
FOREST PRESERVE DETAILED PROJECT WORK PLAN

Fiscal Year 2025
Project # 2025-NV-004
CO-WP-373

<u>Region</u> 5	<u>Project Title</u> Sawyer Mountain Stone Steps
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<u>Project Type</u> New Construction	<u>Town(s)</u> Indian Lake	<u>County</u> Hamilton	<u>Management Unit</u> Blue Ridge Wilderness
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Description of Desired Condition(s) for Project

The Sawyer Mountain Trail is located along the Route 28 corridor, just north of the Village of Indian Lake. A short 1.1-mile hike leads to a scenic overlook. The 2006 Blue Ridge Unit Management Plan (BRW UMP) recognizes the trail as a wilderness foot trail and describes it as being “well located and climbing at a steady, moderate grade. It generally crosses stable, well-drained soils, has few erosion or drainage problems, and is capable of withstanding significant foot traffic. Because the trail is located along a designated scenic byway and it has a relatively gentle grade and short length to mountain views, it affords an opportunity for families and those not inclined to engage in more rigorous backcountry travel to enjoy a primitive recreational experience.” (BRW UMP, page 156). In general, the trail is developed with a four to six-foot corridor and has a tread width of 18 – 36 inches. The current tread surface is mostly native, however onsite borrow soils have been used to stabilize and firm the tread surface where needed to prevent resource degradation.

Although the trail is generally well-situated in the landscape, there are signs of resource degradation, including soil and vegetation loss along short steep sections of the trail. The objective of this project is to stabilize the current trail tread by installing a series of stone stairs and risers. Stone steps are a valuable tool in trail reconstruction to protect from erosion and assist will soil stabilization on steep slopes. The stairs will provide a stable vertical rise on the trail, which slows water runoff and retains soils.

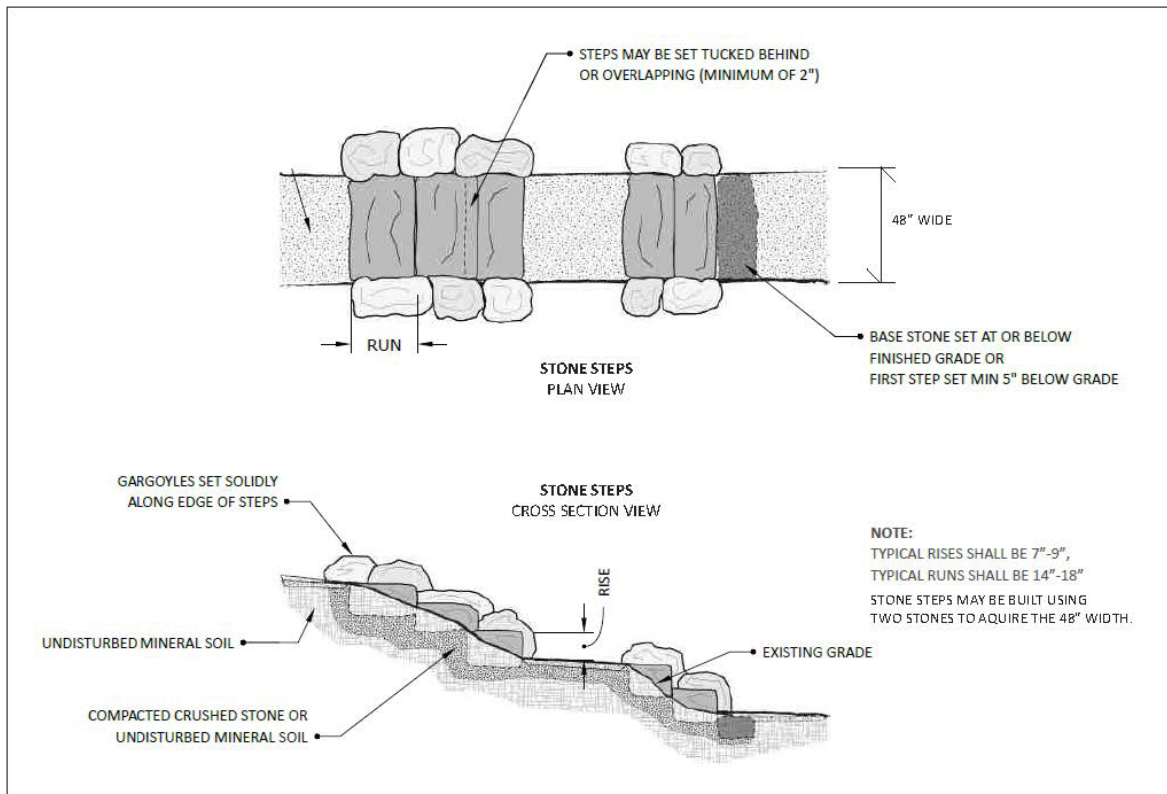
The Sawyer Mountain Trail presents a unique opportunity for the public to experience the Forest Preserve. Contrasted by the more remote and rugged terrain found throughout most of the Adirondack Park’s wilderness areas, the Sawyer Mountain Trail’s gentle grades, proximity to a busy State highway, and rewarding destination make it uniquely suited to provide people of many abilities a positive wilderness experience. In fact, these elements likely lead to the trail’s popularity, and a sustainably designed trail not only assures it will withstand the levels of use it will likely continue to receive, but also serves to educate the public about the benefits of sustainable trail design.

