

# FOREST PRESERVE DETAILED PROJECT WORK PLAN

**Fiscal Year 2024**  
**Project # 2024-RB-007; CO-WP 345**

<u>Region</u> 5	<u>Project Title</u> Jay Mountain Trail Improvements
--------------------	---

<u>Project Type</u>	<u>Town(s)</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Management Unit</u>
Modification of Existing Structure/Improvement	Jay	Essex	Jay Mountain Wilderness Area

Description of Desired Condition(s) for Project

The 2010 Jay Mountain Wilderness Area Unit Management Plan proposed the construction of a formal trail up Jay Mountain to replace an existing herd path. The unit management plan, provided that the primitive character of the existing herd path was to be retained in all rerouted sections and trail marking and brushing were to be kept to the minimum amount necessary.

Consistent with the unit management plan, a trail was cleared around 2012 using minimalist trail building techniques. The trail often encounters obstacles, and rather than manipulating the ground to correct the obstruction, the trail was routed around the obstacle or moved to steeper terrain. This technique was highly successful in many areas but with 10 plus years of wear and erosion the trail is deviating from its location. Trail users are bypassing rough and eroded sections of trail which braids the trail. Trail braiding often compounds resource degradation as users spread out from the constructed area where they choose to avoid the obstacle or segment. In other instances, the trail material has slid down hill creating a path for water to follow. In some instances, trail hardening is all that will be needed. Other spots will be corrected by simply excavating the hillside to cut a bench and shape the backslope to control the water. It is anticipated that additional trail improvements may be necessary as use and trail degradation continue to increase.

The improvements proposed for the Jay Mountain Trail under this work plan include bench cutting, turnpiking and realignment to minimize trail impacts. These improvements will be installed in a way that mitigate the environmental impacts of the trail while keeping the primitive character of the trail.

Description of Project Specifications

The Jay Mountain Trail was developed with a minimalist approach to constructing the tread. Now with over 10 years of use, some sections of the trail require upgrading to provide a sustainable facility. All work will be designed to provide an 18-inch-wide trail tread and a three-foot-wide trail corridor per the Jay Mountain Wilderness Unit Management Plan. In some instances, such as points 1, 3 and 11, the establishment of full bench cuts may require work outside of the trail corridor to construct a proper backslope on steep terrain.

The following improvements will be made at the locations indicated on the attached map:

1. Install no longer than a 30-foot-long full bench cut. This will include the removal of one 4-inch tree to improve the alignment and reduce braiding of the trail.
2. Install no longer than a 75-foot-long stone turnpike. Three 2-inch trees and one 4-inch tree will need to be removed here.
3. Install no longer than a 25-foot-long full bench cut. One 2-inch tree will need to be removed.

4. Remove one two-inch tree to improve hiker flow and reduce braiding and widening of the trail.
5. Cover 20 feet of exposed roots using mineral soils to improve the tread and protect an adjacent tree.
6. Install no more than 40 feet of turnpiking.
7. Reestablish no more than 40 feet of bench cutting.
8. Install no more than 35 feet of turnpiking.
9. Install no more than 30 feet of rock turnpike to re-establish the desired tread.
10. Install no more than 35 feet of rock stairs.
11. Install no longer than a 20-foot-long full bench cut to reestablish the desired tread.
12. Rehabilitate a portion of trail that has deteriorated due to hikers skirting blowdown. The original trail alignment will be re-established by clearing large blowdown and installing a 10-foot-long full bench cut to redefine the trail tread. This site will require the removal of four hazard trees (three four-inch balsam, and one six-inch balsam).

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

Five (5) two-inch trees and six (6) trees three inches or larger will be removed to complete this project. Cutting these trees will allow for an improved alignment of the trail along with improved safety due to the removal of hazardous trees along the trail.

State Land Tree Tally															
Project: Jay Mountain Trail															
State Land Unit: Jay Mountain Wilderness															
Essex								Town: Jay							
Date Talled: 3/28/2023															
Talled By: Keith Carrow															
Species	Diameter														Total
	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	
maple, sugar		1													1
Ironwood		1													1
Fir, Balsam		3	1												4
2 inch category	5														5
<b>Total</b>	5	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11

Bench cutting will be required for certain sections to create a defined footprint of the trail with built in drainage. Turnpiking will be utilized to harden wet areas and where roots have been exposed. These will be hardened with mineral soil to remain sustainable and prevent erosion. Stairs will be built where slopes are too steep for soil to remain in place and there is no alternate route. All of these trail improvements will prevent trail braiding reducing the degradation of the areas around the trail.

**Impacts to Streams, Waterbodies, and Wetlands:**

There are no streams, waterbodies or wetlands near the proposed project sites. The proposed trail improvements will mitigate erosion on the hiking trail.

**Identification of Rare, Threatened or Endangered Species:**

There are no rare, threatened or endangered species documented within 0.25-mile of the project sites.

