FOREST PRESERVE DETAILED PROJECT WORK PLAN

Fiscal Year 2024

Project # 2024-NV-007 CO-WP-333/342

Region	Project Title
5	Watch Hill Trail Reroute

Project Type	Town(s)	County	Management Unit
Modification of Existing Structure/Improvement	Indian Lake	Hamilton	Jessup River Wild Forest

Description of Desired Condition(s) for Project

The Watch Hill Trail is included in a Special Area Management Plan within the 2006 Jessup River Wild Forest Unit Management Plan (UMP). The UMP identifies that the trail system around Watch Hill is ideal for the development of "family oriented" recreational opportunities. The trail leads to two scenic outcroppings along the Watch Hill ridgeline and then turns downhill heading south to Indian Lake, where users can enjoy a sandy beach.

The objective of this project is to alleviate environmental impacts associated with poor trail design, and to improve safety and access for all resource users. Currently, the trail leading from the Route 30 parking area to Watch Hill is in wonderful shape and used by people with varying abilities. The section of trail from the second outcropping to the shore of Indian Lake, however, is in a deteriorated condition and has become unsafe. Rerouting is needed to avoid the steepest section of trail and provide users better and safer access to experience the beach and waterfront at the end of the trail.

This project will establish a minor trail reroute to avoid a steep section of trail descending from the summit of Watch Hill to Indian Lake. Current trail conditions on the descent to the lake are slippery and dangerous for resource users, and natural resource impacts like soil loss and trail widening are observed. By relocating the steepest section of this trail, the Department is providing a better experience for the intended user group, while also mitigating negative environmental impacts associated with poor trail design.

