

**From:** Cathy Pedler <cathypedler.adk@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 02, 2018 1:50 PM  
**To:** SLMP\_UMP\_Comments@apa.ny.gov  
**Cc:** Neilwoody@gmail.com; Cathy Pedler  
**Subject:** Black River Wild Forest UMP 2016 amendment and compliance with APSLMP  
**Attachments:** ADK Comments on BRWF APSLMP Compliance 5-3-2018 Final.pdf

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Please find attached comments on the Black River Wild Forest UMP 2016 amendment and compliance with APSLMP.

Thank you,

Cathy

Cathy Pedler  
Government Relations and Conservation  
Adirondack Mountain Club  
301 Hamilton Street  
Albany, NY 12210

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[cathy@adk.org](mailto:cathy@adk.org)

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Working for Wilderness, [adk.org](http://adk.org)



Working for  
Wilderness

3 May 2018

Walt Linck  
NYS Adirondack Park Agency  
P.O. Box 99  
Ray Brook, NY 12977  
Email - [SLMP\\_UMP\\_Comments@apa.ny.gov](mailto:SLMP_UMP_Comments@apa.ny.gov)

RE: Black River Wild Forest Unit Management Plan (UMP) Amendment

Dear Walt,  
Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2016 Amendment to the Black River Wild Forest (BRWF) Unit Management Plan (UMP).

The Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK) is dedicated to the conservation, preservation, and responsible recreational use of the New York State Forest Preserve and other parks, wild lands, and waters vital to our members and chapters. ADK is a nonprofit organization with 30,000 members in 27 statewide chapters served by a year-round staff offering programs that help people discover, play in, and protect natural places. Since its founding in 1922, The Adirondack Mountain Club has protected wild lands and waters through the work of its dedicated member volunteers and staff. ADK members hike, camp, snowshoe, cross-country ski, paddle, and cycle the lands and waters of the Adirondack Park.

ADK supports the rerouting of snowmobile trails and that the sum of new trails and closures of old trails does not result in a net increase on snowmobile trail mileage in in the Black River Wild Forest Unit Management Plan amendment.

However, we have some concerns with several proposed changes to existing snowmobile trails and the creation of new snowmobile trails in this Unit. After thoroughly examining the maps, and reviewing the reasoning provided, we do not believe all of the proposed changes are justified.

The first issue concerns Figure 1 in the 2016 amendment. The map does not follow the buffer rules correctly along the North Lake-Sand Lake-Mill

Creek (NSM) Trail. After creating our own map (see attached) using the same rules the DEC applied in Figure 1, we found there to be a noticeable difference in buffer location. According to our analysis (but not DEC's), the NSM travels through remote interior forest. In the 2009 Snowmobile Trail Siting Management Guidance, DEC describes *remote interior* as "the geographic area more distant than two miles from the nearest motorized travel corridors in all directions." DEC describes Class II trails as being "located in the periphery of Wild Forest or other Forest Preserve areas," and "only rarely are any segments of them located further than one mile away from the nearest" motorized travel corridor. "Periphery" is defined in the Guidance as "the geographic area within two miles of a motorized corridor." ADK therefore strongly opposes the proposal that the NSM Trail be reclassified as a Class II trail because it does not fit within the established guidelines for Class II trails since the NSM travels through remote interior forest.

We would also like to call attention to Table 3 in the amendment, which proposes that 26.0 miles of existing snowmobile trails be reclassified as Class II trails. DEC needs to explain why such a change is needed and examine the impacts of such a change. This action would open 26.0 miles of new trail for equipment to groom and widen the trail as needed per the guidelines for Class II trails. We are very concerned with the number of tree removals needed to create the proposed Class II trail system. The removals may, individually or cumulatively when considered with the entire planned construction of Class II community connector trails in the Adirondack Park, exceed the Materiality Standard as defined by article XIV section 1 of the New York State Constitution.

Additionally, ADK also would like to inquire about the proposed trails connecting Otter Lake to McKeever. More specifically the trail that would link the Dump Road to Wolf Lake Landing Road. The proposed amendment references the original Black River Wild Forest Unit Management Plan Section IV subsection A-5 and claims that it calls for this trail to be built and become part of the C7 corridor trail.

Subsection A-5 states, "A multipurpose snowmobile, bike and hiking trail will be located from the Cohen Road east of the railroad corridor, to the southern end of the Otter Lake Airport, using mostly old

skid roads (total 1.25 miles.) The proposed trail would provide total State land access to services in Otter Lake without having to cross NYS Route 28. The Trackside Blazers Snowmobile Club has offered volunteer labor, so development costs to New York State could be minimal. After this phase is completed, a connection between the Dump Road and the Wolf Lake Landing Road is recommended. The implementation and layout of Phase II using the Brewer Lake Road and old existing trails as much as possible will be studied.”

ADK would like to point out that while the original Unit Management Plan does indeed recommend that this trail be built it does not mention anywhere that this trail would become part of C7. It is our opinion that DEC cannot use the original Unit Management Plan as justification for making this trail part of C7 since it is not mentioned in subsection A-5.

Overall, ADK finds that the amendment lacks justification for the proposed changes to snowmobile trails to Class II trails, and we are unable to support these portions of the proposed amendment.

