COVER SHEET
and
NOTICE OF COMPLETION
of
FINAL SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
February 2018

PROJECT TITLE:

2016-2017 Amendments to the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan involving the Classification and Reclassification of 52,908 acres of State Lands in the Adirondack Park, which include:

- Classification of Boreas Ponds Tract (20,543 acres)
- 32 Additional Classification Proposals (30,284 acres)
- 11 Reclassification Proposals (132 acres)
- 56 Classifications involving map corrections (1,949 acres)

NAME OF LEAD AGENCY AND PREPARER OF FSEIS:

NYS Adirondack Park Agency
Post Office Box 99
Ray Brook, NY 12977

PROJECT LOCATION:

The classification proposals involve lands in all 12 Counties of the Adirondack Park: Clinton, Essex, Fulton, Franklin, Hamilton, Herkimer, Lewis, Oneida, St. Lawrence, Saratoga, Warren and Washington.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

Amendments to the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP) involving the classification of recently acquired State land parcels of approximately 50,827 acres, eleven (11) State land reclassification proposals of approximately 132 acres and 56 map corrections of 1,949 acres. Total acreage involved in these classifications or reclassifications covered is approximately 52,908 acres. The Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) covers the classification action involving the Boreas Ponds Tract, located in the towns of North Hudson

and Newcomb in Essex County. The other classification and reclassification actions are mentioned in the FSEIS and described in the appendices to the FSEIS. All of the proposals involve the classification or reclassification of State lands according to the provisions of the APSLMP.

AGENCY CONTACT FOR INFORMATION:

Kathleen D. Regan, Deputy Director, Planning
Adirondack Park Agency
Post Office Box 99
1133 State Route 86
Ray Brook, NY 12977
Phone: (518) 891-4050
Fax: (518) 891-3938

DATE OF ACCEPTANCE OF FSEIS BY LEAD AGENCY:

PUBLIC HEARINGS ON THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO APSLMP WERE HELD AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS AND DATES:

November 9, 2016
7:00 pm
Adirondack Park Agency
1133 NYS Route 86
Ray Brook

November 14, 2016
6:00 pm
Northville Central School
131 S. Third Street
Northville

November 16, 2016
7:00 pm
Newcomb Central School
5535 NYS Route 28N
Newcomb

November 21, 2016
7:00 pm
Schroon Lake Central School
1125 Route 9
Schroon Lake

November 28, 2016
7:00 pm
Rochester Institute of Technology
Louise Slaughter Hall
Parking in lot “T”
Rochester

November 29, 2016
6:00 pm
Canton High School
99 Main Street
Canton

December 6, 2016
7:00 pm
Bear Mountain Inn
3020 Seven Lakes Drive
Tomkins Cove

December 7, 2016
2:00 pm
NYSDEC
625 Broadway
Albany

DATE BY WHICH PUBLIC WRITTEN COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED:

December 30, 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Adirondack Park Agency (Agency or APA) proposes the classification and reclassification of State lands within the Adirondack Park according to the guidelines and criteria of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP). The proposal involves State lands in all 12 counties in the Park, including the Boreas Ponds Tract in Essex County. More specifically, thirty-three State land classifications (approximately 50,827 acres), eleven State land reclassifications (approximately 132 acres), and fifty-six map corrections (1,949 acres) are proposed.[1] These proposed classifications, reclassifications and map corrections are presented in Figure 1 and considered for amendments to the APSLMP pursuant to the Adirondack Park Agency Act and the APSLMP.

Review of proposed amendments to the APSLMP must also comply with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) pursuant to Agency regulations and the SEQRA Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (FPEIS) guidelines adopted by the Agency in 1979 for amending the APSLMP.[2] The Agency has undertaken this required SEQRA review of the proposed amendments as follows:

1. All except those involving the MacIntyre East, MacIntyre West and the Boreas Ponds Tract are Type II actions pursuant to Agency regulations and require no further consideration under SEQRA (*See*, Appendix A);
2. For MacIntyre East Tract (6,060 acres) and MacIntyre West Tract (7,368 acres), a draft Negative Declaration was filed November 16, 2016 and stated there would be no significant adverse effect on the environment; and
3. The Boreas Ponds Tract is the subject of this FSEIS.

Discussion and review of the proposed classification of the Boreas Ponds Tract (20,543 acres) was the focus of the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) accepted by the Agency in October 2016. This FSEIS was developed following receipt of extensive public comment on the DSEIS. The FSEIS also provides a basis for SEQRA compliance and for evaluation of the proposed classification of the Boreas Ponds Tract as required by the APSLMP. The process of developing the FSEIS and its contents are summarized below.

Agency staff have prepared all of the proposals to amend the APSLMP in consultation with the Department of Environmental Conservation (Department or DEC). These proposed amendments do not authorize the development of new uses, structures or improvements; such proposals require Unit Management Plan (UMP) and SEQRA review by the Department and the Agency.

[1] Based on public comment, the proposed reclassification of the Cathead Mountain Primitive Area was removed from the original proposal to amend the APSLMP described in the DSEIS.

[2] In implementing SEQRA, the Agency is also bound by the substantive and procedural requirements of Environmental Conservation Law Article 8 and 6 NYCRR Part 617.

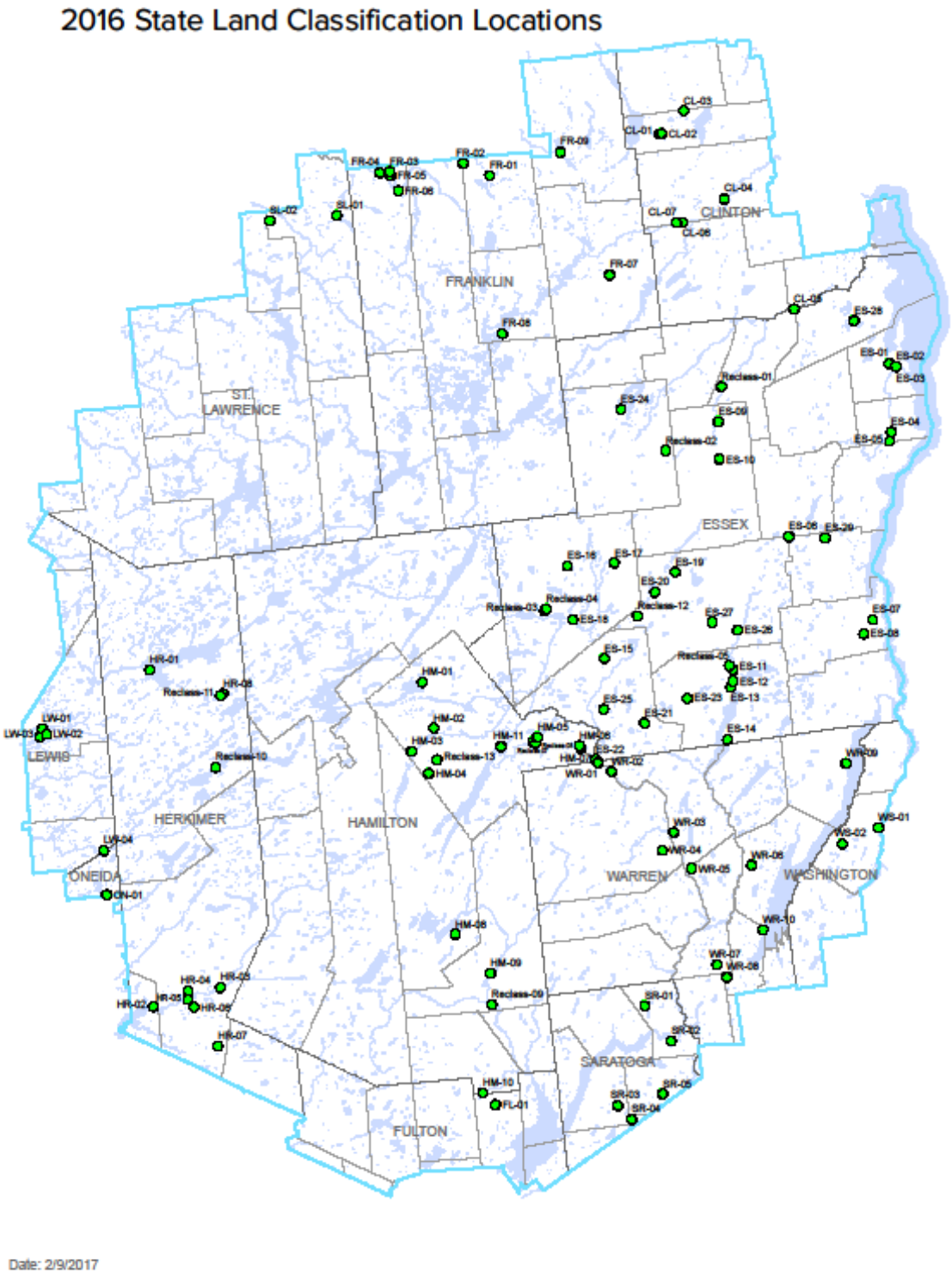

Figure 1: Map of 2016 State Land Classification Locations

DEVELOPMENT OF THE FSEIS FOR THE BOREAS PONDS TRACT CLASSIFICATION PROPOSAL

In October 2016, the Agency Board authorized staff to hold public hearings on all of the proposed classifications and reclassifications pursuant to the APSLMP and SEQRA. Eight public hearings were held inside and outside the Adirondack Park during November and December 2016, and written public comment was accepted on the proposed amendments through December 30, 2016.

Approximately 1,215 people attended the hearings and 462 people spoke for the record. The Agency received more than 11,000 written public comments and three petitions with 27,852 signatures during the public comment period.

Appendix B provides the Agency's response to public comment received at the hearings and through the public comment period, which was prepared in consultation with the Department. This document responds to comments received on the Boreas Ponds Tract proposal and the alternatives for classification of those lands described in the DSEIS, as well as the classification proposal for the MacIntyre East and West tracts and the other proposed classifications and reclassifications.

For the Boreas Ponds Tract, the FSEIS presents five alternatives, a comparative analysis of the alternatives, and a Preferred Alternative. The five alternatives include classifying lands as Wilderness, Primitive, Wild Forest and State Administrative in various configurations. During the public comment period, strong support was expressed for resource protection, community connectivity and recreational access. The Preferred Alternative for the Boreas Ponds Tract described in the FSEIS is responsive to these public interests.

Following public comment, the proposed reclassification of the Cathead Mountain Primitive Area was removed from the classification package. Commenters were concerned that the fire tower needs to remain for emergency communications. To clarify, the fire tower is on private land, not on the lands currently classified as Primitive. There are no longer any non-conforming structures or uses on the lands classified as Primitive, and the lands could be reclassified as Wilderness. However, the Agency has decided not to reclassify this parcel at this time and has withdrawn RC-06 from the FSEIS. This withdrawal will not resolve the inability to reach the private land or fire tower by land through Forest Preserve.

Based on the proposed amendments to the APSLMP, public comment, the FSEIS and other SEQRA documentation, the Agency Board will consider and determine: (a) whether to accept and make required SEQRA findings on the FSEIS for the Boreas Ponds Tract; (b) whether to finalize the determination of SEQRA non-significance for the MacIntyre East and West tracts; and (c) whether to recommend the proposed APSLMP amendments to the Governor for approval.

The Adirondack Park Agency Act requires the Agency to classify the State lands in the Park according to "their characteristics and capacity to withstand use." [3] Characteristics that determine a land's capacity to withstand use include physical, biological, social and intangible characteristics.

The APSLMP (page 1) states

> *…the protection and preservation of the natural resources of the State lands within the Park must be paramount. Human use and enjoyment of those lands should be permitted and encouraged, so long as the resources in their physical and biological context, as well as their social or psychological aspects, are not degraded.*

The APSLMP prescribes types of permissible improvements and management uses in each category, but it does not specifically control the levels of use beyond providing general management guidelines. Careful adherence to guidelines in the APSLMP through this classification process and as applied through the UMP process should minimize significant adverse environmental impacts caused by types or levels of use. Thorough consideration must be given to the effects of recreational use upon the natural resources of these lands.

The APSLMP lists nine basic categories: Wilderness, Primitive, Canoe, Wild Forest, State Administrative, Historic, Intensive Use, Travel Corridors and Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers, which were considered in the process of developing the FSEIS. The Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers and Travel Corridor classifications are essentially corridor overlays to the basic land classification(s) through which the corridor passes (APSLMP, page 16).

The classification alternatives for this action include Wilderness, Primitive, Wild Forest, and State Administrative in various configurations. The DSEIS stated clearly that the alternatives and their boundaries, as presented in the DSEIS for consideration, were not final and could be adjusted based on information gained during the public process. The FSEIS describes final proposed boundaries in the Preferred Alternative and staff recommendation: this Preferred Alternative was developed by APA staff following the public hearings and comment period.

The No Action Alternative was considered for the Boreas Ponds Tract but rejected because the APSLMP requires classification of newly acquired lands as promptly as possible following acquisition. The No Action Alternative for the lands proposed to be reclassified is to leave those lands classified in their current classifications, as described in the current APSLMP.

[3] Former Executive Law § 807, added L. 1971 c. 706, section 1 renumbered 816 and amended L. 1973, c. 348, section 1., as quoted in APSLMP at 13.

SUMMARY OF BOREAS PONDS TRACT ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The 20,543 acre Boreas Pond Tract characteristics include a diversity of lowland terrain, wetlands and mountain ridges. The 345 acre Boreas Ponds are a central feature, in addition to seven other waterbodies on the tract, 27 miles of streams, rivers and tributaries and two dams (one at Boreas Pond and one at La Bier Flow). The landscape of the tract features a natural connectivity of the forests, wetlands, water resources, and other habitats. The tract has approximately 1,800 acres of wetlands including the 1,200 acre Marcy Swamp - the largest high elevation peatland in New York State, at 2,000 feet in elevation. The Boreas Ponds Tract is home to a broad diversity of plant and animal species. Detailed descriptions of the characteristics of the tract are included in this FSEIS at pages 10-48.

Characteristics and Actions Common to all Alternatives:

All of the five alternatives would include portions of the tract being classified as Wilderness, Wild Forest and State Administrative.

The high-elevation (over 2,500 feet) Mountain Spruce Fir Forest in the northern section of the tract would be classified as Wilderness in all five alternatives. This region of the tract has thinner, more erodible soils, two lakes, and the headwaters of four streams. Wilderness classification of this region would provide the maximum protection to natural resources. The southern portion of the tract along the Blue Ridge Road would be classified as Wild Forest in all five alternatives. This portion of the tract has less sensitive habitat than the northern section, which would allow additional recreational uses while still providing substantial protection for the natural resources. These uses include, but are not limited to, public motorized and mechanical access, snowmobile and bicycle trails.

This proposed southern Wild Forest area includes the southeastern corner of the tract and contains Gulf Brook, Ragged Mountain, and The Branch, and borders Elk Lake Road to the east. This southeastern section lacks the sense of remoteness one would encounter in a Wilderness classification, being adjacent to a State highway and active logging operations. It is also further from the High Peaks Wilderness and Dix Wilderness than any of the lands in the tract proposed for Wilderness classification. Although the Ragged Mountain section is rugged with more erodible soils and steep slopes, the size of the area and lack of remoteness makes it suitable for Wild Forest classification.

All alternatives propose classification of two State Administrative Areas for gravel pits. The Towns of North Hudson and Newcomb were granted an easement to access and mine gravel from two gravel pits on the Boreas Ponds Tract, prior to State acquisition. The gravel pits are limited in size to a maximum of one acre each. The easement limits gravel extraction for the sole purpose of facilitating the maintenance of road, trail and infrastructure within the Boreas Ponds Tract, subject to a DEC permit and “subject to all laws, rules and regulations in effect at the time of issuance of the DEC permit.” Once

deemed exhausted, the underlying lands would be reclaimed and reclassified. These two new State Administrative Areas would be named LaBier Flow State Administrative Area and Boreas Ponds Road State Administrative Area.

All alternatives recognize the existence of recreational leases for camps. Each lease provides for road access to the camp buildings, and limits the leased area to a one-acre envelope around the camp buildings. Most of the leases have renewable one-year terms expiring September 30, 2018. The existence of the camps does not influence classification. Upon expiration of the leases and removal of the camp structures, the underlying lands will be managed in accordance with the APSLMP guidelines called for through the classification action and the UMP process.

Recreational Activities:

Recreational opportunities vary from one classification category to another based on the Guidelines for Management and Use specified in the APSLMP. A wide array of recreational activities and associated structures and improvements are allowable on State lands in the Adirondack Park, subject to specific proposals set forth in approved UMPs. Various primitive forms of recreation such as hiking, cross-country skiing, canoeing and horseback riding are allowable uses in all State land classifications. Motorized and mechanized forms of recreation such as snowmobiling, motor boating and bicycling, are generally prohibited in Wilderness, Primitive and Canoe areas, except that bicycle use may be permitted in Primitive and Canoe areas on certain administrative roads. Public input concerning development of particular recreational opportunities and related structures and improvements is provided to DEC during the UMP planning process. These improvements might include trails for snowmobiles, bicycles, horses and wagons, and hiking. Additional improvements could include trailhead parking, campsites and facilities accessible by persons with disabilities.

Specific to snowmobile trails, determinations on the siting and construction of snowmobile trails are guided by Article XIV of the New York State Constitution, the APSLMP, the 2006 Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondack Park/Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (2006 Snowmobile Plan), the 2009 Management Guidance for Snowmobile Trail Siting, Construction and Maintenance on Forest Preserve Lands in the Adirondack Park (2009 Management Guidance), and individual UMPs.

The 2006 Snowmobile Plan was developed with considerable input from the public and public interest groups. This plan recognizes the goal of completing a network of snowmobile trails across the Park which will provide a trail system to connect communities using both public and private lands. The 2006 Snowmobile Plan specifically identified a need to connect Newcomb to North Hudson. The Agency supports this objective and the DEC includes community connector trail planning in the management of any area where it has been determined public snowmobiling may be permitted.

The 2009 Management Guidance was developed and included as an appendix to 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 (Revised March, 2010)." The 2009 Management Guidance addresses snowmobile trail siting, construction and maintenance. Siting requirements include placing Community Connector trails, known as Class II trails, at the periphery of Wild Forest as close as possible to motorized travel corridors. The guidance also allows for Class I snowmobile trails, also known as secondary trails, to be groomed with snowmobiles and which may be located further from motorized travel corridors.

DEC's 2005 UMP for Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest was adopted prior to both the 2006 Snowmobile Plan and the 2009 Management Guidance. The UMP identifies multiple snowmobile trail alternative routes for connecting Minerva to Newcomb, plus other alternative trail routes for connecting Minerva to Pottersville and Schroon Lake (now completed). The 2005 UMP states that it will be amended to select a Preferred Alternative for the community connector trail between Newcomb and North Hudson. In 2015, DEC adopted the Community Connector Trail Plan for the Towns of Newcomb, Minerva, and North Hudson, which amended the 2005 Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest UMP. The 2015 Community Connector Trail Plan included four alternative routes for Section 3, which included the Boreas Ponds Tract. A Preferred Alternative was not chosen at that time because the tract had not been classified. None of the four alternate routes would be precluded by the Preferred Alternative contained in this FSEIS. Each of the alternatives presented in this FSEIS would also allow the Department to locate the trail on the southern area of the tract, north of the Blue Ridge Road.

Unit Management Planning:

Recreational use and trails are designated after the classification process is completed. Once the Governor approves the Agency recommendations for amending the APSLMP to classify Forest Preserve land, the Department, in consultation with the Agency, develops UMPs for the newly classified areas. In addition to inventories of resources, existing facilities, projected public use and assessments of physical, biological and social carrying capacities, each UMP sets forth a statement of management objectives for the protection and rehabilitation of the area's resources and ecosystems and for public use of the area consistent with its carrying capacity.

Special Management:

Nothing in the guidelines pertaining to each classification would prevent the Department of Environmental Conservation from providing for more restrictive management where necessary to comply with constitutional requirements or to protect the natural resources of such lands. (APSLMP, pages 16-17).

For all of the alternatives, the designation of an appropriate special management area can be considered for any lands which may require special management to reflect unusual resource or public use factors, such as those areas surrounding or adjacent to

Boreas Ponds or LaBier Flow. Special management plans, developed either independently or as part of the unit management plan for the major land classification within which they lie, can call for more restrictive measures for public access and use within the designated special management area.

Boreas Ponds Tract Alternative 1 – Map 4

Description:

Alternative 1 would classify lands 500 feet north of Gulf Brook and Boreas Pond Roads, the roads themselves and the land south of the roads as Wild Forest and add these lands to the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest unit. The 500-foot setback north of Gulf Brook and Boreas Pond Roads would facilitate identical management practices on both sides of the roads which would limit possible confusion by users.

The Wild Forest classification would include lands north of the intersection of Boreas Pond Road and Gulf Brook Road (aka the Four Corners), including the road to the Boreas Pond Dam, a former logging road circling Boreas Ponds, the land between the former logging roads and the ponds, and the waters of Boreas Ponds, LaBier Flow and the Boreas River below the Boreas Pond Dam.

The northern Wild Forest boundary of Alternative 1 is formed by the outer shoulder of a former logging road that loops around the Boreas Ponds. Lands north of the Four Corners outside of the area classified as Wild Forest would be classified as Wilderness.

Boreas Ponds Tract Alternative 2 – Map 5

Description:

Alternative 2 would classify lands 500 feet north of the intersection of Gulf Brook and Boreas Ponds Roads, the roads themselves and the land south of the roads as Wild Forest and add these lands to the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest unit. The 500-foot setback north of Gulf Brook and Boreas Ponds Roads would facilitate identical management practices on both sides of the roads which would limit possible confusion by users and allow for management consistency. The Wild Forest would extend east to Elk Lake Road, encompassing Gulf Brook, Ragged Mountain and The Branch, a designated study river under the Wild Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act.

Alternative 2 would classify lands north of the Four Corners, including the waters of Boreas Ponds, as Wilderness, except for the Wild Forest Area described below.

Alternative 2 proposes a Wild Forest Area, extending from the Four Corners north to the Boreas Dam. The western boundary of this area would be 500 feet west of the Boreas Pond Road. The eastern boundary of this area is depicted on the map and includes an area east of the dam and north of LaBier Flow. This Wild Forest Area would include the

waters of LaBier Flow and the Boreas River below the Boreas Ponds Dam, and would contain two high value wetlands. This Wild Forest area would enable the Department's access to the Boreas Ponds Dam and the area surrounding the dam for maintenance.

Boreas Ponds Tract Alternative 2B – Map 6

The Preferred Alternative
A Variation of the DSEIS Alternative 2 and Alternative 4

Description:

Alternative 2B would classify lands 500 feet north of Gulf Brook and Boreas Ponds Roads, the roads themselves, and the land south of the roads as Wild Forest and add those lands to the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest unit. The 500-foot setback north of Gulf Brook and Boreas Ponds Roads would facilitate identical management practices on both sides of the roads which would limit possible confusion by users and allow for management consistency. The Wild Forest Area would extend east to Elk Lake Road, encompassing Gulf Brook, Ragged Mountain and The Branch, a designated study river under the Wild Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act.

A 75-foot-wide Wild Forest corridor, which includes Boreas Ponds Road, would extend north of the Four Corners to and including an abandoned landing that could be used for parking. The landing is approximately 50 by 75 feet (0.09 acre) in size and 590 feet (0.1 mile) from the Boreas Pond dam.

The majority of the land north of the Four Corners and adjacent to the Boreas Ponds Road Wild Forest corridor would be Wilderness, except for the Primitive Area described below. The waters of Boreas Ponds and LaBier Flow would be classified as Wilderness.

The 11-acre Primitive Area proposed in Alternative 2B would allow the Department to reach and maintain the Boreas Ponds Dam. The Primitive Area would extend north from the Boreas Ponds Road Wild Forest corridor. The Primitive Area would widen to the east and border the south shore of First Pond. The Primitive Area would include the dam itself and an area surrounding the dam necessary for maintenance. The section of the Boreas Ponds Road located within the Primitive Area could be designated as an Administrative Road in an approved UMP.

Boreas Ponds Tract Alternative 3 – Map 7

Description:

Alternatives 3 and 4 propose the same and largest acreage of wilderness of any of the alternatives considered. In Alternative 3, the east-west boundary between Wild Forest and Wilderness would intersect Gulf Brook Road 2.27 miles north of Blue Ridge Road.

The boundary would extend for a short distance easterly towards Wolf Pond. The boundary would also extend generally westerly following water courses and land forms, through a section of the current Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest, including the Boreas River, and continuing westerly to the tract boundary south of Trout Pond. The Wild Forest would extend east to Elk Lake Road, encompassing Gulf Brook, Ragged Mountain and The Branch, a designated study river under the Wild Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act.

For both Alternative 3 and 4, the majority of lands north of this boundary including the waters of Boreas Ponds would be classified as Wilderness. A section of Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest would be reclassified as Wilderness.[4] Gulf Brook Road would have a 50-foot-wide Wild Forest corridor for approximately three miles to Four Corners. Additionally, the 50-foot-wide Wild Forest corridor would continue west from Four Corners for approximately one mile on Boreas Pond Road to the Boreas Ponds Road State Administrative Area (gravel pit). Land west of that State Administrative Area would be classified as Wilderness.

Alternative 3 proposes a Wild Forest area, extending from the Four Corners north to the Boreas Dam. (In Alternative 4 these same lands would be classified as a Primitive Area). The western boundary of this area would be 500 feet west of Boreas Pond Road. The eastern boundary generally follows the LaBier Flow and Boreas River and extends east of the river to include an area east of the dam and north of the LaBier Flow. This Wild Forest Area would include the waters of LaBier Flow and the Boreas River below the Boreas Pond Dam and two high value wetlands. This Wild Forest area would enable administrative access to the Boreas Pond Dam and the area surrounding the dam for maintenance by the Department. It would also potentially allow motorized and mechanized recreational use over the Boreas Ponds Road to the dam.

Boreas Ponds Tract Alternative 4 – Map 8

Description:

In Alternative 4, the east-west boundary between Wild Forest and Wilderness would intersect Gulf Brook Road 2.27 miles north of Blue Ridge Road. The boundary would extend for a short distance easterly towards Wolf Pond Mountain and then follow the tract boundary. The Wild Forest would extend east to Elk Lake Road, encompassing Gulf Brook, Ragged Mountain, and The Branch, a designated study river under the Wild Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act. The boundary would also extend generally westerly following water courses and land forms, through a section of the current Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest, including Boreas River, and continuing westerly towards the tract boundary south of Trout Pond.

[4] The proposed reclassification of a portion of the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest as Wilderness (Reclass-12) has been removed from the proposed reclassifications in Appendix A to the DSEIS because neither Alternative 3 nor Alternative 4 are the preferred alternative in this FSEIS.

The majority of lands north of the east-west boundary between Wild Forest and Wilderness, including the waters of Boreas Ponds, would be classified as Wilderness. A section of Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest would be reclassified as Wilderness. Gulf Brook Road would have a 50-foot wide corridor for approximately 3 miles and would be classified as Wild Forest to the Four Corners. Additionally, the 50-foot-wide Wild Forest corridor would continue west from the Four Corners for approximately 1 mile on the Boreas Ponds Road to the Boreas Ponds Road State Administrative Area (gravel pit). Lands west of that State Administrative Area would be classified as Wilderness. The Wild Forest corridor proposed in Alternative 4 would enable access to the two gravel pits.

In Alternative 4, the area of land from the Four Corners north to the southern shore of First Pond would be classified Primitive. The western boundary of this area would be 500 feet west of the Boreas Pond Road. The eastern boundary would generally follow the LaBier Flow and Boreas River and would extend east of the river to include an area east of the dam and north of the LaBier Flow. This Primitive Area would include the waters of LaBier Flow and the Boreas River below the Boreas Ponds Dam and two high value wetlands. The purpose of this Primitive area would be to enable the Department's access to the Boreas Pond Dam and an area surrounding the dam for maintenance. The section of the Boreas Ponds Road located within the Primitive Area could be designated as an Administrative Road in an approved UMP.

