



Adirondack Park Agency

SHERMAN CRAIG
Chairman

TERRY MARTINO
Executive Director

DRAFT MINUTES
State Land Committee
September 15, 2016
Agency Meeting
KF:KDR:mp

State Land Committee September 15, 2016

The State Land Committee convened at 11:00 am.

State Land Committee Members Present:

Karen Feldman, Chair, Chad Dawson, Arthur Lussi, William Thomas and Robert Stegemann (DEC)

Other Members and Designees Present:

Sherman Craig, Chairman, John Ernst, Daniel Wilt, Sandi Allen (DOS) and Bradley Austin (DED)

Local Government Review Board:

Frederick Monroe, Executive Director

Agency Staff Present:

Terry Martino, James Townsend, Kathy Regan, Kevin Prickett, Walt Linck, Mary Palmer

Approval of August 2016 Draft Minutes

By motion of Mr. Stegemann, seconded by Dr. Dawson, the August minutes were unanimously approved.

Mr. Lussi commented that when there are large UMPs that the Board will be making decisions on it would be easier to have paper copies instead of the documents being on cd's. He said it would make it much easier to read and be able to make notes on.

Ms. Feldman agreed this is something we should take a look at to be more efficient. Dr. Dawson said that he had the same concern. He said paper copies would be better a committee member.

Ms. Regan said that if any of the Board members would like paper copies of a full UMP, or just portions of them, staff could accommodate that.

Planning Division Report

Ms. Regan noted the planning division report for July and August. There were no comments.

Ms. Regan noted the “tentative dates” for the upcoming public hearings for the classification action. She added that it is a tentative schedule and could change if the Board did not accept the draft environmental impact statement in October or for some reason staff had to postpone bringing it to the Board.

Ms. Regan said staff will present two UMPs: an amendment for Vanderwhacker Mt. Wild Forest and a UMP for Horicon Boat Launch. She said they will ask the Board to adopt the resolutions on conformance with the State Land Master Plan for both items.

Ms. Regan said Dave Smith (DEC) will present a public draft for the Grass River Wild Forest UMP, noting that this is for information only. She said that DEC will be accepting public comment and staff are not recommending simultaneous public comment as it is a large and complex UMP. She said when the DEC has finished their public comment period they will come back to the Board with a proposed final UMP which could include changes. At that time the Agency will ask to go to public comment for conformance with the State Land Master Plan.

Vanderwhacker Wild Forest UMP Amendment

Mr. Linck gave a brief overview of the Vanderwhacker Mt. Wild Forest UMP Amendment and the proposed management actions. He said the proposed action is for four areas and includes universally accessible fishing and water access, expanded parking, universally accessible privies and construction of a foot bridge.

Mr. Linck said that the agency received one public comment which expressed full support for the amendment and the improved access to the Forest Preserve.

Ms. Feldman asked if the old entrance in the Balfour Lake parking area would still be used. Mr. Linck said it would still remain in use and the proposed new entrance would be a second entrance access point.

Referring to the Palmer Pond site, Dr. Dawson asked about the location where the Scenic River begins and how it affects the project. Mr. Linck said the Scenic River starts one hundred feet south of the dam. He said there will be a narrow footbridge in that vicinity and it will not be used for motorized recreational purposes.

Mr. Lussi asked if cross country skiing was taken into consideration when designing the Lester Flow foot bridge. Mr. Linck said that it will be a sturdy, more significant bridge structure that will allow safe, non-motorized recreational use and will also protect the river banks against over use.

Mr. Linck said that staff recommend the amendment be found to be in conformance with the criteria of the State Land Master Plan.

Ms. Feldman asked for a motion to approve the resolution. By motion of Dr. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Stegemann, the resolution for the Vanderwhacker Mt. UMP amendment was unanimously approved.

Horicon Boat Launch UMP

Mr. Prickett gave a brief overview of the Horicon Boat Launch Proposed Final UMP. He said the launch provides access to the southern end of Schroon Lake just north of the hamlet of Pottersville, near exit 26 of Interstate 87. It is the largest public launch on Schroon Lake.

Mr. Prickett said during the 2015 boating season, the Towns of Horicon, Chester and Schroon purchased a hot water, high pressure wash unit with Department of State Watershed Grant monies to be used to protect Schroon Lake. He added that at this time Schroon Lake does not have a known population of aquatic invasive species.

Mr. Prickett said that when boats are in need of washing upon inspection, drivers are asked to drive out of the launch and around the East Shore Drive to receive a free wash. He said that area towns requested the DEC's help to develop a plan to reduce the number of staff needed to be on site at any one time.