ADK supports the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) route as described in NYS DEC's NCNST Adirondack Park Trail Plan and Final GEIS Oct 2015 approved by DEC, APA and the Governor and included in the BRWF UMP Amendment. ADK looks forward to seeing the gaps filled between existing trails and the completion of the North Country National Scenic Trail across the Black River Wild Forest and North Lake Conservation Easement Lands and units east to the Vermont border. We understand the flexibility required by the “Corridor of Opportunity.” We understand that a route (Figure 7) which avoids wetlands and reduces the number of foot bridges needed is favored as long as the scenic value is preserved.

The Stone Dam Lake Trailhead is the main entry into the Adirondack Park from the west. ADK suggests that parking at this trailhead be enlarged and improved. At present the parking is down in a depression, accommodates only 2-3 cars and it so steep it can only be exited in dry season. The road shoulder does not provide a suitable alternative for parking. ADK also recommends that a large kiosk be installed at the Stone Dam trailhead to welcome hikers to the NCNST in the Adirondack Park.

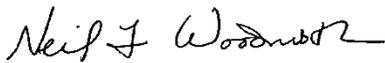
Since the North Country National Scenic Trail is a non-motorized, single-track foot trail it is important that trails open to mechanized users not run concurrent with the foot trail. For the most part, other trails such as bike or snowmobile trails within the unit are entirely separate, which is good planning. The one exception is the snowmobile use of the trail into Little Woodhull Lake from North Lake Road. Since this would be a dead end snowmobile trail, and the former connection to the Sand Lake Trail is closed to motorized travel (and for about one-half mile might run concurrent with the NCNST), we recommend that it not be open to snowmobiles.

Construction of the NCNST will comply with the ASLMP and best trail building practices will be employed in the construction of this 18"-24" non-motorized, foot trail such as: use of natural materials, no cutting of trees over 3" DBH, skirting streams and wetlands when possible, proper drainage, minimal cut & fill benching, minimal grades (10-15%) avoiding unstable slopes, gentle switchbacks, minimal structure as needed to protect resource, use of old trails etc.

It is important that the NCNST route be included in the North Tract Conservation Easement agreement as it is the link between Black River Wild Forest and West Canada Lakes Wilderness where existing trails provide the route for the NCNST. Without this link, a NCNST hiker will need to walk busy roads, such as Route 28, to/from the Inlet and Moose River Plains WF area to access the route.

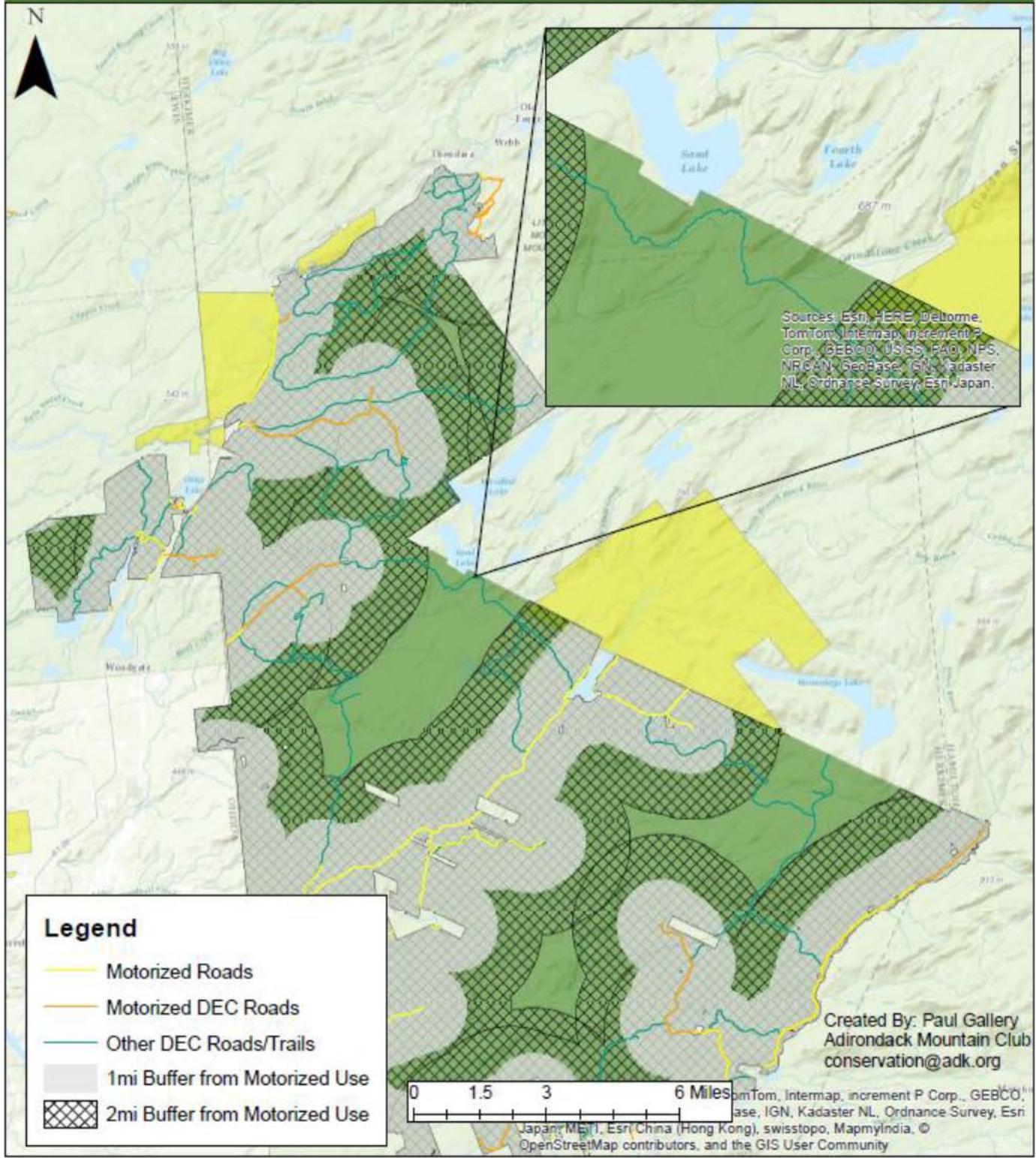
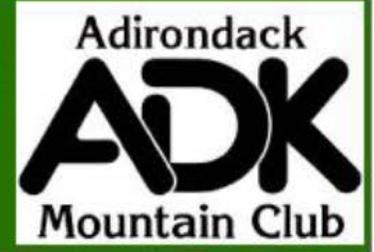
We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the 2016 amendment to the Black River Wild Forest UMP.