Analysis of Project Location and Design Alternatives

No Action alternative: If the proposed trail improvements are not installed, erosion will continue, and the trail will continue to widen in certain areas.

Close the Trail: The trail on Jay Mountain was a herd path prior to the current trail being developed. If the current trail is closed people will continue to follow this trail alignment, or move back to the old trail, which could lead to additional environmental impacts.

Other reroutes have been considered but are not feasible due to steep terrain and wet soils in the areas adjacent to the trail. No reasonable alternative was found for the proposed project sites without major trail modification and additional impacts.

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

No Motorized equipment is planned for this project.

Description of Applicable Standards for Accessibility by People with Disabilities

Compliance with accessibility requirements is not practical because it would fundamentally alter the nature of the proposed hiking trail. Bringing the trail into compliance with accessibility standards would also result in more terrain manipulation and tree cutting. Given these considerations, the wilderness foot trail will be improved and maintained to the standards prescribed in the UMP.

Other Relevant Considerations

None

Prepared by (Name & Title): Keith Carrow, Forester 1  
Phone: (518) 897-1336

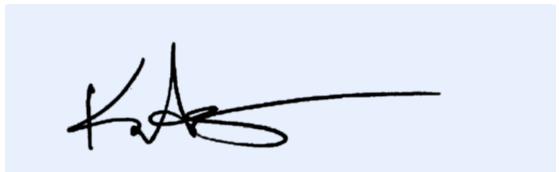
Date: 3/5/2024

Approvals:

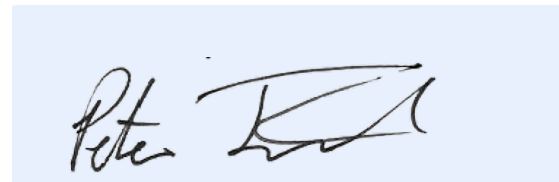
Comments:



Regional Program Manager  
Date: 3/5/2024



Supervisor of Natural Resources  
Date: 08/20/2024

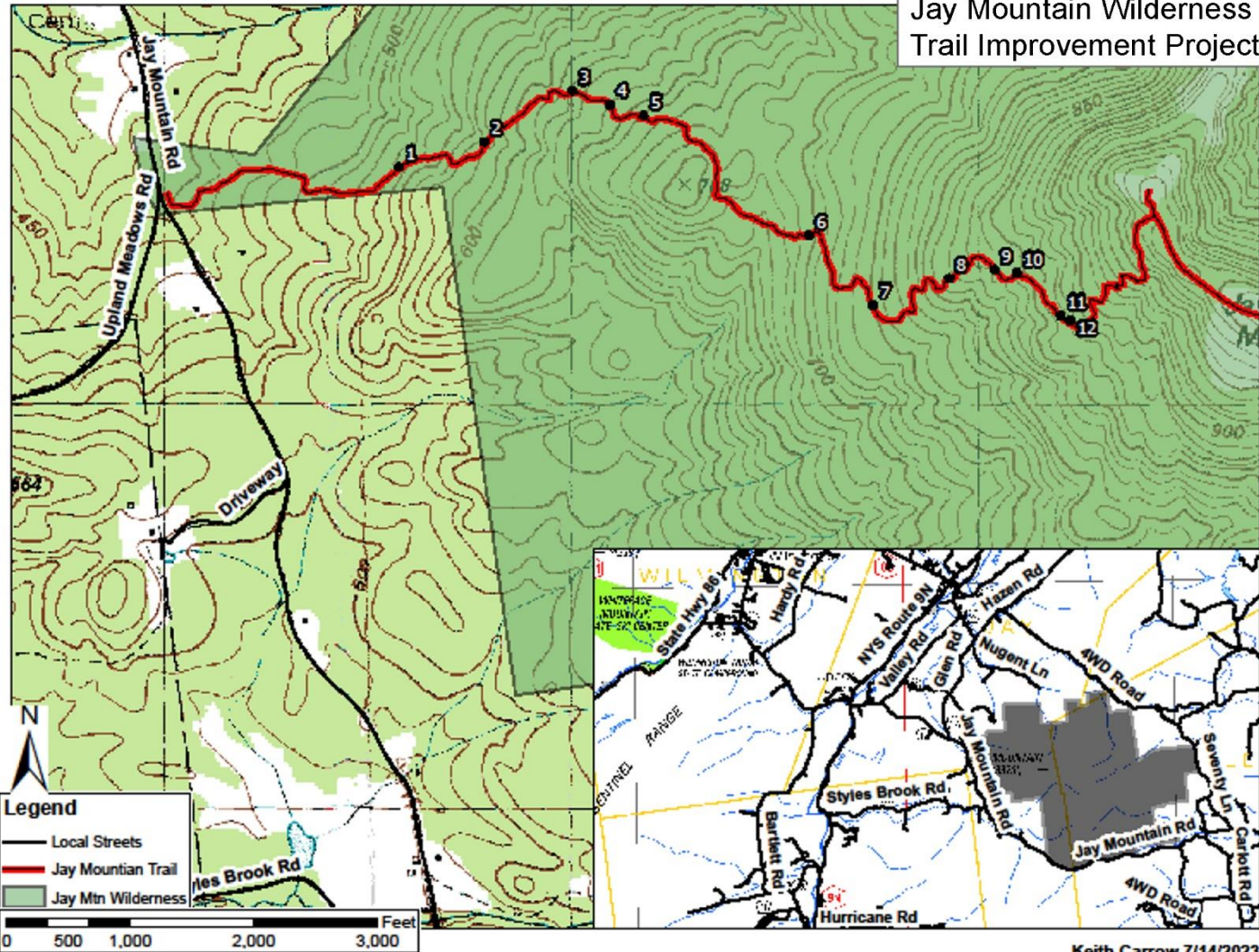


Division Director  
Date: 08/13/2024

**REGULATORY CLEARANCE CHECKLIST – STATE LANDS and CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROJECTS**

PROGRAM	PERMIT	REQUIRED		SECURED BY	COMMENTS
		YES	NO	(NAME)	
Air Resources	Restricted Burning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mineral Resources	Mining	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Materials Management	Solid Waste Mgt. Fac.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Water	Dam Safety Review	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Const. in Flood Hazard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Public Water Supply	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	SPDES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Spills Management	Petro. Bulk Storage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Lands and Forests	Unit Management Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	K. Carrow	Trail designated in 2010 Jay Mountain UMP
	Tree Cutting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	K. Carrow	11 Trees >1" DBH will be cut as part of this project
	Protected Native Plants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Historic Preservation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Fish and Wildlife	Freshwater Wetlands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Wild Scenic & Rec. River	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Compliance Services	Other Protection of Waters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	EAF	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Negative Declaration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Env. Impact Statement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Water Quality Cert.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
DEC (other)	CP-17	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Commissioner (aircraft, motorized equipment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Flight Request	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Contract Clearance Sh.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	DOB Exemption	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Other Agencies	APA MOU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	APA Wetlands Permit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Corps. of Engineers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Building Permits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Local Permits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Easements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Highway Enter DOT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Wastewater Disposal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

Jay Mountain Wilderness  
Trail Improvement Project



Keith Carrow 7/14/2023



NEW YORK STATE

**Department of Environmental Conservation**

DIVISION OF LANDS & FORESTS

# Jay Mountain Wilderness

## Unit Management Plan

---

Towns of Jay and Lewis  
Essex County

DAVID A. PATERSON  
*Governor*

ALEXANDER B. GRANNIS  
*Commissioner*

**For Further Information Contact:**

Robert Daley  
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation  
P.O. Box 296  
Ray Brook, NY 12977-0296  
Phone: (518) 897-1369  
r5ump@gw.dec.state.ny.us

**August 2010**

---

### **Management Actions**

- Reroute portions of the Jay Mountain Trail below the ridge to alleviate erosion problems caused by improper trail layout (See proposed map in Appendix K). Trail will begin at proposed parking area described in Trailheads section (below).
- Close existing sections of Jay Mountain herdpath that have been bypassed by reroutes once these reroutes have been established.
- Collect baseline soil and vegetation data at site of trail relocations for use in LAC process.
- Monitor existing section of Jay Trail along the ridgeline to identify any maintenance needs.
- Maintain lower section of the trail to Class III standards. Marking and trail brushing will be kept to the minimum necessary.
- Maintain upper section of trail (along ridgeline) to Class II standards. Mark upper section of trail with rock cairns, using plastic markers only where necessary (avoid use of paint).

### **3. Trailheads**

#### **Present Conditions**

A trailhead is defined as the starting or termination point of one or more designated trails at a point of entrance to state land which may contain some or all of the following: vehicle parking, trail signs, and peripheral registration structures (Van Valkenburg, 1986). A trailhead classification system was adopted in 1986 to provide for consistency in their location and development. Class I trailheads are the most developed and are found at the major entrances to the backcountry. Class II and Class III are encountered at lesser used trails with correspondingly less development.

There are currently no official trailheads in the JMWA. Users of the Jay Mountain herdpath currently park on the side of the road near where the trail begins. In the winter, snow banks can effectively block users from parking off of the road and lead to vehicles being parked unsafely. Vehicles parked in the road create additional problems by interfering with snow removal crews.

An official trailhead is recommended for the Jay Mountain Trail that is proposed in the Trails section of this UMP. The trailhead would be maintained to Class II Standards. A small parking area, able to accommodate 3-5 vehicles, is planned for the trailhead near the junction of the trail and Jay Mountain Road.

Where the Jay Mountain herdpath currently starts along the Jay Mountain Road, there is an unstable gravel bank that is being eroded by hiker use. Due to local topography and drainage, there is no reasonable area for the relocation of the Jay Mountain Trail. Therefore, the gravel bank at the start of the