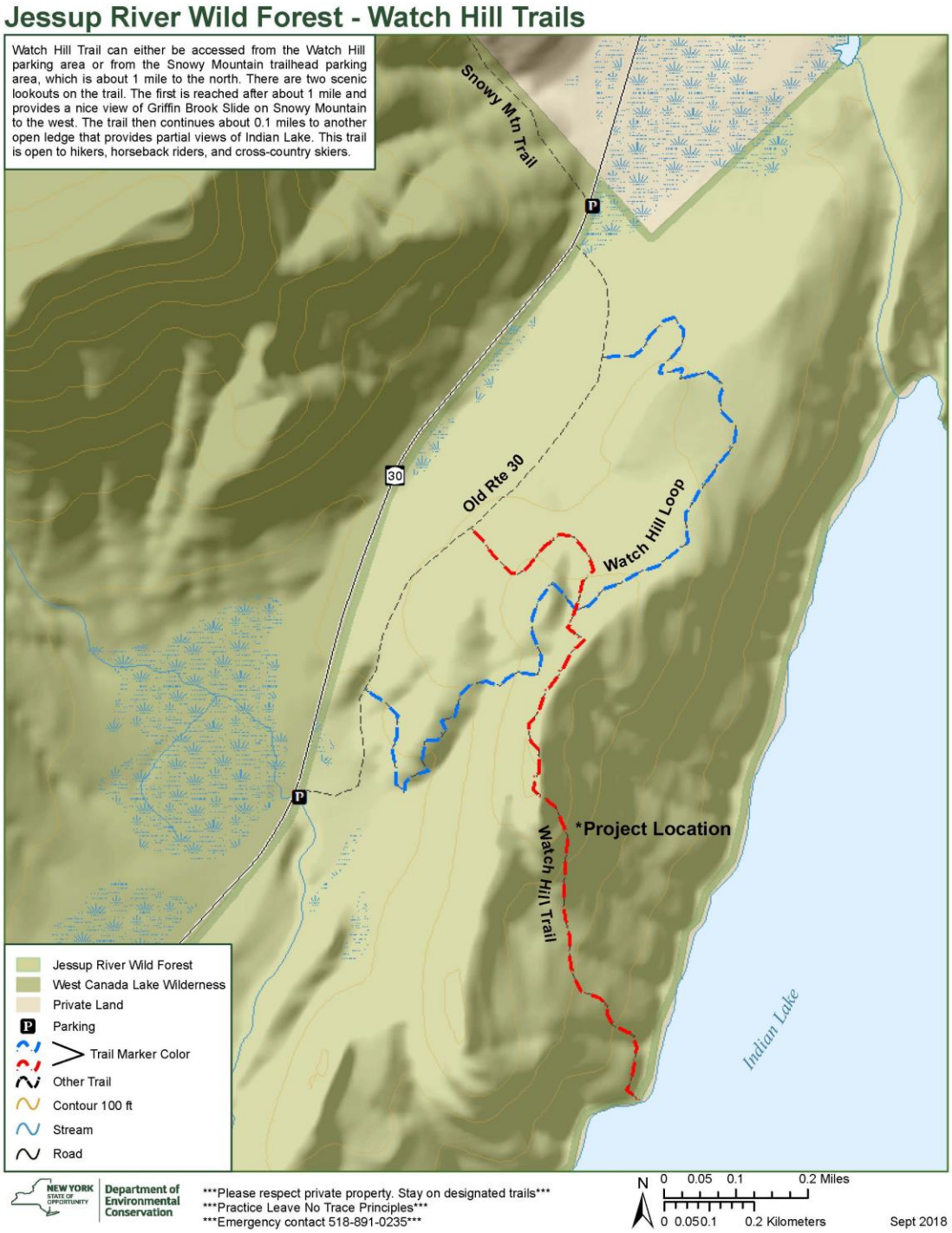
Description of Project Specifications

The UMP recognizes the potential of soil loss on this trail and states "serious problems will be avoided through proper trail layout and trail hardening where necessary (pg. 301)".