Sincerely,



Neil F. Woodworth  
Executive Director and Counsel  
Adirondack Mountain Club  
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# Black River Wild Forest Motorized Use Buffer



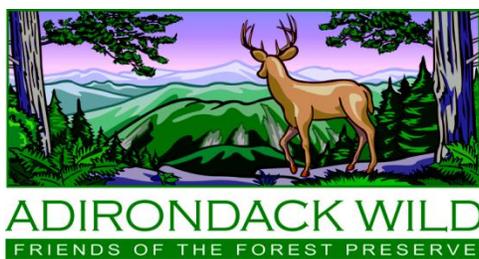
**From:** David H Gibson <dgibson@adirondackwild.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 03, 2018 3:24 PM  
**To:** SLMP\_UMP\_Comments@apa.ny.gov  
**Subject:** Emailing: letter to APA, Black River Wild Forest UMP amendment, May 2018  
**Attachments:** letter to APA, Black River Wild Forest UMP amendment, May 2018.pdf

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May 3, 2018

Walt Linck  
NYS Adirondack Park Agency  
P.O. Box 99  
Ray Brook, NY

**Re. Black River Wild Forest UMP Amendments**

Dear Walt,

Adirondack Wild appreciates the need to update and amend the 1996 Black River Wild Forest Unit Management Plan (BRWF UMP). While DEC's stated purpose of the proposed amendments are to conform the trail classifications with the Management Guidance for Snowmobile Trail Construction, Siting and Maintenance, there appear to be additional questions related to reconstruction and uses of motorized routes and their compliance with the UMP and the Master Plan. These questions should be a part of the APA's review of the UMP and this amendment.

**Wolf Lake Landing Road from McKeever to Woodhull Lake, 4.7 miles in length**, was significantly widened and reconstructed in 2000-2001. At that time, APA responded to concerns I and others raised about the result of that work and its compliance with the BRWF UMP. As a result, APA Director of Planning John Banta wrote to me in 2001:

"Staff advises that they will make a site inspection ...to determine if the Department of Environmental Conservation has undertaken this project in a manner consistent with the Black River Wild Forest Unit Management plan, the Freshwater Wetlands Act, and the Agency staff advice provided during a preconstruction site inspection."

In its current review of the UMP amendment APA and DEC should again consult regarding the results of APA site inspections of the Wolf Lake Landing Road reconstruction in 2001 and subsequently, and assess the current status of the road's compliance with the UMP, Freshwater Wetlands Act and Agency staff advice, and any necessity now to amend the BRWF UMP to bring it into compliance with the State Land Master Plan and the Freshwater Wetlands Act.

**South Shore Road and Snowmobile Connector Trail:** The amendment's description of the history of motorized uses of the Forest Preserve Road known as South Shore Road and the

management decisions DEC recommends for snowmobile and other motor vehicle uses on this route raise a number of questions. The amendment states that after the BRWF UMP was approved in 1996 DEC learned of the presence of several inholders with a legal right of way to reach their properties on South Lake whose ingress and egress conflicted with the road's use as a DEC designated snowmobile trail. The amendment goes on to say that the inholders, without DEC participation, "made road improvements" and "decided to plow the road in winter." It further states that because DEC lacked resources to maintain the road and in order to prevent conflicts with inholders, DEC decided to gate the road and prevent its further use as a designated snowmobile trail.

Then, in order to continue snowmobiling through this area and to create a community connector trail between Nobleboro and McKeever, the amendment states that DEC has decided the best management alternative is to re-route snowmobiling by constructing a new, 4-plus mile snowmobile trail known as the North Lake-South Lake trail just to the west of the South Shore Road.

The amendment also recommends that DEC construct a 15-car parking lot at South Shore Road to accommodate more motor vehicle access during the summer and fall hunting season.