CONCLUSION:

From among the reasonable alternatives available, Alternative 2B is the Preferred Alternative and would avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts to the maximum extent practicable. Alternative 2B would provide additional resource protection for the already protected Forest Preserve and wetland resources of the Boreas Ponds Tract. Table 1 below contains the acreage figures for each of the alternatives through the following combination of lands classified as Wilderness, Wild Forest, Primitive and State Administrative:

Table 1: Boreas Ponds Tract Alternatives: Acreage Figures

Alternative	Wilderness	Wild Forest	Primitive	State Admin
	Total Acres* (Acres of New Classification/*Acres of Reclassification*)			
Boreas Ponds 1	10,178	10,364		2
Boreas Ponds 2	11,323	9,220		2
Boreas Ponds 2B	11,412	9,118	11	2
Boreas Ponds 3	14,669/*1,337*	5,873		2
Boreas Ponds 4	14,669/*1,337*	5,755	118	2

*Acreages are approximate

Alternative 2B provides the strongest possible resource protection for the most sensitive and remote portions of the Boreas Ponds Tract, including the Boreas Ponds and other waterbodies, high value wetlands, and areas with highly erodible soils.

Alternative 2B proposes classification of 11,412 acres of the tract as Wilderness and another 11 acres as Primitive. Public recreational use of the Wilderness lands would be limited to non-motorized and non-mechanized uses, promoting a sense of remoteness preferred by many recreational visitors to the Adirondacks. Alternative 2B provides resource protection through the classification of 9,118 acres of the Boreas Ponds Tract as Wild Forest, some of which may be suitable for motorized and/or mechanized recreational uses pursuant to the protections afforded by an approved UMP. Finally, all of the lands of the Boreas Ponds Tract are protected as Forest Preserve Lands pursuant to Article XIV of the NYS Constitution and all of the wetlands on the Tract are protected by the Freshwater Wetlands Act.

The Preferred Alternative divides the tract between Wilderness and Wild Forest, provides for resource protection of the Boreas Ponds, and allows potential motorized uses within the southern portion of the tract including Gulf Brook and Boreas Ponds Roads, subject to an approved UMP. The Preferred Alternative classifies two 1.0 acre areas as State Administrative for the purpose of mining gravel for road and trail maintenance on the tract.

The Preferred Alternative combines the important attributes of resource protection and recreational access. The alternative contemplates future Unit Management Planning actions by the Department and ensures that all New Yorkers will share in the opportunities afforded through this historic acquisition.

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OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED APSLMP AMENDMENTS

The Adirondack Park Agency is obligated to review proposed amendments to Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP) pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and the guidelines set forth in the APSLMP. This proposal involves State lands in all twelve counties in the Park, including the Boreas Ponds Tract in Essex County. More specifically, thirty-three State land classifications (approximately 50,827 acres), eleven State land reclassifications (approximately 132 acres), and fifty-six map corrections (1,949 acres) are proposed.[5] These proposed classifications, reclassifications and map corrections are considered for amendments to the APSLMP pursuant to the Adirondack Park Agency Act.

The Agency conducted eight public hearings on this proposal between November 9 and December 7, 2016. The public had an opportunity to provide verbal comments at the public hearings and to submit written comments during a scheduled timeframe. There were a total of approximately 1,215 people in attendance at hearings in Ray Brook, Northville, Newcomb, Schroon Lake, Rochester, Canton, Tomkins Cove, and Albany. At the eight hearings, 462 people spoke publicly on the classification proposals and alternatives. The Agency also received approximately 11,000 letters, emails, and faxes, and three petitions with 27,852 signatures during the public comment period which ended on December 30, 2016.

In both written and verbal commentary, the public expressed strong support for resource protection, community connectivity and recreational access. Agency staff considered the public comments and prepared a written response that is included in Appendix B to this FSEIS. The Preferred Alternative for the Boreas Ponds Tract addresses the public interests communicated during the classification process.

With respect to this proposal, the Agency Board must fulfill its responsibilities under SEQRA and will determine whether to recommend the proposed APSLMP amendments to the Governor. The SEQRA and APSLMP process and guidelines for review of the proposal are discussed separately below, with particular focus on the Boreas Ponds Tract.

APSLMP BACKGROUND

In 1885, the New York State Legislature established the Forest Preserve, stating that the Preserve "shall be forever kept as wild forest lands." In 1892, the Adirondack Park (Park) was established through an act of the Legislature, which

[5] Based on public comment, the proposed reclassification of the Cathead Mountain Primitive Area was removed from the original proposal to amend the APSLMP described in the DSEIS.

delineated where State acquisition of private inholdings was to be concentrated. At the Constitutional Convention of 1894, Article VII of the New York State Constitution (now Article XIV) was adopted and soon after was approved by the people of the State. It reads in 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, nor shall the timber thereon be sold, removed or destroyed."*

In 1971, the Adirondack Park Agency was created by the Legislature with two mandates: The Agency was directed to create a State Land Master Plan to classify and provide guidelines for the management and use of State lands within the Park, and a Private Land Use and Development Plan designed to control and channel development on non-State lands to minimize the adverse impacts upon the natural resource quality of the Park. The APSLMP was developed by the Agency and adopted by Governor Rockefeller in 1972. The Private Land Use and Development Plan was approved by the Legislature in 1973. Through these plans, the Agency performs long-range planning on a regional scale for the Park. The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC or Department) is responsible for the care, custody, and control of the State land in the Park; in carrying out this responsibility, DEC drafts Unit Management Plans (UMPs) for managing publicly owned lands within the Park consistent with the APSLMP. There are approximately 2,594,440 acres of Forest Preserve in the Adirondack Park, currently classified as follows:

Classification	Acres
Wilderness	1,160,654
Primitive	38,248
Canoe	17,325
Wild Forest	1,297,711
Intensive Use	22,327
Historic	521
State Administrative	1,888

The area subject to these classifications and reclassifications (the subject area) consists of the recently acquired Boreas Ponds Tract, as well as other recently acquired State lands, eleven reclassification proposals and a number of classifications involving map corrections.

In 2007, the Nature Conservancy purchased 161,000 acres of land from Finch, Pruyn & Company. These lands, called by some the "Jewel in the Adirondack crown," are remarkable for their ecological diversity, astounding beauty and the recreational opportunities they may provide to residents and visitors alike.

Governor Andrew Cuomo approved the classification of several of these parcels in February 2014. That classification package included the Essex Chain Lakes Tract, Indian River Tract, OK Slip Falls Tract, OSC Tract and the reclassification of some State lands surrounding those tracts. This classification package includes, but is not limited to, Finch parcels purchased following the 2014 classifications.

STANDARDS FOR AGENCY REVIEW

APSLMP Standards

The APSLMP sets forth in clear terms the fundamental principles governing the classification considerations and the Agency's responsibilities for the long range planning for the State lands within the Park.

In Part I, INTRODUCTION, the APSLMP sets forth the fundamental principles and states:

> *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. Human use and enjoyment of those lands should be permitted and encouraged, so long as the resources in their physical and biological context as well as their social or psychological aspects are not degraded.*

(APSLMP, page 1)

The APSLMP was adopted in 1972 following the requirement of the Adirondack Park Agency Act to "classify [state lands] lands according to their characteristics and capacity to withstand use…." (APA Act § 807).

Part II of the APSLMP entitled "CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM AND GUIDELINES" sets forth three "determinants" and an additional consideration: The first determinant is "the physical characteristics of the land or water which have a direct bearing upon the capacity of the land to accept human use." After listing several characteristics, the discussion of physical characteristics concludes, "[T]hese factors highlight the essential fragility of significant portions of the state lands within the Park. These fragile areas include most lands above 2,500 feet in altitude, particularly the boreal (spruce-fir), sub-alpine and alpine zones, as well as low-lying areas such as swamps, marshes and other wetlands. In addition, rivers, streams, lakes and ponds and their environs often present special physical problems." (APSLMP, pages 14-15)

The second determinant is biological considerations which are related to the physical characteristics, including deer wintering yards and nesting habitat of rare, threatened or endangered species. This determinant also recognizes that, "Wetland ecosystems frequently are finely balanced and incapable of absorbing material changes resulting from construction or intensive human use." (APSLMP, page 15)

The third determinant involves "certain intangible considerations that have an inevitable impact on the character of land." These include "a sense of remoteness and degree of wildness available to users of a particular area, which may result from the size of an area, the type and density of its forest cover, the ruggedness of the terrain or merely the views over other areas of the Park obtainable from some vantage point." (APSLMP, pages 15)

The final consideration is the presence of established facilities and public uses such as highways, ski areas or campgrounds; these uses are generally viewed as inconsistent with a Wilderness or Wild Forest setting.

The APSLMP contains nine categories which are briefly described below:

Wilderness - A Wilderness area, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man--where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. A Wilderness Area is further defined to mean an area of State land or water having a primeval character, without significant improvement or permanent human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve, enhance and restore, where necessary, its natural conditions, and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least ten thousand acres of contiguous land and water or is of sufficient size and character as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological or other features of scientific, educational, scenic or historical value.

Primitive - A Primitive area is an area of land or water that requires wilderness management and is either:

- Essentially wilderness in character but, (a) contains structures, improvements, or uses that are inconsistent with wilderness, as defined, and whose removal, though a long term objective, cannot be provided for by a fixed deadline, and/or, (b) contains, or is contiguous to, private lands that are of a size and influence to prevent wilderness designation; or,
- Of a size and character not meeting wilderness standards, but where the fragility of the resource, or other factors, requires wilderness management.

Canoe - A Canoe area is an area where the watercourses or the number and proximity of lakes and ponds make possible a remote and unconfined type of water-oriented recreation in an essentially wilderness setting.

Wild Forest - A Wild Forest area is an area where the resources permit a somewhat higher degree of human use than in wilderness, primitive or canoe areas, while retaining an essentially wild character. A Wild Forest area is further defined as an area that frequently lacks the sense of remoteness of Wilderness, Primitive or Canoe areas and that permits a wide variety of outdoor recreation.

Intensive Use - An Intensive Use area is an area where the State provides facilities for intensive forms of outdoor recreation by the public. There are two types of Intensive Use areas: campgrounds and day use areas.

Historic - Historic areas are locations of buildings, structures or sites owned by the State (other than the Adirondack Forest Preserve itself) that are significant in the history, architecture, archeology or culture of the Adirondack Park, the State or the Nation, that fall into one of the following categories:

- State historic sites;
- Properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places;
- Properties recommended for nomination by the Committee on Registers of the New York State Board for Historic Preservation; and that are of a scale, character and location appropriate for designation as an historic area under this master plan and the state has committed resources to manage such as primarily for historic objectives.

State Administrative - State Administrative areas are areas where the state provides facilities for a variety of specific state purposes that are not primarily designed to accommodate visitors to the Park.

The following two categories are essentially corridor overlays to the basic land classifications through which the corridor passes. (APSLMP, page 15).

Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers – The classification and guidelines for Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers are designed to be consistent with and complementary to both the basic intent and structure of the legislation passed by the Legislature in 1972 creating a wild, scenic and recreational rivers system.

Travel Corridors – Travel corridors are the strip of land constituting the roadbed and the right-of-way for State and Interstate highways in the Park, as well as the Remsen to Lake Placid railroad right-of-way.

Each of the nine categories contains further statements in the APSLMP which set forth basic and specific guidelines for improvements, uses and activities.

Special Management - In addition to the nine classification categories, the APSLMP also contains guidelines for areas deserving Special Management. Classifications reflect the minimum management constraints for the lands

affected. “Certain parcels of land may require special management to reflect unusual resource or public land factors.” (APSLMP, page 55). Special Management is not a classification category but rather provides specific protective measures which are more restrictive than what is set forth by the classification category. Special Management Areas are developed after the classification process is complete and specific management protections are developed during the unit management planning process.

Hierarchy of Guidelines

The APSLMP Guidelines for Management and Use are found in each land use classification and establish an important emphasis on Wilderness guidelines. The structure of the management guidelines begins with Wilderness, which is listed first, and adds permitted guidelines and criteria for each subsequent category. Primitive and Canoe Areas are very close to Wilderness, and all three categories have resource considerations and values that require similarly greater protection than Wild Forest areas. For example, in Primitive areas, “All structures and improvements that conform to wilderness guidelines will be acceptable in primitive areas.” (APSLMP, page 30). The motor vehicle, road and all terrain bicycles guidelines all begin with a statement that wilderness guidelines apply and add some possibilities for administrative use of some roads “to reach and maintain existing structures and improvements.” (APSLMP, page 31). The APSLMP guidelines and criteria and the requirements of the FPEIS, discussed under the next heading, place an emphasis on resource protection, remoteness and self-sufficiency found in the Wilderness, Primitive and Canoe classifications, while permitting and encouraging human use as long as the resources are not degraded.

SEQRA Standards

Description of Action

The proposed APSLMP amendment that is the subject of this FSEIS involves the classification of the Boreas Ponds Tract. The entire classification package involves the proposed classification and reclassification of State Lands within the Adirondack Park according to the guidelines and criteria of the APSLMP. The overall package involves land in each of the twelve counties in the Park and includes thirty-three State land classifications (approximately 50,827 acres), eleven State land reclassifications (approximately 132 acres), and fifty-six map corrections (1,949 acres).

The proposed classifications involve recently acquired State lands, while the reclassification proposals affect State lands that were previously classified as part of the APSLMP. Map corrections are the result of regular staff review of the Agency’s land classification GIS layer. This review over time has identified areas

of land depicted on the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan Map as private land that are determined to actually be in State ownership. When such errors in the map are discovered, the Agency places the area information into the State land “Pending Classification” category for consideration in the next Agency classification process.

Procedural Compliance

The legislative purpose of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) was to "to declare a state policy which will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment; to promote efforts which will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and enhance human and community resources; and to enrich the understanding of the ecological systems, natural, human and community resources important to the people of the state." ECL § 8-0101. The DEC regulations further elaborate that: "[i]n adopting SEQR, it was the Legislature's intention that all agencies conduct their affairs with an awareness that they are stewards of the air, water, land and living resources, and that they have an obligation to protect the environment for the use and enjoyment of this and all future generations." 6 NYCRR § 617.1(b).

Agency regulations provide that it "will not carry out, fund, approve or issue a final decision on any action until there has been full compliance with SEQR, [9 NYCRR Part 586], and 6 NYCRR Part 617." 9 NYCRR § 586.3 SEQR requires that the Agency determine whether any action it directly undertakes, funds or approves may have a significant impact on the environment, and, if it is determined that the action may have a significant adverse impact, prepare or request an environmental impact statement. 6 NYCRR § 617.1(c).

The Agency sent a letter to the DEC, Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historical Preservation (OPRHP) on July 19, 2016, seeking lead agency status for the classification and reclassification of State Lands within the Adirondack Park as contemplated by 6 NYCRR §617.6(b). DEC and DOT sent written consents to the Agency acting as lead agency on July 28, 2016. OPRHP did not object within 30 days, thereby consenting by default to the Agency acting as lead agency. 6 NYCRR §617.6(b)(3).

On October 14, 2016, the Agency Board accepted the DSEIS with four alternatives for the Boreas Ponds Tract but no preferred alternative. The Agency authorized public hearings and public comment to be received through December 30, 2016. Agency staff received and organized material from the hearings and public comments, which are incorporated into the FSEIS.

The Agency Board will determine whether to accept the FSEIS. If the Agency accepts the FSEIS, it will make the requisite SEQRA findings on the proposed action pursuant to 6 NYCRR § 617.11. Acceptance of the FSEIS will also provide the basis for the Agency’s APSLMP determination. If the APSLMP amendment is approved for recommendation by the Agency, the classification of the Boreas Ponds Tract will conclude with the Governor’s approval.

Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement

This Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) is a supplement to the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement Guidelines for Amending the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (1979) (FPEIS).

The FPEIS repeats and reaffirms the principles guiding the classification opportunities. Like the APSLMP, the FPEIS begins with a foundation of Wilderness classification and recognizes that opportunities for outdoor activities in large, unconfined spaces like the Adirondack Park are rare in New York State. Wild Forest areas are described in the FPEIS as having "[r]esources which allow a somewhat higher level of human use which does not degrade resource quality while retaining a wild character...." An example of such use includes snowmobiling "where such use will not adversely impact the natural resources quality and wild forest character of the area." (FPEIS, page 19).

The FPEIS requires any newly acquired parcel greater than 5,000 acres proposed to be classified as Wilderness, Primitive or Canoe be listed as a Type I action. The Boreas Ponds Tract is 20,543 acres in size and the proposed classification of the tract is a Type I action under SEQRA.

The DSEIS presented alternatives for the Boreas Ponds Tract which included lands surrounding the ponds and the ponds themselves being classified Wild Forest. In that the Wild Forest classification could potentially have an significant adverse environmental impact, the Agency prepared the DSEIS and the four proposed alternatives for the Boreas Ponds Tract. This FSEIS adds a Preferred Alternative and provides a comparative alternative analysis of these alternatives.

The MacIntyre East and MacIntyre West Tracts are 7,368 acres and 6,060 acres, respectively. The Agency proposed that the MacIntyre East and MacIntyre West be classified primarily as Wilderness. Therefore, as a Type I action, the proposed MacIntyre East and MacIntyre West classifications were found to have no adverse environmental impact, and notice of a draft negative declaration was published in the Environmental Notice Bulletin on November 16, 2016.

The remaining parcels, listed in Appendix A, include actions which are Type II SEQRA actions with no significant adverse environmental impacts. SEQRA does not require an EIS for Type II actions. The Agency accepted comments on the entire classification package pursuant to the APSLMP, which requires hearings inside and outside the Adirondack Park on all proposed State land classifications.

APSLMP CLASSIFICATION CONSIDERATIONS

As discussed in the “APSLMP Standards” above, the Adirondack Park Agency Act requires the Agency to classify the State lands in the Park according to "their characteristics and capacity to withstand use." [6] The physical, biological, and intangible considerations can determine a land’s capacity to withstand use. These considerations for the 99 tracts in Appendix A are addressed in that appendix. A discussion of the classification considerations applied to the Boreas Ponds Tract follows.

A fundamental determinant of land classification is the **physical characteristics** of the land or water which have a direct bearing upon the capacity of the land to accept human use. Soil, slope, elevation and water are the primary considerations of these physical characteristics. These characteristics affect the carrying capacity of the land or water both from the standpoint of the construction of facilities and the amount of human use the land or water itself can absorb.

Biological considerations also play an important role in the structuring of the classification system. Many of these are associated with the physical limitations just described. Wetland ecosystems, habitats of rare, threatened or endangered species and sensitive wildlife habitats are relevant to the characteristics of the land and sometimes determine whether a particular kind of human use should be permitted or prohibited.

Another significant determinant of land classification involves certain **intangible considerations** that have an inevitable impact on the character of land. Some of these are social or psychological, such as the sense of remoteness and degree of wildness.

Finally, the classification system takes into account the **established facilities** on the land, the uses now being made by the public and the policies followed by the various administering agencies. The APSLMP points to the presence of an existing campground or ski area as examples of established facilities which would require an Intensive Use classification. The existence of roads on acquired lands does not mandate a particular classification. When roads become nonconforming as a result of classification, the APSLMP provides that they will be closed within three years.

The physical characteristics specific to the Boreas Ponds Tract include a description of geology and soils, topography and slopes, water resources including lakes and ponds, and the Boreas Ponds and LaBier Flow dams. The biological considerations include a description of forest communities; wetlands; rare, threatened and endangered species; fisheries; bird species; invasive species; biological threats; and ecological integrity including resilience and

[6] Former Executive Law § 807, added L. 1971 c. 706, section 1 renumbered 816 and amended L. 1973, c. 348, section 1., as quoted in APSLMP at 13.

connectivity. The intangible characteristics include an overview of the social and psychological considerations, including a sense of remoteness and degree of wildness. Established facilities and retained rights include existing structures and improvements and deeded and other rights on the tract.

Physical Characteristics

Geology/Soils

The rocks that form the core of the Adirondacks are the remnants of a mountainous region that existed more than one billion years ago. Over the course of hundreds of millions of years, the mountains eroded away, and the rocks were buried in the resulting sediment. The sediment, in turn, became sedimentary rock, and pushed the mountainous rocks deep below the surface. There they were intruded by magma and metamorphosed by high pressure and high temperature, creating metamorphic rocks, primarily metanorthosite and anorthositic gneiss.

About 5-10 million years ago, recent in geologic terms, the Adirondack Mountains began to rise and pushed the deeply buried metamorphic rocks and their overlying sedimentary layers up. This movement eventually formed a dome shaped region approximately 60 miles in diameter. While the cause of the uplift is something of a geologic mystery, the prevailing concept is that there is or has been a hotspot in the Earth's mantle beneath the region. This hot spot created a plume of magma and exerted upward pressure on the layers above.

As the Adirondack dome was uplifted, the sedimentary layers were eroded away, most notably by periods of glaciation, exposing the metamorphic rocks beneath. Beginning about 1.6 million years ago, the Laurentide continental ice sheet advanced and retreated several times across the Adirondacks. More than a mile thick in some places, this moving sheet of ice carved the landscape and scratched, scraped and ground the underlying rock, transporting the eroded materials.

As the ice melted and the glacier receded, most recently about 10,000 – 12,000 years ago, the transported materials were deposited in their present locations. In the broad, glacially carved bottom of the Boreas Ponds valley, there are deep deposits of sandy and gravelly outwash. This flowing glacial melt sorted the outwash by size. The result of this flow is that till material is now present in an unsorted, often well cemented mishmash of various sized boulders, rocks, stones and gravel, to sand, silt and clay, along the mid-slope areas of the tract. At higher elevations, along the steepest slopes and most exposed areas, the surficial deposits are thinner, and bedrock is close to the surface.

These surficial deposits are the parent soil materials of the Boreas Ponds Tract. Soil formation is a process involving the chemical and physical weathering of parent materials by the following factors including, but not limited to: climate (temperature and precipitation); biologic activities (organic decomposition involving soil microbes and other organisms); topography (slope and aspect) and time (allowing for chemical and physical weathering to occur).

As a result of the great degree of variability in the soil formation factors, there is also a great degree of variability in the resulting soils. Soil scientists observe the diversity of soils, and classify them by their characteristics, such as texture, structure, permeability organic matter content, depth to water table, depth to bedrock, and degree of slope, into unique soil types, or soil series. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the federal service under the US Department of Agriculture in charge of mapping where soils are located on the landscape, has identified 61 detailed soil map units within the Boreas Ponds Tract. Many of these mapped soil units are complexes of multiple soil series. Map 1 shows the soils on the Boreas Ponds Tract.

The characteristics of the soils on the Boreas Ponds Tract vary widely with landscape position. Shallow, rocky soils are associated with steep slopes and higher elevations, while deeper soils are found in areas with moderate slopes and in flat valley bottoms. Deep, highly organic, hydric soils are associated with wetland areas.

The soils vary greatly in their characteristics and differ in their ability to support various uses including wastewater and stormwater treatment, support of buildings and roads, agricultural uses, and various recreational uses. NRCS has analyzed the unique properties of the classified soil series, and produced interpretive ratings tables that highlight the compatibility of different soil types for various uses. Figure 2 is a mapped representation of the NRCS table for erosion hazards associated with roads and trails on the soils of the Boreas Ponds Tract. The soil characteristics considered by NRCS for this area are stoniness, depth to a water table, likeliness of ponding or flooding, slope, surface stones or boulders, and texture of the surface layer.

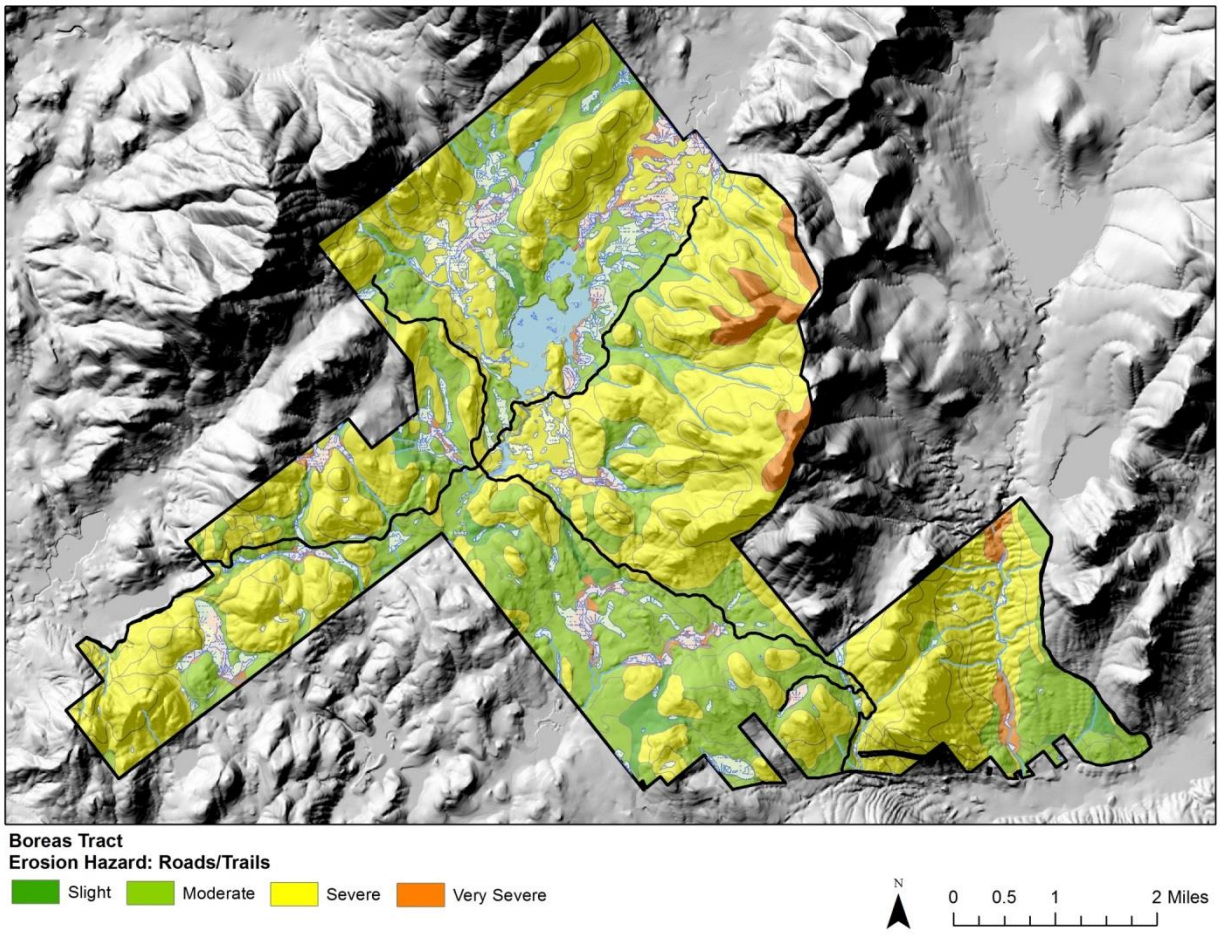

Figure 2: Boreas Ponds Tract Erosion Hazards

The ratings tables are very useful for public and private land use planning. However, it is important to note that these are generalized designations which give an overview of soil characteristics. As with any project, smart design, proper engineering and ongoing maintenance could mitigate potential impacts.

The areas with the best soil ratings are indicative of a greater capacity to withstand use. The higher and steeper elevations with potential and significant erosion impacts indicate less capacity to withstand use. On the Boreas Ponds Tract, Gulf Brook and Boreas Ponds Roads traverse the areas with the best soil ratings. Construction and maintenance of roads and trails elsewhere on the tract, especially in higher elevation locations where steep slopes and thinner soils are present, could pose challenges in relationship to the erosional impacts.

Topography/Slopes

The Boreas Ponds Tract contains a notable diversity of terrain, ranging from the low-lying valley of the Boreas River and Boreas Ponds, to high mountain ridges. There are three named peaks over 2,000 feet: Boreas Mountain (3,776 feet), Moose Mountain (2,700 feet), and Ragged Mountain (2,677 feet). Total acreage of lands over 2,500 feet is approximately 2,650 acres.

The lowest elevation (1,200 feet) in the tract is The Branch, where the river intersects with Blue Ridge Road. The Boreas Ponds are situated at approximately 2,000 feet, and the Boreas River, at the boundary with Vanderwhacker Wild Forest, is approximately 1,940 feet in altitude.

