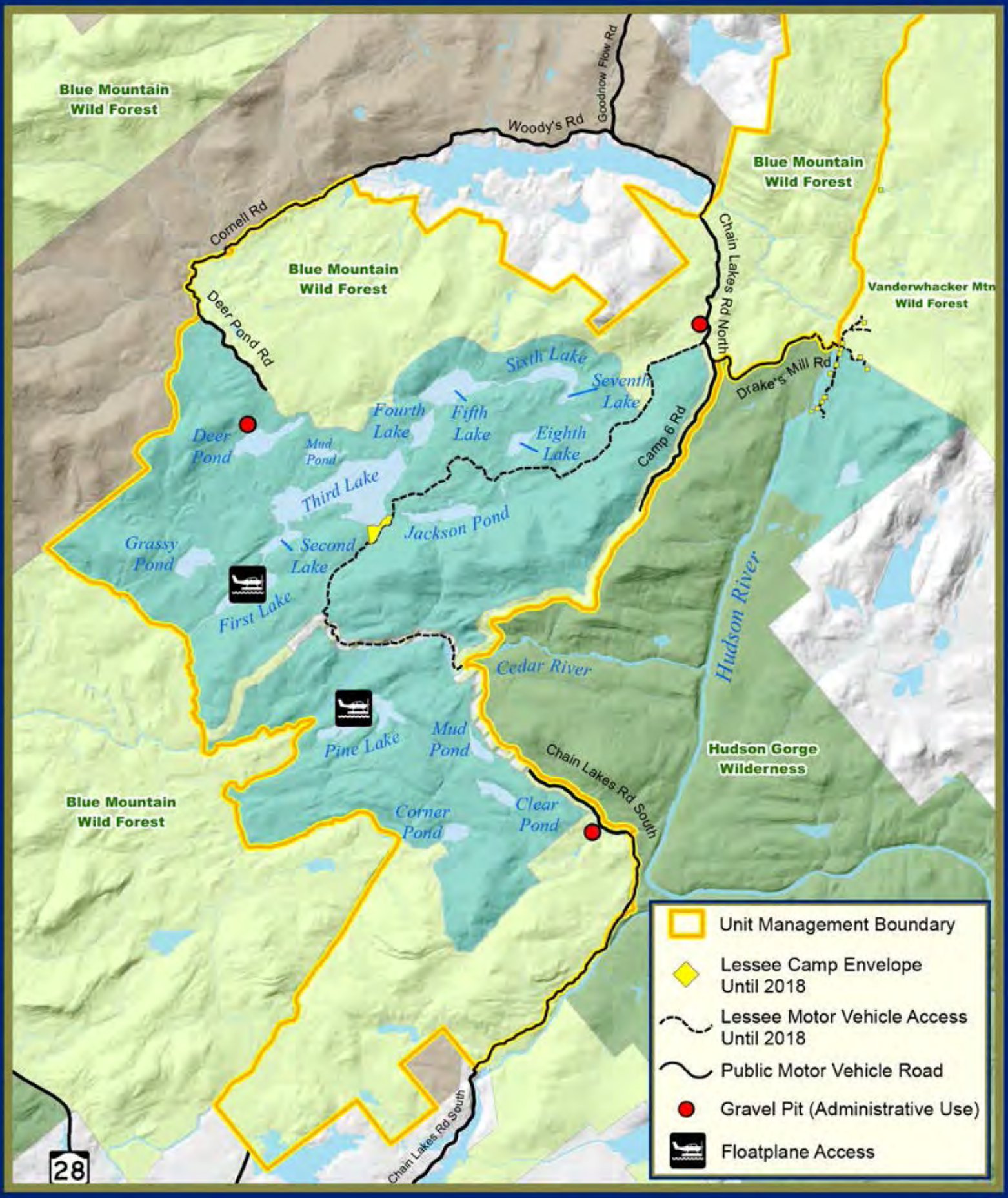
New York's Forest Preserve

Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan

Reserved Rights



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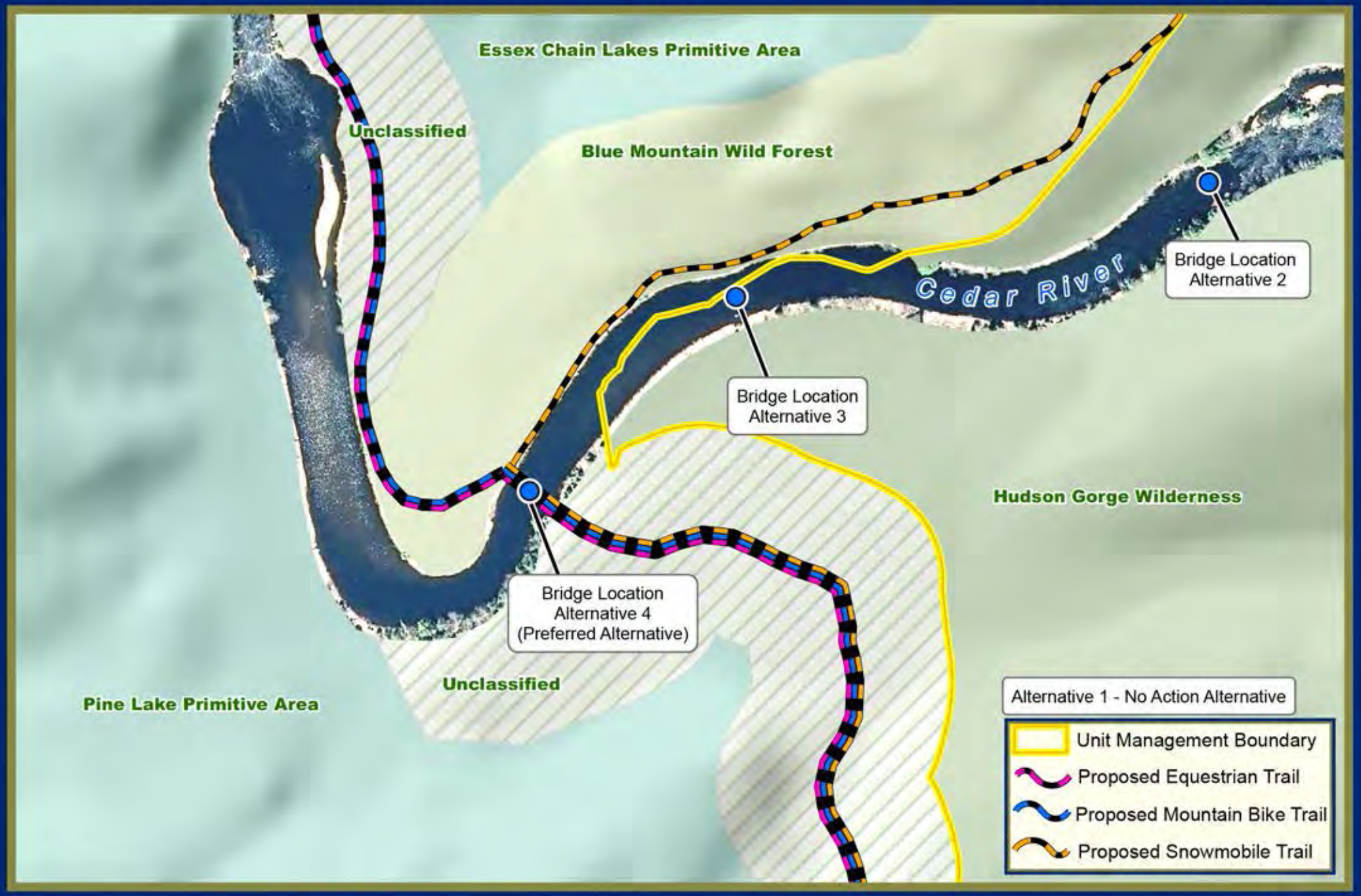
New York's Forest Preserve

Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan

Cedar River Bridge Location



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Warrensburg Office: (518)623-1200