This recommended increase in motor vehicle pressure along or near South Shore Road is troubling. In its review of the BRWF UMP amendment and its compliance with the Master Plan, APA should ask DEC a number of questions, including:

1. Is the South Shore Road a Forest Preserve road as defined in the State Land Master Plan as being designed for two-way travel by automobiles?
2. If not a road, and if truly a Forest Preserve trail why is the route open to motor vehicles and now proposed for additional motor vehicle access with a 15-car parking lot? Why is such a large parking area needed here in light of the fact that other parking lots exist or are proposed in the vicinity of North Lake and the adjacent Conservation Easement?
3. Why did DEC cede its authority for care, custody and control of the Forest Preserve to private landowners in order to make road improvements on South Shore Road? Did these improvements improperly change a trail into a road?
4. As an alternative to the current recommendation to construct a new snowmobile connector trail just to the west of South Shore Road, with its attendant tree-cutting and need to construct seven new snowmobile bridges, why shouldn't the DEC work with the few private inholders to attempt to resolve the actual or perceived conflicts of use of the South Shore road so that its use as the snowmobile trail could continue?
5. If use conflicts on South Shore Road end or if private inholders sell to the State, what is the likelihood that a new North Lake-South Lake community connector trail will duplicate the South Shore Road as a snowmobile connector trail in violation of the Snowmobile Guidance document?

**Pratt Northam Memorial Park:** DEC proposes to re-route snowmobiling from South Shore Road onto a new North Lake-South Lake community connector, stating that the reroute will be

through “Pratt-Northam Memorial Park and other adjoining Forest Preserve.” The amendment perpetuates the UMP’s description of the 4000 + acres of Pratt-Northam Memorial Park as “non Forest Preserve lands” because they were obtained through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Gift statutes. Yet, the 1996 UMP, following a discussion of constitutional questions, states that: “pending the resolution of the constitutional issue, the tract will be managed in a manner consistent with Article XIV and in conjunction with the rest of the Black River Wild Forest” (page 49, 1996 BRWF UMP).

The 1996 BRWF UMP makes clear that “Pratt Northam Memorial Park” will never be used for silvicultural research. Perpetuating this name makes no management sense today and increases the chance that someday the land’s management may become seriously incompatible with adjacent Forest Preserve. It is, therefore, time for DEC, in consultation with APA, to resolve the constitutional issue and declare that the so-called Gift Lands are Forest Preserve and are indistinguishable from and part of the Black River Wild Forest. APA should ask DEC to omit all reference to a “Pratt-Northam Memorial Park.”

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,



Dave Gibson, Managing Partner

Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve  
P.O. Box 9247  
Niskayuna, New York 12309  
[www.adirondackwild.org](http://www.adirondackwild.org)

Cc: Kathy Regan, APA  
Judy Drabicki, Regional Director, NYS DEC Region 6  
Dave Smith, Regional Forester, NYS DEC Reg. 6  
Rob Davies, Director, DEC Lands and Forests

**From:** Dominic Jacangelo <djacange@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 01, 2018 10:32 AM  
**To:** SLMP\_UMP\_Comments@apa.ny.gov  
**Cc:** jrolf@nysnowmobiler.com; craig laplante  
**Subject:** Black River UMP Amendments NYSSA Comments  
**Attachments:** Comments on UMP to APA.pdf

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Walt: Attached are some comments on the Black River Wild Forest UMP Amendments which DEC have submitted for APA review.



## New York State Snowmobile Association

P.O.Box 1040

Pine Bush, NY 12566.

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Email: [dominic@nysnowmobiler.com](mailto:dominic@nysnowmobiler.com)

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**Executive Director**

**Dominic Jacangelo**

Walt Link  
NYS Adirondack Park Agency  
PO BOX 99  
Ray Brook, NY 12977

Re: Black River Wild Forest  
Final Amendment

These comments are offered on behalf of NYSSA in relation to submission of the final amendments to the Black River Wild Forest UMP by the DEC for consistency review. NYSSA along with nearby clubs submitted extensive comments relative to the DEC's plan for this forest unit. Our comments are attached to this document. Overall, NYSSA supports the Black River Wide Forest amendment but does have several concerns and comments.

The Amendment proposes to close several trails in the North West section of the unit as shown on Figure 2. In addition the figure also shows the creation of a Class I Trail, Nick's Lake – Nelson Lake Trail. NYSSA strongly recommends that this trail be upgraded to a Class II trail to replace use of the railroad corridor in this area. The rail is frequently exposed and a Class II trail would be an attractive alternative to use of the rail. It was noted by DEC that the Nick's Lake – Nelson Lake Trail would be redundant to a trail found north and west of the tracks. DEC failed to acknowledge that the trail is part of the Town of Webb system for which a local permit is required and is not available to the general public. For that reason the Nick's Lake – Nelson Lake Trail should be upgraded to a Class II trail.

The Twin Lakes Trail has very limited access. There is no trailhead parking and to access the trail requires an extensive ride on plowed roads. In the absence of documented use of the trail by hunters / trappers the trail should be considered for closure.

The Department proposes to build a short Class I connector trail at the south end of Mad Tom Lake Trail. Mad Tom Lake Trail is proposed as a Class II trail. That connector trail will reach C4H, an OPRHP funded corridor trail located on private land. The Class I connector trail should be upgraded to a Class II connection to allow for tracked groomers to pass from Mad Tom Lake Trail to C4H without having to travel down NY Route 8 to make the connection.