Given the diversity of terrain within the Boreas Ponds Tract, slopes vary greatly, from flat, to gently rolling, to severely steep. Generally, areas of steep slopes are problematic for certain recreational improvements, such as campsites, road building and trail development because of the high risk of erosion. Figure 3 shows the subject area topography.

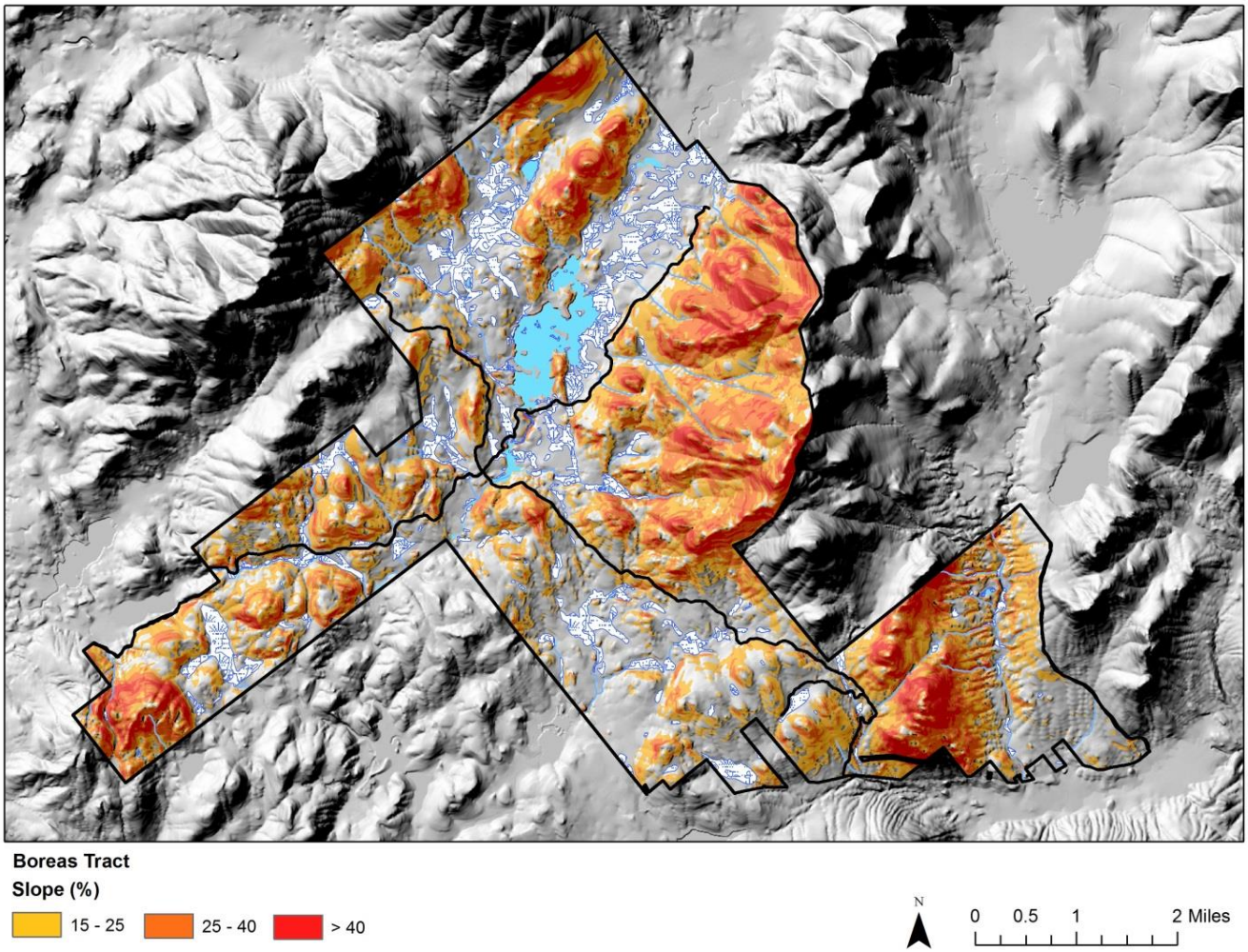

Figure 3: Boreas Ponds Tract Topography

Water Resources

The APSLMP states:

> The water resources of the Adirondacks are critical to the integrity of the Park. The protection of the major watersheds of the state was a major reason for the creation of the Forest Preserve and continues to be of significant importance. Waters, particularly lakes and ponds, have their carrying capacity from a physical, biological and social standpoint just as do tracts of public or private land. The use made of state waters also has a direct impact on adjacent land holdings. (APSLMP, page 4)

A dominant feature of the landscape in the Boreas Ponds Tract is the three connected waterbodies known as Boreas Ponds.

Lakes and Ponds

The Boreas Ponds are within the Upper Hudson River watershed and are the headwaters of the Boreas River. Prior to the impoundment, the three ponds were connected by shallow channels. The ponds comprise a surface area of 345± acres, as recorded by the Adirondack Lakes Survey Corporation. Bathymetry indicates that there are 3 distinct basins with a large portion of the ponds being less than 5 feet in depth. Figure 4 shows the subject area lakes and ponds.

There are ten waterbodies within the Boreas Ponds Tract, as listed below, with the Boreas Ponds being the largest:

- Boreas Ponds – 345 acres
- LaBier Flow - 27acres
- White Lily Pond – 16 acres
- Fly Pond – 13 acres
- Unnamed Pond – 22 acres
- Unnamed Pond – 12 acres
- Unnamed Pond – 5 acres
- Unnamed Pond – 4 acres
- Unnamed Pond – 3 acres

- Deer Pond – 2 acres

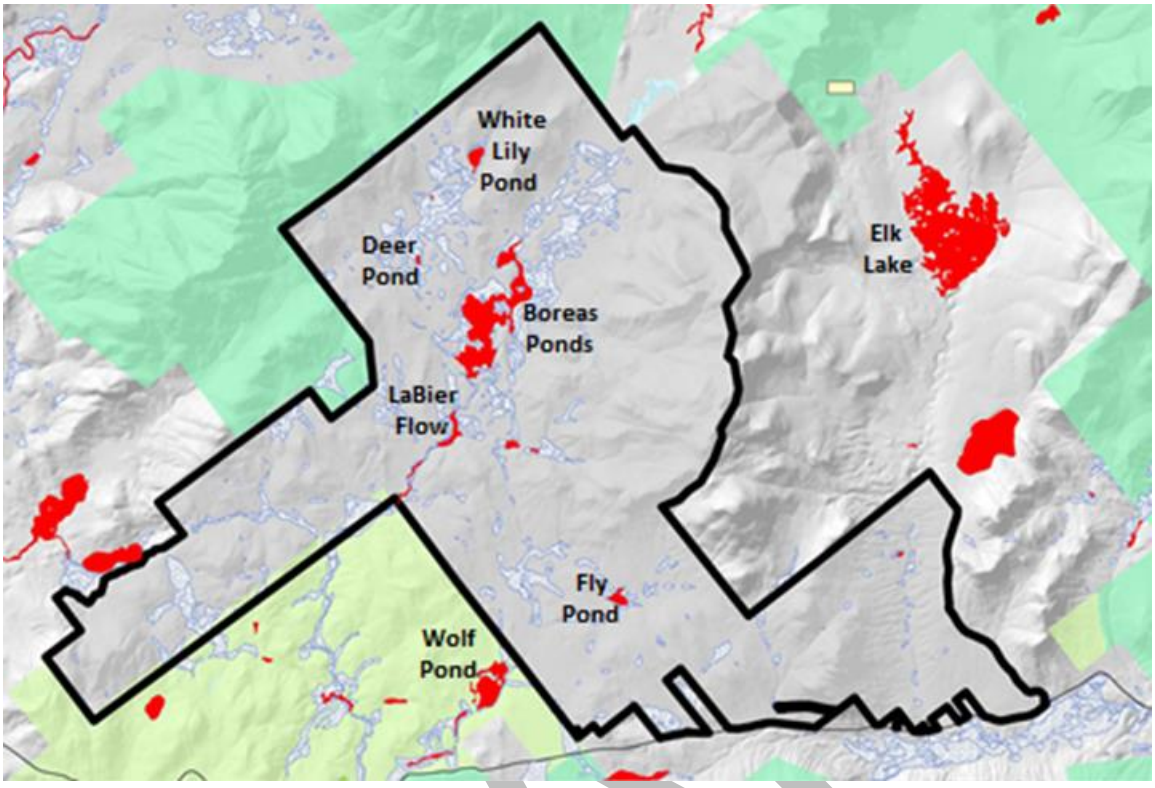

Figure 4: Boreas Ponds Tract Waterbodies

Rivers, Streams and Tributaries

A total of seven streams, approximately 27 miles, were identified on the Boreas Ponds Tract. They include White Lily Brook, Brant Brook, Snyder Brook, Boreas River, LeClair Brook, Andrew Brook and The Branch (from Elk Lake). All seven are classified as moderate or high gradient, neutral pH, with moderate buffering capacity. DEC has classified all seven streams as C (T). The best usage of Class C is fishing and the symbol (T) indicates that they are trout waters.

The Boreas River flows unimpeded from the dam at LaBier flow to the Blue Ridge Road, with wetlands adjoining one or both sides along most of the way. The wetlands and closed canopy forest cover accompanying the Boreas River, both on and off the Boreas Ponds Tract, make it an important corridor for wildlife dispersal. About 3 miles south of the Blue Ridge Road, the Boreas becomes a Scenic River within the WSRR system. Upstream of that, it is not a designated river.

Boreas River – LaBier Flow to Blue Ridge Road

APA staff review of characteristics of the headwater reaches of the Boreas River indicates that most of the river from LaBier Flow to the Blue Ridge Road would, after expiration of nearby leases in 2018, have similar characteristics to a “wild”

river under the NYS Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act (Rivers Act). Wild rivers, through the Rivers Act, are generally five (5) miles or more in length, free of diversions and impoundments, and accessible only by water, foot or horse trail. Wild river areas are primitive and undeveloped in nature. In general, the minimum distance from the Boreas River to a public road is one-half mile.

Boreas Ponds Dam

Finch, Pruyn & Company constructed a wooden dam in 1915 at the southern end of the Boreas Ponds to facilitate log drives on the Boreas River.

The dam is listed in DEC's dam inventory as an earth and rock filled dam 196 feet in length with a spillway width of 16 feet. The spillway is made of concrete and was reconstructed in 1997. A wooden bridge supported by steel cross beams spans the spillway. The dam is considered a Class A hazard (low hazard) by DEC.

LaBier Flow Dam

A second dam, also rated as a Class A hazard, is located approximately 1.2 miles downstream of the Boreas Ponds Dam, creating the impoundment known as LaBier Flow. The dam consists of a center timber crib structure and 15± foot wide spillway with earthen embankments on either side. The downstream left embankment is 40± feet long and the downstream right embankment is 160± feet long. A wooden bridge supported by steel cross beams spans the spillway.

DEC issued an emergency authorization in August 2008 to the former property owner for the correction of deficiencies in the dam and to alleviate the threat of failure. These measures have been undertaken.

Aquatic Organism Passage

The Boreas Ponds and associated wetlands were dramatically changed with the construction of the dam which restricted water flow, resulting in increased water levels, flooding out what were likely peatland in and around the former basins. These changes created a simplified ecosystem in an earlier successional state. Complex habitat, consisting of varied vegetation covertypes distributed over several soil moisture regimes, was converted to a less developed system in an earlier successional stage, consisting of fewer covertypes and one constant moisture regime. Fewer combinations of vegetation types and moisture regimes results in a system with fewer habitat niches available for species to exploit. These wetland changes also increased the usability of the pond for some species of wildlife, while negatively affecting others. The construction of the dam created a barrier to movement of aquatic and semi-aquatic species and also disrupted the natural hydrological regime and sediment/nutrient transport function of the Boreas River.

The removal of the Boreas or the LaBier Dam would significantly alter the size and depth of the impounded waters as well as the wetland communities associated with the Ponds.

Dams are conforming structures in all classification categories. In Wilderness Areas, existing dams on established impoundments may remain, however, no new dams may be constructed. The APSLMP requires that natural materials will be used wherever possible in the reconstruction or rehabilitation of dams.

The Forest Preserve Policy Manual developed by the Department provides guidance for the location, construction and maintenance of dams for multiple classification categories. The decision to reconstruct or rehabilitate dams is based on multiple factors including natural resource protection.

Biological Considerations

Forest Communities

Northern hardwood forest is the characteristic matrix forest community of the Adirondacks, in which patches of other community types are nestled, and this is the case within the Boreas Ponds Tract. However, at the highest locations of the Boreas Ponds Tract, as is consistent with and characteristic of the High Peaks Wilderness, mountain spruce-fir is dominant and is the matrix forest of the upper elevations of the region. Forest composition on the Boreas Ponds Tract is strongly influenced by topographic variation across the site.

Lowlands - Northern Swamp

Generally, conifer communities dominate the moist lowland areas. Common tree species include black and red spruce, balsam fir, red maple and white and yellow birch. A notable community is the alkaline conifer-hardwood swamp, a forested wetland found on alkaline substrates that promote higher nutrient availability than more acidic wetlands. Northern white cedar, black ash and red maple are common tree species in this community, and the high nutrient availability supports a high diversity of understory plants.

Midslope – Northern Hardwood Forest

Northern hardwood forests are most richly expressed on sites with higher levels of alkalinity based upon bedrock and soils types. Sugar maple, American beech and yellow birch are the dominant tree species, with black cherry and white ash being common associates. Transition to lowland conifer communities occur at the lower elevations of northern hardwood forests, while transitions to boreal upland communities occur at the higher elevations.

Upper Elevations – Mountain Spruce-Fir Forest

Mountain spruce-fir forest, dominated by red spruce and balsam fir, and associated with mountain paper birch, yellow birch and mountain ash, is found in the higher elevations of the Boreas Ponds Tract. This forest is designated as a significant New York Community by the New York Natural Heritage Program (State Rarity Rank S2/S3).

This type of forest is generally restricted to elevations above 3,000 feet, where short growing seasons and exposure to severe, long duration winter conditions shape the ecological setting. Cloud cover is common, as moist rising air masses condense at cooler elevations, providing a consistent water supply, as vegetation captures fog droplets. Soils in this forest are spodosols, characterized by high acidity and low fertility, and subject to downslope movement on steep slopes, especially when saturated. Wind throw is also a disturbance factor, both to soils and vegetation, given the exposed setting of this forest.

Mountain spruce-fir forests on private lands have been impacted by logging activity in the past century and a half, with disturbance exacerbated by operations on steep slopes. Acid deposition is a continuing threat, especially because these forests are often surrounded by acidic clouds and fog, which affects the ability of vegetation to retain essential nutrients. The warming temperatures and increased variability of weather impacts associated with climate change are also a threat leading to the decline of this forest type.

Conservation strategies for Mountain spruce-fir forest include maintaining the integrity and connectivity of large blocks of this forest. The proximity of the Mountain spruce-fir forest within the Boreas Ponds Tract to the high elevation slopes of the High Peaks Wilderness to the north, with similar forest associations, bolsters the need for protection of this fragile forest type.

Timber Harvest History

The valuable commercial timber species characteristic of the forests in the Boreas Ponds Tract has led to generations of industrial forest management, creating a mosaic of different aged stands. With the end of logging operations on the tract, natural disturbance regimes will now dominate. Wind throw, ice and snow loading, forest pests (native, non-native and invasive) and disease are the primary disturbance factors.

As these forests mature, the forest structure will change. Gaps in forest cover will be fewer and smaller in scale, and species diversity of plants and animals will change. Species which prefer open or edge habitats characteristic of early successional forests, such as deer, moose, snowshoe hare, ruffed grouse, and golden winged warbler are likely to be better represented on nearby conservation easement and private lands, which are managed for timber. Conversely, the

maturing forests on the Boreas Tract will better accommodate a range of interior forest species, including ovenbird, hermit thrush, and scarlet tanager.

Wetlands

There are approximately 1,801 acres of wetlands in the Boreas Ponds Tract. Many of these wetlands are associated with streams and other waterbodies. Map 2 shows the locations of wetlands in this tract. This wetland mapping uses the Cowardin classification system[7], which does not specifically identify or differentiate among peatlands, wet meadows or emergent marsh.

There are numerous wetland types on this tract of land ranging from coniferous swamps to alluvial forests, to sphagnum- shrub bogs, to beaver flows and other open wetlands. The substrate of this tract and the species diversity within these wetlands varies from location to location. Regardless of species diversity, the wetlands are significant and play a critical role in modulating the flow of water in the watershed, reducing flooding and erosion. The wetlands also filter pollutants and purify water and provide critical habitat for many species of plants and animals. Table 2 lists acreage of common wetland types in the Boreas Ponds Tract.

Table 2: Acreage of Common Wetland Cover Types

	FO1	FO4	SS1	SS3	EM1	Total*
Boreas Ponds Tract	6.6	990.6	323.4	86.9	174.6	1801.1

*Total of all wetlands, including cover types not included in this table.

Following is a description of the cover types in Table 2:

FO1 – Hardwood swamp, usually dominated by Red or Silver Maple.

FO4 – Conifer swamp, dominated by Balsam Fir, Tamarack or Black Spruce.

SS1 – Shrub swamp, with Alder and Willow as dominant species.

SS3 – Shrubby peatland, characterized by Ericaceous shrubs and peat moss.

EM1 – Either wet meadows or emergent marsh, or a combination of the two.

The boreal wetland habitats (FO4 and SS3) are of particular ecological importance to the region because of their relative rarity and because of the specialized plants and animals that they support which do not substantially occur

[7] Cowardin, L.M., V. Carter, F.C. Golet, and E.T. LaRoe. 1979. *Classification of wetlands and deepwater habitats of the United States*. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service FWS/OBS-79/31, Washington, D.C., 103 pp.

outside of the Adirondacks in New York State. Boreal bogs may be eliminated from the State or, at best, limited to small isolated patches at higher elevations in the northernmost part of New York by climate change.[8]

Value 1 Wetlands

Due to their association with open water, there are areas of value 1 wetlands on the Boreas Ponds Tract. According to Part 578.5 of the Agency's Rules and Regulations, "Wetlands associated with open water provide breeding and spawning areas as well as food and cover for wildlife and fish using the open water. They are an integral part of open water ecosystems and provide natural nutrient exchange. They purify water entering the open water and may improve its quality whether measured in rate of flow, dissolved oxygen content, clarity, or ionic content. They often provide temporary storm water storage and ameliorate downstream flooding. Wetlands with over 20 acres within the mean high water mark of lake, ponds, rivers and streams are integral parts of those water bodies and can dramatically affect quality and flow in those waterbodies and are rated highest (1)."

Figure 5 shows the location of Value 1 wetlands on the Boreas Tract and adjacent Forest Preserve land south of the tract. Description of significant Value 1 wetlands follows Figure 5.

[8] Hilke, C. and Galbraith, H. 2013. Assessing the Vulnerability of Key Habitats in New York: A Foundation for Climate Adaptation Planning. National Wildlife Federation, Northeast Regional Center. Montpelier, VT.

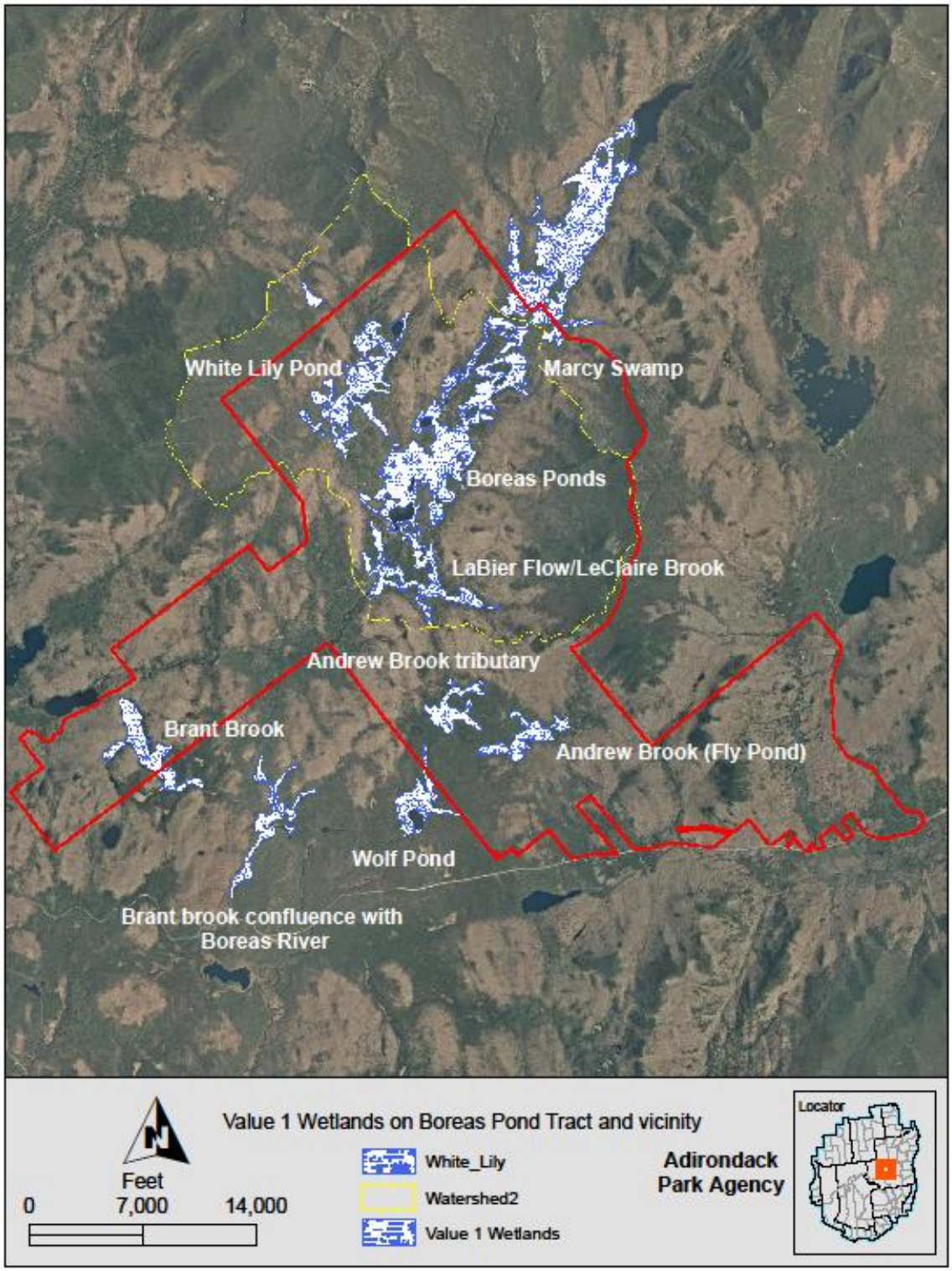

Figure 5: Boreas Ponds Tract Value 1 Wetlands

Boreas Ponds Wetlands

The Boreas Ponds wetland communities consist of emergent marsh and deepwater marsh wetlands. Due to their size, wetland covertypes present, diversity and abundance of aquatic macrophytes, presence of a New York State protected plant, and hydrologic connection to the main waterbodies, they have the highest value rating of 1 as defined in 9 NYCRR Part 578. Emergent marsh is the most valuable individual covertypes and one of the highest in productivity. These wetlands provide nesting habitat, food and cover for wildlife, the 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.

Agency staff conducted several site visits of Boreas Ponds. A total of 16 emergent and deepwater marsh wetland plant species were identified during the site visits. This diverse wetland community is represented by the following species: watershield *(Brasenia schreberi),* the State protected Farwell's milfoil (*Myriophyllum farwellii)*, slender watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum tenellum),* bladderwort (*Utricularia spp.*), Robbins pondweed (*Potamogeton robinsii*), floatingleaf pondweed (*Potamogeton natans*), ribbonleaf pondweed (*Potamogeton epihydrus*), bur-reed (*Sparganium sp*), pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*), white water lily (*Nymphaea odorata*), yellow pond lily (*Nuphar variegata*), pipewort (*Eriocaulon aquaticum*), threeway sedge *(Dulichium arundinaceum*), arrowhead *(Sagittaria sp.),* coast sedge (*Carex exilis*) and rush *(Juncus spp.).*

During a site visit Agency staff surveyed LaBier Flow. In addition to the 16 emergent and deepwater marsh wetland plant species identified in the Boreas Ponds, two additional species, large leaf pondweed (*Potamogeton amplifolius)* and common waterweed (*Elodea canadensis*), were found.

Additional plants found on bog mats included: round-leaved sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*), Wright's spike-rush(*Eleocharis sp*.), tawny cotton-grass (*Eriophorum virginicum*), northern bog clubmoss (*Lycopodiella inundata*), northern bugleweed (*Lycopus uniflorus*), bog buckbean (*Menyanthes trifoliate*), sweet gale (*Myrica gale*), bog aster (*Oclemena nemoralis*), royal fern (*Osmunda regalis*), pitcher-plant (*Sarracenia purpurea*), tall meadow-rue (*Thalictrum pubescens*), marsh fern (*Thelypteris palustris*), marsh St. John's-wort (T*riadenum virginicum*), northern evening-primrose (*Oenothera parviflora*), and common St. John's-wort (*Hypericum perforatum*).

Although there is abundant aquatic plant diversity which appear to be thriving in the area, the wetlands around the pond were profoundly changed by the increased water levels created by the construction of the dam. Significant communities around the ponds were flooded by the creation of the Boreas Ponds Dam, as evidenced by the flooded cedar forests and bog fragments remaining around the ponds' margins and on islands within.

Two additional Value 1 wetlands are associated with the Boreas Ponds: a Medium Fen/Conifer Swamp along unnamed tributary to Boreas River and a wetland northeast of Third Pond which is described below.

> Northeast of the Third Pond, an abandoned road (referred to by Finch as North Spur) crosses an unnamed tributary to the Boreas River. There is an area of open peatland (medium fen) on the west side of this dirt road dominated by sedges and sweet gale, with lesser amounts of black spruce, red maple, spiraea, speckled alder and dead cedars, which is about 25 acres in size. The medium fen grades into a conifer swamp on the outer edges of the wetland complex. This large wetland complex is also subject to beaver activity, as evidenced by a beaver dam within it, which is visible in 2013 air photos.

Marcy Swamp

The largest wetland complex on the Boreas Ponds Tract is associated with the Boreas River, upstream of the Boreas Ponds. The Marcy Swamp extends over five miles from the Boreas Ponds to the Upper Ausable Lake on the adjacent property to the northeast. These wetlands are located at the headwaters of two major Adirondack watersheds, the Ausable/Boquet and the Upper Hudson. The wetland complex straddles the watershed boundary. During a site visit to the property, one caretaker said, “Which way the water goes depends on what the beavers are doing.” The very start of both the Boreas River and the East Branch of the Ausable Rivers are in this wetland complex. The wetland links these two watersheds for species dispersal. This wetland complex accepts, holds and treats runoff from several Adirondack High Peaks, including portions of Allen, Skylight, Redfield, and Marcy, serving as a water treatment basin for a large and very steep watershed.

The Marcy Swamp is mostly made up of a 1,200 acre peatland. The entire wetland complex sits at around 2000 feet in elevation, making it the largest, highest elevation peatland in New York State.[9] There are extensive peatlands within this wetland complex and many of the wetland covertypes in the Cowardin classification system are represented, making the habitat very structurally and biologically diverse. Peatlands are notable for their unique ability to sequester carbon in their thick saturated soils composed of dead and decaying plant material.

Several communities within this wetland are ranked by the New York Natural Heritage Program (NYNHP) and considered to be vulnerable or imperiled, facing ongoing threats including climate change, nitrogen deposition, hydrologic alteration, recreational overuse and invasive species. Deer overbrowsing, deer trails and orchid collection are less widespread threats.[10] The wetland communities within Marcy Swamp that are ranked as vulnerable and imperiled by

[9] Langdon, Steve, January 2017, personal communication.
[10] http://www.acris.nynhp.org/communities.php

the NYNHP include: northern white cedar swamp (S2S3), and medium fen (S2S3). Other significant wetland communities within the Marcy swamp are black spruce-tamarack bog (S3), dwarf shrub bog (S3), and inland poor fen (S3). NYNHP has also documented Northern bog aster, a New York State threatened plant within this wetland complex and round whitefish within Upper Ausable Lake, which is listed by New York State as endangered. There is also a great blue heron rookery at the north end of the ponds according to NYNHP. Figure 6 shows the covertypes of Marcy Swamp.