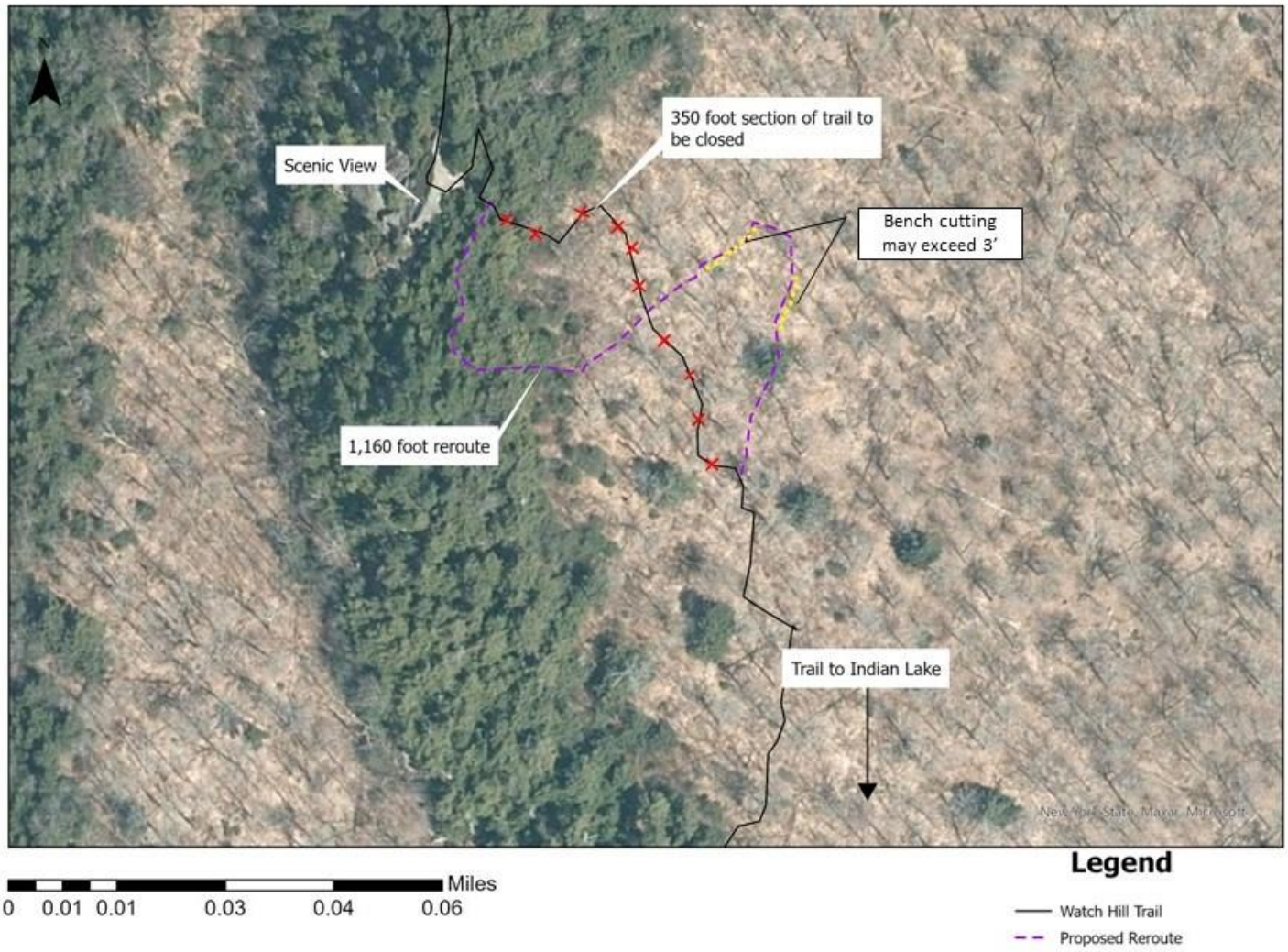
The minor trail reroute proposed will be approximately 0.2 miles long and follow designs for sustainable trails. This project is necessary to avoid a very steep (20% grade) and slippery section of trail to the south of the second overlook. After leaving the second overlook the trail immediately turns downhill and follows the fall line for the few hundred feet of the trail. After this initial descent, the trail

follows a southwest alignment towards the lake. Separate workplans will address additional issues further down the trail.

All work will be done with hand tools. The new trail alignment will use full bench construction and turnpiking where appropriate. In some instances, the establishment of full bench cuts may require work outside of the trail corridor to construct a proper backslope on steep terrain. Preferred maximum grade of the reroute will be 10%. Where sustainable grades cannot be met, structures such as stone steps or steps with upslope tread will be installed to ensure a stable tread surface. These sustainable techniques will provide users with a durable surface and minimize negative natural resource impacts. As a Class III Primitive Trail, the tread will be between 14-18 inches wide, and the corridor will be cleared to three feet wide. The trail will be sited to avoid natural seepages and tree cutting.



Watch Hill Trail: Reroute Location Map



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

1.) There will be no tree cutting associated with this project. Lateral branch trimming and removal of small (less than one-inch Diameter at Breast Height (DBH)) trees and brush will be necessary to clear the corridor. The corridor will be cleared three feet wide and 10 feet high.

2.) Earthwork will vary along the proposed reroute based on slope, terrain, and other landscape features. Earthwork is necessary to ensure the trail is built with proper in-slope and out-slope, the installation of drainage dips and other structures necessary to provide users with a sustainable tread surface. The trail will be built to blend into the natural setting.

3.) This project will not impact streams, waterbodies, or wetlands. The minor trail reroute does not traverse through streams or wetlands.

4.) There are no occurrences of rare, threatened, or endangered species or important or unique natural communities within a quarter of a mile of the project location.

5.) The project will require up to 200 feet of full bench construction. Full bench construction may require work outside of the trail corridor to construct a proper backslope in steep terrain. Upon completion of the reroute, the current trail alignment will be brushed in to discourage use.