We thank you for this opportunity to comment.



## New York State Snowmobile Association

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**Executive Director**

**Dominic Jacangelo**

February 29, 2016

Michael Marsh, Forester  
225 North Main Street  
Herkimer, NY 13357

Re: Black River UMP Draft Amendment

To Whom It May Concern:

The NYS Snowmobile Association generally supports the draft UMP Amendment for the Black River Unit. The reclassification of trails to Class II Snowmobile Trails as well as the construction of 7.2 miles of new trail is important to connecting this area to surrounding snowmobile trails. A viable, safe, groomed trail from McKeever to Ohio would be a great thing!

Based on local knowledge and experience we believe there are several trails which are proposed for closure which should not be closed and a few which are designated to remain open which should be closed.

1. We support the building of a Class II Community Connector Snowmobile Trail between Otter Lake and McKeever. Currently, when there is low-snow conditions that don't cover the rails on the Travel Corridor (Trail C7), the only option is to ride two miles on the shoulder of Route 28. The local snowmobile club groomer also uses this route when grooming C4H, so it is important to the area.
2. Recommend NOT closing the Otter Lake outlet trail, as it starts on Trail 7C and gives snowmobilers access to the trail system for the community of Otter Lake since the trail ends at the end of Lake View Road. This trail does see traffic from the community when there is enough snow to ride. This trail was used this year, with only about 8 inches of snow in the area.
3. Recommend closing the Twin Lakes trail as it leads nowhere and there is a bridge out about 1.5 miles in from the road. This trail doesn't fit into the class 1 definition of a trail. The trail is seldom used and only accessible by parking in the trail head parking area plowed by the town of Ohio.
4. Recommend closing Little Woodhull Lake Trail all together. By only closing the section proposed in the UMP update, it would leave a dead end trail to a lake with no parking

## Black River Draft UMP Amendments

### P.2

area or trailhead from North Lake Rd. This trail is only marked as a foot trail on the North Lake Road side, using DEC trail markers. This trail is seldom ridden as snowmobilers use C4H, the groomed trail, to access North Lake and points east. There have been very few tracks on this trail in the last 10 years, except the Forest Rangers that have been noted to be in there a couple of times.

5. Propose to build a new snowmobile-accessible bridge in the vicinity of Remsen Falls over the south / east branch of the Moose River to connect Wolf Lake Landing Trail and the Nicks Lake-Nelson Lake trail that is slated to remain open, thereby creating a north-south connection parallel to the Travel Corridor that will allow much better snowmobile use in low-snow years than to riding on the rails. The current Moose River crossing is via the travel corridor bridge at McKeever which is elevated and difficult to traverse. Language should be included to allow the Nicks Lake – Nelson Lake Trail to be designated a Class II trail when the bridge over the south / east branch of the Moose River is constructed. We are concerned that the current plan leaves the Nicks Lake – Nelson Lake Trail as a dead end trail and does not envision the trail as an alternative to using the travel corridor.
6. The north end of the Nicks Lake - Nelson Lake trail is accessed from Bisby Road in Thendara. The area does see heavy traffic from Old Forge and Thendara, in the Town of Webb. There is a parking area plowed out at this trail entrance and the area trails are groomed by an unknown person with a snowmobile and a commercial drag. Nicks Lake Road and Nicks Lake Trail, the short pieces slated for closure, should remain open for this reason. The currently-designated snowmobile trails to Humphrey Hill and to the lock and dam should remain open, as they have a wonderful scenic view of the Moose River, providing snowmobile access to the area from Green Bridge Rd.
7. Support the new proposed Class II Community Connector Trail (North-South Lake Trail segment) around the South Lake residences to have a complete “McKeever to Ohio” Class II trail.
8. Support the proposal to reclassify the entire trail from South Lake to Mad Tom Lake Trail as a Class II Community Connector Snowmobile Trail. The UMP proposal to widen and improve the trail around Round Top to get a tracked-groomer allowed there is a great upgrade being proposed, and should be given high priority to begin trail work.

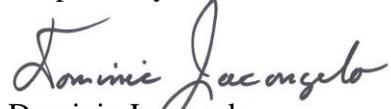
Black River Draft UMP Amendments

P3.

9. Support the re-classification of the Mill Creek- Black Creek Lake Trail. This currently-designated snowmobile trail is seldom, if ever, used by area snowmobilers and the local club, and is not a funded trail. This trail should be closed as a snowmobile trail.
10. It is the snowmobile-community's position that currently designated snowmobile trails that could be and are used to access other designated snowmobile trails, should remain open as long as they conform to the APA/DEC Snowmobile Trail Siting Guidelines. NYSSA proposes that when other designated snowmobile trails that are proposed to remain open but are very seldom if ever used by snowmobile traffic, should be prime candidates for closure after public notice. These trail miles could be used elsewhere in the Adirondack Park to create new trails that make more sense to the overall snowmobile trail network. The opposes the closure of any road to snowmobile travel since they are not covered by the Commissioner's guidance and do not contribute to or subtract from the trail mileage cap.

We support the rest of the amendments in this UMP as written. Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Respectfully submitted,



Dominic Jacangelo

**From:** Jeff Greene <mvwcjfg@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 03, 2018 7:38 AM  
**To:** SLMP\_UMP\_Comments@apa.ny.gov  
**Subject:** Comments  
**Attachments:** black river ump apa comments 05-2018.pdf

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Please see the attached for comments on the UMP.