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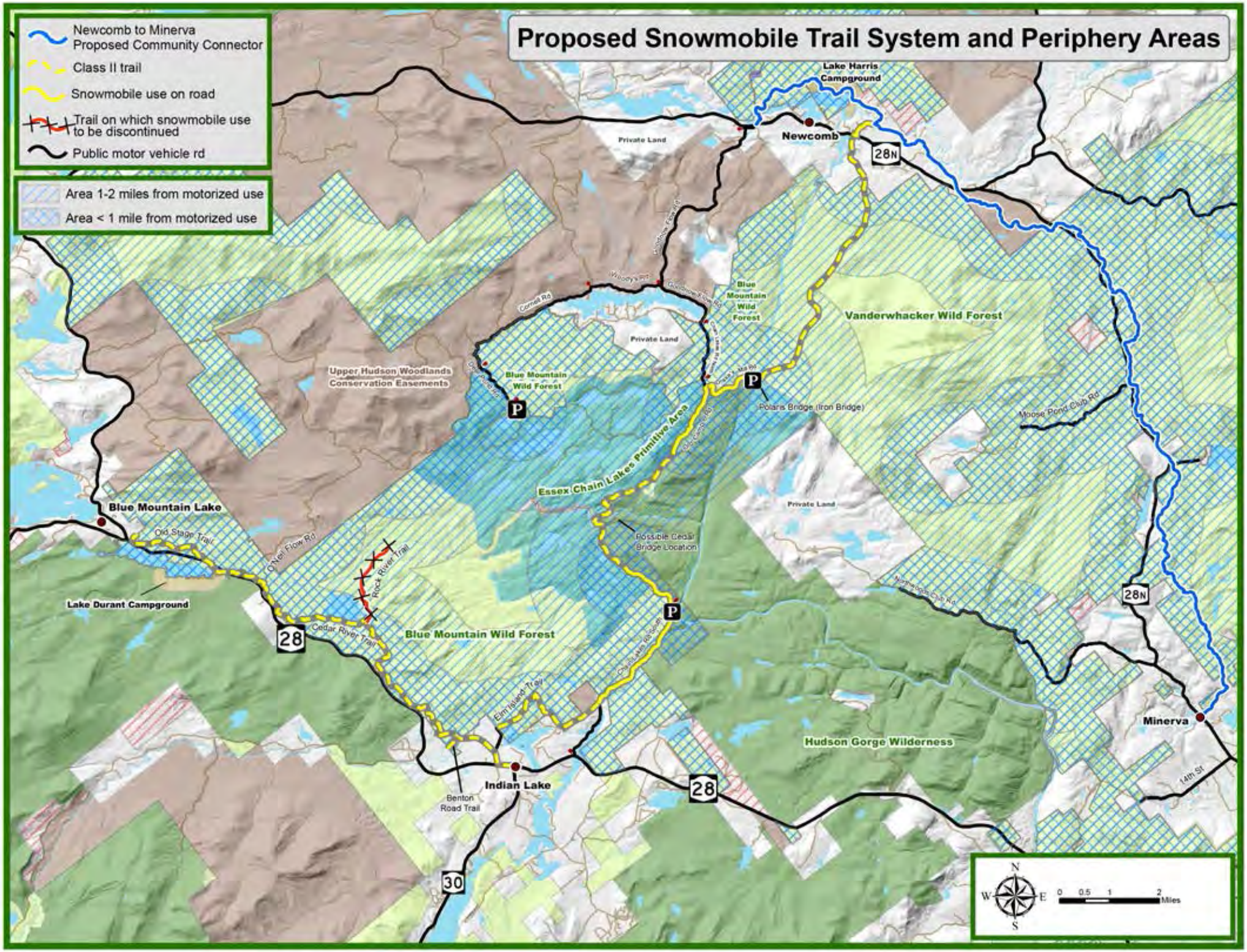
Proposed Snowmobile Trail System and Periphery Areas
Newcomb to Minerva Proposed Community Connector
Class II trail
Snowmobile use on road
Trail on which snowmobile use to be discontinued
Public motor vehicle rd
Area 1-2 miles from motorized use
Area < 1 mile from motorized use
Lake Harris Campground
Newcomb
28N
Private Land
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
Vanderwhacker Wild Forest
Upper Hudson Woodlands Conservation Easements
Polaris Bridge (Iron Bridge)
Moose Pond Club Rd
Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area
Possible Cedar Bridge Location
Blue Mountain Lake
Old Stage Trail
O'Neil Flow Rd
Rock River Trail
Lake Durant Campground
28
Cedar River Trail
Elm Island Trail
Hudson Gorge Wilderness
Minerva
14th St
Indian Lake
Benton Road Trail
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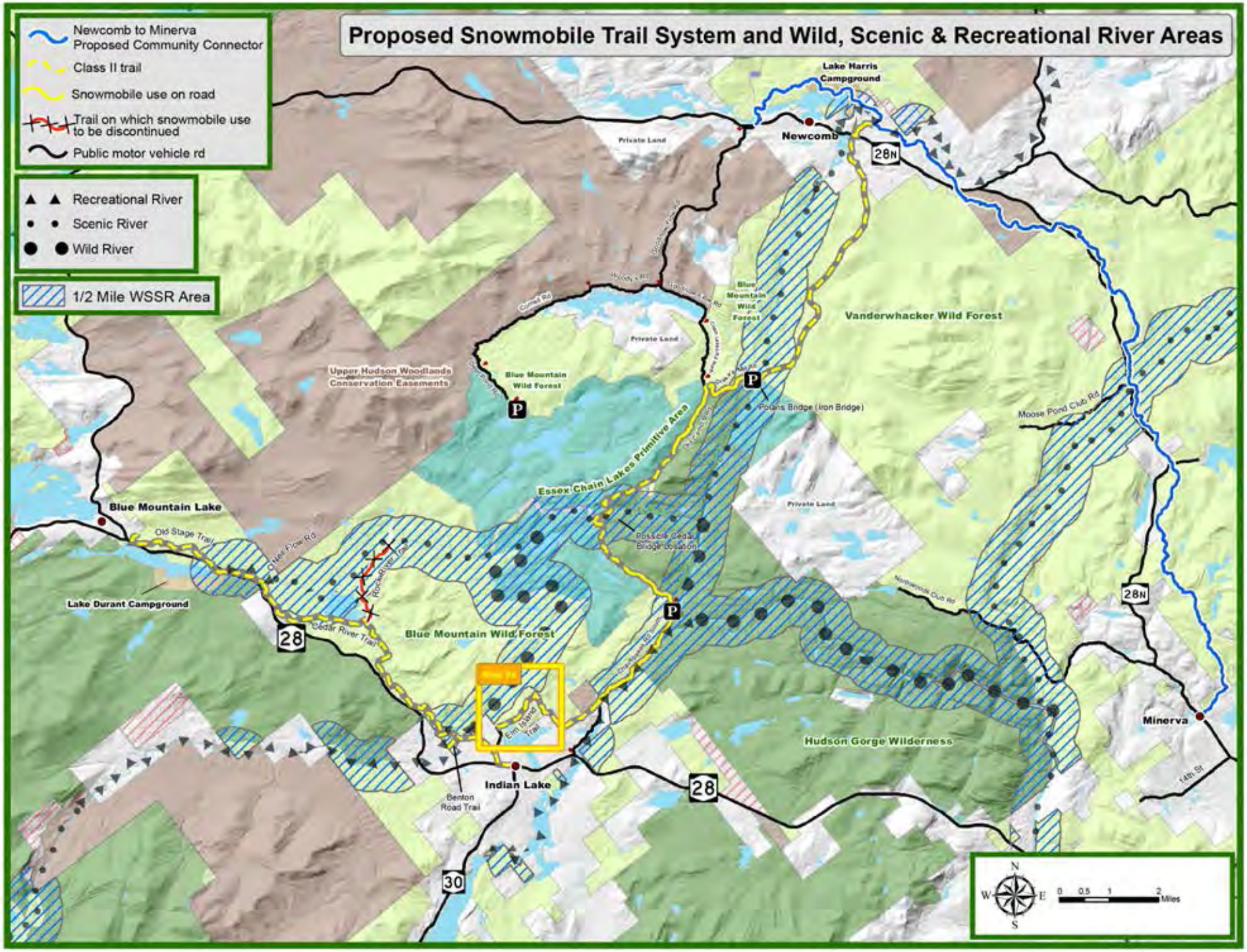
Proposed Snowmobile Trail System and Wild, Scenic & Recreational River Areas
Newcomb to Minerva Proposed Community Connector
Class II trail
Snowmobile use on road
Trail on which snowmobile use to be discontinued
Public motor vehicle rd
Recreational River
Scenic River
Wild River
1/2 Mile WSSR Area
Lake Harris Campground
Newcomb
28N
Private Land
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
Vanderwhacker Wild Forest
Upper Hudson Woodlands Conservation Easements
Potsdam Bridge (Iron Bridge)
Moose Pond Club Rd
Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area
Blue Mountain Lake
Old Stage Trail
O'Neil Flow Rd
Rocky River Trail
Possible Cedar Bridge Location
Lake Durant Campground
28
Cedar River Trail
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
Elm Island Trail
Hudson Gorge Wilderness
Minerva
Indian Lake
Benton Road Trail
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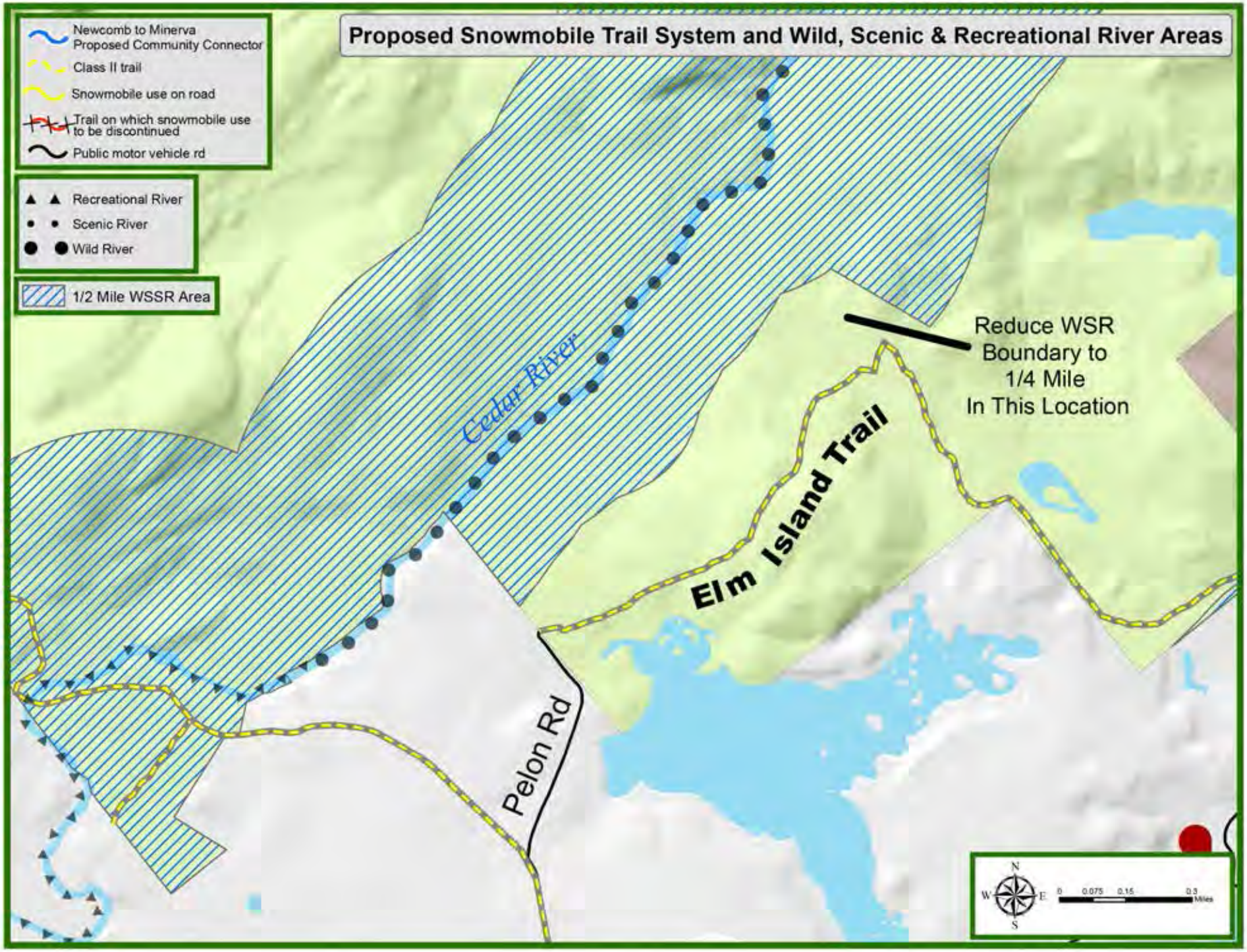
Proposed Snowmobile Trail System and Wild, Scenic & Recreational River Areas
