

# FOREST PRESERVE DETAILED PROJECT WORK PLAN

**Fiscal Year 2024**  
**Project # CO-WP-346**

<u>Region</u> 4	<u>Project Title</u> Blackhead Mountain Spur Trail Reroute
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<u>Project Type</u>	<u>Town(s)</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Management Unit</u>
Modification of Existing Structure/Improvement	Windham, Jewett	Greene	Windham-Blackhead Range Wilderness

Description of Desired Condition(s) for Project

The Blackhead Mountain Spur Trail is a 0.6-mile foot trail located in the Windham-Blackhead Range Wilderness. The trail forms a connection between the Black Dome Range Trail and Escarpment Trail and leads to the summit of Blackhead Mountain. This work plan outlines the relocation of approximately 460 feet of existing trail to a new, sustainably designed trail approximately 1,590 feet in length. The existing section of trail is steep and fall-aligned which has resulted in trail widening, erosion, and incision. Stone steps had been installed along some of the steepest portions of this trail section but have failed, leaving an unstable surface of loose stone, soil, and exposed rebar which is an undesirable condition for both natural resources and visitor experience and safety. While a Unit Management Plan (UMP) for this location has not yet been completed, minor reroutes are permitted without a UMP under the Catskill Park State Land Master Plan (CPSLMP). As such, the desired conditions for this project have been derived from the CPSLMP management guidelines for wilderness areas and management goals. According to the CPSLMP, a wilderness area is characterized as an area that should appear to be primarily affected by natural forces with human impact on the landscape being largely unnoticeable. These areas offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. Non-motorized trails, including foot trails, are considered conforming facilities. These facilities should be designed to blend with the surrounding environment, should require minimal maintenance and should be designed in such a way that the surrounding plant and wildlife communities are protected. Where they exist, hiking trails should perpetuate the wild character of the area while providing a quality wilderness hiking experience where visitors can experience the sights and sounds of nature with limited evidence of human influence on the environment. The existing conditions in the project area are not in alignment with these principles.

Relocating this degraded section of trail to a more sustainable route will bring this section of trail into alignment with desired conditions. This minor reroute will improve visitor safety and experience as well as reduce the physical and visual impact of foot traffic in this wilderness setting. The new route will provide a high-quality experience for hikers travelling through the area by allowing them to be immersed in nature without experiencing and contributing to undesirable impacts to natural resources through travel on unsustainably aligned trails and unstable trail surfaces. Design parameters for this project will be consistent with a wilderness foot trail experience. Trails and trail structures will consist

of natural materials that blend with the surrounding terrain and will be designed to sustain use without developing trail widening, trail braiding, erosion, or muddiness to a significant degree.

### Description of Project Specifications

The new trail relocation will be approximately 1,590 ft in length and will be designed and constructed to a single-lane, wilderness foot trail. The tread width will be 12-24" (except on steep side slopes where the width may be 36-48") and will consist of native material, with some on-site borrow or imported material where needed for stabilization and occasional grading. Trail construction will involve bench cutting and will incorporate sustainable trail features including grade reversals where possible. The existing trail will be closed and brushed in upon completion of the new route to prevent continued use.

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

- A) Trees to be removed: 7 trees with a DBH of 3" or greater and 104 trees with a DBH less than 3" may need to be removed (see attached tally). Species composition for trees under 3" DBH consists primarily of mountain maple, pin cherry, and mountain-ash. This tree tally is a high-end count of trees to be removed. During construction, tree removal will be minimized to the extent possible. Whenever practicable, the trail will be routed to avoid tree cutting and side limbing will be favored over tree removal.
- B) Earthwork and disturbance, including identification of work outside the project footprint: This relocation will involve full bench construction. The installation of stone steps may be necessary at switchbacks but will be avoided wherever possible. Any disturbance outside of the designed trail tread, including areas upslope and downslope of bench cuts, will be naturalized to blend with the surrounding environment.
- C) Describe how the project will avoid or minimize impacts to streams, waterbodies, and wetlands: This project does not take place in the vicinity of any streams, waterbodies, or wetlands.
- D) Identification of rare, threatened, or endangered species: This project is in the vicinity of a known occurrence of Bicknell's Thrush, a species listed as Special Concern. To mitigate potential impacts to montane bird species, construction activities will not take place during the breeding and nesting season from mid-May through mid-July.

### Analysis of Project Location and Design Alternatives

- 1) No action – Leaving the existing trail in its current alignment and condition is not the preferred alternative. Without taking any action the trail will continue to degrade and natural resource impacts and visitor safety will continue to be a concern.
- 2) Repair existing – Repairing the existing trail was considered but is not the preferred alternative. Stone steps which had been installed have not held up over time. Installing stone stairs a second time on the existing trail will likely lead to the same result due to the trail grade, ground conditions, and water runoff characteristics. This alternative would require more significant time and resources to maintain and repair over the life of the trail.
- 3) Alternate location/design – Alternative trail locations were considered. Relocations that only crossed the existing trail once (relocation entirely on north side of existing trail/south side of existing trail) were considered. These both offered terrain challenges and more significant terrain modifications would likely be required.