The diversity of wetland types indicates diverse underlying water chemistry and the presence of a calcareous influence. These specialized communities provide habitat for species that exist only in the northern part of New York State, which is the southern extent of their ranges. These habitats also host a biota that is specific to their respective communities, including carnivorous plants.

The amount of wetlands within the mean high water mark of the Boreas Ponds (>100 acres), the presence of threatened plants, the variety of covertypes, and the presence of islands within the wetlands all contribute to the value rating of 1 for the Marcy Swamp and Boreas Ponds wetland complex.

The high elevation of Marcy Swamp, along with its well-connected position within the landscape and its existing boreal communities, make it an important place for conservation of boreal peatlands. National Wildlife Federation and DEC management recommendations for boreal bog habitat include protecting large blocks of undisturbed boreal bog habitat, reducing anthropogenic impacts on hydrology, reducing recreation and visitation at vulnerable sites and altering dam-water flow regimes to increase the area of potential bog habitat.[11]

[11] Hilke, C. and Galbraith, H. 2013. Assessing the Vulnerability of Key Habitats in New York: A Foundation for Climate Adaptation Planning. National Wildlife Federation, Northeast Regional Center. Montpelier, VT.

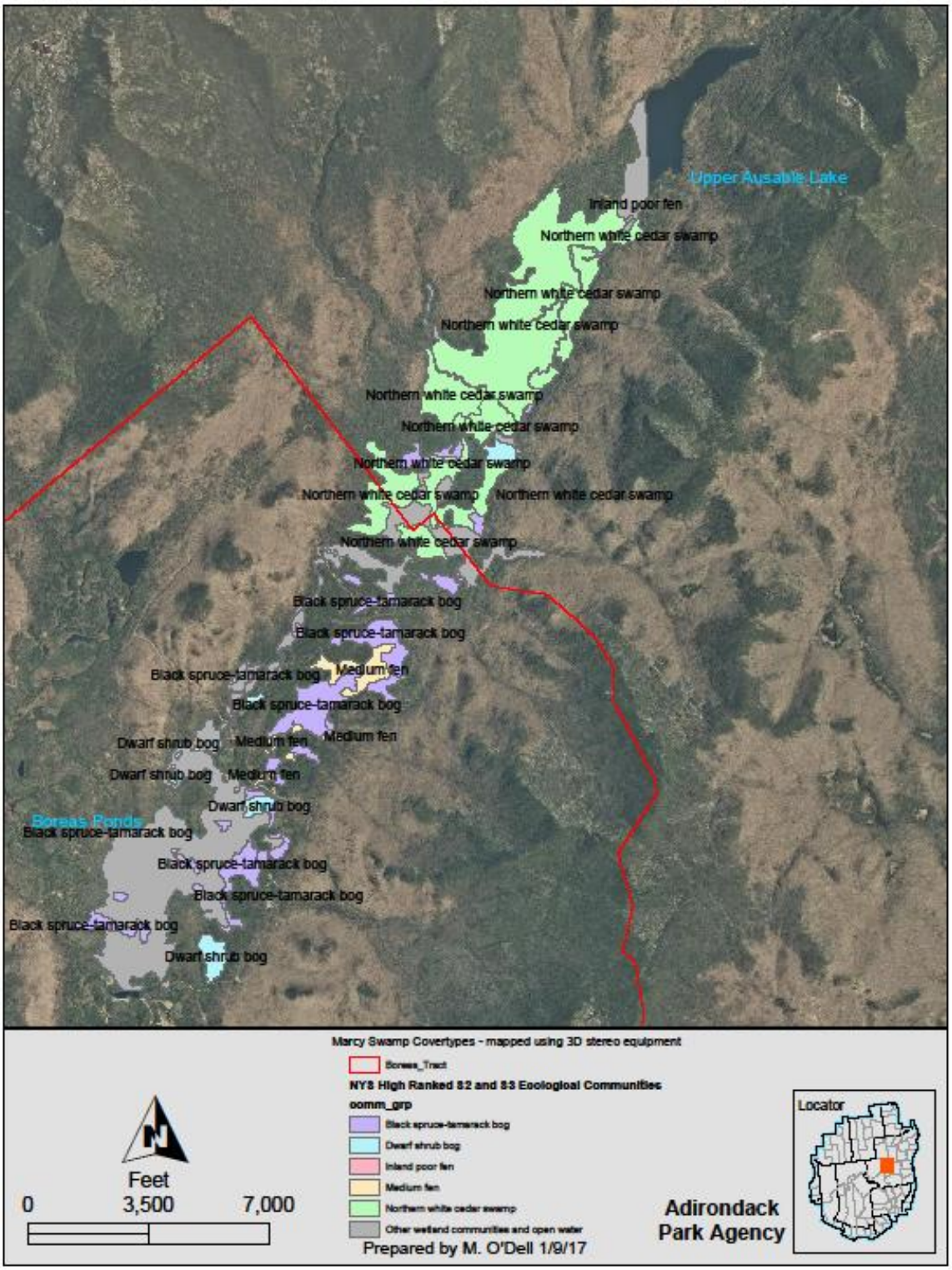

Figure 6: Marcy Swamp Covertypes

Two additional Value 1 wetlands, described below, are associated with Marcy Swamp: Dead Cedar Backwater and an Inland Bog/Poor Fen.

Dead Cedar Backwater

On the northeast side of the Boreas Ponds, within the Second Pond, there is a shallow bay of the pond that is a dead forested/shrub swamp wetland. It is dominated by dead cedar trees and leatherleaf. The dead forested/shrub wetland is approximately 15 acres in size within the mean high water mark of the ponds. Two great blue herons and a flock of unidentified ducks were flushed from this wetland during the site visit.

Inland Bog/Poor Fen

On the southeast side of the Boreas Ponds, there is an inland bog/poor fen associated with an unnamed tributary to the Boreas Ponds. It is approximately 20 acres in size. It is dominated by sphagnum moss, leatherleaf, Labrador tea, bog rosemary, with tamarack, black spruce and cedar on the outer edges.

LaBier Flow/LeClaire Brook

Downstream of the Boreas Ponds along the Boreas River is the LaBier flow wetland, which is associated with the impounded Boreas River and its tributary, LeClaire Brook. Most of the flow is a shallow emergent and deepwater marsh. It is dominated by white water lilies and Brassenia, with some Sparganium. The shoreline is mostly rocky and steep, with a very narrow fringe wetland of sweet gale, leatherleaf and royal fern.

Andrew Brook Tributary

This is a shrub swamp, conifer swamp, wet meadow and emergent marsh along a meandering brook with several beaver dams along its length. A large portion of the wetland is dominated by leatherleaf and is characterized as an open peatland, probably a poor fen.

Andrew Brook

The wetlands along Andrew Brook are similar to that described above for the Andrew Brook tributary, except that the wetlands and ponded areas along the brook are much larger in scale, with one of the ponds being named as Fly Pond. Some portions of the wetland complex are dominated by sweet gale and leatherleaf, overtopped by *Carex aquatilis* and underlain by sphagnum moss. Other portions are dominated by grasses and sedges or speckled alder and underlain by sphagnum moss. The open peatland is surrounded by conifer swamp. Andrew Brook is a tributary to Wolf Pond, which is a separate value 1 wetland which drains to the Boreas River.

Brant Brook

The wetlands associated with Brant Brook are conifer and shrub swamps with some areas of open peatland within, which are dominated by leatherleaf. This brook is also heavily influenced by beaver, with impoundments creating several ponds within the wetlands complex. Brant Brook enters the Boreas River at a confluence of several other tributaries on the Vanderwhacker Wild Forest to the south of the Boreas Ponds Tract. There is another value 1 wetland at this confluence of tributaries with the Boreas River.

White Lily Pond and Outlet

White Lily Pond and the outlet comprise another large wetland complex and contains large amounts of coniferous swamp and peatlands important to lowland boreal birds. It also represents a large, relatively undisturbed riparian corridor for species dispersal.

There are many other wetland complexes on the Boreas Ponds Tract, which provide the same important functions as the wetlands described above, including flood control, wildlife habitat, sediment filtration, and nutrient storage and cycling. They all have additional aesthetic and educational value, and are havens for biodiversity. All of these wetlands, and the headwater wetlands, in particular, serve to maintain baseflows in streams and rivers downstream. The peatlands, in particular, are providing significant carbon storage, which mitigates the effects of climate change.

Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species and Natural Communities

The Adirondack landscape includes rare species which are protected in New York State. Within the Boreas Ponds Tract, three rare, threatened or endangered species (vascular plants and animals) occur, some with multiple populations. In addition to these three known occurrences of rare species, Purple crowberry (*Empetrum atropurpureum*) was known to occur historically.

One of the plants identified during the site visits is a NYS protected species. Farwell's milfoil (*Myriophyllum farwellii*) was identified in Boreas Ponds and LaBier Flow and is listed as threatened in 6 NYCRR Section 193.3. Plants listed as threatened are likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of their ranges within the State.

Listed below are some species of special concern reported from the tract.

Name	US Listed	NY Listed	NYNHP Rank[12]
Bicknell's Thrush (*Catharus bicknelli*)	Migratory Bird Treaty Act	SC	
Common Loon (*Gavia immer*)		SC	G5 S4
Farwell's Milfoil (*Myriophyllum farwelli*)		U	G5 S2
Moose (*Alces alces)*		SGCN	
Northern Bog Aster (*Symphyotrichum boreale*)		T	G5 S2

It is important to understand that a comprehensive survey of these lands has not been conducted by the staff of the New York Natural Heritage Program (NYNHP) and additional species may be present.

Additionally, several significant natural community types are documented by NYNHP or mapped from aerial photography. While these natural communities have no legislative State or Federal protection, their rarity is ranked by the Natural Heritage Programs.

Name	NYNHP Rank
Black Spruce – Tamarack Bog	G4G5 S3
Dwarf Shrub Bog	G4 S3
Inland Poor Fen	G4 S3
Medium Fen	G3G4 S2S3
Mountain Spruce – Fir Forest	G3 S2S3
Northern White Cedar Swamp	G4 S2S3

In 2001, botanist Jerry Jenkins conducted biological surveys of the entire TNC/Finch acquisition lands, including some of the tracts being classified in this package, tracts purchased by the State and tracts that have been protected by conservation easements and are currently privately owned. Jenkins' summary of biological significance does not always follow the NYNHP ranking system and includes regional specialties in addition to State, Global and Federal rankings. Although his summary is not as easily quantifiable as NYNHP surveys, his information is included for a more comprehensive understanding.[13]

Jenkins also documents bryophytes that the NYNHP does not document.

Evidence of moose has been observed on the property by Agency staff. Landscape capability models by University of Massachusetts[14] suggest that the matrix forest block containing the Boreas Tract and a portion of the tract itself are

[12] www.acris.nynhp.org/ranks.php

[13] www.apa.ny.gov/Research/index.html

[14] McGarigal K, Deluca WV, Compton BW, Plunkett EB, and Grand J. 2016. Designing sustainable landscapes: modeling focal species. Report to the North Atlantic Conservation Cooperative, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Northeast Region.

the best available habitat for moose for all parts of their lifecycle available in New York State. The moose are likely to shift to neighboring conservation easement and private lands being managed for timber as the forests on the Boreas Tract mature.

American marten occupancy models by The Klamath Center for Conservation Research indicate that the forest matrix block containing the Boreas Tract, including all of the Boreas Tract, may be the only habitat occupied by marten in the Adirondack Park using snow depth predictions for the year 2055.[15]

Fisheries

DEC completed fish surveys using backpack electrofishing equipment in 2014 and gill nets in 1983 and 2013 on the Boreas Ponds. Fish collected included the following species: brown bullhead, white sucker, pumpkinseed sunfish, golden shiner, common shiner, eastern blacknose dace, northern redbelly dace and brook trout.

DEC reports that 8 fish stocking permits were issued since 1984 and at least 5 different strains of brook trout were released into Boreas Ponds. Brown trout were also stocked in 2008. Additional stocking records obtained from Finch, Pruyn & Company indicates that rainbow trout were stocked in LaBier Flow and brook trout were stocked in White Lily Pond. DEC completed water chemistry analyses on all 3 of the Boreas basins that included pH, temperature and dissolved oxygen profiles. Trout require cold water refugia during the summer months in order to survive; typically, temperatures less than 65F and dissolved oxygen levels above 4 parts per million are required for their long-term survival. All 3 of the basins had sufficient dissolved oxygen and temperatures suitable for long-term trout survival.

It has been confirmed that Boreas Ponds support a population of late spawning suckers (*Catostomus sp*.) which are genetically distinct from the typical white sucker (*Catostomus commersonii*) found in the Adirondack Region. Additional research, including genetics analysis, is necessary to determine if it is a variant, a strain, or new species. The late spawning sucker was listed in 2015 by the NYNHP as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) in the high priority category. This requires maintaining and protecting the population until it can be verified that the species occurs in greater numbers in other waterbodies. Additionally, NYNHP has documented Round whitefish nearby, within Upper Ausable Lake, which is listed by New York State as endangered.

[15] Carroll, C. 2007. Interacting effects of climate change, landscape conversion, and harvest on carnivore populations at the range margin: marten and lynx in the northern Appalachians. Conservation Biology 21:1092-1104. PDF (2MB).

Bird Species

A limited amount of field survey work was conducted to inventory bird species for the Boreas Ponds Tract. The NYNHP database and the 2000-2005 New York State Breeding Bird Atlas[16] were reviewed for this parcel. The Breeding Bird Atlas is the most comprehensive, statewide survey available which reveals the distribution of breeding birds in New York. Breeding Bird Atlas data for blocks overlapping the Boreas Tract include records of several lowland boreal birds, including Black-backed woodpecker, Olive-sided flycatcher, Gray jay, Boreal chickadee, Tennessee warbler, Lincoln's sparrow and Rusty blackbird. Of the 12 lowland boreal species monitored by the Wildlife Conservation Society's long-term effort, at least 7 are showing declining occupancy in Adirondack wetlands.[17] Long-term survival of these lowland boreal bird species is uncertain, due to the potential for the boreal wetlands they depend on to be degraded, severely reduced or eliminated by climate change. Potential impacts to boreal wetlands from climate change include loss of peat and tree invasion resulting from increased summer drought brought on by higher temperatures and lower rainfall.[18]

The NYNHP has records of Common Loons and Bald Eagles (historical). Jenkins found 9 boreal bird species in the Boreas Ponds Tract. Jenkins notes that the Boreas Ponds and associated wetlands had the greatest diversity of boreal bird species, with 9 of the 12 total [boreal species observed on all of the Finch lands surveyed] occurring there and that Boreas Ponds was one of only two sites in the study where substantial numbers of individual birds were observed. Jenkins also found five species of breeding waterfowl. The 2000-2005 New York State Breeding Bird Atlas recorded over 100 species of birds within the Boreas Ponds Tract vicinity. Interior forest species, such as red-shouldered hawk, northern goshawk, eastern wood-pewee and scarlet tanager were recorded in several of the blocks overlapping the Boreas Ponds Tract. Cessation of forest management on the tract will likely result in an increase in the quality and quantity of habitat for interior forest species as forests mature and gaps in the forest close in over time. Several bird Species of Special Concern not noted above were also recorded by the 2000-2005 Breeding Bird Atlas in blocks overlapping the tract: Cooper's hawk, Sharp-shinned hawk, and Golden-winged warbler. Northern harrier, a NYS Threatened species was also recorded in the 2000-2005 Breeding Bird Atlas in blocks overlapping the Boreas Tract. Many of the birds listed as Species of Greatest Conservation Need, including high priority species, are recorded in the 2000-2005 Breeding Bird Atlas in blocks overlapping the Boreas Tract as well. One of these species, the Gray jay, is notable in that it breeds in winter, making winter recreation a concern for this species.

[16] McGowan, K.J., & Corwin, K. (2008). The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

[17] Glennon, Michale, February 2017, personal communication.

[18] Glennon, Michale J. "Dynamics of Boreal Birds at the Edge of their Range in the Adirondack Park, NY." *Northeastern Naturalist* 21.1 (2014): NENHC-51.

Increased recreational activity on the parcel may result in an increase in the densities of generalist bird species, such as crows and ravens, which have smaller home ranges, higher reproduction and increased survival near recreational activities.[19] These generalist species will likely compete with specialized bird communities and predate their young and eggs during the breeding season. Increased recreation on the ponds could have implications for breeding loons, as they are susceptible to human disturbances during incubation, leaving eggs for an hour or more after a single disturbance. Common loons are already under stress from mercury poisoning, which has been correlated with behavior changes that lead to decreased reproductive success, decreased survival and increased susceptibility to other diseases.[20]

Increased human activity is associated with increased numbers of invasive birds, such as European starlings and House sparrows, which compete with and predate on native birds. Other North American native species, such as Brown-headed cowbird, Blue jay, American crow and Common grackle are also associated with humans and will compete with and predate on native birds.

As the forest matures and gaps in the canopy close in the absence of forest management, the composition of the forest bird community will likely shift from those species dependent on younger forests with more disturbance to favor those species dependent on mature forests with less disturbance. Bird species associated with younger, more disturbed forests, such as golden-winged warblers, willow flycatcher, and chestnut-sided warbler will likely decrease and species associated with mature, closed canopy forests, such as eastern wood-peewee, northern goshawk, ovenbird and scarlet tanager will likely increase with an increase in the amount and quality of those habitats.

Invasive Species

New York State legislation defines invasive species as "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."

The New York iMapInvasive database was evaluated and it was determined that no aquatic or terrestrial invasive species have been reported on the tract. New York iMapInvasives is an online GIS-based data management system that is managed by the NYNHP. However, Agency staff did observe the terrestrial invasive species, spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*), on the earthen dam at LaBier Flow during a site visit. No aquatic invasive species were found during field work conducted by The Nature Conservancy or the APA.

While there are currently no aquatic invasive species on the tract, the waterbodies become vulnerable to the introduction of invasives through

[19] Marzluff JM, Neatherlin E. Corvid response to human settlements and campgrounds: Causes, consequences, and challenges for conservation. Biological Conservation 2006;130: 301–314.
[20] http://www.acris.nynhp.org/guide.php?id=6720

increased human activity. A review of current literature concerning the transport of aquatic invasive species from infested waterbody to uninfected waterbodies indicates that “Much of the ongoing spread of AIS to inland waters throughout North America can be attributed to the overland movement of small-craft boats."[21] [22] [23] [24] Furthermore, translocation of organisms by boaters can be intentional (e.g. as bait[25]), but is often unintentional, with organisms inadvertently carried in bilge water, live wells, and bait buckets. Organisms can also be entrained on boat exteriors, e.g., entangled on propellers and trailers, attached to other entangled organisms.[26] [27]

Non-native forest pests and diseases are present in the pre-dominantly northern hardwood forests of this tract. Beech bark disease, caused by a scale insect (*Cryptococcus fagisuga*) originating in Europe, in conjunction with a fungus (*Nectria coccinea* var. *faginata*), has severely impacted beech stands throughout the Eastern United States, and is present on this tract. Balsam wooly adelgid (*Adelges piceae*) is a tiny sucking insect of European origin, having localized impacts on balsam fir stands. Gypsy moth (*Lymantria dispar dispar*) is a destructive defoliator which inhibits the health of hardwood stands.

Emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*), hemlock wooly adelgid (*Adelges tsugae*) and Asian longhorned beetle (*Anoplophora glabripennis*) are invasive forest pests known regionally, but not reported on this tract. Their presence in the vicinity of the tract is of concern to forest managers, and is a challenge in maintaining the long term health of native forest species.

Terrestrial invasive plants are heavily associated with the presence of roads (Figure 7). Road maintenance and mowing are major methods of spreading invasive plants. Invasive plant propagules and invasive forest pest eggs can be carried in the mud stuck to the tires of cars or bicycles, on vehicles, in firewood,

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[21] Bossenbroek, Jonathan M., Clifford E. Kraft, and Jeffrey C. Nekola. 2001. “Prediction Of Long-Distance Dispersal Using Gravity Models: Zebra Mussel Invasion Of Inland Lakes.” *Ecological Applications* 11.6: 1778–1788.

[22] Johnson, Ladd E., Anthony Ricciardi, and James T. Carlton. 2001. “Overland Dispersal of Aquatic Invasive Species: A Risk Assessment of Transient Recreational Boating.” *Ecological Applications* 11.6: 1789–1799.

[23] Leung, Brian, Jonathan M. Bossenbroek, and David M. Lodge. 2006. “Boats, Pathways, and Aquatic Biological Invasions: Estimating Dispersal Potential with Gravity Models.” *Biological Invasions* 8.2: 241–254.

[24] Rothlisberger, John D. et al. “Aquatic Invasive Species Transport via Trailered Boats: 2010. What Is Being Moved, Who Is Moving It, and What Can Be Done.” *Fisheries* 35.3: 121–132.

[25] ºKeller,R.P., A.N.Cox, C. Van Loon, D.M. Lodge, L.M. Herbor, and J. Rothlisberger. 2007. From bait shops to the forest floor: earthworm use and disposal by angler. American Midland Naturalist 158:321-328.

[26] Johnson, Ladd E., Anthony Ricciardi, and James T. Carlton. 2001. “Overland Dispersal Of Aquatic Invasive Species: A Risk Assessment Of Transient Recreational Boating.” *Ecological Applications* 11.6: 1789–1799.

[27] Puth, Linda M., and David M. Post. 2005. “Studying Invasion: Have We Missed the Boat?” *Ecology Letters* 8.7:715–721.

on clothing, shoes, gear and in the feces of horses. The road network on the tract and use of the road network is a pathway for invasive species to spread on the tract.

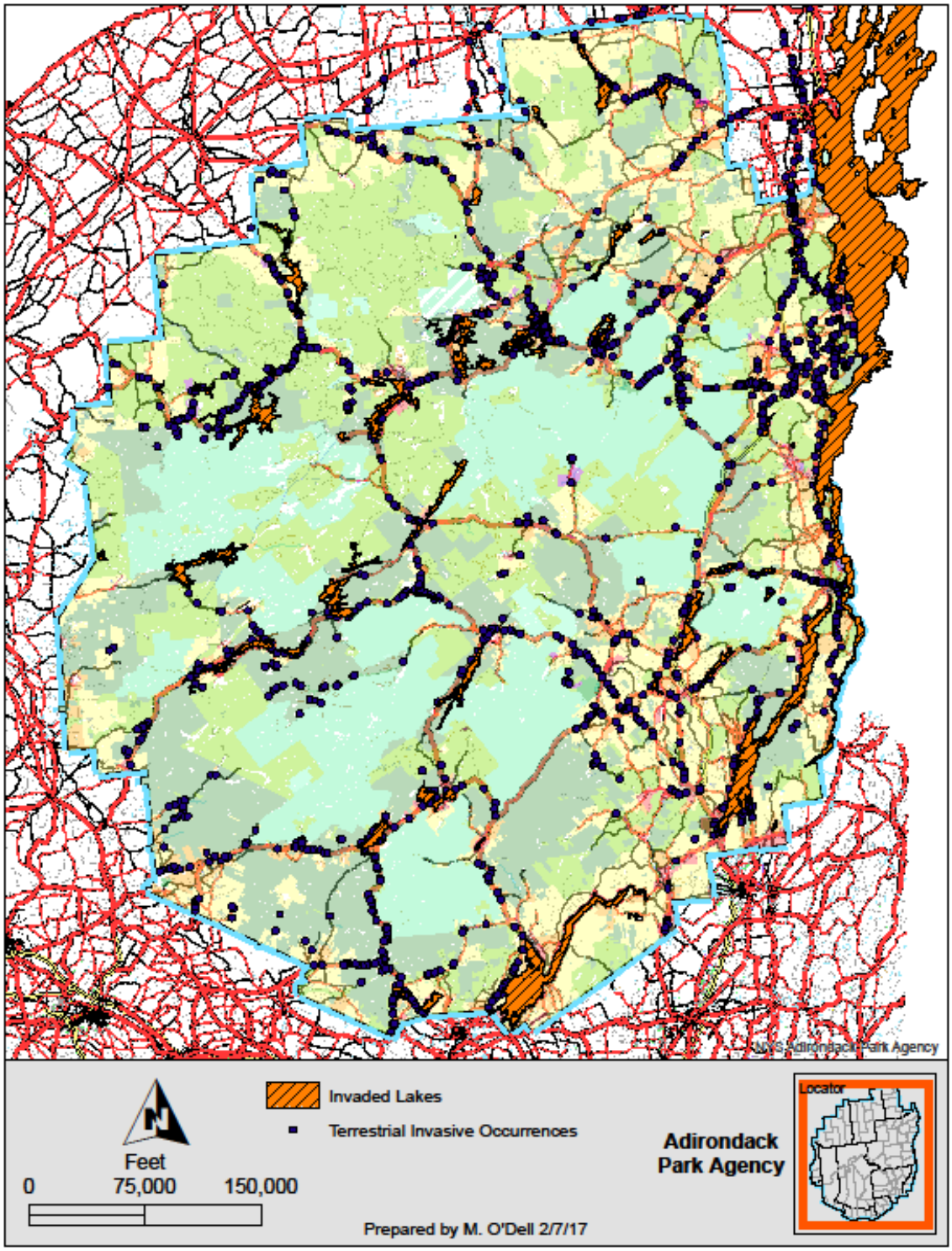

Figure 7: Terrestrial Invasive Occurrences

Penetration into the tract with traffic from far-away areas that are host to many invasives not now in the Adirondacks increases the likelihood of a new invasive introduction. A terrestrial or aquatic invasive species affecting the Boreas Tract could invade both the Upper Hudson River and Ausable River watersheds. A new introduction of an invasive forest pathogen or insect could also affect the adjoining wilderness areas.

Preventing the spread of invasive species is paramount to preserving the integrity of the ecosystems of the Boreas Ponds Tract and surrounding wilderness areas. Climate change and temperature increases will give a competitive advantage to invasive plants. Current control practices used to contain invasive species populations may lose effectiveness due to the effects of climate change. Increasing atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations could lead to the reduced efficacy of herbicides, making it harder to control future infestations. Aquatic invasives can also grow more aggressively with increased water temperature. Biological controls can become ineffective if there is a mismatch in climate tolerances between the control agent and the target invader.[28]

Threats

Wetlands, freshwater communities and terrestrial communities are all threatened by acid deposition and climate change. Some wetland communities have experienced hydrologic alterations from the building of roads and dams that are continuing to cause increased water levels in some locations and sedimentation in others. Invasive species are a threat to the wetland, freshwater and forest communities of the entire tract. Areas closest to roads, dams, trails and associated disturbance are the most threatened by terrestrial invasive plants.

Effects of roads extend far beyond their footprints, resulting in physical, chemical and biological changes to both terrestrial and aquatic habitats. Wildlife, particularly forest interior species and wide-ranging species such as moose and marten are threatened by the direct effects of roads, including wildlife mortality and behavior modification.[29] That threat will likely increase with increased usage of roads. Increases in traffic volume alter species composition, impede animal movements, cause direct mortality and fragments habitat.[30] For example, in one

[28] Rosenzweig, C., W. Solecki, A. DeGaetano, M. O'Grady, S. Hassol, P. Grabhorn (Eds.). 2011. *Responding to Climate Change in New York State: The ClimAID Integrated Assessment for Effective Climate Change Adaptation*. Technical Report. New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), Albany, New York. www.nyserda.ny.gov

[29] Trombulak, S.C., and C.A. Frissell. 2000. Review of ecological effects of roads on terrestrial and aquatic communities. Conservation Biology 14(1): 18-30.