Newcomb to Minerva Proposed Community Connector
Class II trail
Snowmobile use on road
Trail on which snowmobile use to be discontinued
Public motor vehicle rd
Recreational River
Scenic River
Wild River
1/2 Mile WSSR Area
Cedar River
Reduce WSR Boundary to 1/4 Mile In This Location
Elm Island Trail
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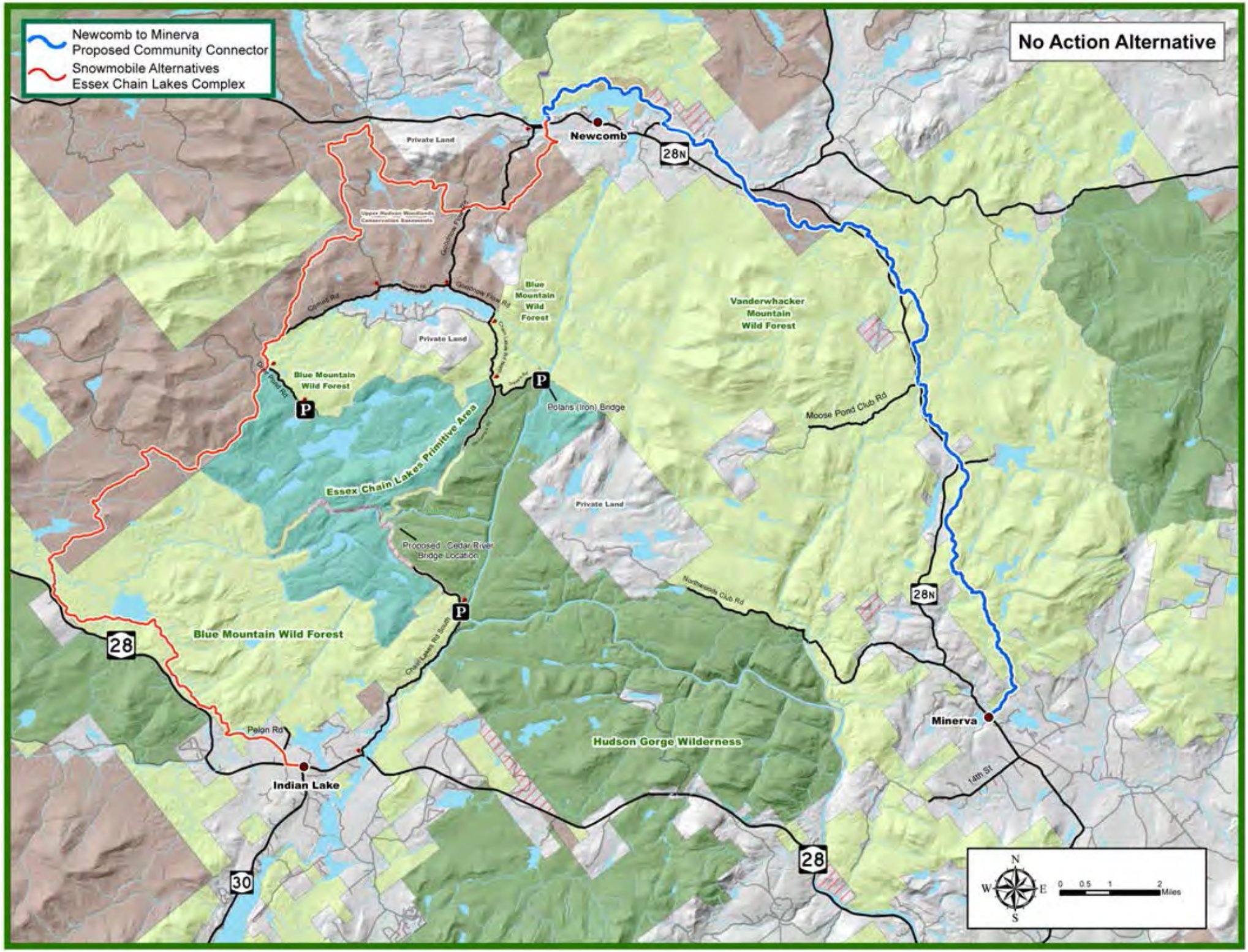
No Action Alternative
Newcomb to Minerva
Proposed Community Connector
Snowmobile Alternatives
Essex Chain Lakes Complex
Newcomb
28N
Private Land
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest
Private Land
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
Potsans (Iron) Bridge
Moose Pond Club Rd
Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area
Private Land
Proposed Cedar River Bridge Location
Northwoods Club Rd
28N
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
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Pelon Rd
Hudson Gorge Wilderness
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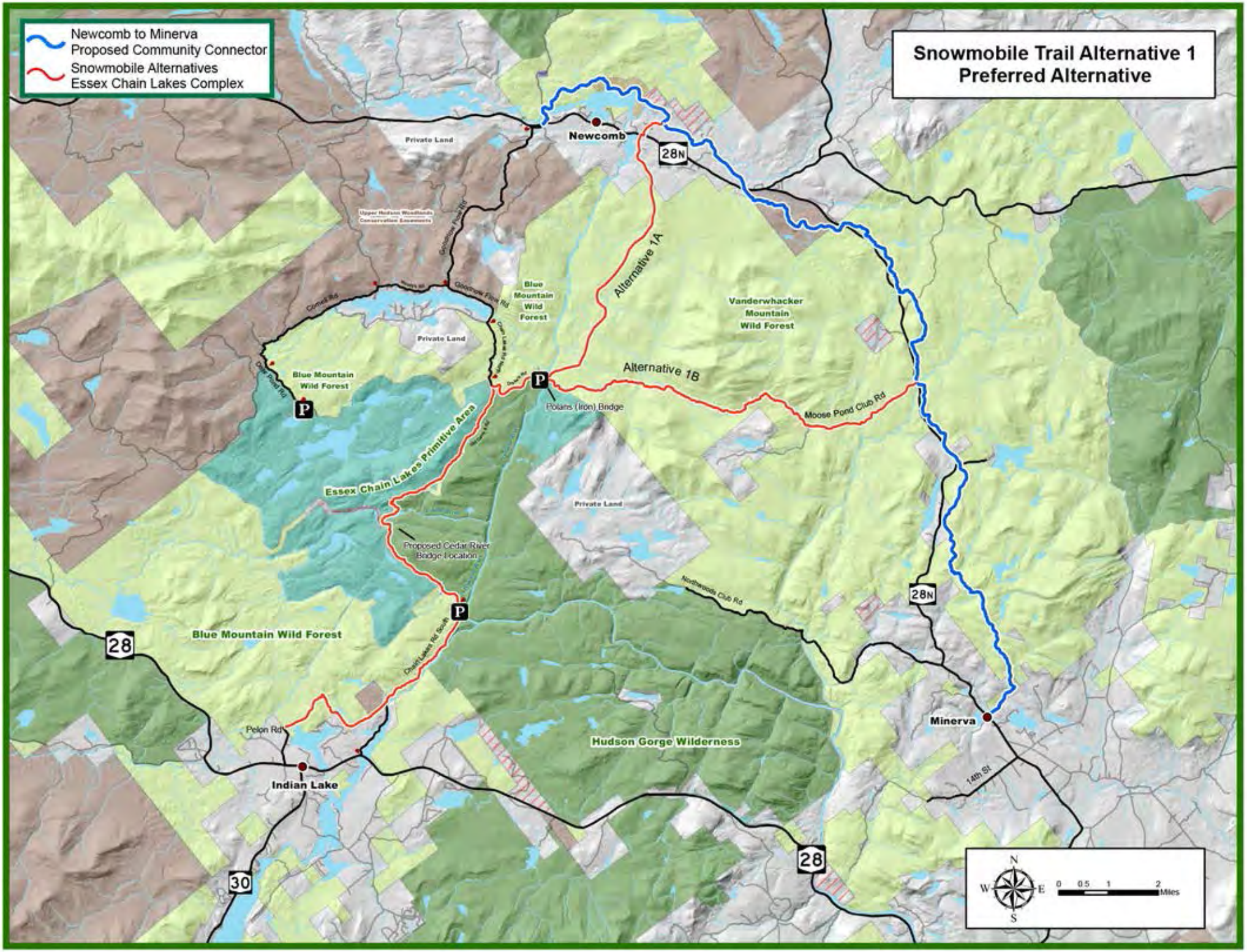
Newcomb to Minerva
Proposed Community Connector
Snowmobile Alternatives
Essex Chain Lakes Complex
Snowmobile Trail Alternative 1
Preferred Alternative
Newcomb
28N
Private Land
Upper Hudson Woodlands Conservation Easements
Goldthrite Flow Rd
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
Alternative 1A
Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest
Alternative 1B
Moose Pond Club Rd
Polans (Iron) Bridge
Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area
Proposed Cedar River Bridge Location
Northwoods Club Rd
Chain Lakes Rd South
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
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Pelon Rd
Indian Lake
Hudson Gorge Wilderness
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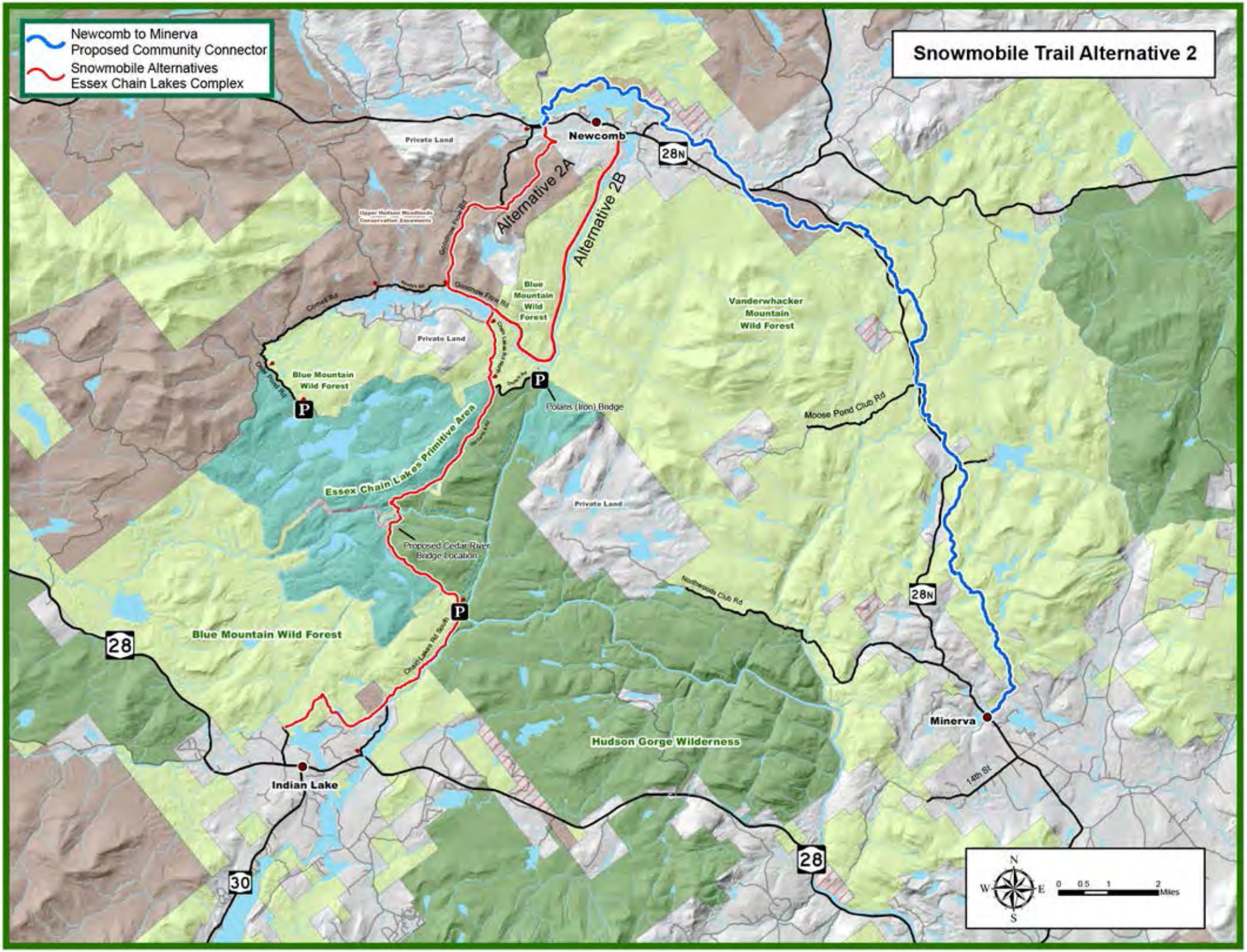
Snowmobile Trail Alternative 2
Newcomb to Minerva
Proposed Community Connector
Snowmobile Alternatives
Essex Chain Lakes Complex
Newcomb
Minerva
Indian Lake