Description of Project Specifications

Approximately 125 feet of trail exceeds sustainable grade and is becoming deeply eroded and gullied (see Figure 1 for a photo of the project location). The management objective for this section of trail is to install a series of stone steps and risers to stabilize the trail tread. The rock steps will be well integrated into the environment to maintain the wild forest character of the area.

Maximum step rise will be between seven to nine inches in height and the step run will be a minimum of 10 to 12 inches wide. The tread of the stone staircase will be constructed to be no more than three feet wide and no less than two feet wide. Trail gargoyles, stone structures to prevent the plants and soil adjacent to the trail from being trampled and destroyed, will be placed along the edge of the steps to dissuade resource users from walking around the structure.

Native stones will be quarried from the surrounding landscape and brought to the project site via use of a highline and grip hoist system. If stones need to be split, the work will be accomplished with a power drill. Use of power drills will only occur during off-peak seasons. Hand tools will be used to excavate and set stones for staircases. The area of disturbance outside of the final footprint of the stone stairs will be minimal. Herd paths and disturbances caused from quarrying stones will be blended into the natural environment upon completion of the project.



	PROJECT	STONE STEPS (NOT TO SCALE)	03/06/22 # 08
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Description of Measures Taken to Avoid, Mitigate and Minimize Impacts to Natural Resources

Trees to be Removed: Micro-level realignments of the trail tread may occur during the implementation of this project to avoid large tree roots. Up to 25 trees between one and three-inch diameter at breast height (DBH) may be removed to facilitate this trail repair project.

FOREST PRESERVE WORK PLAN TREE TALLY

Project Name: Sawyer Mountain Stone Steps
 State Land Unit: Blue Ridge Wilderness
 County: Hamilton
 Date Tallied: 12/13/2024
 Tallied By: Jaime Parslow
 Town: Indian Lake

Species	Diameter														Total	
	1 to 3	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28		30
American Beech	25															25
Total	25															

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".

- A.) Earthwork and Disturbance including work outside of the project footprint: Significant terrain modifications such as earthwork and disturbance will be minimized to the extent possible. Earthwork will consist of quarrying rocks for stone steps and risers and minor excavation necessary for properly setting individual stone steps. The area of disturbance outside of the final footprint of the stone stairs will be minimal. Herd paths and disturbances caused from quarrying stones will be blended into the natural environment upon completion of the project. Currently the project location is becoming gullied and severely eroded. The installation of the stone features will mitigate current soil loss and erosion impacts by stabilizing the soils.
- B.) There will be no impacts to streams, waterbodies, or wetlands.
- C.) There are no known occurrences of rare, threatened, or endangered species within ¼ mile of the project site.

Analysis of Project Location and Design Alternatives

The desired outcome of this project is to stabilize the current trail tread, provide resource users a single stable tread surface, and protect natural resources from degradation caused by pedestrian traffic along the trail corridor. To achieve these conditions the following alternative actions were considered:

No Action Alternative

- A no action alternative was considered while in the planning phase of this project. Due to the current deteriorated state of the trail with noticeable soil loss and trail widening this alternative is not preferred. Action is required to reduce natural resource impacts.

Trail Realignment

- A longer trail realignment was scoped during the planning phase of this project. Landscape characteristics and topographical features such as rock outcroppings, drainages, and low-lying vernal pools limited realignment options. An approximate 800-foot realignment was laid out to the north of the current trail. This new alignment would require extensive full bench construction, side hill retention, including rock pinning due to exposed bedrock, and rock features in steeper slopes to make it sustainable. The new alignment would follow side hill contours through a mostly mixed hardwoods forest. Tree cutting would be necessary with up to 50 hardwoods being removed. The size class of trees to be removed would be between one-inch DBH and 12-inch DBH. Because of the scope of work involved in building a new section of trail, with the inclusion of rock work, this option is not preferred. Additionally, the new alignment would cut off a section of current trail that is unimpacted by resource users.