[30] Charry, Barbara, and Jody Jones. 2010. “Traffic Volume as a Primary Road Characteristic Impacting Wildlife: A Tool for Land Use and Transportation Planning”. In Proceedings of the 2009 International Conference on Ecology and Transportation, edited by Paul J. Wagner, Debra Nelson, and Eugene Murray. Raleigh, NC: Center for Transportation and the Environment, North Carolina State University.

study, onset of adverse impacts for carnivores and ungulates began at traffic volumes of 100 to 500 cars per day.[31] Roads also increase edge habitat, resulting in increased nest predation and nest parasitism and decreased nesting success of forest interior birds. Blocked culverts and improperly installed culverts have reduced the connectivity of the tract for aquatic and semi-aquatic organisms. Increased traffic and human usage on the tract threaten to reduce the ecological integrity and resilience of the tract, making it less supportive of ecological processes, including biodiversity, and less resilient to forces of change. The impacts of culverts can be reduced by replacing the culverts with bridges.

Ecological Integrity

Ecological integrity is defined as the ability of an area to sustain important ecological functions over the long term, to support biodiversity and the ecosystem processes necessary to sustain biodiversity. Ecological integrity encompasses three factors: freedom from human impairment, or intactness; the capacity to recover from or adapt to disturbance and stress, or resiliency; and the propensity to facilitate or impede ecological flows, or connectivity.[32] Conservation efforts historically have been focused on conserving particular species or ecosystems in the places where they exist now. Ecologists recognize that change is coming fast, and those species or ecosystems of concern may not persist in the places where they exist today. A changing climate has already resulted in impacts to the behaviors of species and the arrangements of ecosystems subject to these changes.

Increasingly, ecological research has focused efforts on conservation of areas that exhibit high levels of ecological integrity, and by so doing, ensuring that places capable of supporting ecosystem functions are conserved, regardless of the current character of the biological landscape.

Researchers at The University of Massachusetts have mapped ecological integrity throughout the northeast as an approach to identifying target areas for conservation efforts. Researchers at the Wildlife Conservation Society in turn used these data to map Ecological Integrity on the Boreas Tract, and determined that 77% of the Boreas Tract has above average ecological integrity.[33] Areas with low ecological integrity are primarily associated with existing roads and development.

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[31] Alexander, S. M., N. M. Waters, and P.C. Paquet. 2005. Traffic volume and highway permeability for a mammalian community in the Canadian Rocky Mountains. *The Canadian Geographer.* 49(4):321-331.

[32] McGarigal K, Compton BW, Plunkett EB, Deluca WV, and Grand J. 2017. Designing sustainable landscapes: modeling ecological integrity. Report to the North Atlantic Conservation Cooperative, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Northeast Region.

[33] Glennon, M.J. 2016. Ecological composition and condition of the Boreas Ponds Tract. Wildlife Conservation Society, Adirondack Program Technical Paper #7

Using similar metrics as the ecological integrity mapping work, researchers from The Nature Conservancy have identified what they've termed "matrix blocks" throughout the northeast.[34] These are large contiguous areas whose size and natural condition allow for continued support of ecological processes. Matrix blocks possess a high degree of connectivity within a functional landscape, which can combat habitat fragmentation, protect water quality, provide habitat for numerous species, and buffer against the effects of large environmental changes. If protected and allowed to regain their natural condition, matrix forest blocks would serve as critical source areas for all species requiring interior forest conditions or associated with the dominant forest types found within the block.

Many of these blocks are located within the Adirondack Park, which is noted as having the largest area of unbroken temperate deciduous forest greater than 100,000 acres in size in the United States. The Boreas Ponds Tract is situated within this landscape, within one of the largest, most intact matrix blocks (See Figure 8).

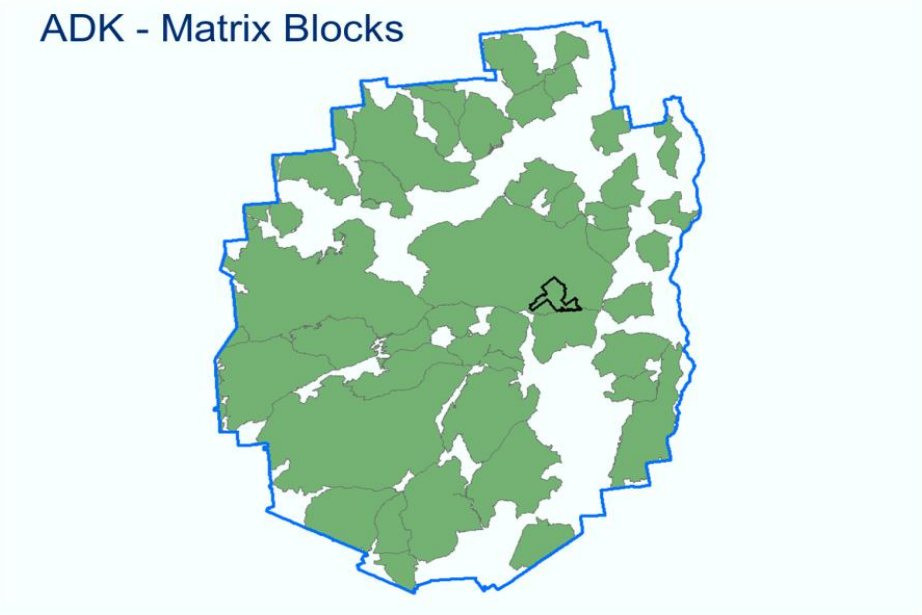

Figure 8: Adirondack Park Matrix Blocks

[34] The Nature Conservancy, Eastern Conservation Science. 2007. Tier 1 Matrix Forest Blocks. The Nature Conservancy Eastern Regional Office. Boston, MA.

The long-term ecological integrity and potential impact to the freshwater resources of the Boreas Ponds Tract have been evaluated in relation to the potential impacts of human use on the water resources. Changes to freshwater ecosystems can originate from the anthropogenic and natural causes[35] listed below:

- Terrestrial vegetation alteration and degradation of the riparian zone
- Aquatic vegetation alteration and degradation
- Introduction of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)
- Introduction of pollutants
- Development within the watershed
- Climate Change
- Acid precipitation
- Other on-site and external threats

Resilience and Connectedness

The connectedness of the Boreas Ponds Tract and the larger forest matrix block it is situated in were determined to be far above average by an analysis done by Wildlife Conservation Society,[36] which was based on the work of The Nature Conservancy.[37] The connectedness is largely what makes the tract, as well as the forest matrix block it is situated in, resilient: the tract is capable of supporting ecological processes, including biodiversity, into the future. The Boreas Ponds Tract was found to exhibit above average resilience for its geophysical setting in comparison to the Northeast region, with areas of lower resilience corresponding to the locations of roads on the tract. The overall lack of barriers to species dispersal and continuous forest cover contribute substantially to the tract's resilience, meaning it is an important place to "conserve the stage" or the setting containing the underpinnings of biodiversity. This is an indication that the tract will continue to support biodiversity, even as climate change forces a reorganization of "the players" or species and communities within the setting.

[35] McEwen, A., Dawson, C., and Gerstenberger, L. 2011. Adirondack Park Forest Preserve Carrying Capacity of Water Bodies Study: Phase 1- Selecting Indicators for Monitoring Recreational Impacts. State University of New York, College of Environmental Science and Forestry.

[36] Glennon, M.J. 2016. Ecological composition and condition of the Boreas Ponds tract. Wildlife Conservation Society, Adirondack Program Technical Paper #7.

[37] Anderson MG, Ferree CE. 2010. Conserving the Stage: Climate Change and the Geophysical Underpinnings of Species Diversity. PLoS ONE 5(7): e11554. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0011554

Intangible Considerations

The APSLMP directs that certain intangible considerations be examined when classifying land:

> *… another significant determinant of land classification involves certain intangible considerations that have an inevitable impact on the character of land. Some of these are social or psychological--such as the sense of remoteness and degree of wildness available to users of a particular area, which may result from the size of an area, the type and density of its forest cover, the ruggedness of the terrain or merely the views over other areas of the Park obtainable from some vantage point.*

(APSLMP, pages 15-16)

The Adirondack Park provides a wide spectrum of opportunities for remoteness and recreation. The addition of slightly more than 50,000 acres of land, much of it adjacent to existing Forest Preserve and in particular, the High Peaks Wilderness, provides the public with new opportunities for experiencing remoteness on land and water. The vast beauty of this area, along with numerous opportunities for solitude can provide the public with an extraordinary experience.

A GIS analysis finds that there are 121 lakes in the Adirondack Park that are 300 acres or larger (Boreas Ponds is 345 acres in size). Of those 121 lakes, 15 are completely surrounded by Forest Preserve. Of those 15 lakes, 6 are entirely surrounded by land classified as Wilderness, Primitive or Canoe. They are Long Pond (St. Regis Canoe Area) St. Regis Pond (St. Regis Canoe Area), Cedar Lakes (West Canada Lake Wilderness), Lake Lila (William C. Whitney Wilderness), Pharaoh Lake (Pharaoh Lake Wilderness), and Round Lake (Round Lake Wilderness).

The distance from motorized access, i.e. parking, for these lakes is as follows:

Long Pond: access to the lake is 0.21 miles from parking.
St. Regis Pond: access to the lake is 1.21 miles from parking.
Lake Lila: access to the lake is 0.26 miles from parking.
Round Lake: access to the lake is direct from parking.
Cedar Lake: access to the lake is 4.3 miles from parking.
Pharaoh Lake: access to the lake is 3.3 miles from parking.

Only three lakes are larger than 300 acres, entirely surrounded by Wilderness, Primitive or Canoe, and located more than a mile from parking: St. Regis Pond, Cedar Lake and Pharaoh Lake.

Social and Psychological benefits

Intangible considerations are the only classification criteria that specifically focus on one classification -- Wilderness, which is the highest level of classification. The APSLMP states that "[w]ithout these [intangible] elements an area should not be classified as wilderness, even though the physical and biological factors would dictate that the limitations of wilderness management are essential. In such cases, as will be seen, a primitive designation would be required." (APSLMP, page 15).

Research has found that most people value the indirect and existential values of wilderness over direct use components. Over 19.7 million people live in New York State. A vast majority of them will never visit the Boreas Ponds Tract. However, these constituents are stakeholders who value the indirect social and psychological benefits associated with wilderness protection of these lands.

Legal scholars and economists have recognized the indirect benefits of wilderness including bequest values, existence values, and option values.[38] Many stakeholders find value in the knowledge that wilderness will be around for their descendants to enjoy. These are “bequest values”- saving wilderness for future generations.

Others simply find pleasure in knowing that wild places protected in perpetuity exist, even if they may never have the opportunity or desire to visit these places. These are “existence values.”

Third, some people are satisfied in having the option to visit such a wild place. Their “option values” relate to this satisfaction of knowing they can go to these wild places, whether or not they actually do.

A 2003 study found that the top five reasons people support wilderness protection were: protection of wildlife habitat, protection for endangered species, preserving ecosystems, providing for future generations, and protecting water quality. Recreation opportunities and “income for tourism industry” were the least important reasons that people supported wild land protection.[39] They were instead motivated by the indirect benefits to the ecosystem and to future generations.

Wilderness classification of a portion of the Boreas Ponds Tract will provide both direct user benefits and indirect bequest, existence, and option values to residents of New York State. While a vast majority of New York residents will likely never visit the land, they will derive satisfaction in knowing that it exists for future generations, forever protected as wilderness.

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[38] Walsh, R.G.; Loomis, J. B.; Gillman, R. S. 1984. Valuing option, existence and bequest demands for wilderness. *Land Economics* 60(1):14-29.

[39] Cordell, H. K, M. A. Tarrant, and G. T. Green. 2003. Is the public viewpoint of wilderness shifting? IJW 9(2): 27–32.

Bob Marshall wrote in 1930 that the benefits of wilderness may be separated into three broad divisions: the physical, the mental and the esthetic.[40] Physical benefits tend to be more obvious and the value of exercise has been extensively researched.

In reference to the psychological benefits of wilderness, Marshall noted the natural environment offers everyone peace of mind. A Finnish study of 3,060 people found that restorative experiences during nature-based recreation are associated with a sense of emotional well-being for weeks after the experience. The restorative experience had more effect on well-being than the length of time engaged in nature-based recreation or whether it was conducted alone or with others.[41] This may be why veterans have found retreats in wilderness and other natural environments to be ideal for healing. Research suggests that outdoor recreation may enhance treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The U.S. Army's Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) programs include an outdoor recreation program aiming to "build a sense of community, promote skill development, and provide for stress relief and enjoyment while conserving and protecting wildlife, forests, wetlands, and other natural resources."[42] The Wounded Warrior Project Odyssey helps veterans overcome combat stress through outdoor rehabilitative retreats. Activities include horseback riding, canoeing, whitewater rafting, kayaking, rock climbing, a high ropes course, fishing, and skiing at retreats held across the country.[43] There are also numerous mental health and counseling programs for adolescents and teenagers based on wilderness and other outdoor experiences.

In reference to the esthetic benefits, the APSLMP instructs that the Agency consider the views from the vantage points within the Boreas Ponds Tract over other areas of the Park. The well-documented views from Boreas Ponds of the High Peaks are breathtaking. There are also magnificent views from LaBier Flow, Ragged Mountain, Boreas Mountain, White Lily Pond, and additional vantage points.

Sense of Remoteness and Degree of Wildness

One intangible consideration is the sense of remoteness one feels on a parcel. This sense is related to distance from other people and development. Staff prepared a preliminary estimate of the area's most distant from roads in 2007, set out in Figure 9 which follows:

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40 Marshall, Robert. 1930. "The Problem of the Wilderness" *Scientific Monthly*30 (2):141 – 148.

41 Korpela, K., Borodulin, K., Neuvonen, M., Paronen, O., Tyrväinen, L. 2014. Analyzing the mediators between nature-based outdoor recreation and emotional well-being, *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 37(1):1-7.

42 Id.

43 https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/programs/combat-stress-recovery-program/project-odyssey, accessed on February 16, 2017.

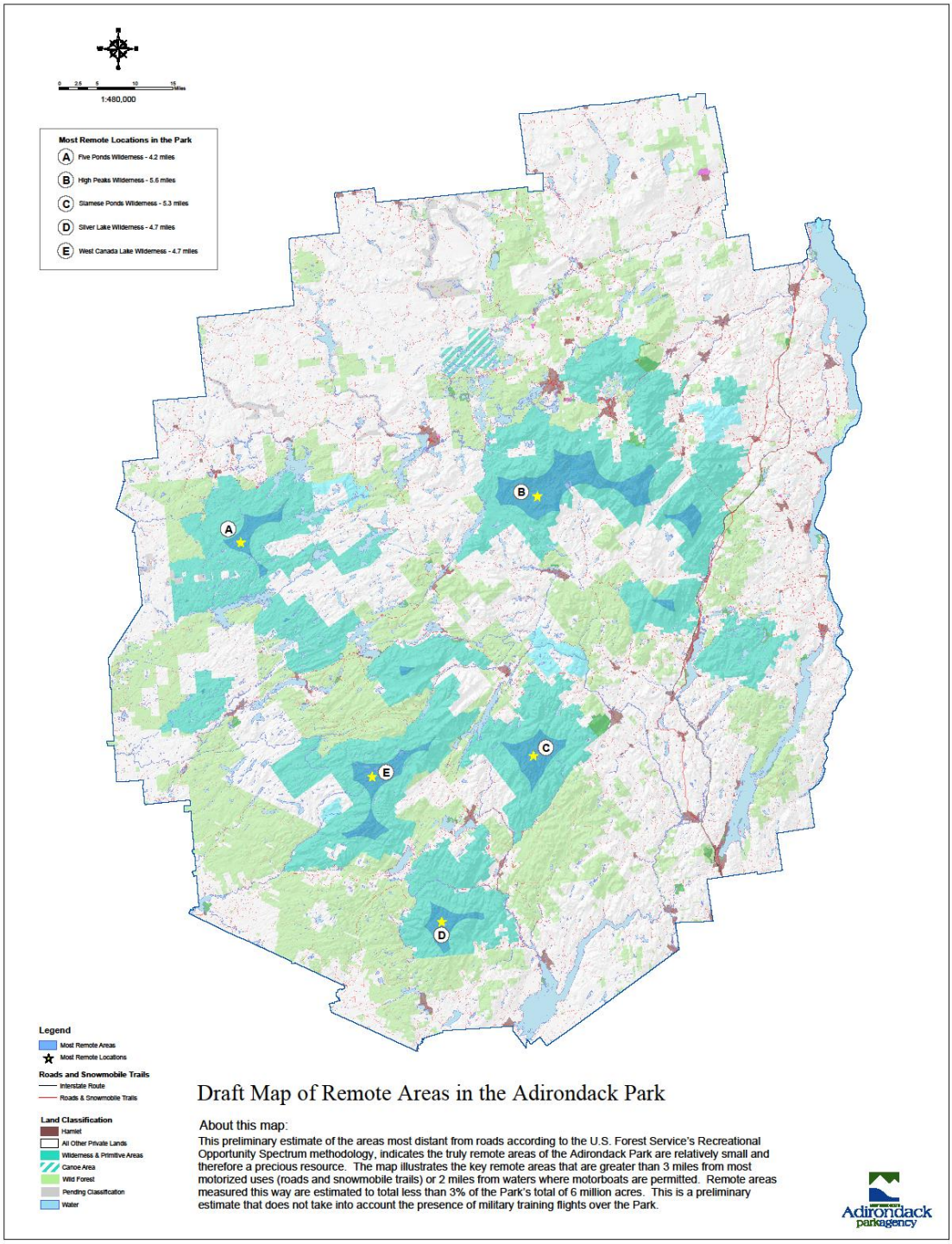

Figure 9: Remote Areas in the Adirondack Park (2007)

The previous mapping shows that the truly remote areas of the Adirondack Park are relatively small. The key remote areas, depicted in dark green, are greater than 3 miles from most motorized uses (roads and snowmobile trails) or 2 miles from waters where motorboats are permitted. Remote areas measured this way were estimated to total less than 3% of the Park's 6 million acres.

In determining the sense of remoteness and degree of wildness, the Agency also considers the size of an area and the ruggedness of the terrain. The Boreas Ponds Tract is 20,543 acres and the alternatives include between 10,178 and 14,669 acres of Wilderness, with the Preferred Alternative proposing 11,412 acres of Wilderness. Each of the alternatives exceeds the 10,000 acre threshold for Wilderness found in the APSLMP (page 22).

The Boreas Ponds Tract includes steep slopes, as well as wetlands, coniferous and hardwood forests, and at high elevations, rocky boulder soils, making for rugged terrain adding to the sense of wildness.

The sense of remoteness can be affected by motorized access and the resulting noise. The FPEIS discusses the impact of the Wilderness guidelines prohibiting public motorized use on area character and landscape quality: "Noise intrusion is only one component of an area's character. The mere knowledge that motorized access is permissible diminishes a sense of remoteness." (FPEIS, page 35). For some, noise acts as a physiological stressor producing changes similar to those brought about by exposure to extreme heat, cold, pain, etc.[44]

Noise is defined as unpleasant or unwanted sound. In parks and wilderness areas, whether a sound is considered noise is related to the expectations of the visitor as well as the visitor's personality.[45] Not surprisingly, if a visitor comes to a park or wilderness area with the intention to hear the sounds of nature or to experience solitude, noise is more disturbing to that person.

In one study, the results indicated that the auditory soundscape could impact the aesthetic assessment of a visual landscape. The 251 participants rated 25 scenes from 5 national parks under quiet conditions or while hearing 45 dB(A) or 60 dB(A) of natural sounds, such as bird calls or wind rustling through leaves, natural sounds with aircraft sounds, natural sounds with ground traffic sounds, or natural sounds with human voices. Any anthropogenic noise–air traffic, ground traffic, or voices– had a negative impact on the environmental assessments of the scenes. The effect was more pronounced at higher decibel levels. The man-made sounds, air traffic, ground traffic, and human voices, significantly decreased ratings of tranquility and solitude while also increasing ratings of annoyance. These effects were strongest for scenes that were high in scenic beauty.[46]

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[44] Rylander, R. 2004. *Physiological aspects of noise-induced stress and annoyance*, Journal of Sound and Vibration, 277(3): 471–478. *See also* US EPA .1971.Effects of Noise on People, The Central Institute for the Deaf.

[45] Benfield, J.A., Nurse, G.A., Jakubowski, R., Gibson, A.W., Taff, B.D., Newman, P., and Bell, P.A. 2012. Testing Noise in the Field: A Brief Measure of Individual Noise Sensitivity, *Environment and Behavior* XX(X) 1–20.

[46] Benfield, J A., Bell, P. A., Troup, L.J., and Soderstrom, N. C. 2010. Aesthetic and affective effects of vocal and traffic noise on natural landscape assessment, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 30, 103-111.

Snowmobiles have been one of the greatest sources of controversy over noise on public lands, perhaps because, as one commentator noted, "the northern winter had long been associated with silence."[47] A Finnish government study found that although noise pollution can be avoided or mitigated with good snowmobile route planning, the study found that a significant variable in assessing noise impact was the diverse nature of snowmobiling. Some models of snowmobiles may be ten decibels louder than others. The variety of driving styles also affected the impact, with some riders traveling at a relatively constant speed, while others rode the same route ”aggressively,” accelerating and engine braking. "The noise impacts of these two extremes on the surroundings significantly differ from one another."[48] There are also large differences between snowmobile routes, and even the characteristics for the same route can vary greatly, depending on utilization rate, snow condition and condition of the route itself.[49]

Although there are quieter four-stroke machines available, some snowmobilers prefer a louder machine.[50] According to the American Council of Snowmobile Associations, "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 when tested under the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) J192 procedures. Additionally, those produced after June 30, 1976 and certified by the Snowmobiles Safety and Certification Committee's independent testing company emit no more than 73 dB(A) at 50 feet while traveling at 15 mph when tested under SAE J1161 procedures.[51]

The land classification process does not provide an opportunity to limit the types of snowmobiles that are allowed on trails in the Forest Preserve. In contrast, in Yellowstone National Park, snowmobiles must now meet noise and air emission requirements, including a Best Available Technology (BAT) noise standard of a maximum decibel level of 67 dBA, considerably lower than the industry standards listed above.

Noise caused by snowmobile use varies greatly and is dependent upon many conditions: characteristics of the surrounding terrain, forest cover and snow cover, weather, types of sleds, how they are being ridden, and the number of snowmobilers riding together. Regardless of such variables snowmobile noise travels the greatest distances – sometimes on the order of miles – when there is little to no intervening topography or forest cover to muffle the noise.

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47 Reich, Leonard S. (1999). 1999. Ski-Dogs, Pol-Cats, and the Mechanization of Winter: The Development of Recreational Snowmobiling in North America, *Technology and Culture*, 40 (3), 484-516, 499.

48 Liikonen, L., Alanko, M., Jokinen, S., Niskanen, I., Virrankoski, L. 2007. Snowmobile Noise, *The Finnish Environment,* 40 (Finland Ministry of the Environment). Accessed February 16, 2017 at https://helda.helsinki.fi/handle/10138/38417

49 Liikonen, L. et al (2007), 10,40.

50 Reich (1999), 500.

51 http://www.snowmobilers.org/sound-environment-issues-snowmobiling.aspx, accessed on March 1, 2017.

Within the Boreas Ponds Tract, snowmobile use along Gulf Brook Road closer than one mile south and east of the road intersection near LaBier Flow (Four Corners) would likely be audible to wintertime visitors at the ponds. The road runs along a northeast facing slope just south of the Ponds and is at a meaningfully higher elevation, lacking intervening topography. In addition, snowmobiles traveling along a portion of this stretch would be traveling directly toward the ponds, which (depending on speed) could serve to audibly increase the impact of noise. Depending on a visitor's sensitivity to noise, the sense of remoteness could be decreased and may conflict with visitor expectations.

History of Wilderness in the Adirondack Park and Preserve

Since 1894, the Adirondack Forest Preserve, the State-owned lands within the Adirondack Park, have been protected under the State Constitution's "Forever Wild" clause, which now provides: " 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."[52] Congress enacted the federal Wilderness Act in 1964, recognizing wilderness as “an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.” In 1970, the Temporary Study Commission on the Future of the Adirondacks (TSC) recommended adoption of language from the 1964 Wilderness Act in the future Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan, with 4 minor changes, the major one being increasing the threshold acreage from 5,000 to 10,000 acres. The Commission also noted that “No roads will be allowed within wilderness areas. Existing roads will be allowed to revegetate naturally if feasible."[53]

In 1972, the Legislature approved the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan, adopting the definition of wilderness recommended by the TSC, with minor changes. The wilderness definition included the phrase “untrammeled by man,” which is often confused with untrampled. “Untrammeled” is defined as “Not subject to human controls and manipulations that hamper the free play of natural forces.”[54]

The Agency adopted the FPEIS in 1979, setting forth guidelines for amending the APSLMP and for classification of lands. At that time, the Agency stated:

> *When the Master Plan was adopted in 1972, only one of the 15 Wilderness areas met wilderness standards due to the existence of non-conforming uses. The Plan should therefore be recognized as an attempt to restore and rehabilitate these lands so that they meet*

[52] N.Y. Const. Art. 14, § 1.

[53] Temporary Study Commission on the Future of the Adirondacks. 1971. Technical Report 1, Volume B, 25-26.

[54] Dawson, Chad P. and Hendee, John C. (2009). Wilderness Management (Fourth Edition): Stewardship and Protection of Resources and Values.

> *such standards. As of November 1978, eleven of the fifteen wilderness areas completely comply with the required standards.*

FPEIS, page 16 (emphasis added)

When the APSLMP was revised in 1979, the definition of Wilderness was expanded to make clear that areas could be classified as Wilderness even if they needed to be enhanced or restored to a natural condition (emphasis added). Restoration is a natural outcome of efforts to enhance Wilderness. Most, if not all, of the areas currently classified as Wilderness once had mining or logging activities on the land, with man-made structures and roads. The APSLMP provides that most of these structures and roads be removed or closed.

Today, the APSLMP still contains the core concepts from the 1964 Wilderness Act: that a wilderness area, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man. The APSLMP notes that Wilderness offers opportunities for solitude, where one does not have to see other people. These opportunities directly relate to the sense of remoteness that the APSLMP asks us to examine as an intangible consideration. The more remote a place is, the greater chance of finding solitude.

Established Facilities and Retained Rights

Structures and Improvements

The Boreas Tract contains several camps associated with private clubs. The State did not purchase these structures with the land. According to the terms of the leaseholder agreements the camp structures will be removed by the lessees by September 30, 2018, or by the previous owner, The Nature Conservancy, by October 1, 2020.

The tract has approximately 53 miles of former forest management roads as identified on Map 3. Dark, solid lines depict the roads to the camp structures that are being used by the lessees. The remaining dashed roads are unmaintained former forest management roads. The August 2016 DEC Interim Access Plan[55] states the general character of these roads:

- The existing road network is comprised of single lane roads.
- The interior roads were designed for hauling forest products.
- The surface of the existing roads gets soft during wet weather.

[55] http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/107502.html

- Gulf Brook Road (main road from the county highway) contains several pinch points where the narrow travel surface may result in vehicles getting stuck.
- There are concerns with sight distances and safe pull offs for vehicles passing each other, especially vehicles with trailers.
- There are multiple areas along interior roads where the road surface is rough, soft or narrow and the use of motor vehicles may result in impacts. These impacts could include run off erosion and lead to increased maintenance costs and additional impacts to natural resources.

These forest management roads have numerous culverts and bridges. There are two bridges which cross the dams. Other bridges exist on unmaintained roads and may no longer be structurally sound. Currently, the public has access on Gulf Brook Road to a parking area that is 3.2 miles from the Blue Ridge Road.

In the past, the Agency has not viewed the presence of forest management roads as dictating or precluding a particular classification. Roads existed on the majority of State lands prior to being added to the Forest Preserve, and did not determine how the land was eventually classified. Roads can remain in areas classified as Wild Forest, Intensive Use, Historic, and State Administrative in an approved UMP. The speed and degree of rehabilitation for abandoned roads is dependent on a number of variables including soils, slopes, original construction design, maintenance, age and degree of use of the original road, in addition to work conducted to enhance the rehabilitation (i.e. removal of culverts).