Alternative 2A
Alternative 2B
28N
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30
Private Land
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest
Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area
Hudson Gorge Wilderness
Polaris (Iron) Bridge
Proposed Cedar River Bridge Location
Moose Pond Club Rd
Northwoods Club Rd
Cedar River Rd
Chain Lakes Rd South
14th St
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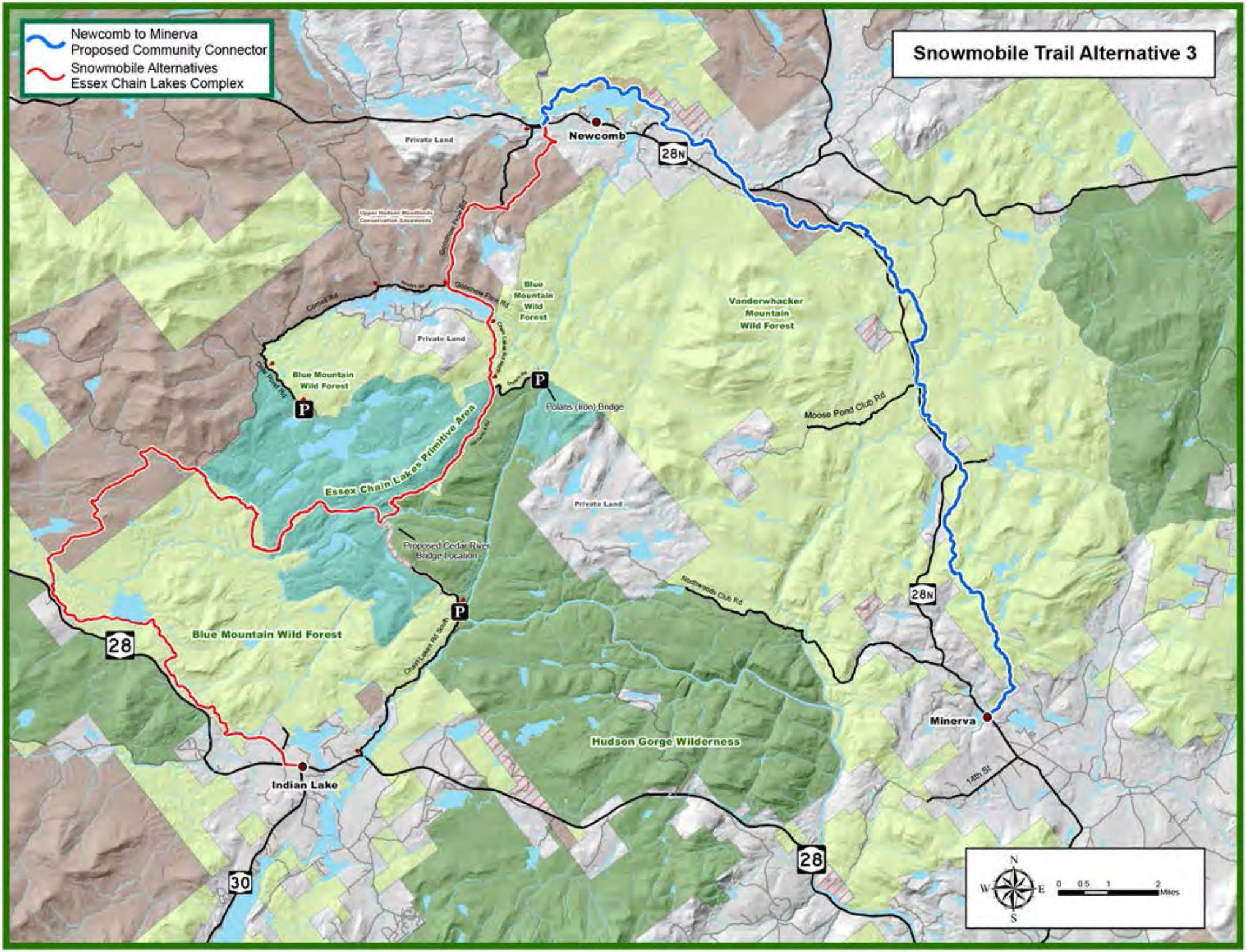
Snowmobile Trail Alternative 3
Newcomb to Minerva
Proposed Community Connector
Snowmobile Alternatives
Essex Chain Lakes Complex
Newcomb
28N
Private Land
Upper Hudson Woodlands Conservation Easements
Goldthwaite Pond Rd
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest
Cornell Rd
Private Land
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
Cedar River Rd
Polaris (Iron) Bridge
Moose Pond Club Rd
Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area
Private Land
Proposed Cedar River Bridge Location
Northwoods Club Rd
28N
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
28
Chain Lakes Rd South
Minerva
Hudson Gorge Wilderness
14th St
Indian Lake
28
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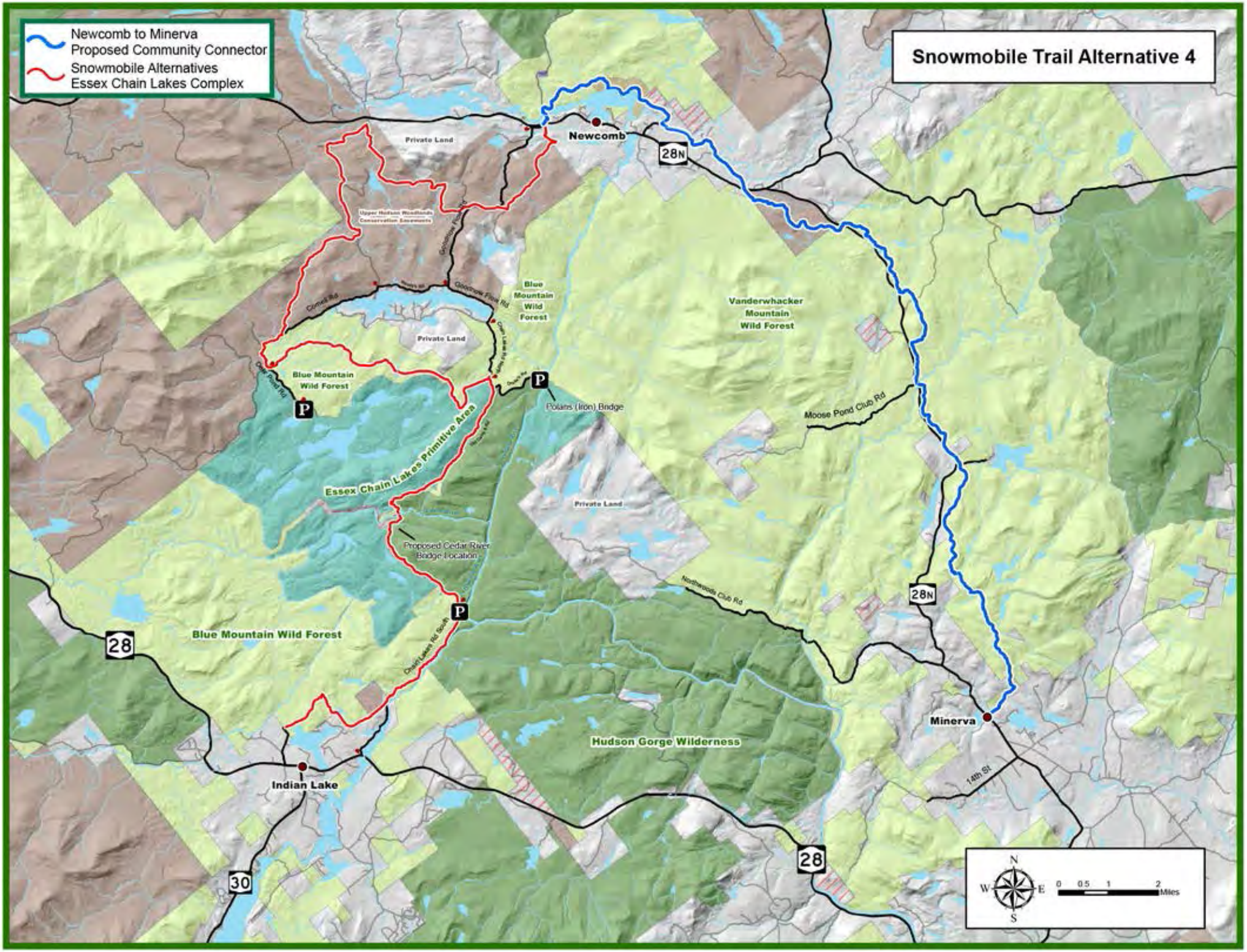
Snowmobile Trail Alternative 4
Newcomb to Minerva
Proposed Community Connector
Snowmobile Alternatives
Essex Chain Lakes Complex
Newcomb
28N
Private Land
Upper Hudson Woodlands Conservation Easements
Goldthrite Flow Rd
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest
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Minerva
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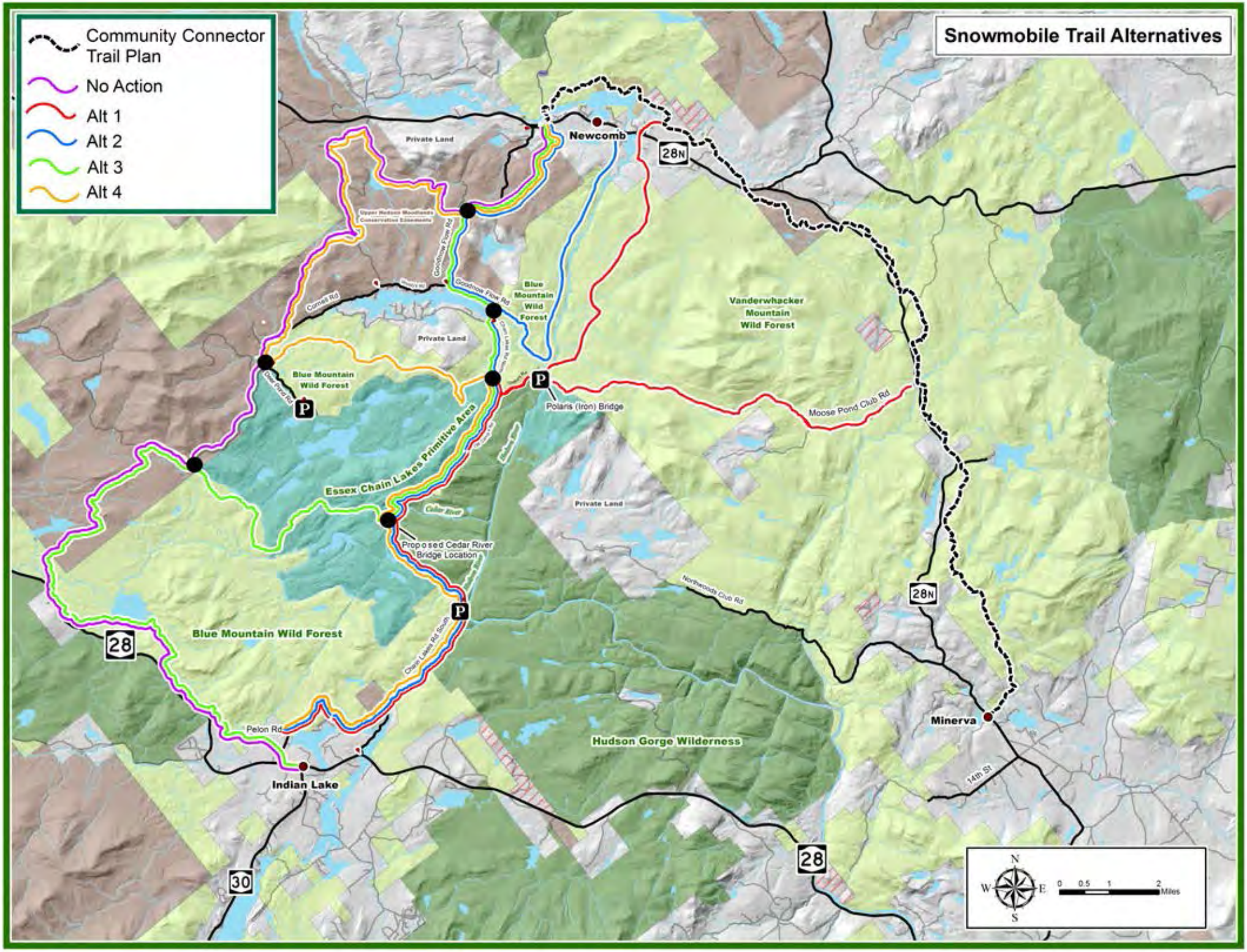
Snowmobile Trail Alternatives
Community Connector Trail Plan
No Action
Alt 1
Alt 2
Alt 3
Alt 4
Newcomb
28N
Private Land
Upper Hudson Woodlands Conservation Easements
Goodnow Flow Rd
Blue Mountain Wild Forest
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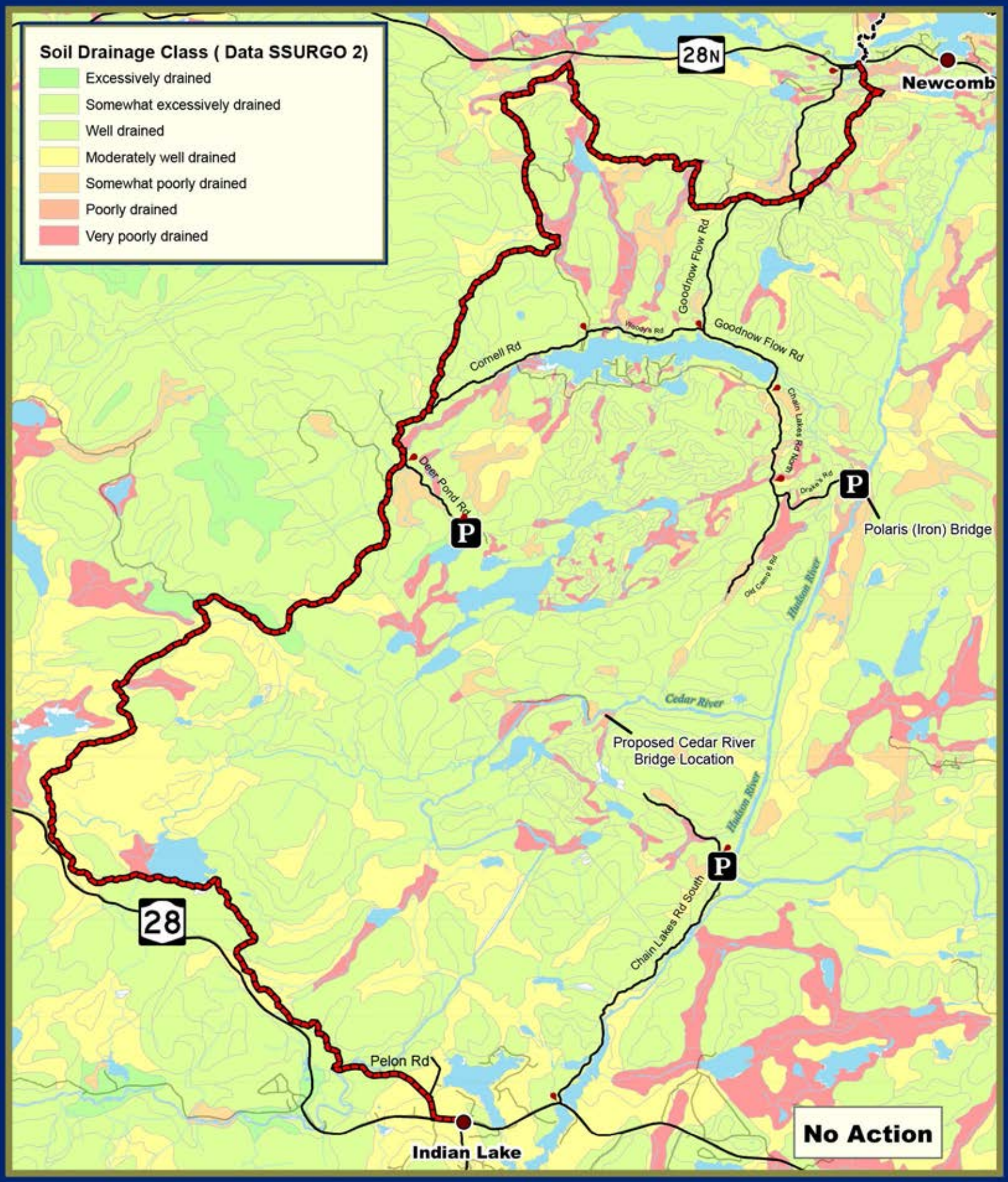
New York's Forest Preserve

Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan

Soils



NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY | Department of Environmental Conservation

Warrensburg Office: (518)623-1200

0 0.75 1.5 3 Miles

0 0.75 1.5 3 Kilometers

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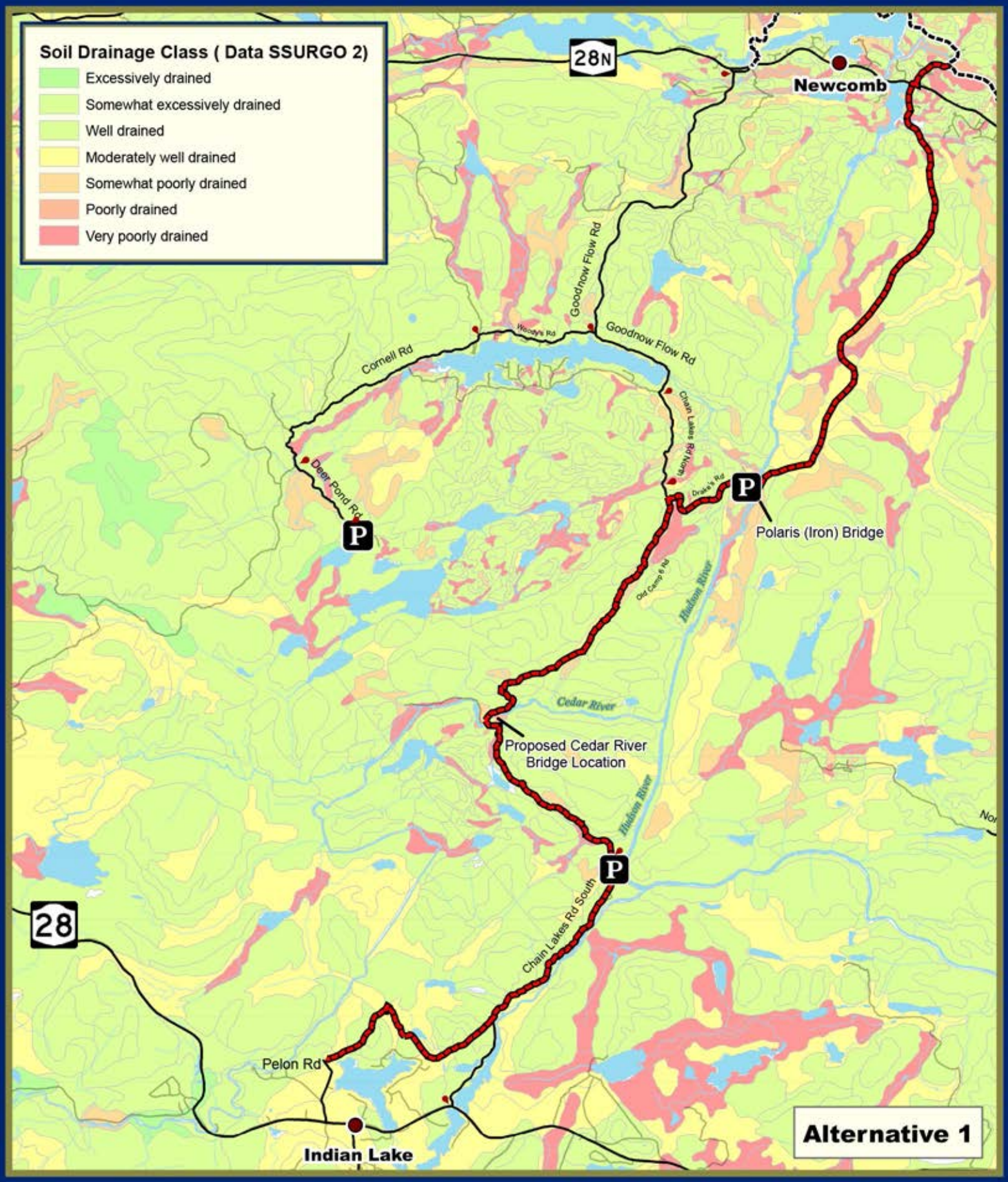
New York's Forest Preserve

Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan

Soils



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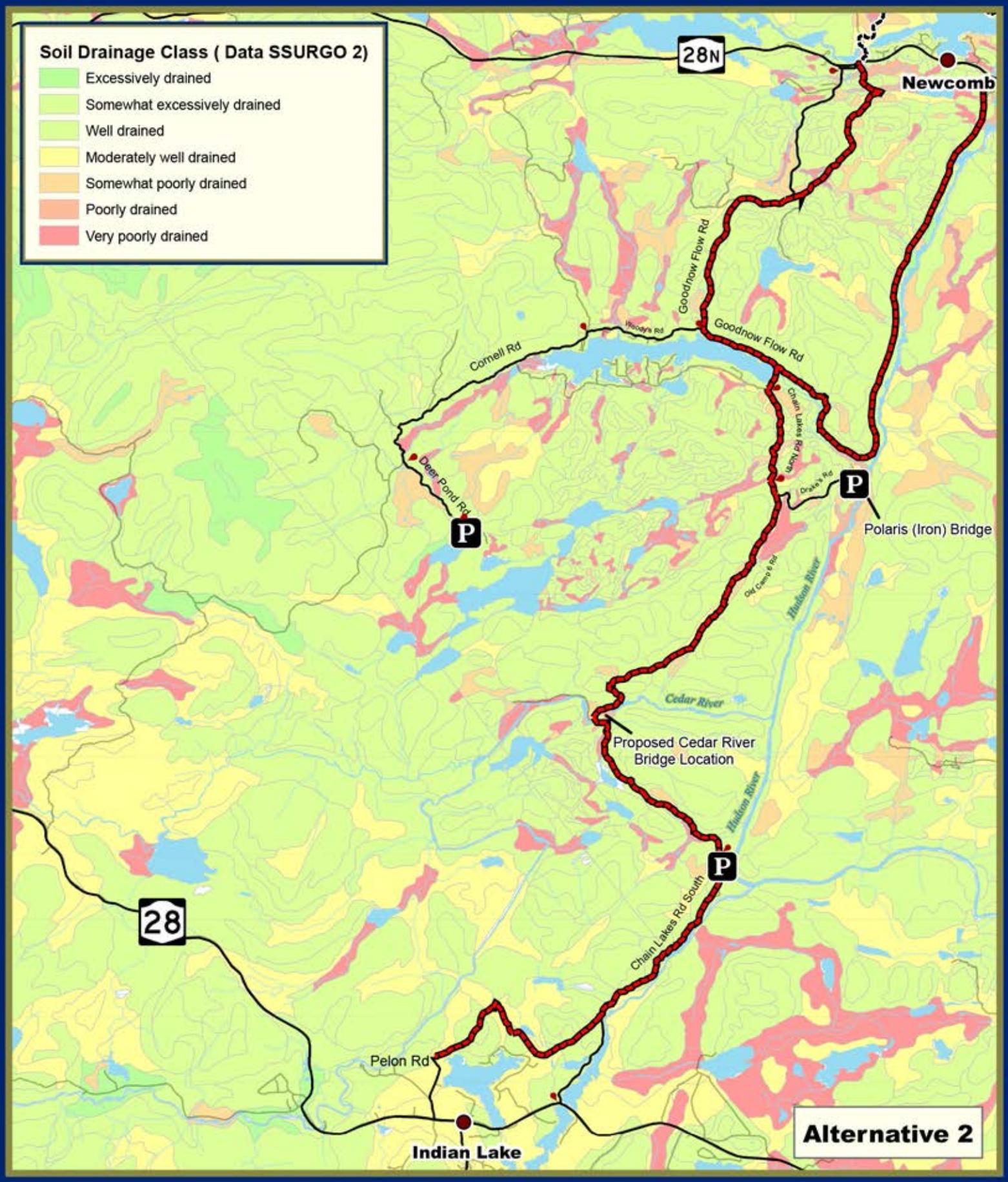
New York's Forest Preserve

Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan

Soils



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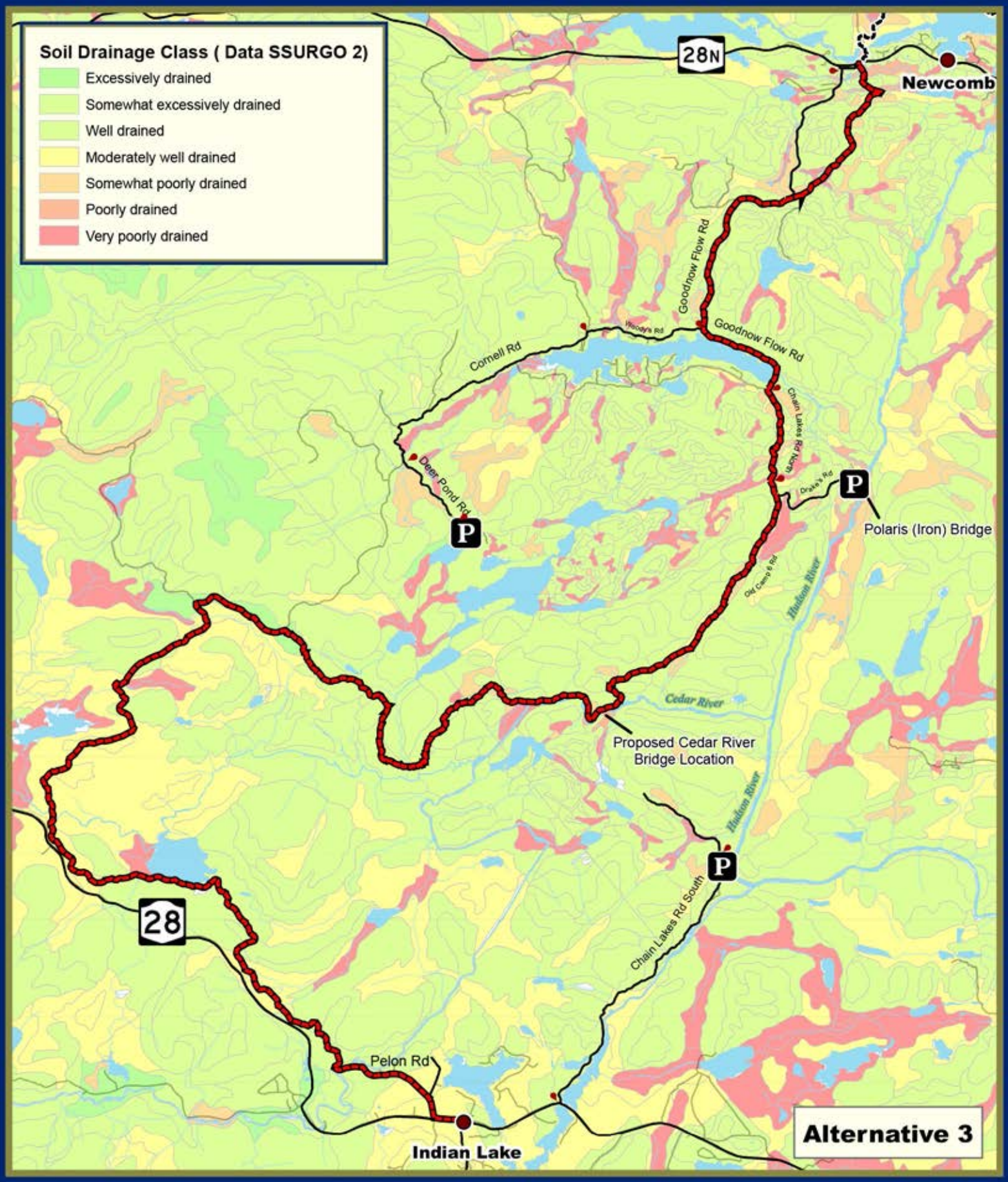
New York's Forest Preserve

Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan

Soils



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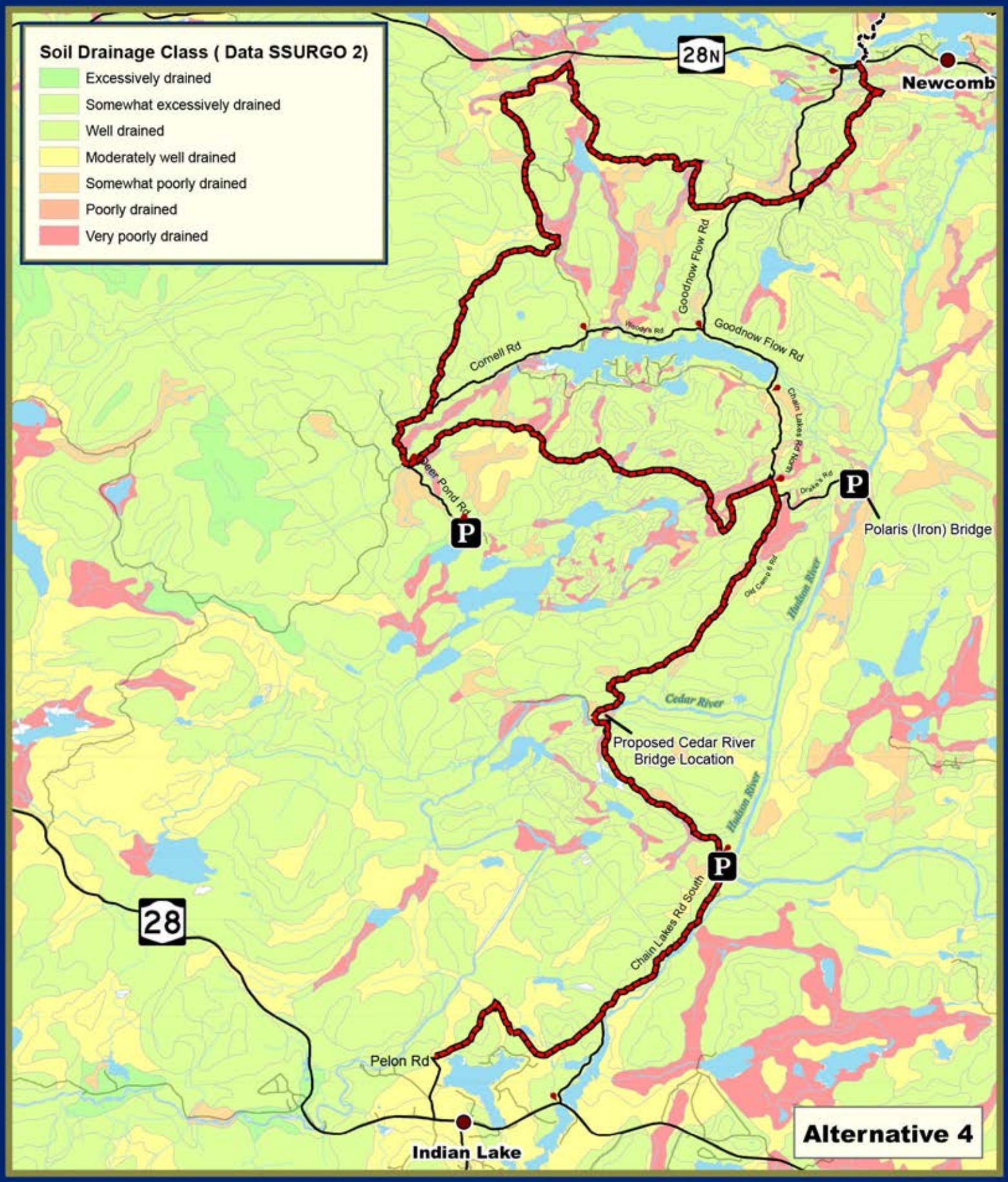