Thank you!

Jeff Greene

Secretary

Ohio Ridge Riders Snowmobile Club



**From:** Mary Coffin <maryccoffin@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 30, 2018 5:01 PM  
**To:** SLMP\_UMP\_Comments@apa.ny.gov  
**Cc:** Marsh, Michael A (DEC); Neilwoody@gmail.com; Andrea Ketchmark  
**Subject:** Black River Wild Forest UMP Amendment Comments due 5/3/18  
**Attachments:** Black River UMP amend.docx

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Dear Walt,

Please see the attached comments in support of the BRWF UMP Amendment. I know you are familiar with the Adirondack Park route of the North Country National Scenic Trail. The section through the Black River Wild Forest and North Tract Conservation Easement is an important starting point and connector to West Canada Wilderness where the route uses mostly existing trail and helps to move the hiker off road at the west end of the route.

Please consider the attached comments.

Thank you,

Mary

--

MARY C COFFIN 315 687 3589

Dear walt

Your Adventure Starts Nearby on:

North Country National Scenic Trail [NCNST] and Finger Lakes Trail

Help us build and maintain the Adirondack section of the NCNST

TO: Walt Linck, NYS APA  
POB 99, Ray Brook, NY 12977

[SLMP\\_UMP\\_Comments@apa.ny.gov](mailto:SLMP_UMP_Comments@apa.ny.gov)

FROM: Mary C Coffin, NCTA (North Country Trail Association) NY State Volunteer Council Chair

RE: Black River Wild Forest and North Tract Conservation Easement UMP Final Amendment

4/29/18

Dear Mr. Linck,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this amendment. As a volunteer with both ADK and North Country Trail Association(NCTA) I have a vested interest in the route of and construction of the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) through both the Black River Wild Forest Unit and North Tract Conservation Easement areas. I have spent much time exploring on the ground, GPSing and evaluating possible routes for a sustainable foot trail in the unit based mostly on the DEC 2015 NCNST Plan, (North Country National Scenic Trail Adirondack Park Trail Plan/Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement). I have also worked closely with Josh Clague and Jim Sessions from the Albany DEC office and in the field with DEC Forester/Planner Michael Marsh. I feel that my comments made to the Draft UMP Amendment were considered.

#### North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) Route

1. I support the National Scenic Trail route as described in the 2015 DEC Final Plan, approved by DEC, APA and the Governor and included in the BRWF UMP Amendment. I understand the flexibility required by the "Corridor of Opportunity" and have GPSed both options. I understand that a route (Figure 7) which avoids wetlands and reduces the number of foot bridges needing to be constructed is favored as long as the scenic value is preserved.

2. I support both proposed parking lots and am pleased that the new parking facility at the Stone Dam Lake will be larger, not down in a dip and include a kiosk since it is the trailhead where the NCNST first enters the Adirondack Park from the west.

3. Since a National Scenic Trail is a non-motorized, single-track foot trail it is important that trails open to mechanized users not run concurrent with the foot trail. For the most part other trails such as bike or snowmobile trails within the unit are entirely separate. I support the closure to motorized use on the rarely used Little Woodhull Lake Trail to avoid the wetlands around Little Woodhull Lake.

4. Construction of the NCNST will comply with the ASLMP and best trail building practices will be employed in the construction of this 18"-24" non-motorized, foot trail such as: use of natural materials, no cutting of trees over 3" DBH, skirting streams and wetlands when possible, proper drainage, minimal cut & fill benching, minimal grades (10-15%) avoiding unstable slopes, gentle switchbacks, minimal structure as needed to protect resource, use of old trails etc.

5. It is important that the NCNST route be included the North Tract Conservation Easement agreement as it is the link between Black River Wild Forest and West Canada Lakes Wilderness where existing trails provide the route for the NCNST. Without this link, a NCNST hiker will need to walk busy roads, such as Route 28, to/from the Inlet and Moose River Plains WF area to access the route.

#### Motorized use

1. I support the rerouting of snowmobile trails and that the sum of new trails and closures of old trails does not result in a net increase on snowmobile trail mileage in this unit.

2. I would hope that any new trails or redesigned trails for snowmobiling would adhere strictly the ASLMP and best trail construction practices to minimize environmental impact, disruption of wildlife, and promote safety for the riders. Caution must be taken during new construction and proposed "upgrading of 26 miles of snowmobile trails to Class II standards" to not violate Article XIV. Tree, rock and soil removal are a concern.
3. I agree that Class II snowmobile trails should be located only on the periphery of Wild Forest and near existing roads/front country rather than the interior/back country.
4. I see no problem with a snowmobile trail crossing a foot trail perpendicularly as long as they do not run concurrent.
5. I support the "more traditional type of Adirondack snowmobiling experience" where some trails within the interior of Wild Forest areas or adjacent to private in-holdings may be rerouted, re-designated for non-motorized use or abandoned. These should be the more environmentally compatible, non-groomed trails with lower speed limits.
6. I note no mention in the amendment of ATV or off road motorized or motor vehicle use or ATV trail construction. Good, I feel there is no place for these on Forest Preserve land. I understand that the DEC and NYS legislature are under pressure to allow ATV and UTV access on state lands especially on forest roads. This of course requires active enforcement. Every pilot ATV program on NY state lands has been discontinued and trails closed because of environmental damage caused by ATVs. Therefore, ATVs, side by sides and UTVs should not be permitted in the Forest preserve either.