Mr. Prickett said the UMP proposes to move the boat washing station to a location that allows for better use of the parking area. He said the UMP proposes the construction of a 210' by 12' gravel lane from the parking area to an open grass area along East Shore Drive, including a 20' by 40' gravel pad for the wash unit. He said it will decrease staff numbers and also increase traffic efficiency.

Mr. Prickett said the Agency and DEC received 10 letters during the comment period. He said most of the comments favored locating both the inspection station and decontamination station closer to the boat launch. He said DEC's response to the suggested alternative cited The New York Codes, Rules and Regulations regarding aquatic invasive species control at state boat launching sites, and due to the conflict with the regulation, this alternative is not feasible.

Dr. Dawson asked what volume of use is expected at this area. Rob Ripp (DEC) said he did not have an exact number, but it is used more than some of the other areas where there are boat wash stations. He added that they also advertise the service to boaters going to other lakes without the service to stop and get their boats washed. They are offering this as a preventative service.

Dr. Dawson asked if part of designing the proposed alternative took into consideration the higher volume, allowing for better traffic flow. Mr. Ripp said that was a very large part of the criteria for the plan. He said they place wash units at locations where better prevention control can be provided for invasive species.

Mr. Monroe said this is an improvement of what is there now, but local towns prefer the alternative suggested through the public comment letters. He added that he understands the Agency is only looking to make sure the plan complies with the State Land Master Plan.

Mr. Monroe said that one of the big concerns expressed by the towns is having a busy launch that will cause backup of traffic. He added that the UMP approved use should be closely monitored and there should be a willingness to make adjustments if traffic does become a problem.

Mr. Stegemann said the development of plans for the boat wash station has been very constructive. He said one of the big issues was the large size of the wash station and how to keep it from cluttering up the boat launch. He said he is fully supportive of monitoring the launch.

Mr. Prickett said staff recommend that the Horicon Boat Launch UMP be found in conformance with the State Land Master Plan.

Ms. Feldman asked for a motion to approve the resolution. By motion of Dr. Dawson, seconded by Ms. Feldman, the resolution for the Horicon Boat Launch UMP was unanimously approved.

Grass River UMP

Dave Smith (DEC) gave a presentation on the Grass River UMP. He said the two month public comment period has just started and there will be a public meeting in Colton on October 3rd.

Mr. Smith said the Grass River Wild Forest encompasses approximately fourteen-thousand acres of Forest Preserve lands distributed across several scattered parcels in the northwest corner of the Adirondack Park in the Towns of Clare, Clifton, Colton and Fine in St. Lawrence County.

Mr. Smith said most of the lands are within the Grass River watershed, with parcels abutting the South, Middle, North and Main branches of the Grass.

Mr. Smith said one of the proposed actions is to acquire a river corridor from National Grid, or establish a management agreement with them. He said other actions include establishing trails and small parking areas, constructing a lean-to, opening some roads to public motor vehicles, and designating nine hundred feet of Forest Preserve road as part of the St. Lawrence County Multi-Use Trail. He said this trail would allow ATV use from mid-May to mid-September.

Mr. Smith said some campsites do not meet the State Land Master Plan separation guidelines. Because of this, they are proposing removal of some campsites and considering relocations for other sites. Mr. Smith said heavy use has resulted in sanitary issues and a chemical, vault or composting toilet is also proposed.

Mr. Smith said that some branches of the Grass River are designated Scenic Rivers, so permits may be required for some of the proposed actions.

Dr. Dawson said that because of the complexity of the rivers system a map would be helpful showing where the scenic and recreational designations are. He added that it would be a good part of the public record and it would also improve the plan.

Mr. Ernst agreed, noting the complexity of the proposal, what kind of information was available for the public. Mr. Smith said that there are web pages that do supply a fair amount of information but they do need to supply more.

Referring to the Tooley Pond area, Mr. Lussi asked if there was any kayak or parking congestion in the spring when the water is running high. Mr. Smith said so far it has not been an issue but they are proposing to add some parking spaces to the area.

Referring to the roads in the Tooley Pond unit, Ms. Feldman asked what they are currently used for. Mr. Smith said that right now those roads are being illegally used by motor vehicles and they propose to close some and rehabilitate others.

Mr. Stegemann asked if the corresponding Resource Management Plan addresses where the trail sections interact with the easement lands. Mr. Smith said staff made sure they all coordinate.

Mr. Craig said it is a very complex study of Forest Preserve and easement lands, and complimented Mr. Smith on the presentation. He added that he looks forward to its development.

Ms. Feldman thanked Mr. Smith, Mr. Prickett and Mr. Linck for their presentations.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Karen Feldman, Committee Chair, adjourned the meeting at 12:34 pm.