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

No motor vehicles or motorized equipment will be used for this project.

Description of Applicable Standards for Accessibility by People with Disabilities

This project is located in a wilderness area, approximately 3 miles from a trailhead and covers steep and rugged terrain with approximately 2,000 feet of elevation gain to the project area. Significant modifications to the unit would be required to meet accessible standards. These alterations would fundamentally alter the character of the area and are beyond the scope of this project.

Other Relevant Considerations

Prepared by (Name & Title): Alicia van der Veur, Forester      Date: 6/27/2024  
Phone: 607-652-3698

Approvals:

Comments:

*Bill Schongar*

Regional Program Manager  
Date: 7/2/2024

Project Specifications section states 1590 feet of trail relocation.

*John W. [Signature]*

Regional Director  
Date: Click to enter a date.

*Peter [Signature]*

Division Director  
Date: 08/16/2024

**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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Alicia van der Veur	No UMP – Minor trail relocations permitted per CPSLMP
	Tree Cutting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	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"/>		

### FOREST PRESERVE WORK PLAN TREE TALLY

Project Name: Blackhead Mountain Spur Trail Reroute  
 State Land Unit: Windham-Blackhead Range Wilderness  
 County: Greene  
 Date Tallied: 7/18/23  
 Tallied By: Alicia van der Veur

Town: Windham, Jewett

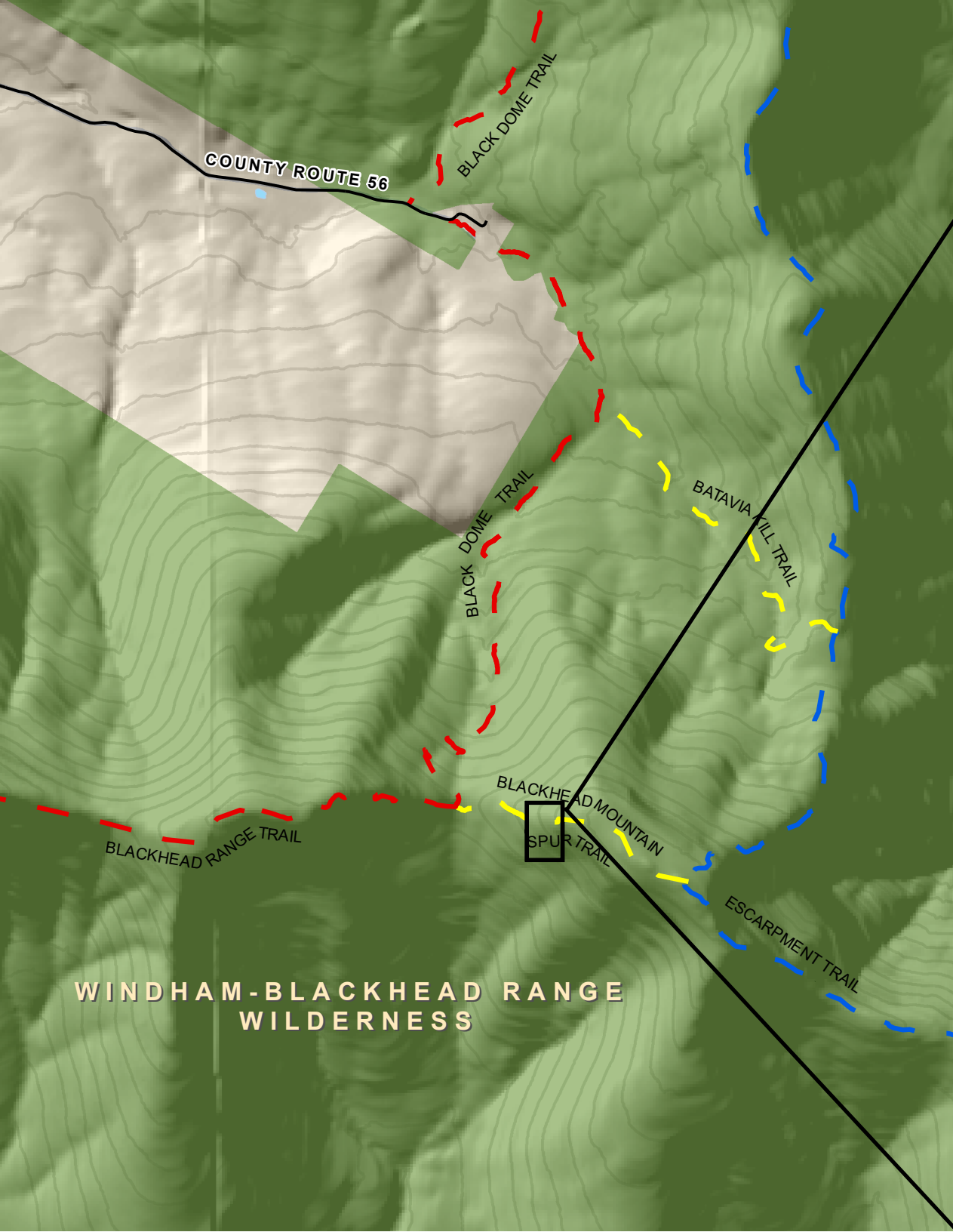
Species	Diameter															Total
	1 to 3	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	
Pin Cherry		5	1													6
Sugar Maple		1														1
<b>Total</b>	104	6	1													111

Note: 1" - 3" size class are trees from 1.0" to 2.9" BDH. 4" size class are trees from 3.0" to 4.9". 6" size class are trees from 5.0" to 6.9".