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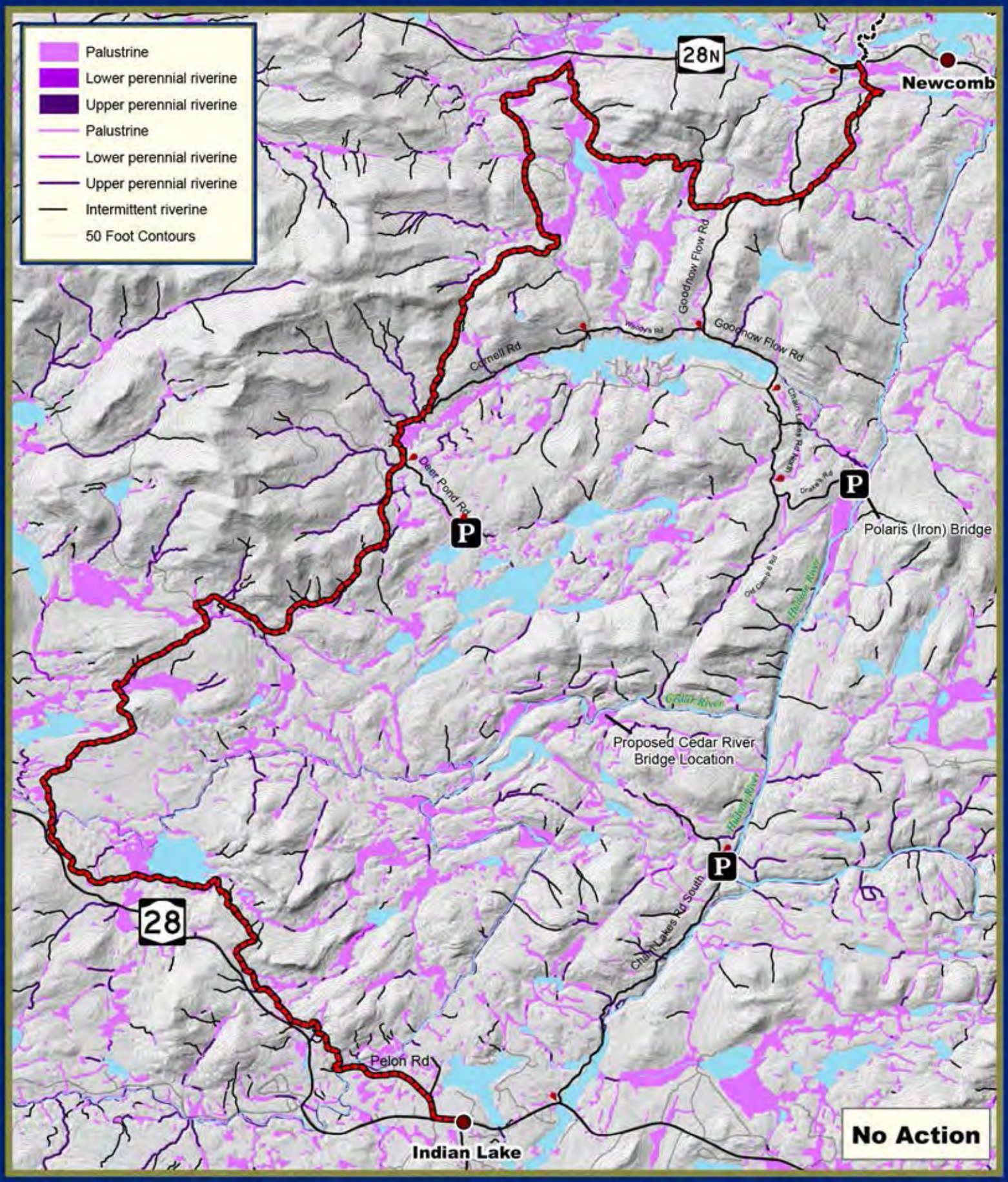
New York's Forest Preserve

Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan

Wetlands



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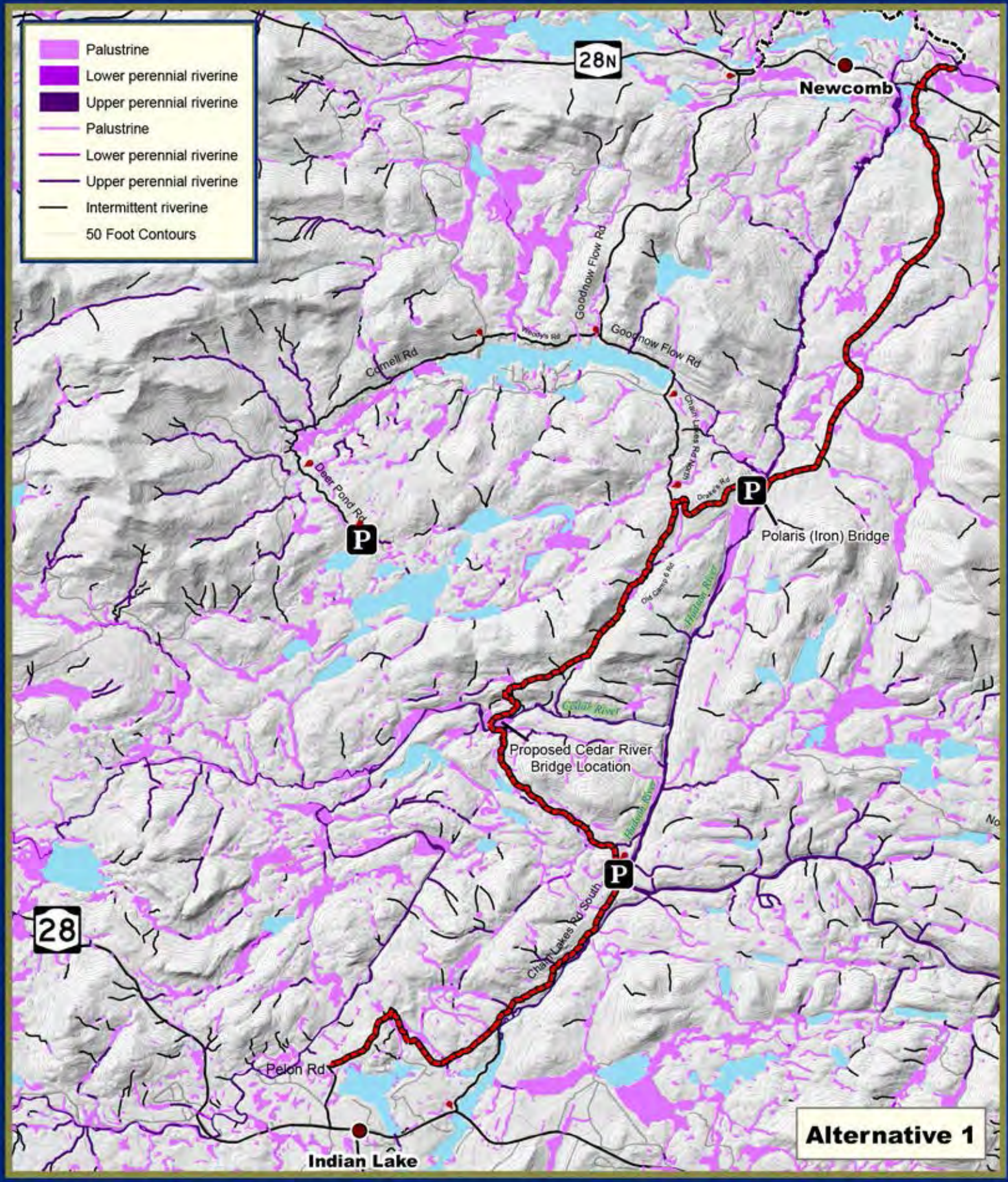
New York's Forest Preserve

Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan

Wetlands



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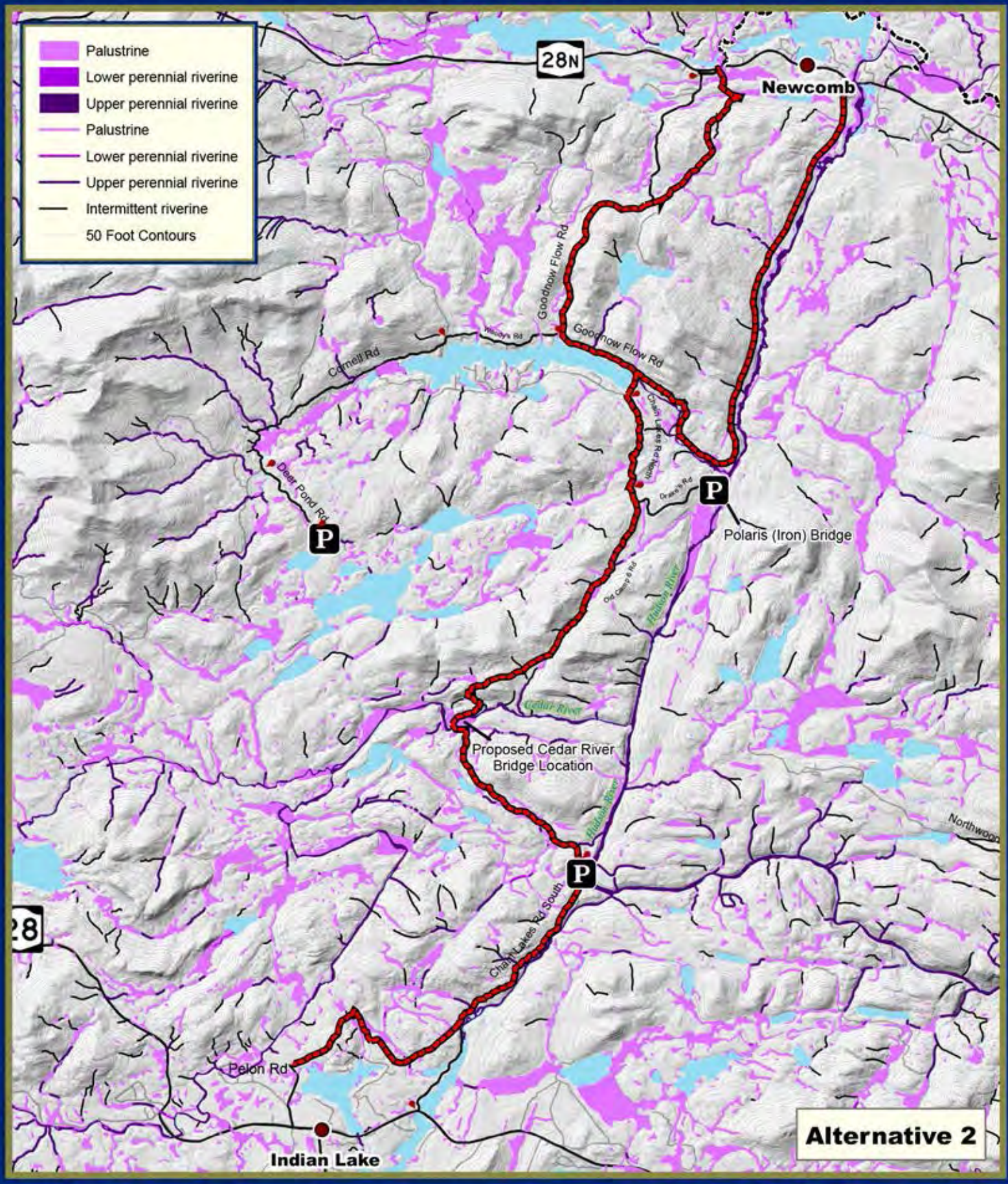
New York's Forest Preserve

Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan

Wetlands



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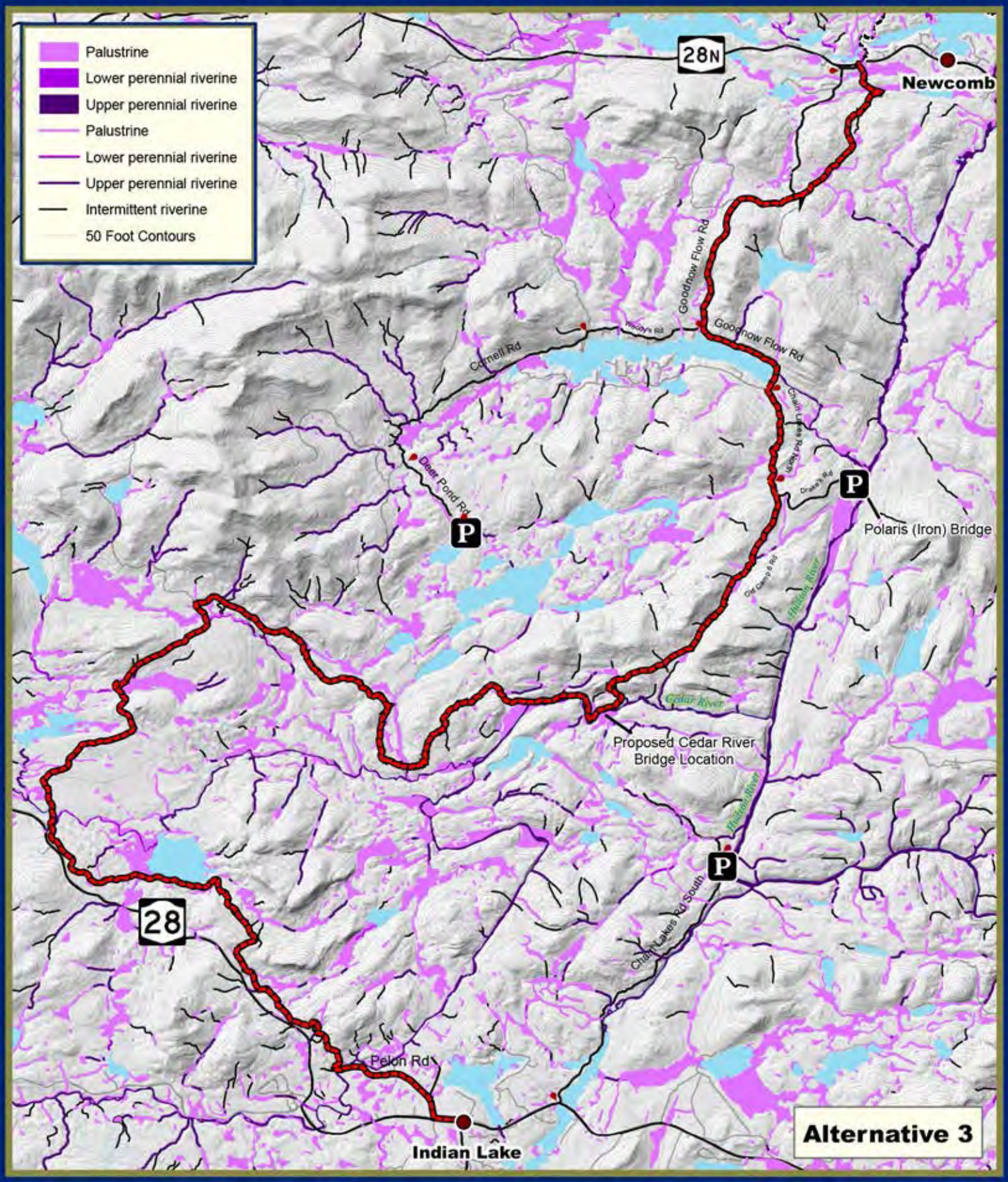
New York's Forest Preserve

Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan

Wetlands



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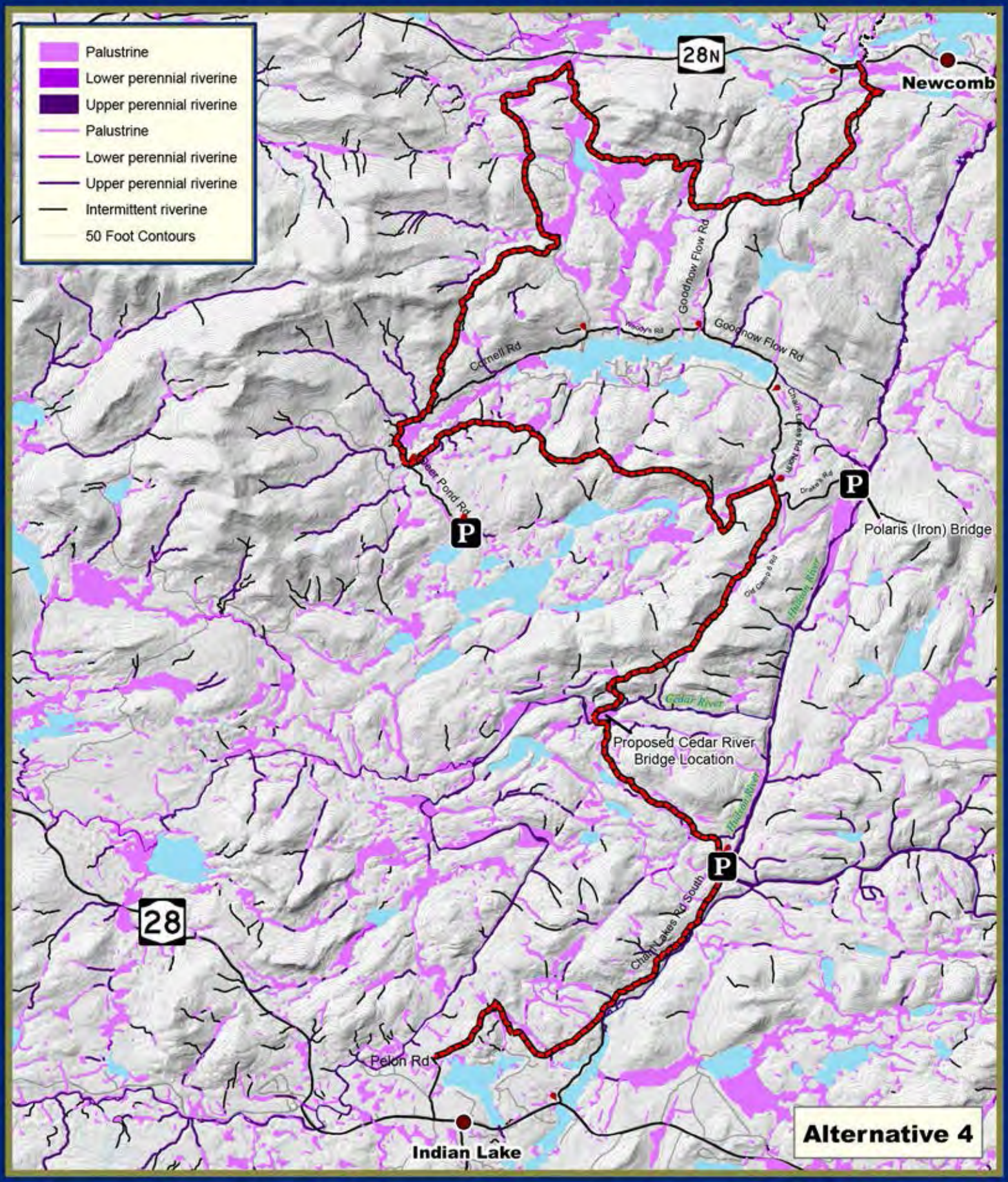

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Photo 1: Polaris (Iron) Bridge over the Hudson River. Taken from the east shore, looking west.

Photo 2: The Gooley Club main clubhouse building, located on the south shore of Third Lake.

Photo 3: Taken from the Cornell Rd, looking south at Deer Pond Rd.

Photo 4: Deer Pond parking area. Taken from the north end of the parking area, looking south.

Photo 5: Canoe carry trail from Deer Pond to the Deer Pond parking area. Taken from the north shore of Deer Pond, looking north to the carry.

Photo 6: The "Tube" is the culvert between Fourth and Fifth Lakes. Taken from the woods road over the culvert, looking east at Fifth Lake.

Photo 7: Waterway access site to Fifth Lake, from a distance. Taken from the "Tube", looking southeast towards the gradual, sandy shore.

Photo 8: Cedar River, looking upriver. Taken from the Chain Lakes Rd North, just as the Cedar River comes into view.

Photo 9: Cedar River, Alternative 4 potential bridge site. Taken from the north shore, looking at the south shore.

Photo 10: Cedar River, Alternative 4 potential bridge site. Taken from the south shore, looking at the north shore.

Photo 11: Cedar River, Alternative 3 potential bridge site. Taken from the north shore looking at the south shore.

Photo 12: Cedar River, Alternative 3 potential bridge site. Taken from the south shore looking at the north shore.