Install a Series of Stone Steps and Risers

- The preferred management action to address resource concerns at the project location is to install a series of stone steps and risers in the already impacted trail corridor. The installation of stone steps will stabilize the soils and provide resource users a firm and stable tread to hike on. This management action is preferred over a larger trail realignment because it will achieve the objectives of the work plan, with the least impact on the surrounding environment. Project specifications are above.

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

Motorized equipment such as rock drills may be used to facilitate the construction of the stone steps during the off-peak season. No motor vehicles will be used.

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 Department of Environmental Conservation (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 CFR § 35.151 (a)]. This project is a modification to an existing trail that is not currently built to ADA standards. It would be 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 will be completed with contracted labor during the 2025 field season.

Prepared by (Name & Title): Jaime Parslow, Forester
Phone: (518) 863 4545 ext. 3004

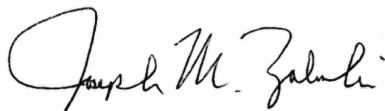
Date: 1/16/2025

Approvals:

Comments:



Regional Program Manager
Date: 1/16/2025

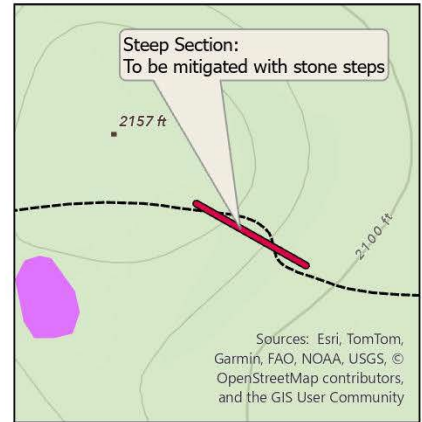
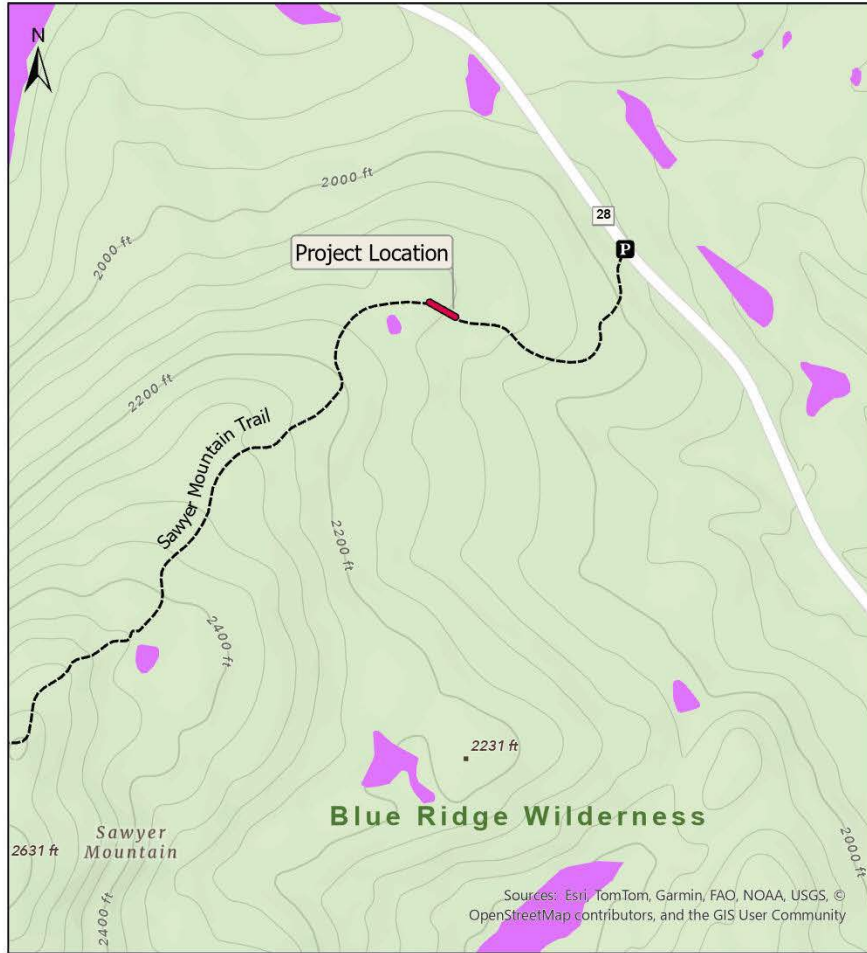