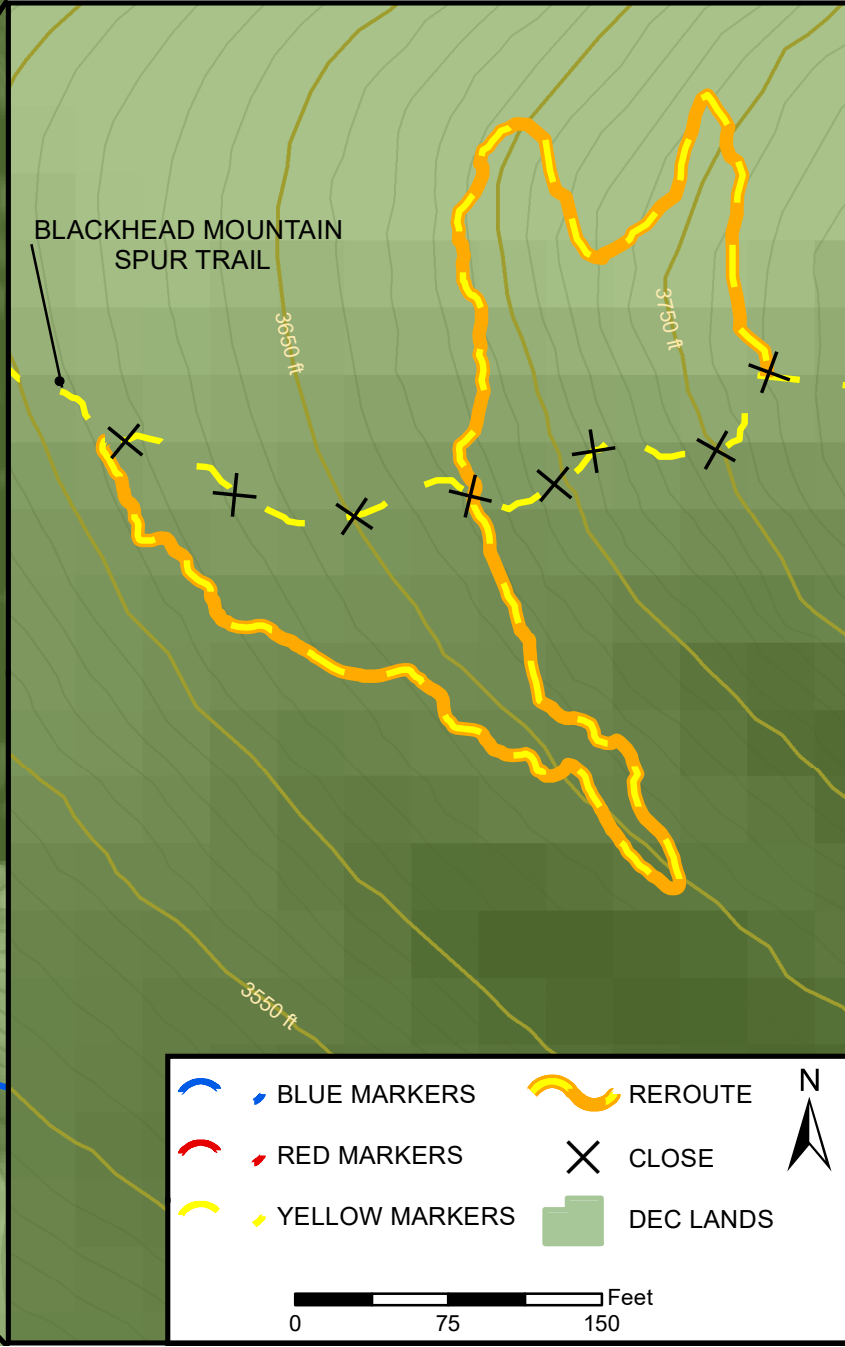
# PROJECT LOCATION








BLACKHEAD MOUNTAIN SPUR TRAIL

WINDHAM-BLACKHEAD RANGE  
WILDERNESS



WINDHAM-BLACKHEAD RANGE  
WILDERNESS



	BLUE MARKERS		REROUTE	
	RED MARKERS		CLOSE	
	YELLOW MARKERS		DEC LANDS	

0 75 150 Feet







Example of exposed rebar