Finch Pruyn, previous owners of the Boreas Ponds Tract, built a wooden lodge on the property as a corporate retreat in 1996. The lodge was located on the south side of the Boreas Ponds. It was removed during the summer of 2016.

As described in the Physical Characteristics: Water Resources section, the Boreas Pond and LaBier Flow dams are situated on the tract. DEC is committed to the ongoing maintenance of both structures.

The tract has eight parking areas, five of which are located along the periphery of the tract on Town and County Roads. Three interior parking areas are located on Gulf Brook Road between the Blue Ridge Road and a gate 3.2 miles inside the tract.[56]

The Boreas Ponds Tract also contains a log cabin and numerous abandoned gravel pits. Two of the gravel pits are being retained pursuant to an easement and are proposed to be classified as State Administrative Areas. The log cabin and the easement are described below.

[56] http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/107502.html

Historic Structures

The State owns the Boreas Ponds Log Cabin. The Department has requested and received a determination of eligibility on the State and National Register of Historic Places from the NYS Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) for the cabin.

The cabin is located on land proposed to be classified as Wild Forest. The ultimate disposition of the Boreas Ponds Log Cabin will be determined by the UMP process.

Historic classification under the APSLMP was not considered at this time for the Log Cabin because one of the requirements for this classification is that the structure must already be a State historic site, on the National Register of Historic Places, or recommended for listing by the NYS Board for Historic Preservation, and the State must make a commitment of resources to manage the location primarily for historic objectives (APSLMP, page 46).

Deeded and Other Rights

When the State acquired the Boreas Ponds Tract, there were existing recreational leases for camps. Each lease provides for road access to the camp building(s), and limits the leased area to a one-acre envelope around the camp buildings. The Nature Conservancy has also reserved easements to access the lands by motorized means beyond the lease terms to manage and police the leaseholds and for the removal of any remaining structures

This summary of easements, leases and other rights is not intended to be a full description of the rights and encumbrances on the Boreas Ponds Tract. Complete descriptions are included in the deeds, which are recorded in the Office of the Essex County Clerk.

Table 3 lists leases issued to private parties on the Boreas Ponds Tract.

Table 3: Boreas Ponds Tract Leases

TRACT NAME	CLUB NAME	TOWN	COUNTY
Boreas Ponds Tract	Brace & Brook Sportsmen	Newcomb	Essex
Boreas Ponds Tract	Boreas River Club	Newcomb	Essex
Boreas Ponds Tract	Ragged Mountain Fish & Game Club, Inc.	North Hudson	Essex
Boreas Ponds Tract	Wolf Valley Club	North Hudson	Essex
Boreas Ponds Tract	Slide Brook Club	Newcomb/North Hudson	Essex

The recreational leases on the Boreas Ponds Tract include a series of extensions and expire on September 30, 2018, unless terminated earlier under the terms of the leases. The Nature Conservancy's right to enter the lands to manage the leaseholds and remove any remaining structures expires on October 1, 2020.

The leases and camp buildings do not affect the classification options. In Wilderness, the most restrictive classification, non-conforming structures are to be removed by the end of the third year following classification. The leases and the right to enter to remove remaining structures will have expired by that date.

Prior to transferring title to the State, The Nature Conservancy granted an easement, titled a "Conservation Easement" to the Towns of North Hudson and Newcomb (Towns) for "non-exclusive right of access and to allow others non-exclusive access to facilitate access to the Property for public recreational use." The Towns must obtain an annual permit from DEC, with access granted in the sole discretion of DEC on an annual basis. DEC may determine the frequency of access on roads "which may be designated for public motorized use." Any other person or entity authorized in the DEC permit to the Town(s) must also obtain a separate permit from DEC. The easement also grants the Towns a non-exclusive right-of-way and road easement on roads and existing and former road corridors designated in a DEC permit for administrative and emergency purposes. Administrative access is defined as access required to perform executory functions necessary to implement the Towns' rights set forth in the easement, e.g. road maintenance, inspection or search and rescue.

The easement also grants the Towns a non-exclusive right to mine gravel from two designated pits, solely for the purpose of maintaining roads, trails, and infrastructure within the Boreas Ponds Tract. The gravel pits are limited to one acre each and the Towns may only use the gravel on the Boreas Ponds Tract. The right will be terminated when the pits are exhausted. The Towns may use Gulf Brook Road and Boreas Ponds Road to access the gravel pits, subject to a work plan and DEC permit. The easement makes it clear that ownership of the road bed remains with the grantor and that no public highway is created by the easement.

SEQRA CONSIDERATIONS

In adherence to SEQRA guidelines, the Agency considers the following:

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

Physical, biological and intangible impacts may result from the proposed classification action. The FPEIS lists general impacts associated with amendments to the APSLMP:

A. Changes in existing use or levels of use which exceed the physical, biological or social carrying capacity of State lands could result in significant adverse impacts on the natural resources and open space character of State lands.

The proposed SEQRA action that is the subject of this FSEIS involves the classification the Boreas Ponds Tract. The APSLMP prescribes types of permissible uses in each category, but it does not specifically control the levels of use beyond providing very general management guidelines. Careful application of guidelines in the APSLMP, through this classification process and as applied through the UMP process, should prevent significant adverse environmental impacts caused by types or levels of use.

Careful consideration must be given to the levels of recreational use, both motorized and non-motorized, in relation to the potential carrying capacity of an area. Under Wilderness, Primitive or Canoe area designations, public use of motor vehicles and aircraft are prohibited. Limited use of motor vehicles may be allowed for emergency and administrative purposes under these classifications. Biking on specific administrative roads, designated for fisheries management or water protection, may be allowed under a Canoe area classification, subject to their designation in an adopted UMP. In a Primitive area, bicycles are allowed on DEC administrative roads designated in an adopted UMP. Biking may also be allowed in Wild Forest areas on designated roads and trails, as specified in an approved UMP. Under a Wild Forest classification, public motorized use may be allowed on roads, rivers, lakes and ponds, and by snowmobiles on designated trails during the winter season. All motorized uses would be limited to roads and trails designated in a duly adopted UMP.

Development of snowmobile trails and roads open to public use are subject to the “no material increase” provision of the APSLMP (Guideline 4 under Wild Forest). This guideline limits the total mileage of snowmobile trails and roads that can be designated for public motorized use on Forest Preserve Wild Forest lands, above which any increase will be considered a material increase. Through consultation with DEC, the Agency has interpreted the APSLMP snowmobile trail mileage guideline to be 848.88 miles; above that number any increase will be considered material.

Even under a Wild Forest classification, the Department may restrict use of motor vehicles and aircraft by the public and by administrative personnel where in its judgment the character of the natural resources of the area make additional restrictions desirable or necessary.

The overriding consideration when classifying newly acquired lands adjacent to State lands with two or more classifications is a “determination that any use allowed by classification should not exceed the physical, biological, or social carrying capacity of the land’s resources.” (FPEIS, page 24) The Boreas Ponds have had relatively restricted past recreational use by Finch Pruyn employees, guests and lessees. Prior to State acquisition, there was no general public access and, as a result, the ponds have retained their pristine condition.

B. Diminishment in quality of recreational opportunities requiring vast acreages of open space, such as hunting, backpacking and wilderness canoeing, could cause significant adverse economic impacts.

The newly acquired lands were previously not open to the public and any new recreation taking place on these lands will be new activity on those lands. There will be no diminishment of existing public activity in this action.

C. Diminishment in area of lands designated Wilderness, Primitive or Canoe Areas would significantly decrease the availability of primitive recreational opportunities which are at present extremely limited in New York State and rare in the Northeastern United States.

This action includes classification proposals which increase the amount of Wilderness and Primitive in the Park, therefore offering increased opportunities for primitive recreation.

D. The designation of large tracts of State land as Wilderness, Primitive or Canoe provides the unusual opportunity for the reintroduction of extirpated species of wildlife which require significant acreages of habitat essentially undisturbed by man.

The alternatives described in this document include classifying large tracts of land as Wilderness and Wild Forest. The reintroduction of extirpated species is possible, but the feasibility needs to be analyzed through the UMP process. The reintroduction of certain extirpated species may not be limited to Wilderness or Primitive classifications, but may also be possible within areas classified as Wild Forest.

E. Deterioration of the quality or character of Wilderness, Primitive or Canoe area resources could adversely impact the educational and research values of those areas.

This action includes classification proposals which increase the amount of Wilderness to the Park, therefore offering increased opportunities for education and research in those areas.

F. Deterioration in the quality of the natural or scenic resources of State lands could adversely affect the Park economy.

This area includes several natural and scenic resources, including lakes and ponds with high quality fisheries, mountains, and several miles of undeveloped rivers. The extent of the impacts to these resources on the Park economy will depend on the level and type of use of the land, which are controlled through both the classification and UMP process.

However, threats to the natural resources of these lands through over-use or improper practices could lead to their deterioration. Included in these threats is that of invasive species, both terrestrial and aquatic. Deterioration of the natural resources could directly impact tourism and the local economy.

G. Potential Impacts of Classification Options

Classification of these lands could result in management actions that could diminish the overall quality of the natural resources. The classification establishes strong guidelines that are incorporated into UMPs and direct DEC's unit management planning. Improper classification of these lands could result in management actions that could diminish the overall quality of the natural resources.

The Department is bound to guidelines for each classification when developing UMPs as defined in the APSLMP. These guidelines vary from one classification category to another and may prescribe the types of recreational opportunities available in conformance with the APSLMP's unifying theme that "the protection and preservation of the natural resources of the state lands within the Park must be paramount. Human use and enjoyment of those lands should be permitted and encouraged, so long as the resources in their physical and biological context as well as their social or psychological aspects are not degraded." (APSLMP, page 1)

The principal difference between the Wilderness, Primitive and Wild Forest classifications involves the degree to which motor vehicle access is permitted by the public and the degree the State may use motor vehicles for administrative purposes.

In Wilderness areas, the use of motor vehicles is prohibited except for sudden, actual on-going emergencies involving the protection or the preservation of human life or intrinsic resource values.

In Primitive areas, the use of motor vehicles is subject to Wilderness guidelines except that existing roads and snowmobile trails may be used by administrative personnel to the extent necessary to reach and maintain existing structures and improvements.

A Wild Forest classification would broaden the range of conforming structures, improvements and uses. The Wild Forest classification would allow use of motor vehicles by administrative personnel where necessary to reach, maintain, or construct permitted structures and improvements, for appropriate law enforcement and general supervision of the public or appropriate purposes, including research to preserve fish and wildlife and other natural resources.

Public use of motor vehicles is allowed on a limited and regulated basis that will not materially increase motorized uses in Wild Forest Areas that conformed to the APSLMP at the time of its adoption. Snowmobile use is limited to snowmobile trails designated in an approved UMP. ATV use is restricted to public roads and DEC roads open to such use.

Another significant difference between the three classifications involves the use of bicycles. The use of bicycles is prohibited in all Wilderness areas. In Primitive areas bicycles are allowed on roads legally open to the public and on administrative roads designated by DEC in an adopted UMP. In Wild Forest areas, bicycles are allowed on trails designated in an approved UMP.

Unavoidable Adverse Environmental Effects

Appropriate classification will avoid most adverse impacts upon the resource quality and character of State lands within the Park. Strong guidelines for the classification of State lands protect resource quality and character from overuse and degradation while still providing public recreational use opportunities.

Further protection of these resources will be addressed in the UMP process.

Measures to Mitigate Potential Adverse Environmental Effects

The APSLMP is designed to allow only those uses of State land that will not degrade resource quality or character. The discussion of alternatives in the FSEIS allows the Agency to evaluate the various classifications and the potential adverse impacts of those classifications.

Potential adverse environmental impacts of the classification of the Boreas Ponds Tract are from recreational motorized and mechanized uses. The Agency's APSLMP classification of the Boreas Ponds Tract must ensure that the mitigation of these potential adverse environmental impacts occurs to the fullest extent practicable, taking into account social, economic and other essential considerations.

Protection of State lands by the APSLMP through a Wilderness or Primitive classification provides substantial mitigation of potential adverse environmental impacts. Once lands are classified, the APSLMP ensures additional mitigation of these impacts through guidelines for the management and use of classified lands to which the Department's UMPs and actions must conform. Accordingly, the APSLMP guidelines for lands classified as Wild Forest require resource protection and furnish binding management and use guidance that helps to mitigate the potential adverse environmental impacts of motorized and mechanized uses on those lands.

The Agency's detailed discussion of mitigation measures for the Boreas Ponds Tract is developed in the Alternative Description and Analyses through evaluation of the five alternatives and their relative potential for adverse environmental impacts based on differing classification scenarios. Through this analysis, a Preferred Alternative is identified.

The Preferred Alternative would classify the most sensitive resources on the Boreas Ponds Tract as Wilderness or Primitive, substantially minimizing the potential for adverse environmental impacts from motorized and mechanized recreational uses in those areas. However, the Wild Forest classification proposed for other lands in the Preferred Alternative would create the opportunity for motorized and mechanized recreational uses. Requisite conformance with APSLMP guidelines and UMPs would help lessen the adverse impacts from motorized and mechanized recreational uses in Wild Forest areas. Of the alternatives considered, the Preferred Alternative mitigates potential significant adverse environmental impacts to the maximum extent practicable, taking into account other relevant considerations.

Finally, the APSLMP allows the Department to manage classified lands more restrictively than the classification category guidelines. The UMPs for these areas could prescribe management to further mitigate impacts on specific areas deserving of additional protection.

Effects on the Use and Conservation of Energy Resources

The proposed classification alternatives have no measureable effect on the use or conservation of energy resources.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

The classification of these lands itself does not provide irreversible or irretrievable commitments to the resources. No development is mandated for lands being added to the Forest Preserve.

Growth Inducing Aspects of Proposed Action

The APSLMP provides alternatives for a diversity of recreation opportunities within the Park, which can have a positive impact on the local economy and the demand for local services. The number of visitors is affected by various factors including destination marketing programs and visitor accommodations.

The recreation and tourism industry is the backbone of the Adirondack economy. Lodging, food and automobile services provide the primary source of income from this industry. These expenditures result in jobs and have a multiplier effect when the original expenditure is used to buy additional goods and services within the Park. This "ripple effect" can generate new growth throughout the Adirondack's local communities.

Economic Impacts of the Proposed Action

SEQRA mandates that a "suitable balance" of economic, social, and environmental factors be taken into account and reflected in the decision-making processes of State and local agencies. This proposed action provides for a balance of these considerations through the accommodation of diverse outdoor recreation uses on the impacted lands. Through the varied classifications of the Boreas Ponds Tract and the associated recreation opportunities, visitation and its related spending in the local economy can be maximized.

The local, regional, and State economies significantly benefit from visitation spending. In the Adirondack Park, visitors are attracted by a variety of features including recreation amenities, shopping and dining opportunities, quaint hamlets, scenic and aesthetic qualities, and overall quality of experience. People seeking outdoor recreation opportunities are attracted to a diversity of activities year-round, including snowmobiling, skiing, hiking, kayaking, canoeing, hunting, and fishing. A 2012 report from the Adirondack Partnership highlights that to attract the largest amount of visitors to a region, it must provide the greatest diversity of activities as possible.[57] Additionally, a 2016 Wild Center report on recruiting millennial visitors to the Adirondacks articulated the need to offer varied recreation and social experiences.[58] This proposed action seeks to allow a broad spectrum of recreation opportunities on the newly acquired State lands so that communities can program and market these resources to maximize economic benefit.

The Forest Preserve as a Programmable and Marketable Asset

Adirondack towns and villages provide services, accommodations, shopping opportunities, and hamlet experiences to visitors to the region. These communities complement the Forest Preserve by providing the social and cultural components of a trip while recreation on State lands offers a plethora of recreation opportunities. These two components work together to attract people to the region.

To maximize visitation to their communities, many towns and villages have begun to program and market their Forest Preserve resources. Local businesses have also taken partnership and/or leading roles in these efforts. Communities throughout the Park offer events on the Forest Preserve including wildlife festivals, canoe races, mountain bike races, back-country ski festivals, and snowmobile gatherings. The Town of Indian Lake, in partnership with local businesses, Hamilton County, and local chambers of commerce, has taken a four-season approach to programming and marketing their State land resources. In the winter the community plays host to Snowcade, a family-friendly snowmobiling festival; in the spring, the community coordinates with the Town of

[57] Adirondack Partnership Recreation Planning Workgroup, 2013. Adirondack Park Recreation Strategy: Capitalizing on the Economic Potential of our Natural Environment.

[58] The Wild Center, 2016. The Adirondacks and the Next Generation: A Guidebook for Marketing the Adirondacks to Millennials. Tupper Lake, NY

Inlet to host the Black Fly mountain bike challenge. In the summer, the Town is home to the Governor's Adirondack Challenge, where participants from all over New York State enjoy diverse activities ranging from white-water rafting to fly-fishing and canoeing. Come the fall, the Town's Moose Festival attracts hundreds of people to participate in hikes and wildlife viewing events.

Surrounding towns also use the Forest Preserve for events, including the Town of Newcomb's Teddy Roosevelt Weekend, where guests can hike, bike, or take wagon rides to Great Camp Santanoni. Long Lake's Birding Weekend, snowmobile Poker Run, and Winter Carnival all bring visitors to various state land assets. Throughout the region, numerous communities have similar programs and events that take advantage of the Adirondack Forest Preserve.

Incentive programs have also been used by local communities and regional organizations to attract visitors. In 2015, Tupper Lake unveiled its Tupper Lake Triad hiking challenge, which provides a patch for participants after they complete three designated hikes surrounding the community. The Town of Chester similarly offers the Chester Challenge, which provides a pin after hikers complete six of eleven designated hikes in that Town. Comparable challenges are offered in Moriah, Lake George, Saranac Lake, and Cranberry Lake. These unique hiking challenges attract people back to the region as a whole.

Finally, communities are beginning to offer recreation infrastructure to connect their hamlet centers to the Forest Preserve and bring more recreationists into their community to spend money. "The Five Towns", consisting of the Towns of Indian Lake, Long Lake, Minerva, Newcomb and North Hudson, have collaboratively worked with the NYS Department of Conservation to develop a plan to bring equestrian and snowmobile support facilities into the communities' hamlets. Similarly, the Village of Northville has created a formal start/finish area for the Northville-Placid Trail in the center of the Hamlet to bring hikers directly to their commercial center. These projects help to amplify visitors' familiarity with the Adirondack's hamlet centers and bring potential customers into areas with the greatest accumulation of local businesses.

Adirondack communities throughout the Park are programming and marketing the Forest Preserve to achieve economic benefit and there is opportunity for more communities to participate. Adirondack towns and villages, in coordination with the private and non-profit sectors, can plan additional events and competitions, develop new programs and challenges, and develop fresh recreation amenities and infrastructure to make the most of the recreation opportunities afforded by State land.

Business and Resident Attraction

The market opportunity for local businesses increases as more visitors and their associated spending come into an area. As new businesses open to capitalize upon the influx of visitation spending, new jobs can be created and the ripple effects throughout the local economy stimulate additional business development.

Many existing businesses in the Park directly benefit from Forest Preserve recreation amenities. Guides, outfitters, lodging facilities, entertainment facilities, food services, and event services all benefit from spending in this sector. Multiplier effects ensure that this spending is distributed throughout the local and regional economies providing additional benefits to businesses not directly involved in recreation-based service provision.

Recreation opportunities afforded through this classification package offer the potential for new users to come into the region, or for existing visitors to be retained in the region, thus increasing the economic opportunities for local businesses.

Economic Impacts of Different Land Classifications

A range of recreation opportunities are provided for in every land classification. Specific activities and amenities are identified through the Unit Management Planning process administered by DEC. After thorough vetting and public input, different recreational opportunities are incorporated into a UMP with implementation to follow.

The total use of a unit is the main driver of economic impact resulting from recreation in a particular unit. The total use of a unit is influenced by a variety of factors including the appeal of the natural resource itself, available recreation infrastructure, proximity to commercial centers and accommodations, access, events and programming, and the marketing of the resource.

Economic Impacts from Preferred Alternative

The Preferred Alternative is a diversity of classifications for different parcels of land. This will accommodate the largest range of uses possible including snowmobiling, hiking, equestrian use, kayaking, cross-country skiing, hunting, fishing, bicycling, and other motorized and non-motorized uses. The infrastructure and recreation opportunities allowed for under the Preferred Alternative will provide new assets (following UMP development) which can be marketed and programmed to attract visitors. To the extent that the local and State governments plan for, develop, program, and market these recreation opportunities, the economic impacts related from this action will be realized.

Conclusion of the Economic Impacts of the Proposed Action

The Adirondack Park's economy benefits significantly from visitation. A number of factors influence the number of people who visit the region including recreation amenities, social and cultural resources, and overall quality of the experience or place. Those seeking outdoor recreation opportunities participate in a variety of activities. By providing for a number of recreation opportunities, this action will allow communities and the State to amplify the economic impacts of the classification package.

CLASSIFICATION ACTION FOR THE BOREAS PONDS TRACT

A detailed narrative and alternative maps are provided for the Boreas Ponds Tract below.

The **No Action Alternative** was rejected for the Boreas Ponds Tract because the APSLMP requires classification of newly acquired lands following acquisition.

Alternative Descriptions and Analyses

The FPEIS and the APSLMP offer Guidelines for amendments to the APSLMP and Criteria for classification, respectively. For acquisitions like the Boreas Ponds Tract, the FPEIS Guidelines for Recent Acquisition Classification states that:

> *"the physical and biological resources, use patterns, scenic characteristics, remoteness, accessibility, existing facilities, adjacent land use and classification, and suitability for various recreational uses are analyzed. In such cases, the overriding consideration is a determination that any use allowed by classification should not exceed the physical, biological, or social carrying capacity of the land's resources."*

(FPEIS, page 24)

Similarly, the Adirondack Park Agency Act and the APSLMP require the Agency to classify the State lands in the Park according to "their characteristics and capacity to withstand use."

The APSLMP (page 1) states:

> "…the protection and preservation of the natural resources of the State lands within the Park must be paramount. Human use and enjoyment of those lands should be permitted and encouraged, so long as the resources in their physical and biological context, as well as their social or psychological aspects, are not degraded."

In order to achieve the APSLMP's complementary objectives and to make a determination whether a proposed classification is in accordance with the lands "characteristics and capacity to withstand use," the APSLMP, like the FPEIS, requires the Agency to consider characteristics of the lands including physical, biological, social and intangible characteristics.

The following four APSLMP considerations are presented and discussed for each of the five alternatives for the Boreas Ponds Tract:

1. Provide greatest protection of ***physical characteristics*** to the most fragile lands, particularly lands over 2,500' elevation, steep slopes, wetlands, and waterbodies with minimal capability to withstand high use.

2. Take into account ***biological considerations*** such as the presence of more sensitive plant species and wetland ecosystems, as well as the need to protect special wildlife habitats and values.
3. Take into account ***intangible considerations***: **e.g., "scenic characteristics." "sense of remoteness."** and **"degree of wildness"** with wild soundscape (noise). This can also include **compatibility of adjacent land uses and classification of public and private lands adjoining the tract**, **the scarcity of wilderness recreation opportunities and values of "roadless areas"** in NY and the Northeast.
4. Take into account ***established facilities and public uses***, **as well as relevant policies of administering agencies**.

The description of each alternative includes the lands to be classified, various descriptors including roads, setbacks, boundaries and distinctive features, within the context of a recommendation for land classification. Each alternative also includes a discussion of selected recreational opportunities.

The analysis for each alternative includes an examination of the impacts of the alternative in relation to the APSLMP criteria that there is a review of the physical characteristics, biological considerations, intangible qualities, and facilities for each proposed alternative. In combination, the APSLMP criteria and the programmatic considerations overlap. As such, each alternative analysis is presented within the context of these considerations and the various physical and biological characteristics of the tract that are described in the text of the FSEIS.

Boreas Ponds Tract

The 20,534 acre Boreas Ponds Tract characteristics include a diversity of lowland terrain, wetlands and mountain ridges. The 345 acre Boreas Ponds are a central feature, in addition to seven other waterbodies on the tract, 27 miles of streams, rivers and tributaries and two dams (one at Boreas Ponds and one at La Bier Flow). The landscape of the tract features a natural connectivity of the forests, wetlands, water resources, and other habitats. The tract has approximately 1,800 acres of wetlands including the 1,200 acre Marcy Swamp - the largest high elevation peatland in New York State, at 2,000 feet. The Boreas Ponds Tract is home to a broad diversity of plant and animal species. Detailed descriptions of the characteristics of the tract are included in this FSEIS in the preceding sections on Physical Characteristics starting on page 10 and Biological Considerations starting page 17.

Actions Common to all Alternatives

All of the five alternatives would include portions of the tract being classified as Wilderness, Wild Forest and State Administrative.

The high-elevation (over 2,500 feet) Mountain Spruce Fir Forest in the northern section of the tract would be classified as Wilderness in all five alternatives. This region of the tract has thinner, more erodible soils, two lakes, and the headwaters

of four streams. Wilderness classification of this region would provide the maximum protection to natural resources. The southern portion of the tract along the Blue Ridge Road would be classified as Wild Forest in all five alternatives. This portion of the tract has less sensitive habitat than the northern section, which would allow additional recreational uses while still providing substantial protection for the natural resources. These uses include, but are not limited to, public motorized and mechanized access, snowmobile and bicycle trails.

This proposed southern Wild Forest area includes the southeastern corner of the tract and contains Gulf Brook, Ragged Mountain, and The Branch, bordered by Elk Lake Road to the east. This southeastern section lacks the sense of remoteness one would encounter in a Wilderness classification, being adjacent to a State highway and active logging operations. It is also further from the High Peaks Wilderness and Dix Wilderness than any of the lands in the tract proposed for Wilderness classification. Although the Ragged Mountain section is rugged with more erodible soils and steep slopes, the size of the area and lack of remoteness makes it suitable for Wild Forest classification.

All alternatives propose classification of two State Administrative Areas for gravel pits. The Towns of North Hudson and Newcomb were granted an easement to access and mine gravel from two gravel pits on the Boreas Ponds Tract, prior to State acquisition. The gravel pits are limited in size to a maximum of one acre each. The easement limits gravel extraction for the sole purpose of facilitating the maintenance of road, trail and infrastructure within the Boreas Tract, subject to a DEC permit and “subject to all laws, rules and regulations in effect at the time of issuance of the DEC permit.” Once deemed exhausted, the gravel pits would be reclaimed and reclassified. These two new State Administrative Areas would be named LaBier Flow State Administrative Area and Boreas Ponds Road State Administrative Area. All alternatives allow DEC access to the Boreas Ponds dam for maintenance and provide varying degrees of public access to the Boreas Ponds dam.

All alternatives recognize the existence of recreational leases for camps. Each lease provides for road access to the camp buildings, and limits the leased area to a one-acre envelope around the camp buildings. Most of the leases have renewable one-year terms expiring September 30, 2018. The existence of the camps does not influence classification. Upon expiration of the leases and removal of the camp structures, the underlying lands will be managed in accordance with the APSLMP guidelines called for through the classification action and the unit management planning process.

Recreational Activities

Recreational opportunities vary from one classification category to another based on the Guidelines for Management and Use specified in the APSLMP. A wide array of recreational activities and associated structures and improvements are allowable on State lands in the Adirondack Park, subject to specific proposals set forth in approved UMPs. Various primitive forms of recreation such as hiking,

cross-country skiing, canoeing and horseback riding are allowable uses in all State land classifications. Motorized and mechanized forms of recreation such as snowmobiling, motor boating and bicycling, are generally prohibited in Wilderness, Primitive and Canoe areas, except that bicycle use may be permitted in Primitive and Canoe areas on certain administrative roads. Public input concerning development of particular recreational opportunities and related structures and improvements is provided to DEC during the UMP planning process. These improvements might include trails for snowmobiles, bicycles, horses and wagons, and hiking. Additional improvements could include trailhead parking, campsites and facilities accessible by persons with disabilities.