Regional Director
Date: 10/28/2025



On Behalf of the Division Director
Date: 4/28/2025

Sawyer Mountain Project Location Map

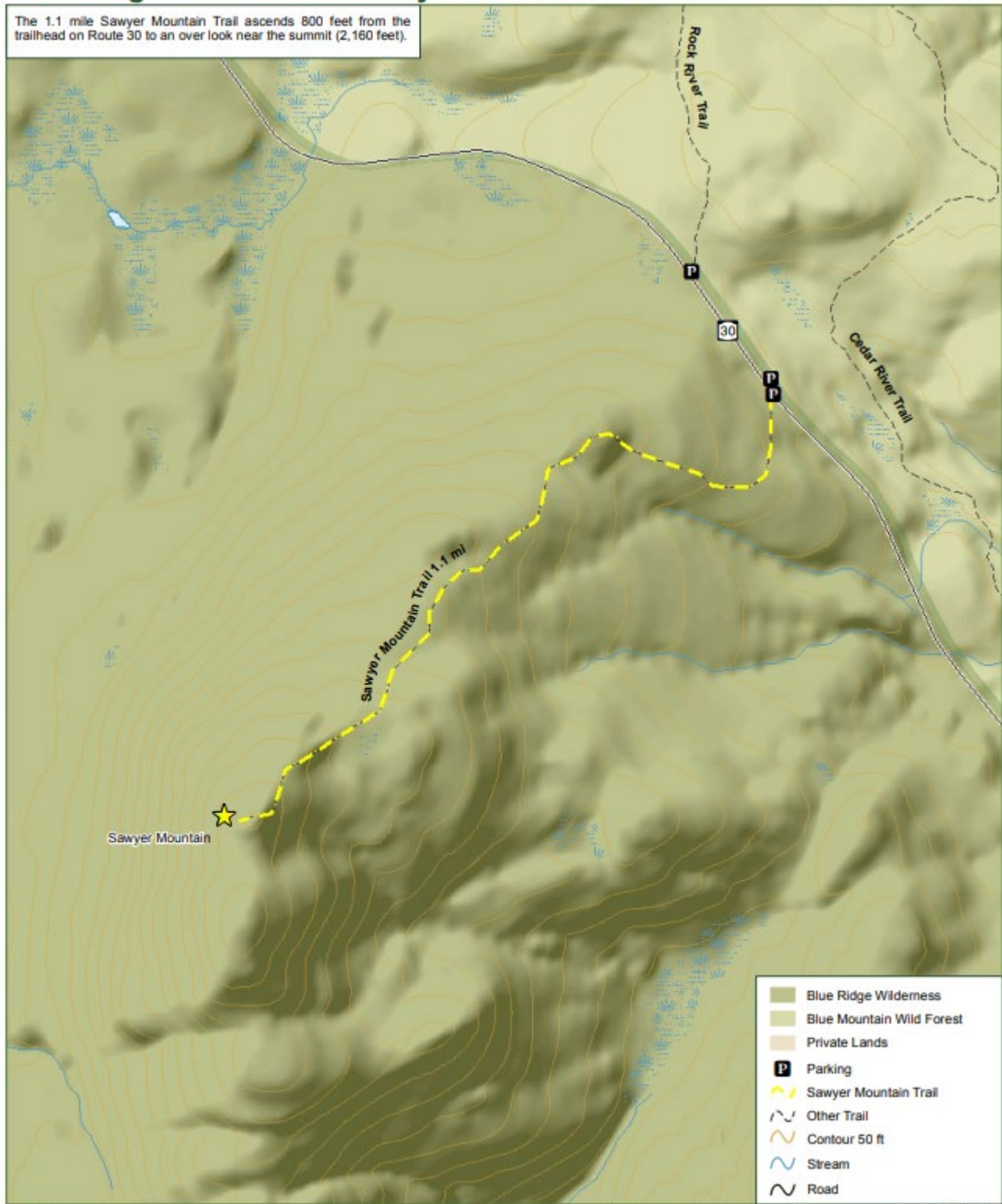


Legend

-  Trailhead & Parking Area
-  Project Location
-  Sawyer Mountain Trail
- APA Wetlands Polygon**
-  Palustrine
-  Lower perennial riverine
-  Upper perennial riverine

Blue Ridge Wilderness - Sawyer Mountain Trail

The 1.1 mile Sawyer Mountain Trail ascends 800 feet from the trailhead on Route 30 to an over look near the summit (2,160 feet).



- Blue Ridge Wilderness
- Blue Mountain Wild Forest
- Private Lands
- P Parking
- Sawyer Mountain Trail
- Other Trail
- Contour 50 ft
- Stream
- Road



Department of Environmental Conservation

Please respect private property. Stay on designated trails
 Practice Leave No Trace Principles
 Emergency contact 518-891-0235

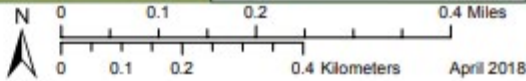




Figure 1. Project Location

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"/>	NYS DEC	Blue Ridge Wilderness UMP 2006
	Tree Cutting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jaime Parslow	
	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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Motorized equipment use contingent upon Commissioner approval.
	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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NYS DEC	
	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"/>		