Analysis of Project Location and Design Alternatives

Alternative1: Keep the trail in the existing corridor and install a series of check steps and rock staircases to harden the existing path. Although this alternative would achieve the objectives of the project, it is not preferred for the following reasons:

A. Although there are some suitable rocks available in the landscape, extensive earthwork would have to be done to yield enough rocks for the construction of lengthy staircases.

B. Rock work is labor and time intensive. A skilled trail crew would likely spend many weeks completing this type of project.

C. Although rock work would provide users safer passage, the grade of existing corridor is too steep to be sustainable. Erosion would likely continue requiring continued maintenance of the structures placed on steep grades.

Preferred Alternative: Reroute the trail to avoid the undesirable segment of trail. Landscape conditions are suitable to install a minor trail reroute following the curvilinear alignment of the terrain. This option is less time consuming and offers a more sustainable and long-term solution.

Description of Use of Motorized Equipment and/or Motor Vehicles (if any)

There will be no motorized equipment used for this project.

Description of Applicable Standards for Accessibility by People with Disabilities

In accordance with the US Department of Justice's ADA Title II regulations, all new DEC facilities, or parts of facilities, that are constructed for public use are to be accessible to people with disabilities. *Full compliance is not required where DEC can demonstrate that it is structurally impracticable to meet the requirements [28 CRF § 35.151 (a)].*

This project is a modification to a trail that is not currently built to ADA standards. It would be structurally impractical to modify the entire trail system. All new structures will be built to provide access for as many abilities as possible.

Other Relevant Considerations

This project is intended to be completed during the 2024 field season by contracted labor.

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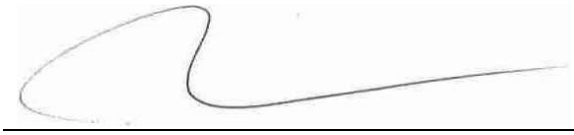
Date: 1/23/2024

Approvals:

Comments:



Regional Program Manager
Date: 3/28/2024

Regional Director
Date: 9/24/2024

Division Director
Date: 06/25/2024

REGULATORY CLEARANCE CHECKLIST – STATE LANDS and CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROJECTS					
PROGRAM	PERMIT	REQUIRED		SECURED BY	COMMENTS
		YES	NO	(NAME)	
Air Resources	Restricted Burning	☐	☒		
Mineral Resources	Mining	☐	☒		
Materials Management	Solid Waste Mgt. Fac.	☐	☒		
Water	Dam Safety Review	☐	☒		
	Const. in Flood Hazard	☐	☒		
	Public Water Supply	☐	☒		
	SPDES	☐	☒		
Spills Management	Petro. Bulk Storage	☐	☒		
Lands and Forests	Unit Management Plan	☒	☐	DEC	JRWF UMP (2006)
	Tree Cutting	☐	☒		
	Protected Native Plants	☐	☒		
	Historic Preservation	☐	☒		
Fish and Wildlife	Freshwater Wetlands	☐	☒		
	Wild Scenic & Rec. River	☐	☒		
Compliance Services	Other Protection of Waters	☐	☒		
	EAF	☐	☒		
	Negative Declaration	☐	☒		
	Env. Impact Statement	☐	☒		
	Water Quality Cert.	☐	☒		
DEC (other)	CP-17	☐	☒		
	Commissioner (aircraft,motorized equipment)	☐	☒		
	Flight Request	☐	☒		
	Contract Clearance Sh.	☐	☒		
	DOB Exemption	☐	☒		
Other Agencies	APA MOU	☒	☐		DEC/ APA memo on minor reroutes
	APA Wetlands Permit	☐	☒		
	Corps. of Engineers	☐	☒		
	Building Permits	☐	☒		
	Local Permits	☐	☒		
	Easements	☐	☒		
	Highway Enter DOT	☐	☒		
	Wastewater Disposal	☐	☒		