Existing nearby recreational resources on State lands include the Lake Harris Campground, Camp Santanoni Historic Area, Essex Chain Primitive Area, Polaris Mountain Primitive Area, High Peaks Wilderness, Dix Wilderness, Hoffman Notch Wilderness, Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest and the unclassified lands known as the MacIntyre East and West Tracts, proposed to be added to the High Peaks Wilderness and Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest. In addition to the waters of Boreas Ponds and the Essex Chain Lakes, there are paddling opportunities on the Hudson River, Newcomb Lake, The Branch River, Opalescent River, Schroon River and the Boreas River. Also, located on private and Town lands in Newcomb are the SUNY-ESF Adirondack Interpretative Center, Open Space Conservancy Interpretative Trails in historic Adirondac, Newcomb Town Beach, High Peaks Golf Course and Newcomb Overlook. To the east in North Hudson are a private campground, Sharp Bridge State Campground, a Town Beach, private lodges and commercial enterprises, and a planned redevelopment of the Frontier Town site as a Campground, Equestrian and Day Use Area with cabins, hotel and commercial services and businesses. These surrounding public lands and both public and private facilities could enhance the opportunities for public use and enjoyment of the Boreas Ponds Tract.

Specific to snowmobile trails, determinations on the siting and construction of snowmobile trails are guided by Article XIV of the New York State Constitution, the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan, the 2006 Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondack Park (Snowmobile Plan), the 2009 Management Guidance for Snowmobile Trail Siting, Construction and Maintenance on Forest Preserve Lands in the Adirondack Park (Management Guidance), and individual Unit Management Plans.

The 2006 Snowmobile Plan was developed with considerable input from the public and public interest groups. This plan recognizes the goal of completing a network of snowmobile trails across the Park which will provide a trail system to connect communities using both public and private lands. The Snowmobile Plan specifically identified a need to connect Newcomb to North Hudson. The Agency supports this objective and the DEC includes community connector trail planning in the management of any area where it has been determined public snowmobiling may be permitted.

The Management Guidance was developed and included as an appendix to 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 (Revised March, 2010)." The Management Guidance addresses snowmobile trail siting, construction and maintenance. Siting requirements include placing Community Connector trails, known as Class II trails, at the periphery of Wild Forest as close as possible to motorized travel corridors. The guidance also allows for Class I snowmobile trails, also known as secondary trails, to be groomed with snowmobiles and which may be located further from motorized travel corridors.

DEC's 2005 UMP for Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest was adopted prior to both the 2006 Snowmobile Plan and the 2009 Management Guidance. The UMP identifies multiple snowmobile trail alternative routes for connecting Minerva to Newcomb, plus other alternative trail routes for connecting Minerva to Pottersville and Schroon Lake (now completed). The 2005 UMP states that it will be amended to select a Preferred Alternative for the community connector trail between Newcomb and North Hudson. In 2015, DEC adopted the Community Connector Trail Plan for the Towns of Newcomb, Minerva, and North Hudson, which amended the 2005 Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest UMP. The 2015 Community Connector Trail Plan included 4 alternative routes for Section 3, which included the Boreas Ponds Tract. A Preferred Alternative was not chosen at that time because the tract had not been classified. None of the four alternate routes would be precluded by the Preferred Alternative contained in this FSEIS. Each of the alternatives presented in this FSEIS would also allow the Department to locate the trail on the southern area of the tract, north of the Blue Ridge Road.

Unit Management Planning

Recreational use and trails are designated after the classification process is completed. Once the Governor approves the Agency recommendations for amending the APSLMP to classify Forest Preserve land, the Department, in consultation with the Agency, develops UMPs for the newly classified areas. In addition to inventories of resources, existing facilities, projected public use and assessments of physical, biological and social carrying capacities, each UMP sets forth a statement of management objectives for the protection and rehabilitation of the area's resources and ecosystems and for public use of the area consistent with its carrying capacity. The Department will also then amend the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest UMP with the identification of the Preferred Alternative for Section 3 of the Newcomb to North Hudson Community Connector Trail.

Special Management Areas

Nothing in the guidelines pertaining to each classification would prevent the Department of Environmental Conservation, or any other State agency

administering such lands, from providing for more restrictive management where necessary to comply with constitutional requirements or to protect the natural resources of such lands. (APSLMP, pages 16-17)

For all of the alternatives, the designation of an appropriate special management area can be considered for any lands which may require special management to reflect unusual resource or public use factors, such as those areas surrounding or adjacent to Boreas Ponds or LaBier Flow. Special management plans, developed either independently or as part of the unit management plan for the major land classification within which they lie, can call for more restrictive measures for public access and use within the designated special management area.

Boreas Ponds Tract Alternative 1 – Map 4

Description:

Alternative 1 would classify lands 500 feet north of Gulf Brook and Boreas Ponds Roads, the roads themselves and the land south of the roads as Wild Forest and add these lands to the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest unit. The 500-foot setback north of Gulf Brook and Boreas Ponds Roads would facilitate identical management practices on both sides of the roads which would limit possible confusion by users.

The Wild Forest classification would include lands north of the intersection of Boreas Ponds Road and Gulf Brook Road (aka the Four Corners), including the road to the Boreas Ponds Dam, a former logging road circling Boreas Ponds, the land between the former logging roads and the ponds, and the waters of Boreas Ponds, LaBier Flow and the Boreas River below the Boreas Ponds Dam.

The northern Wild Forest boundary of Alternative 1 is formed by the outer shoulder of a former logging road that loops around the Boreas Ponds. Lands north of the Four Corners outside of the area classified as Wild Forest would be classified as Wilderness.

Analysis:

Alternative 1 is not the Preferred Alternative.

The classification of a 1,100+/-acre area north of the intersection of Four Corners as Wild Forest is the most distinctive feature of Alternative 1, compared to the other alternatives. It is the only classification alternative which classifies the Boreas Ponds as Wild Forest.

Physical and biological characteristics

Alternative 1 would classify 1,100+/-acres north of the Four Corners as Wild Forest. This area, including the Boreas Ponds, contains natural resources which are the tract's most fragile and sensitive to impacts from recreational use. In comparison to a Wilderness classification, a Wild Forest classification would be less protective of the physical and biological resources of this portion of the tract.[59]

Alternative 1 does not provide the maximum protection for the most sensitive resources on the tract. The wetlands associated with the Boreas Ponds (Deep Water and Emergent Marshes), additional natural communities, the rare plant species (a submerged aquatic milfoil and bog aster), wildlife habitat and fisheries could all be negatively affected by management and uses, particularly motorized uses, allowed in lands classified as Wild Forest. Based on the average shallow depth of 5 feet, motorized craft could have a significant adverse environmental impact on the bottom of the ponds by: damaging plants, organisms and fish life; shoreline erosion caused by waves; and impacts on nesting areas of shoreline wildlife.

Vehicles, snowmobiles, bicycles and motor boats could potentially be allowed in Wild Forest, pursuant to an approved UMP. These public uses could be significantly more intensive than when the tract was private land and accessed by only leaseholders and loggers.

The potential motorized and mechanized recreation uses under a Wild Forest classification could impact the unique and sensitive resources of the ponds[60] and wetlands.[61] Construction and maintenance of roads and trails elsewhere on the tract, especially in higher elevation locations where steep slopes and thinner soils are present, could pose challenges in relationship to the erosional impacts.[62] Although the tract has had limited motor vehicle traffic when in private ownership, the risks of introducing invasive species increases with public access. Vehicles and boats from inside and outside the Adirondack region are vectors for invasive species. Translocation of organisms by boaters can be intentional (e.g. bait[63]), but is often unintentional, with organisms inadvertently carried in bilge water, live wells, and bait buckets. Organisms can also be entrained on boat exteriors, e.g.,

[59] The APSLMP's "Guidelines for Management and Use" of Wild Forest areas (p.35) direct that areas classified as Wild Forest "should accommodate much of the future use of the Adirondack forest preserve."

[60] Water Resources, supra, pp 15-18.

[61] *See* Figure 5: Boreas Ponds Tract Value 1 Wetlands, supra at page 23 and generally section on Wetlands, starting on p. 20.

[62] Figure 2: Boreas Ponds Tract Erosion Hazards at p. 14 and generally Geology/Soils starting at p. 12.

[63] Keller,R.P., A.N.Cox, C. Van Loon, D.M. Lodge, L.M. Herbor, and J. Rothlisberger. 2007. From bait shops to the forest floor: earthworm use and disposal by angler. *American Midland Naturalist* 158:321-328.

entangled on propellers and trailers, attached to other entangled organisms.[64] Additional vehicle use has the potential to decrease the ecological integrity of the tract by increasing disturbance caused by humans and by impeding ecological flows and connectivity.[65]

Lands south of the Four Corners and east of Gulf Brook Road can better accommodate increased use. With the exception of Ragged Mountain, these lands contain less wetlands, and have comparatively deeper soils and more moderate slopes which are less fragile.[66] A Wild Forest classification for the lands south of the Four Corners could adequately protect the physical and biological characteristics of the southern portion of the tract.

Intangible considerations

The Agency is obligated to consider intangible characteristics in land classification decisions in locations where visitors are most likely to recreate. The Boreas Ponds, the routes leading to and from them, and the surrounding summits offer a view of the ponds and a rare potential for visitors to appreciate a high degree of wildness. The Boreas Ponds themselves, LaBier Flow, the summits of Moose Mountain and Boreas Mountain, and the rivers and wetlands offer nearly unparalleled scenic quality and an experience of remoteness. The sense of remoteness can be affected by roads, both from the visual impact and from motorized access with the resulting noise.

Alternative 1 would allow management and potential uses, including motorized uses and bicycles, allowed in lands classified as Wild Forest. The types of recreational uses, the higher degree of public use, and the related management that would potentially accompany a Wild Forest classification around the Boreas Ponds could diminish the existing, unique and rare intangible characteristics of that area of the tract. Potential Wild Forest uses would introduce noise and mechanized recreation not associated with a sense of remoteness.[67]

Compatibility of adjacent land uses / land classifications

The majority of adjacent private lands to the portion of the tract north of the Four Corners are classified as Resource Management which is the most restrictive private land classification under the Adirondack Park Agency Act.[68] Additionally most of the adjoining private lands are already

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[64] Johnson, Ladd E., Anthony Ricciardi, and James T. Carlton. 2001. "Overland Dispersal of Aquatic Invasive Species: A Risk Assessment of Transient Recreational Boating." *Ecological Applications* 11.6: 1789–1799. Puth, Linda M., and David M. Post. 2005. "Studying Invasion: Have We Missed the Boat?" *Ecology Letters* 8.7:715–721.

[65] Invasive Species, on page 34 et seq.

[66] Geology/Soils, supra, p. 12 et. seq. including **Error! Reference source not found.Error! Reference source not found.**.

[67] *Sense of Remoteness and Degree of Wilderness, supra, pgs. 40 – 41 et seq. including* Figure 9: Remote Areas in the Adirondack Park (2007).

[68] Map 3: Existing Infrastructure of the Boreas Ponds Tract

subject to conservation easements where timber management continues to occur.[69] The adjoining and nearby State land classifications are Wilderness, in the High Peaks Wilderness, Dix Mountain Wilderness and Hoffman Notch Wilderness, and Wild Forest, in the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest.[70] There is also an Intensive Use Area, Harris Lake Campground, nearby in the Town of Newcomb.[71]

The classifications proposed south of Four Corners in Alternative 1 are generally compatible with the adjoining private land uses, which include Rural Use and Resource Management lands under the Adirondack Park Agency Act.[72] This alternative's proposed Wild Forest classification of lands and waters north of Four Corners, however, is incompatible with the High Peaks Wilderness to the north and northwest and with Dix Mountain Wilderness to the northeast. Of the five alternatives, Alternative 1 is the least compatible with adjacent State land classifications.

Eastern wilderness opportunities / roadless areas

Classification of the Boreas Ponds Tract presents an opportunity to significantly expand the acreage of the High Peaks Wilderness as a unique roadless area while reducing ecological impacts stemming from motor-vehicle use of the tract's former logging roads.[73] Alternative 1 takes least advantage of this opportunity, adding the least amount of Wilderness to the High Peaks Wilderness of any alternative considered.[74] Alternative 1 would allow maintenance of the existing road network around the Boreas Ponds in a Wild Forest classification. Alternative 1 would also extend the Wild Forest classification to the western end of the Boreas Ponds Road, which could result in motorized use over a larger area than Alternatives 3 and 4.

Existing facilities and public uses

The existing facilities include two dams and five camps leased to recreational clubs pursuant to leases expiring in 2018.[75] None of these structures or improvements would be impacted by Alternative 1. The dams could remain and the camps must be removed in accordance with the lease terms. Prior to State acquisition there had been no public use of the Boreas Ponds Tract.

Use by the public would be influenced by the classification and the recreational uses adopted through a UMP. Alternative 1 classifies more land as Wild Forest

[69] Map 4: Boreas Ponds Tract Alternative 1
[70] Map 4: Boreas Ponds Tract Alternative 1; *see also* Map 6: Boreas Ponds Tract Alternative 2B: Preferred Alternative.
[71] http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/24469.html
[72] Map 3: Existing Infrastructure of the Boreas Ponds Tract
[73] *See,* Map 3: Existing Infrastructure of the Boreas Tract.
[74] Table 1: Boreas Ponds Tract Alternatives: Acreage Figures on page 84.
[75] Structure and improvements, supra, p. 45 et seq. and Map 3: Existing Infrastructure of the Boreas Tract.

than other alternatives, and would potentially result in the introduction of additional structures and uses to areas with that classification.[76] Wild Forest classification around the Boreas Ponds could enable the use of additional roads and/or trails for snowmobile and/or bicycles in an area now closed to public motorized and mechanized uses.

In comparison, Wilderness designation of all or a very large portion of the tract would result in the closure of what would be viewed as non-conforming roads, including removal of culverts and replacement with bridges if the roads are converted to trails.

Discussion of Selected Recreational Opportunities

Among all of the alternatives, Alternative 1 offers the greatest variety of potential locations for motorized and mechanized recreational opportunities including bicycling, snowmobiling, motor boating, and public motor vehicle access throughout the Boreas Ponds Tract.[77] Through the UMP process, motorized and mechanized forms of recreation could be allowed on and immediately around the Boreas Ponds as well as the full length of Gulf Brook and Boreas Ponds Road. A Wild Forest classification around the Boreas Ponds could have a negative impact on recreationists interested in quiet waters, cross country skiing, hiking and remote access because it creates the potential for motorized recreation on and around the Boreas Ponds.

Alternatives 1, 2 and 2B would allow for a community connector snowmobile trail to be designated on Gulf Brook and Boreas Ponds Roads. Use of these roads for a Class II community connector trail does not prevent trail construction; it would require the Department to construct approximately three miles of new Class II trails on Forest Preserve lands. This would be less new trail construction as compared to Alternatives 3 and 4.

Boreas Ponds Tract Alternative 2 – Map 5

Description:

Alternative 2 would classify lands 500 feet north of Gulf Brook and Boreas Ponds Roads, the roads themselves and the land south of the roads as Wild Forest and add these lands to the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest unit. The 500-foot setback north of Gulf Brook and Boreas Ponds Roads would facilitate management practices on both sides of the roads in an identical manner which would limit possible confusion by users and allow for management consistency. The Wild Forest would extend east to Elk Lake Road, encompassing Gulf Brook, Ragged Mountain and The Branch, a designated study river under the Wild Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act.

[76] Puth, Linda M., and David M. Post. 2005. “Studying Invasion: Have We Missed the Boat?” *Ecology Letters* 8.7:715–721.

[77] Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action, supra, p. 48.

Alternative 2 would classify lands north of the Four Corners, including the waters of Boreas Ponds, as Wilderness, except for the Wild Forest Area described below.

Alternative 2 proposes a Wild Forest Area, extending from the Four Corners north to the Boreas Dam. The western boundary of this area would be 500 feet west of the Boreas Ponds Road. The eastern boundary of this area is depicted on the map and includes an area east of the dam and north of LaBier Flow. This Wild Forest Area would include the waters of LaBier Flow and the Boreas River below the Boreas Ponds Dam, and would contain two high value wetlands. The purpose of this Wild Forest area is to enable the Department's access to the Boreas Ponds Dam and an area surrounding the dam for maintenance.

Analysis:

Alternative 2 is not the Preferred Alternative.

Alternative 2 differs from Alternative 1 in that it proposes classifying significantly less land as Wild Forest and more land as Wilderness north of the Four Corners. This alternative, as well as Alternatives 2B, 3 and 4 would classify the Boreas Ponds as Wilderness.

Physical characteristics and biological considerations

Alternative 2 would protect a majority of the tract's most fragile and sensitive physical and biological resources north of the Four Corners, Gulf Brook Road, and Boreas Ponds Road by classifying it as Wilderness. However, the Wild Forest Area in Alternative 2 would still offer less protection to certain wetlands just north of the Four Corners near the road, LaBier Flow and its ½-mile-long western shoreline, and a portion of the far southern shore of First Pond. These areas would be less protected by classification of this area as Wild Forest subject to potential motor vehicle, snowmobile and bicycle use adjacent to the ponds and on the roads within the wetlands south of the ponds. Alternatives 1 and 3 would also have Wild Forest in these areas.

Unlike Alternative 1, Alternative 2 would protect the waters of Boreas Ponds and most of the associated northern wetlands by classifying the water and a majority of the land surrounding the ponds as Wilderness. As with Alternative 1, the wetlands associated with the Boreas Ponds (Deep Water and Emergent Marshes), additional natural communities, the rare plant species (a submerged aquatic milfoil and bog aster), wildlife habitat and fisheries could still be affected by the nearby motorized and mechanical forms of recreation. All of Marcy Swamp would have Wilderness protection. This alternative also adds the full length of the White Lily, Slide, Snyder and LeClaire Brooks to Wilderness.

In comparison to Alternative 1, Alternative 2 would provide better protection and improve the ecological integrity, resilience and connectedness of the tract through the addition of 1,145 acres of Wilderness. Closure of the former logging roads surrounding the Boreas Ponds as a result of the Wilderness classification would reduce erosion and minimize the chance of introduction of invasive species to the ponds and most of the surrounding wetlands. Wilderness classification prohibition of roads and vehicle use, including use of motors on the Ponds, would increase the ecological integrity of the tract by decreasing disturbance caused by humans and by improving ecological flows and connectivity.

Lands south of the Four Corners and east of Gulf Brook Road can accommodate increased use. These lands contain less wetlands, have deeper soils and moderate slopes which are less fragile. The Wild Forest classification of lands south of the Four Corners is the same as in Alternative 1, and would protect the physical and biological characteristics of those lands to the same extent.

Intangible considerations

Alternative 2, just as Alternatives 2B and 3, would protect the scenic quality, degree of wildness and sense of remoteness more than Alternative 1, but not as much as Alternative 4. The proposed Wild Forest classification from Four Corners to Boreas Ponds under Alternatives 2 and 3 could still diminish the scenic quality and the degree of wildness from the vicinity of LaBier Flow north to the shoreline of the Boreas Ponds by allowing structures, improvements and recreational uses otherwise prohibited in Wilderness.

Alternative 2 would allow public motorized uses and bicycles in the proposed swath of Wild Forest from the Four Corners to the Boreas Ponds. Motorized and mechanized uses could eliminate a sense of remoteness or solitude at the ponds. These uses would introduce noise and mechanized recreation not associated with a sense of remoteness.

Compatibility of adjacent land uses / land classifications

The majority of adjacent private lands are classified as Resource Management which is the most restrictive private land classification. Additionally, most of the adjoining private lands are subject to conservation easements where timber management continues to occur. The adjoining and nearby State land classifications are Wilderness, in the High Peaks Wilderness, Dix Mountain Wilderness and Hoffman Notch Wilderness, and Wild Forest, in the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest. There is also an Intensive Use Area, Harris Lake Campground, nearby in the Town of Newcomb.

The extension of Wild Forest lands north of Four Corners proposed in Alternative 2, although not as extensive as in Alternative 1, is still not compatible with the High Peaks Wilderness to the north and northwest

and Dix Mountain Wilderness to the northeast. Alternative 2 could introduce uses nonconforming with Wilderness guidelines to an interior location adjacent to established Wilderness areas. These uses would be in conflict with the wilderness characteristics of the surrounding lands.

The classifications proposed south of Four Corners in Alternative 2 are generally compatible with the adjoining private land uses, which include Rural Use and Resource Management lands under the Adirondack Park Agency Act.

Eastern wilderness opportunities / roadless areas

Compared to Alternative 1, Alternative 2 provides an opportunity to expand the acreage of the High Peaks Wilderness as a unique roadless area while reducing ecological impacts stemming from motor-vehicle use of the tract's former logging roads around the ponds. Prohibiting motorized and mechanized recreational use around Boreas Ponds would increase the ecological integrity of the tract by decreasing potential disturbance caused by humans and by improving ecological flows and connectivity. Alternative 2 would extend the Wild Forest classification to the western end of the Boreas Ponds Road, which could result in motorized use over a larger area than Alternatives 3 and 4.

Existing facilities and public uses

The existing facilities include two dams and five camps leased to recreational clubs pursuant to leases expiring in 2018.[78] None of these structures or improvements would be impacted by Alternative 2. The dams could remain and the camps must be removed in accordance with the lease terms. Prior to State acquisition there had been no public use of the Boreas Ponds Tract.

Prior to State acquisition there had been no public use. Alternative 2 would extend the Wild Forest classification in a wide swath centered on the Boreas Ponds Road, to the Boreas Ponds, which could enable the use of additional roads and/or trails for snowmobiles, motor vehicles, and/or bicycles up to the Ponds. Future public use would be influenced by both the classification and the UMP.

Discussion of Selected Recreational Opportunities

Similar to the other alternatives**,** Alternative 2 allows for the potential of various recreational opportunities such as snowmobiling, bicycling, horseback riding, cross country skiing, hiking, paddling and camping pursuant to an UMP. Compared to Alternative 1, however, there would be less potential opportunity for motorized and mechanized recreational uses due to the proposed addition of more Wilderness around and including Boreas Ponds.

[78] Structure and improvements, supra, p. 45 et seq. and Map 3: Existing Infrastructure of the Boreas Tract.

As with Alternatives 1 and 3, Alternative 2 could still potentially lead to motorized and mechanized recreational use in a Wild Forest area extending from Four Corners to the southern shoreline of the Boreas Ponds through an UMP.

Those seeking to recreate on quiet waters or on wilderness lands may have the sense of remoteness reduced by the motorized access to the south shore of the Boreas Ponds. The intrusion would be less pervasive than in Alternative 1, which would allow the option of motorized recreation on and around the Boreas Ponds.

Alternatives 1, 2 and 2B would allow the placement of part of a Class II community connector snowmobile trail on Gulf Brook and Boreas Ponds Roads, but all of these alternatives using the former logging roads would require the Department to construct approximately three miles of new Class II trails on Forest Preserve lands. This would be less new trail construction as compared to alternatives 3 and 4.

Boreas Ponds Tract Alternative 2B – Map 6
The Preferred Alternative (Variation of the DSEIS Alternative 2 and Alternative 4)

Description:

Alternative 2B would classify lands 500 feet north of Gulf Brook and Boreas Ponds Roads, the roads themselves, and the land south of the roads as Wild Forest and add those lands to the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest unit. The 500-foot setback north of Gulf Brook and Boreas Ponds Roads would facilitate management practices on both sides of the roads in an identical manner which would limit possible confusion by users and allow for consistency. The Wild Forest Area would extend east to Elk Lake Road, encompassing Gulf Brook, Ragged Mountain and The Branch, a designated study river under the Wild Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act.

A 75-foot-wide Wild Forest corridor, which includes Boreas Ponds Road, would extend north of the Four Corners to and including an abandoned landing that could be used for parking. The landing is approximately 50 by 75 feet (0.09 acre) in size and 590 feet (0.1 mile) from the Boreas Ponds dam.

The majority of the land north of the Four Corners and adjacent to the Boreas Ponds Road Wild Forest corridor would be Wilderness, except for the Primitive Area described below. The waters of Boreas Ponds and LaBier Flow would be classified as Wilderness.

The 11-acre Primitive Area proposed in Alternative 2B would allow the Department to reach and maintain the Boreas Ponds Dam. The Primitive Area would extend north from the Boreas Ponds Road Wild Forest corridor. The Primitive Area would then widen to the east and border the south shore of First

Pond. The Primitive Area would include the dam itself and an area surrounding the dam necessary for maintenance. The section of the Boreas Ponds Road located within the Primitive Area could be designated as an Administrative Road in an approved UMP.

Analysis:

Alternative 2B is the Preferred Alternative.

Alternative 2B represents a modification of Alternative 2, combined with an element of Alternative 4. The Wild Forest area in Alternative 2, which extends northward from the Four Corners to the Boreas Ponds, is reduced to a 75-foot road corridor in Alternative 2B. The Alternative 2B corridor would end 0.1 mile from the Boreas Ponds Dam. The larger Primitive Area proposed as part of Alternative 4 would be modified to be an eleven-acre area surrounding and including the Boreas Ponds dam to enable the Department motorized access for dam maintenance.

Physical characteristics and biological considerations

Unlike Alternative 2, Alternative 2B would classify a Primitive area immediately south of First Pond which allows for Wilderness management and prohibits public motorized use. The Primitive classification and prohibition of motorized use would provide natural resource protection to the ponds and wetlands by limiting potential impacts from erosion and introduction of invasive species that may accompany increased motor vehicle access. This Primitive area of eleven acres would be smaller than that proposed in Alternative 4.

Similar to Alternative 2, Alternative 2B would ensure that most of the tract's fragile and sensitive physical and biological resources north of Four Corners receive the maximum protection through a Primitive or Wilderness classification. In addition, certain wetlands just north of the Four Corners near the road, most of the ½-mile-long western shoreline of LaBier Flow and those waters, and all of the southern shoreline area of the ponds would be classified Wilderness. Therefore, these areas would be subject to fewer potential recreational use impacts, providing more natural resource protection in this area than in Alternatives 1, 2 or 3.

As with Alternative 2, Alternative 2B provides additional protection to the Boreas Ponds by classifying the water bodies and a majority of the land surrounding the Ponds as Wilderness. The wetlands associated with the Boreas Ponds (Deep Water and Emergent Marshes), additional natural communities, the rare plant species (a submerged aquatic milfoil and bog aster), wildlife habitat and fisheries would not be negatively affected by potential motorized and mechanized forms of recreation. The full extent of Marcy Swamp would have Wilderness protection. Prohibiting roads and vehicle use, including use of motors on the Ponds would increase the ecological integrity of the tract by decreasing disturbance caused by humans and by improving ecological flows and connectivity.

This alternative also adds the full length of the White Lily, Slide, Snyder and LeClaire Brooks to Wilderness.

The ecological integrity, resilience and connectedness of the tract would be improved by 89 acres more Wilderness than Alternative 2 and by closure of the roads surrounding the ponds, allowing them to restore naturally.

South of Four Corners, Gulf Brook Road, and Boreas Ponds Road, the Wild Forest classification would adequately protect the physical and biological characteristics of the land, just as for Alternatives 1 and 2.

Intangible considerations

For Alternative 2B, the scenic quality, degree of wildness and sense of remoteness would be more protected than Alternative 1 and Alternative 2. However, if allowed by a UMP, structures, improvements and recreational uses in the Wild Forest corridor near the Boreas Ponds could affect the scenic quality, sense of remoteness and the degree of wildness of the Boreas Ponds and LaBier Flow. The proposed limitation of motorized recreational uses to only one tenth of a mile from the ponds for potential parking would have a lesser impact than Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 in this area. A Wilderness classification along the eastern side of the corridor from the vicinity of LaBier Flow north to the shoreline of the Boreas Ponds would better protect the scenic quality, degree of wildness and sense of remoteness in that area than Alternatives 1, 2 or 3 in this area of the tract.

Compatibility of adjacent land uses / land classifications

The majority of adjacent private lands are classified as Resource Management which is the most restrictive private land classification. Additionally, most of the adjoining private lands are subject to conservation easements where timber management continues to occur. The adjoining and nearby State land classifications are Wilderness (High Peaks Wilderness, Dix Mountain Wilderness and Hoffman Notch Wilderness) and Wild Forest (Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest).