#### Invasive Species

1. In the amendment, I see no mention of accommodations for prevention of invasive species by motorized use, watercraft or foot travel. Invasive species are spreading at rapidly, reducing water quality, affecting the tree canopy, and recreational opportunities. For example, a simple boot brush unit and posted explanation of its use at the Stone Dam Lake trailhead where one first enters the Forest Preserve might reduce boot borne critters from entering.

I think that walking, hiking, xc skiing and snowmobiling will provide wonderful recreational and economic resources for communities both within the Adirondack Park and communities just outside the Park and that BRWF can offer both motorized snowmobile trails and non-motorized pedestrian trails separately, i.e. a multiple use area with single use trails.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments.

**From:** Rocci Aguirre <raguirre@adirondackcouncil.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 03, 2018 5:45 PM  
**To:** SLMP\_UMP\_Comments@apa.ny.gov  
**Cc:** Regan, Kathleen D (APA); Linck, Walter W (APA); Rocci Aguirre; Jackie Bowen  
**Subject:** Black River Wild Forest compliance letter  
**Attachments:** APA\_2018 BRWF UMP Compliance\_Final.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

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Walt,

Hello, attached are the Adirondack Council's comments on the compliance of the BRWF UMP. Please let me know if you have any issues opening the attachment or questions on the content of the letter.

All the best,  
Rocci

~~~~~  
Raul "Rocci" Aguirre  
Adirondack Council  
Director of Conservation  
office: 518.873.2240 x 104  
cell: 518.429.9417





*The mission of the ADIRONDACK COUNCIL is to ensure the ecological integrity and wild character of the ADIRONDACK PARK for current and future generations.*

May 3, 2018

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Walter Linck  
NYS Adirondack Park Agency  
P.O. Box 99  
Ray Brook, NY 12977  
(Via Electronic Submission))

***RE: SLMP compliance for the 2016 Black River Wild Forest Draft Unit Management Plan Amendment***

Dear Mr. Linck,

On behalf of the Adirondack Council, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to offer the following comments on the compliance of the proposed amendments to the *2016 Black River Wild Forest Draft Unit Management Plan*. As we stated in our February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016 letter to the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), the Council supports the larger efforts by the DEC to reclassify snowmobile trails that are consistent with the State Land Master Plan (SLMP) and conform to the *2009 Management Guidance: Snowmobile Trail Siting, Construction and Maintenance on Forest Preserve Lands in the Adirondack Park* (Guidance).

The Council believes that the proposed UMP amendment as presented has two issues concerning SLMP conformance. The first relates to the issues surrounding the South Shore Road and the related North Lake/South Lake Class II snowmobile trail. Determination of the status of this road, i.e. does it meet the SLMP definition as a road or trail, and the need for the creation of 4+ miles of new snowmobile trail are clearly areas that fall within the Adirondack Park Agency's (APA) jurisdiction for review and approval and need further clarification.

The second issue relates to the proposed alternate "railroad spur road" noted on page 14 of the UMP and identified as an "existing roadway on Forest Preserve lands which was not listed in the Black River Wild Forest UMP as a legitimate Forest Preserve Road." The status of this road needs to be clarified within the conformance review. Reducing and separating motor vehicle and snowmobile traffic is a worthy goal, and one the Council supports, but the designation of a new Forest Preserve road and associated uses should be given a rigorous review.

The Adirondack Council would like to recognize the significant amount of work invested by DEC regional staff in addressing concerns we had raised in our review

DEFENDING THE EAST'S GREATEST WILDERNESS

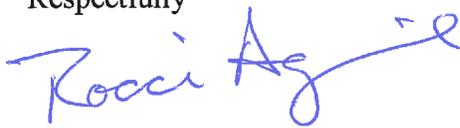
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342 Hamilton Street Albany, New York 12210 tel 518.432.1770 fax 518.449.4839 info@adirondackcouncil.org



of the original draft UMP amendment. The efforts to address the lack of adequate maps, the inclusion of a superior reroute of the North Country National Scenic Trail, and an updated and revised accounting for the base snowmobile trail mileage were noted and appreciated.

Overall, the Council supports the larger goals of the Black River Wild Forest UMP amendment and its attempt to bring snowmobile trails into compliance with the Snowmobile Guidance document and sees this as a Wild Forest area where those changes are both necessary and appropriate. However, we believe the issues relating to the two identified roads are important questions that warrant APA review and a ruling on SLMP compliance. Thank you for accepting and reviewing our comments.

Respectfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rocci Aguirre". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Rocci Aguirre  
Conservation Director

**From:** William Ingersoll <hikerbill30@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 24, 2018 10:07 PM  
**To:** SLMP\_UMP\_Comments@apa.ny.gov  
**Subject:** Black River Wild Forest UMP Amendment

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

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Hi Walt,

I am writing to offer my comments on the proposed amendment to the Black River Wild Forest UMP, specifically in regards to its relationship with the SLMP.

My biggest point of concern with the entire document is found on Page 13 of the amendment. Buried within a discussion of cutting a snowmobile trail near South Lake is a segue to an unrelated proposal to convert a snowmobile trail into an automobile road "as far as Parcel II of the Pratt-Northam Memorial Park," where "a 15-car parking lot will be constructed there per the recommendations given in the current Black River Wild Forest UMP." There is little further discussion of this proposal, and no analysis of alternatives.

It is my opinion that the entire Black River Wild Forest UMP, from the original document to the current amendment, does NOT conform to the State Land Master Plan inasmuch as roads in the Forest Preserve and other state-owned lands (such as the so-called Pratt-Northam Memorial Park) are concerned.

The 1996 UMP for this area inventoried numerous roads for the BRWF. However, the text descriptions were vague and many of the maps were illegible, making it nearly impossible to correlate the proposals for road retention, maintenance, and "rehabilitation" with actual facilities in the woods.

The SLMP defines a "road" in the following terms (emphasis added):

**32. Road**--an improved or partially improved way **designed for travel by automobiles** and which may also be used by other types of motor vehicles except snowmobiles, unless the way is a designated snowmobile trail; and is,  
(i) either maintained by a state agency or a local government and open to the general public;  
(ii) maintained by private persons or corporations primarily for private use but which may also be open to the general public for all or a segment thereof; or,  
(iii) maintained by the Department of Environmental Conservation or other state agency and open to the public on a discretionary basis.

The Roads and Administrative guidelines for Wild Forests (page 39 of the SLMP) adds this restriction (emphasis added):

**4. No new roads will be constructed in wild forest areas** nor will new administrative roads be constructed unless such construction is absolutely essential to the protection or administration of an area, no feasible

alternative exists and no deterioration of the wild forest character or natural resource quality of the area will result.

Therefore by the confluence of these two SLMP guidelines, a "way" in the Forest Preserve can **only** be considered a road if it was designed for use by automobiles prior to the implementation of the original plan in 1972, or prior to the acquisition of the land on which the road is located.

The SLMP does not provide many details about what "designed for travel by automobiles" means in terms of managing the many "ways" that exist in places like the BRWF. However, Justice Gerald Connolly's ruling in *Protect the Adirondacks! v. NYS DEC, et al.*, dated December 1, 2017, is essentially a legal determination on precisely this topic.

The plaintiff in that case argued that the construction of snowmobile trails that were wider, straighter, and more graded than a typical foot trail amounted to the construction of new roads, in violation of Article XIV and the SLMP. However, Justice Connolly rejected that argument. On page 16 he listed the "essential characteristics" of a forest road: they are crowned, utilize linear ditching, wide enough for two vehicles to pass, and constructed with materials brought in from outside the immediate location. A trail may be wide and bench cut, but it is still a trail so long as it lacks those essential road characteristics.

This must be the standard when considering what constitutes a "road" in the Forest Preserve: it is a way that, **prior to 1972**, was crowned, ditched, widened, and artificially surfaced for the passage of automobiles--and no other form of wheeled or motor vehicle. Railroad grades, logging roads, skid trails, and other ways commonly found in the Forest Preserve may be "roads" in the general vernacular, but the SLMP specifically requires that eligible roads be "designed for travel by automobiles." Because the Wild Forest guidelines make it clear that "no new roads will be constructed," then this act of designing a road for automobiles had to occur earlier than either 1972 or the acquisition of the land in question. And when determining which "ways" have been designed for automobile use, Justice Connolly's four "essential characteristics" must be the determining criteria.

Therefore to determine whether the Black River Wild Forest UMP conforms to the SLMP, the state land staff of the APA must review all of the inventoried roads and determine that, prior to 1972, each was crowned, ditched, widened, and artificially surfaced (constructed with outside materials). **Any "way" that fails ANY of these criteria is not a road by this legal test, and is in fact a trail.** If it is a trail, then DEC lacks the authority to open it to automobile or ATV use.

Upon scrutinizing the so-called "roads" in this unit, you will discover that only a small number will meet all of the criteria. Most will not. When DEC "rehabilitated" Wolf Lake Landing Road in 2004--which was by all accounts a "jeep trail" beforehand, constructed in the 1910s for private logging access at a time when automobile use in the backcountry was nearly nonexistent--it effectively constructed a new road within the footprint of a trail. Likewise with Mill Creek Road in 2016. The fact that these "ways" are designed for automobiles now is irrelevant if no documentation exists that they met all of the above-mentioned criteria before 1972.

Any "way" now used publicly by automobiles or ATVs that fails any of the criteria is non-conforming and must be closed immediately.

With this in mind, it is highly improper to be issuing an amendment to a UMP when so much of the original 22-year-old document does not conform with the SLMP. The entire UMP needs to be reassessed, and all of its proposals for public motorized access need to be reviewed in light of Justice Connolly's criteria. The public cannot weigh the merits of the proposed new snowmobile, ski, and hiking trails when many of the underlying assumptions about the BRWF are obsolete. Please recommend that the APA board reject this amendment and instruct DEC to commence a full revision of the entire UMP.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns.

Regards,

Bill Ingersoll  
Cofounder, Adirondack Wilderness Advocates  
Publisher, Wild River Press  
7123 Trenton Road  
Barneveld NY 13304