Alternative 2B would classify more Wilderness north of the Four Corners compared to Alternatives 1, 2 and 3, and is thus more compatible to existing adjacent land uses. However, the Wild Forest corridor coming within one tenth of a mile of the ponds, is not compatible with the High Peaks Wilderness to the north and northwest and the Dix Mountain Wilderness to the Northeast for the same reasons discussed in relation to Alternatives 1, 2 and 3. In contrast to Alternatives 1 and 2, Alternative 2B's proposed 11-acre Primitive area bordering the ponds would provide for a buffer of Wilderness management consistent with the surrounding State lands.

The classifications proposed south of the Four Corners in Alternative 2B are generally compatible with the adjoining private land uses, which include Rural Use and Resource Management lands under the Adirondack Park Agency.

Eastern wilderness opportunities / roadless areas

Compared to Alternative 1, Alternative 2B expands the acreage of the High Peaks Wilderness as a unique roadless area. It minimizes ecological impacts stemming from potential motorized use of the tract's former logging roads in Alternative 1. Preventing such motorized vehicle use would increase the ecological integrity of the tract by decreasing disturbance caused by humans and by improving ecological flows and connectivity. Alternative 2B does not propose Wild Forest around the ponds, but includes a narrow Wild Forest corridor on the Boreas Ponds Road which would terminate one tenth of a mile south of First Pond at a proposed Primitive Area.

In comparison to Alternative 2, Alternative 2B provides more wilderness protection for the ponds through the Primitive classification on the southern shore of First Pond. Alternative 2B would classify a narrower corridor of Wild Forest than Alternative 2 (75 feet versus 500+ feet) leading north from the Four Corners toward the ponds. The 75-foot Wild Forest corridor would still allow motorized access, and the accompanying noise and environmental impacts, within one tenth of a mile from the ponds. However, compared to Alternatives 1, 2 and 3, Alternative 2B would classify LaBier Flow and a portion of the Boreas River between the Boreas Ponds Dam and LaBier Flow as Wilderness and/or Primitive, limiting the impacts of motorized uses on those bodies of water.

In comparisons to Alternatives 3 and 4, Alternative 2B would not reclassify 1,337 acres of Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest to Wilderness. Unlike Alternatives 3 and 4, Alternative 2B does not classify the lands south of the Boreas Ponds Road and west of Gulf Brook Road as Wilderness. On the western end of the Boreas Ponds Road, both Alternatives 3 and 4 would terminate the Wild Forest corridor along the Boreas Ponds Road at the westernmost State Administrative Area. Like Alternatives 1 and 2, Alternative 2B would extend a Wild Forest corridor, which includes the Boreas Ponds Road, to the western boundary of the tract. Alternatives 3 and 4 would provide a substantially larger remote and roadless area than Alternatives 1, 2 or 2B.

In comparison to Alternative 1, 2 and 3, Alternative 2B has less Wild Forest north of the Four Corners and would classify almost all of those lands as a combination of Wilderness and Primitive instead. The Wild Forest Area proposed in Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 extends to the southern shore of First Pond and includes LaBier Flow, the Boreas River and two high value wetlands. The Wild Forest corridor in Alternative 2B, in

contrast, does not extend to the ponds or include LaBier Flow, the Boreas River and two high value wetlands. The Primitive classification in Alternative 2B only allows the Department to use motor vehicles to access the ponds for dam maintenance.

Alternative 4 has a larger Primitive area north of the Four Corners than Alternative 2B, which would limit the public use of motorized vehicles within approximately one mile from the ponds. Alternative 4 would create the largest roadless area, with potentially a greater sense of remoteness at the ponds in comparison to Alternative 2B.

Existing facilities and public uses

The existing facilities include two dams and five camps leased to recreational clubs pursuant to leases expiring in 2018.[79] None of these structures or improvements would be impacted by Alternative 2B. The dams could remain and the camps must be removed in accordance with the lease terms. Prior to State acquisition there had been no public use of the Boreas Ponds Tract.

A log cabin is located on land proposed to be classified as Wild Forest. The ultimate disposition of the Boreas Ponds Log Cabin would be determined by the UMP process. Future public uses of existing facilities would be influenced by both the classification and the UMP.

Discussion of Selected Recreational Opportunities

Alternative 2B allows for the potential of various recreational uses such as public motor vehicle access, snowmobiling, bicycling, horseback riding, cross country skiing, hiking, paddling and camping. The recreational uses and public access would be designated through the UMP process.

The proposed Primitive area south of First Pond would prevent public motorized access directly to the ponds, including the use of snowmobiles. Under Alternative 2B, bicycling could still be allowed on Gulf Brook Road and the Boreas Ponds Road from the western boundary of the tract to within one tenth of a mile of the ponds, as those roads would be classified as Wild Forest. The section of Boreas Ponds Road within the Primitive Area could potentially be designated as an Administrative Road in an approved UMP, in which case bicycle use could be possible to the dam. Primitive Area guidelines state that "…bicycles may be used on existing roads legally open to the public and on administrative roads specifically designated for such use by the Department of Environmental Conservation as specified in individual unit management plans" (APSLMP, page 32).

[79] Structure and improvements, supra, p. 45 et seq. and Map 3: Existing Infrastructure of the Boreas Tract.

Alternative 2B would allow the designation of a community connector snowmobile trail on Gulf Brook and Boreas Ponds Roads, just as Alternatives 1 and 2 would. Using these roads for the Newcomb to North Hudson Community Connector Trail would require the Department to construct approximately three miles of new Class II trails on Forest Preserve lands. This would be less new trail construction as compared to Alternatives 3 and 4.

Boreas Ponds Tract Alternative 3 – Map 7

Description:

Alternatives 3 and 4 propose the same and the largest acreage of Wilderness of any alternatives presented. In both, the east-west boundary between Wild Forest and Wilderness would intersect Gulf Brook Road 2.27 miles north of Blue Ridge Road. The boundary would extend for a short distance easterly towards Wolf Pond. The boundary would also extend generally westerly following water courses and land forms, through a section of the current Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest, including the Boreas River, and continuing westerly to the tract boundary south of Trout Pond. The Wild Forest would extend east to Elk Lake Road, encompassing Gulf Brook, Ragged Mountain and The Branch, a designated study river under the Wild Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act.

For both Alternatives 3 and 4 the majority of lands north of this boundary including the waters of Boreas Ponds would be classified as Wilderness. A section of Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest would be reclassified as Wilderness.[80] Gulf Brook Road would have a 50-foot-wide Wild Forest corridor for approximately three miles to the Four Corners. Additionally, the 50-foot-wide Wild Forest corridor would continue west from the Four Corners for approximately one mile on Boreas Ponds Road to the Boreas Ponds Road State Administrative Area (gravel pit). Land west of that State Administrative Area would be classified as Wilderness.

Alternative 3 proposes a Wild Forest area, extending from the Four Corners north to the Boreas Dam. (In Alternative 4, these same lands would be classified as a Primitive Area). The western boundary of this area would be 500 feet west of Boreas Ponds Road. The eastern boundary generally follows the LaBier Flow and Boreas River and extends east of the river to include an area east of the dam and north of the LaBier Flow. This Wild Forest Area would include the waters of LaBier Flow and the Boreas River below the Boreas Ponds Dam and two high value wetlands. The Wild Forest area would enable administrative

[80] The proposed reclassification of a portion of the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest as Wilderness (Reclass-12) has been removed from the proposed reclassifications in Appendix A to the DSEIS because neither Alternative 3 nor Alternative 4 are the preferred alternative in this FSEIS.

access to the Boreas Ponds Dam and an area surrounding the dam for maintenance by the Department. It would also potentially allow motorized and mechanized recreational use over the Boreas Ponds Road to the dam.

Analysis:

Alternative 3 is not the Preferred Alternative.

Both Alternatives 2 and 3 include an area of Wild Forest between the Four Corners and the Boreas Ponds, with potential for motorized and mechanized recreation reaching the Ponds' southern shore via Gulf Brook and Boreas Ponds Roads. Alternative 3 would classify considerably more land as Wilderness south of the Four Corners than Alternatives 1, 2 and 2B. The larger Wilderness classification would better protect a larger portion of the Boreas River south of La Bier Flow, unlike Alternatives 1, 2 and 2B. This portion of the Boreas River is not a designated river under the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Act (WSRRA). The proposed Wilderness classification, however, would preclude motorized and mechanized recreational uses near the Boreas River to a similar extent as the most protective WSRRA designation of “wild” river.

Alternative 3 would also classify a Wild Forest corridor through the southern section of Wilderness area, potentially allowing motorized and mechanized recreational uses through lands classified as Wilderness, along the entire length of Gulf Brook Road and the Boreas Ponds Road from the Four Corners to the Boreas Ponds Road State Administrative Area.

Physical characteristics and biological considerations

Alternative 3 would provide wilderness protection to the majority of the tract’s most fragile and sensitive physical and biological resources north of the Four Corners. However, as with Alternatives 1 and 2, certain wetlands just north of the Four Corners near the road, LaBier Flow and its ½-mile-long western shoreline, and a portion of the far southern shore of the Boreas Ponds would be less protected than the other areas surrounding the Ponds by classification of this area as Wild Forest.

The area of Wild Forest, which would extend to the southernmost shoreline of the Boreas Ponds, could potentially allow a variety of recreational uses, including a bicycle trail and/or a Class I snowmobile trail. These mechanized and motorized uses could have a negative effect on the biological and physical characteristics of the ponds and surrounding wetlands.

As with Alternatives 2 and 2B, Alternative 3 protects the Boreas Ponds in part by classifying the water bodies and a majority of the land surrounding the Ponds as Wilderness. The wetlands associated with the Boreas Ponds (Deep Water and Emergent Marshes), additional natural communities, the rare plant species (a submerged aquatic milfoil and bog aster), wildlife habitat and fisheries would be

affected by the nearby motorized and mechanical forms of recreation. All of Marcy Swamp would have Wilderness protection. This alternative also adds the full length of the White Lily, Slide, Snyder and LeClaire Brooks to Wilderness.

In comparison to Alternative 1, and like Alternatives 2 and 2B, Alternative 3 would improve the ecological integrity, resilience and connectedness of the tract by requiring that the former logging roads surrounding the Boreas Ponds be closed to motorized and mechanized use. Ecological integrity would be improved through limiting human impairment and improving ecological connectivity.

Alternative 3 offers additional natural resource protection by proposing considerably more Wilderness acreage south of Four Corners than Alternatives 1, 2 or 2B. The expanded Wilderness area contains the Boreas River and more lands to the west of the river where steep slopes, thin soils and wetlands predominate the landscape, similar to the northernmost reaches of the tract. Alternative 3's proposed Wilderness classification would better protect this area from potential impacts of motorized and mechanized recreational uses than Alternatives 1, 2 or 2 B.

Intangible considerations

Alternatives 2, 2B, and 3 would protect the scenic quality, degree of wildness and sense of remoteness considerably more than Alternative 1, but not as much as Alternative 4. A Wild Forest classification near the Boreas Ponds could diminish the scenic quality and the degree of wildness from the vicinity of LaBier Flow north to the shoreline of the Boreas Ponds by potentially allowing structures, improvements and recreational uses prohibited in Wilderness. Alternative 2B provides more protection of these characteristics in this area of the tract than Alternative 3, but not as much protection as Alternative 4.

Alternative 3 would also potentially allow public motorized uses and bicycles in the proposed mile-long swath of Wild Forest from the Four Corners to Boreas Ponds, which could reduce a sense of remoteness or solitude at the ponds. These uses would introduce noise and mechanized recreation not associated with a sense of remoteness. By bisecting the Wilderness Area, Alternative 3's proposed Wild Forest Corridor along Gulf Brook Road and Boreas Ponds Road would similarly diminish the sense of remoteness on the Wilderness lands on both sides of the roads.

Compatibility of adjacent land uses / land classifications

The majority of adjacent private lands are classified as Resource Management which is the most restrictive private land classification. Additionally, most of the adjoining private lands are subject to conservation easements where timber management continues to occur. The adjoining and nearby State land classifications are Wilderness, in the High Peaks Wilderness, Dix Mountain Wilderness and Hoffman Notch Wilderness, and Wild Forest, in the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest.

There is also an Intensive Use Area, Harris Lake Campground, nearby in the Town of Newcomb.

Alternative 3 would classify a 50-foot-wide Wild Forest corridor to enable motorized use to reach the Four Corners and Boreas Ponds State Administrative Area. The Wild Forest corridor would allow for motorized and mechanized recreational uses that are not compatible to the surrounding wilderness area.

For the same reason discussed in relation to Alternative 2, the extension of Wild Forest lands north of Four Corners proposed in Alternative 3 would not be compatible with the High Peaks Wilderness to the north and northwest and the Dix Mountain Wilderness to the Northeast. In this regard, Alternative 3 is less compatible than Alternative 2B, which limits the Wild Forest corridor north of Four Corners to 75 feet in width and would classify the lands to the east of that portion of the corridor as Wilderness and terminate the Wild Forest corridor at a proposed Primitive area 0.1 miles from Boreas Ponds. Alternative 3 could introduce uses nonconforming with Wilderness guidelines to an interior location where the uses would be in conflict with the wilderness characteristics of the surrounding lands.

Eastern wilderness opportunities / roadless areas

Unlike Alternatives 1, 2 and 2B, Alternative 3 would classify the wild forest corridor containing the Boreas Ponds Road to terminate at the Boreas Ponds State Administrative Area instead of extending to the western edge of the tract. Therefore, Alternative 3, compared to Alternatives 1, 2 and 2B, would significantly expand the acreage of the High Peaks Wilderness as a unique roadless area while minimizing ecological impacts stemming from motor-vehicle use of the former logging roads.

Existing facilities and public uses

The existing facilities include two dams and five camps leased to recreational clubs pursuant to leases expiring in 2018.[81] None of these structures or improvements would be impacted by Alternative 3. The dams could remain and the camps must be removed in accordance with the lease terms. Prior to State acquisition there had been no public use of the Boreas Ponds Tract.

Discussion of Selected Recreational Opportunities

Alternative 3 would offer the same potential variety of recreational uses as Alternatives 1, 2 and 2B. Alternative 3 would have more acres of Wilderness south of the Four Corners, which would prohibit motorized and mechanized

[81] Structure and improvements, supra, p. 45 et seq. and Map 3: Existing Infrastructure of the Boreas Tract.

recreational uses on a larger portion of the tract than Alternatives 1, 2 and 2B. Alternative 3, however, also includes a proposed Wild Forest corridor along Boreas Ponds Road and Gulf Brook Roads. This Wild Forest corridor would potentially allow bicycling and motorized uses, including snowmobiling, as far west as the Boreas Ponds State Administrative Area, in an approved UMP.

In Alternative 3, the Department could not build new roads, bike trails or snowmobile trails in the area classified as Wilderness; such activities would be limited to the Wild Forest Corridor.

Like Alternatives 1 and 2, but not Alternatives 2B or 4, Alternative 3 proposes an area of Wild Forest at the southern shoreline of First Pond where a variety of Wild Forest recreational uses could potentially be allowed, including a bicycle trail and/or a Class I snowmobile trail.

Because lands west of the Boreas Ponds State Administrative Area would be classified as Wilderness, Alternative 3 would prevent a proposed Community Connector Snowmobile Trail from using portions of Gulf Brook and Boreas Ponds Roads. The land classified as Wild Forest immediately north of the Blue Ridge Road would enable a Class II trail to be located on that portion of the tract without using Gulf Brook and Boreas Ponds Roads. This would require approximately seven to eight miles of new snowmobile trail to be constructed on the Forest Preserve, more than for Alternatives 1, 2 and 2B.

Boreas Ponds Tract Alternative 4 – Map 8

Description:

In Alternative 4, the east-west boundary between Wild Forest and Wilderness would intersect Gulf Brook Road 2.27 miles north of Blue Ridge Road. The boundary would extend for a short distance easterly towards Wolf Pond Mountain and then follow the tract boundary. The Wild Forest would extend east to Elk Lake Road, encompassing Gulf Brook, Ragged Mountain, and The Branch, a designated study river under the Wild Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act. The boundary would also extend generally westerly following water courses and land forms, through a section of the current Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest, including Boreas River, and continuing westerly towards the tract boundary south of Trout Pond.

The majority of lands north of the east-west boundary between Wild Forest and Wilderness, including the waters of Boreas Ponds, would be classified as Wilderness. A section of Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest would be reclassified as Wilderness. Gulf Brook Road would have a 50-foot wide corridor for approximately 3 miles and would be classified as Wild Forest to the Four Corners. Additionally, the 50-foot-wide Wild Forest corridor would continue west from the Four Corners for approximately 1 mile on the Boreas Ponds Road to the Boreas Ponds Road State Administrative Area (gravel pit). Lands west of that

State Administrative Area would be classified as Wilderness. The Wild Forest corridor proposed in Alternative 4 would enable access to the two gravel pits.

In Alternative 4, the area of land from the Four Corners north to the southern shore of First Pond would be classified Primitive. The western boundary of this area would be 500 feet west of the Boreas Ponds Road. The eastern boundary would generally follow the LaBier Flow and Boreas River and would extend east of the river to include an area east of the dam and north of the LaBier Flow. This Primitive Area would include the waters of LaBier Flow and the Boreas River below the Boreas Ponds Dam and two high value wetlands. The purpose of this Primitive area would be to enable the Department's access to the Boreas Ponds Dam and an area surrounding the dam for maintenance. The section of the Boreas Ponds Road located within the Primitive Area could be designated as an Administrative Road in an approved UMP.

Analysis:

Alternative 4 is not the Preferred Alternative.

Alternative 4, as well as Alternative 3, proposes the largest acreage of wilderness of any of the alternatives. One major similarity between Alternatives 3 and 4, in comparison to Alternatives 1, 2 and 2B, is that an area south of Gulf Brook Road would be classified as Wilderness. The larger wilderness classification would protect a larger portion of the Boreas River south of LaBier Flow than Alternatives 1, 2 or 2B. The Wilderness classification around the Boreas River would prevent motorized and mechanized recreational uses, similar to the protection provided to a wild river under the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act.

Alternative 4 would also classify a Wild Forest corridor through a section of Wilderness, allowing motorized and mechanized uses along Gulf Brook Road and portions of the Boreas Ponds Road west from the Four Corners to the Boreas Ponds Road State Administrative Area.

The Primitive classification in the areas south of and surrounding the dam is the major distinction between Alternatives 3 and 4. The Primitive classification allows for maintenance of the dam while also providing wilderness type protection to the area. The combination of the Primitive classification south of the ponds and the Wilderness classification of the ponds and surrounding lands would protect the natural resources of the waterbodies and wetlands.

Physical characteristics and biological considerations

North of Gulf Brook Road and the Four Corners, all of the tract’s most fragile and sensitive resources of a physical and biological nature would be protected by Wilderness and Primitive classifications more than any other alternative considered. The Wilderness and Primitive classifications would prohibit motorized forms (although not mechanized forms) of public recreational use

between the Four Corners and Boreas Ponds. Administrative use of motor vehicles and equipment would be allowed to the southern shoreline of the Boreas Ponds for the maintenance of the dam.

As with Alternatives 2, 2B, and 3, Alternative 4 would provide additional protection to the Boreas Ponds by classifying the water and a majority of the land surrounding the Ponds as Wilderness. The wetlands associated with the Boreas Ponds (Deep Water and Emergent Marshes), additional natural communities, the rare plant species (a submerged aquatic milfoil and bog aster), wildlife habitat and fisheries would not be negatively affected by motorized forms of recreation. The full extent of Marcy Swamp would have Wilderness protection. This alternative also includes the full length of the White Lily, Slide, Snyder and LeClaire Brooks to Wilderness.

Like Alternative 3, Alternative 4 offers additional natural resource protection by proposing considerably more Wilderness acreage south of Four Corners than Alternatives 1, 2 or 2B. The expanded Wilderness area contains the Boreas River and more lands to the west of the river where steep slopes, thin soils and wetlands predominate the landscape, similar to the northernmost reaches of the tract. Alternative 4's proposed Wilderness classification would provide better protection to this area from potential impacts of motorized and mechanized recreational uses than Alternatives 1, 2 or 2B. As with Alternative 3, while this portion of the Boreas River is not a designated river under the WSRRA, the proposed Wilderness classification would preclude motorized and mechanized recreational uses near the Boreas River to a similar extent as the most protective WSRRA designation of "wild" river.

Compared to the alternatives considered, Alternative 4 would best improve the ecological integrity, resilience and connectedness of the tract which would be improved by: (1) the addition of the most acreage of Wilderness, including reclassification of 1,337 adjacent acres of the Vanderwhacker Wild Forest as Wilderness; (2) closing the roads surrounding the Boreas Ponds and allowing the roads to restore naturally; and (3) establishing a Primitive area between Four Corners and the Boreas Pond dam.

Intangible considerations

The characteristics of scenic quality, degree of wildness and sense of remoteness would be most protected and enhanced via Alternative 4, compared to the other alternatives. The entirety of the tract north of Gulf Brook Road and the Four Corners would be managed as Wilderness, with the possible exception of bicycle use along the road to the Boreas Ponds dam. The sense of remoteness and solitude could be enhanced by the lack of motorized recreational uses at the Ponds.

Also, similar to Alternative 3, the Wilderness classification of the lands south of Gulf Brook Road would provide better protection to that portion of the Boreas River than Alternatives 1, 2 and 2B. However, as with Alternative 3, Alternative 4 would bisect the Wilderness Area with a Wild Forest Corridor along Gulf Brook Road and Boreas Ponds Road. Motorized and mechanized recreational uses of this corridor would reduce the sense of remoteness of the Wilderness lands on both sides of the roads.

Compatibility of adjacent land uses / land classifications

The majority of adjacent private lands are classified as Resource Management which is the most restrictive private land classification. Additionally, most of the adjoining private lands are subject to conservation easements. The adjoining and nearby State land classifications are Wilderness, in the High Peaks Wilderness, Dix Mountain Wilderness and Hoffman Notch Wilderness, and Wild Forest, in the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest. There is also an Intensive Use Area, Harris Lake Campground, nearby in the Town of Newcomb.

Alternative 4, as well as Alternative 3, would establish an east-west boundary across the tract between Wilderness to the north and Wild Forest to the south. The northern section of Wilderness would be compatible with the High Peaks Wilderness to the North and Dix Mountain Wilderness to the northwest. The area of land between the Boreas Dam and the Four Corners would be classified Primitive, rather than Wild Forest as proposed by Alternative 3, ensuring greater compatibility with adjacent Wilderness lands among these two alternatives.

Alternative 4 would classify a long Wild Forest road corridor penetrating into Wilderness lands. As with Alternative 3, Alternative 4 could introduce uses non-conforming to the surrounding wilderness area.

Eastern wilderness opportunities / roadless areas

The Primitive classification in the area south of and surrounding the Boreas Ponds dam is the major distinction of Alternative 4 compared to Alternative 3. By classifying this area as Primitive, Alternative 4 significantly expands the acreage of the High Peaks Wilderness as a unique roadless area while reducing ecological impacts stemming from motorized use to the ponds more than any other alternative. Alternative 4 limits the motorized use of the Boreas Ponds Road from the Four Corners to the ponds to occasional trips necessary for dam maintenance and repair by the Department. Other than Alternative 2B, this is the only alternative that would ensure that there would be no public motorized use at the southern shore of the Boreas Ponds.

Existing facilities and public uses

The existing structures and improvements include two dams and five camps leased to recreational clubs pursuant to leases expiring in 2018. None of these structures or improvements would be impacted by Alternative 4. The dams could remain and could be maintained in a Primitive area and the camps must be removed in accordance with the lease terms. Prior to State acquisition there had been no public use.

Discussion of Selected Recreational Opportunities

Similar to the other alternatives**,** Alternative 4 allows for various recreational uses such as public motor vehicle access, snowmobiling, bicycling, horseback riding, cross country skiing, hiking, paddling and camping. The recreational uses and areas would be designated through the UMP planning process. Alternative 4 offers the same potential for recreational opportunities as Alternative 3, except that unlike Alternative 3, no motorized recreational uses would be permissible north of the Four Corners to the Boreas Ponds Dam.

The area classified as Primitive, north of the Four Corners, would prevent public motorized recreational access to the ponds, including the use of snowmobiles. The road could be designated as an Administrative Road in an approved UMP, in which case bicycle use could be possible. Primitive Area guidelines state that "…bicycles may be used on existing roads legally open to the public and on administrative roads specifically designated for such use by the Department of Environmental Conservation as specified in individual unit management plans" (APSLMP, page 32).

The 50-foot Wild Forest corridor would extend to the westernmost gravel mine on the Boreas Ponds Road. Land west of that State Administrative Area would be classified as Wilderness. This alternative would prevent the proposed Community Connector Snowmobile Trail from using portions of Gulf Brook and Boreas Ponds Roads. The land classified as Wild Forest immediately north of the Blue Ridge Road enables a Class II community connector snowmobile trail to be located on that portion of the tract. This would require approximately seven to eight miles of snowmobile trail to be constructed on the Forest Preserve.

Conclusion

In making the SEQRA findings and decision, the Agency must consider all of the relevant environmental impacts, facts and conclusions disclosed in this FSEIS. Further, the Agency must weigh and balance the relevant environmental impacts of the Preferred Alternative with the social and economic benefits to be gained from providing the opportunity for a mixture of public recreational uses on the Boreas Ponds Tract. Additionally, the APSLMP requires that the Agency classify the land according to its characteristics and capacity to withstand use based on the following factors: physical characteristics, biological considerations, intangible

considerations and established facilities. The FSEIS analyzes potential motorized, non-motorized, mechanized and non-mechanized uses in relationship to natural resource protection and human use and enjoyment of the land.

From among the reasonable alternatives available, Alternative 2B is the Preferred Alternative and would avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts to the maximum extent practicable. Alternative 2B would provide additional resource protection for the already protected Forest Preserve and wetland resources of the Boreas Ponds Tract. Table 1 below contains the acreage figures for each of the alternatives through the following combination of lands classified as Wilderness, Wild Forest, Primitive and State Administrative:

Table 1: Boreas Ponds Tract Alternatives: Acreage Figures

Alternative	Wilderness	Wild Forest	Primitive	State Admin
	Total Acres* (Acres of New Classification/*Acres of Reclassification*)			
Boreas Ponds 1	10,178	10,364		2
Boreas Ponds 2	11,323	9,220		2
Boreas Ponds 2B	11,412	9,118	11	2
Boreas Ponds 3	14,669 / *1,337*	5,873		2
Boreas Ponds 4	14,669/*1,337*	5,755	118	2

*Acreages are approximate

Alternative 2B provides the strongest possible resource protection for the most sensitive and remote portions of the Boreas Ponds Tract, including the Boreas Ponds and other waterbodies, high value wetlands, and areas with highly erodible soils.

Alternative 2B proposes classification of 11,412 acres of the tract as Wilderness and another 11 acres as Primitive. Public recreational use of the Wilderness lands would be limited to non-motorized and non-mechanized uses, promoting a sense of remoteness preferred by many recreational visitors to the Adirondacks. Alternative 2B provides resource protection through the classification of 9,118 acres of the Boreas Ponds Tract as Wild Forest, some of which may be suitable for motorized and/or mechanized recreational uses pursuant to the protections afforded by an approved UMP. Finally, all of the lands of the Boreas Ponds Tract are protected as Forest Preserve Lands pursuant to Article XIV of the NYS Constitution and all of the wetlands on the tract are protected by the Freshwater Wetlands Act.

The Preferred Alternative divides the tract between Wilderness and Wild Forest, provides for resource protection of the Boreas Ponds, and allows potential motorized uses within the southern portion of the tract including Gulf Brook and Boreas Ponds Roads, subject to an approved UMP. The Preferred Alternative classifies two 1.0 acre areas as State Administrative for the purpose of mining gravel for road and trail maintenance on the tract.

The Preferred Alternative combines the important attributes of resource protection and recreational access. The Preferred Alternative contemplates future Unit Management Planning actions by the Department and ensures that all New Yorkers will share in the opportunities afforded through this historic acquisition

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APPENDICES

Summary Table and Maps for Non-Boreas tracts of land being classified

Response to Public Comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (October 14, 2016)

Draft Environmental Impact Statement (October 14, 2016) Comparison (redline showing changes from DSEIS to FSEIS)

APSLMP Area Descriptions (redline showing changes from December 2016)