

# FOREST PRESERVE DETAILED PROJECT WORK PLAN

**Fiscal Year: 2025**  
**Project # 2025- NV-001**  
**CO-WP-375**

<u>Region</u> 5	<u>Project Title</u> Watch Hill Trail Reroute Phase 2
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<u>Project Type</u>	<u>Town(s)</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Management Unit</u>
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 reduce environmental impacts associated with poor trail design, and to improve access for all resource users. Currently, the trail leading from the Route 30 parking area to Watch Hill is in good condition and used by people with varying abilities. However, the section of trail from the second outcropping to the shore of Indian Lake is eroded and provides an undesirable trail surface. Rerouting is needed to avoid the steepest section of trail and provide users safer access to experience the beach and waterfront at the end of the trail.

This project represents a continuation of work previously completed in 2024 (Project #2024-NV-007; CO-WP-333). In 2024, 0.1 mile of trail was realigned to avoid a steep section on the upper portion of the trail descending from the summit of Watch Hill to Indian Lake. While the 2024 project was underway staff identified additional alignment further down the trail. This project will extend the 2024 trail realignment downslope an additional 440 feet. This extension will allow users to avoid a steep section of trail by providing a more sustainable route that follows the natural contours of the landscape. By tying into what was done in 2024, this project will eliminate 411 feet of existing fall line trail. Current trail conditions on the descent to the lake can be slippery. Natural resource impacts like soil loss and trail widening are visible. By relocating the steepest section of this trail, the DEC is providing a better experience for the intended user group, while also mitigating negative environmental impacts associated with poor trail design.

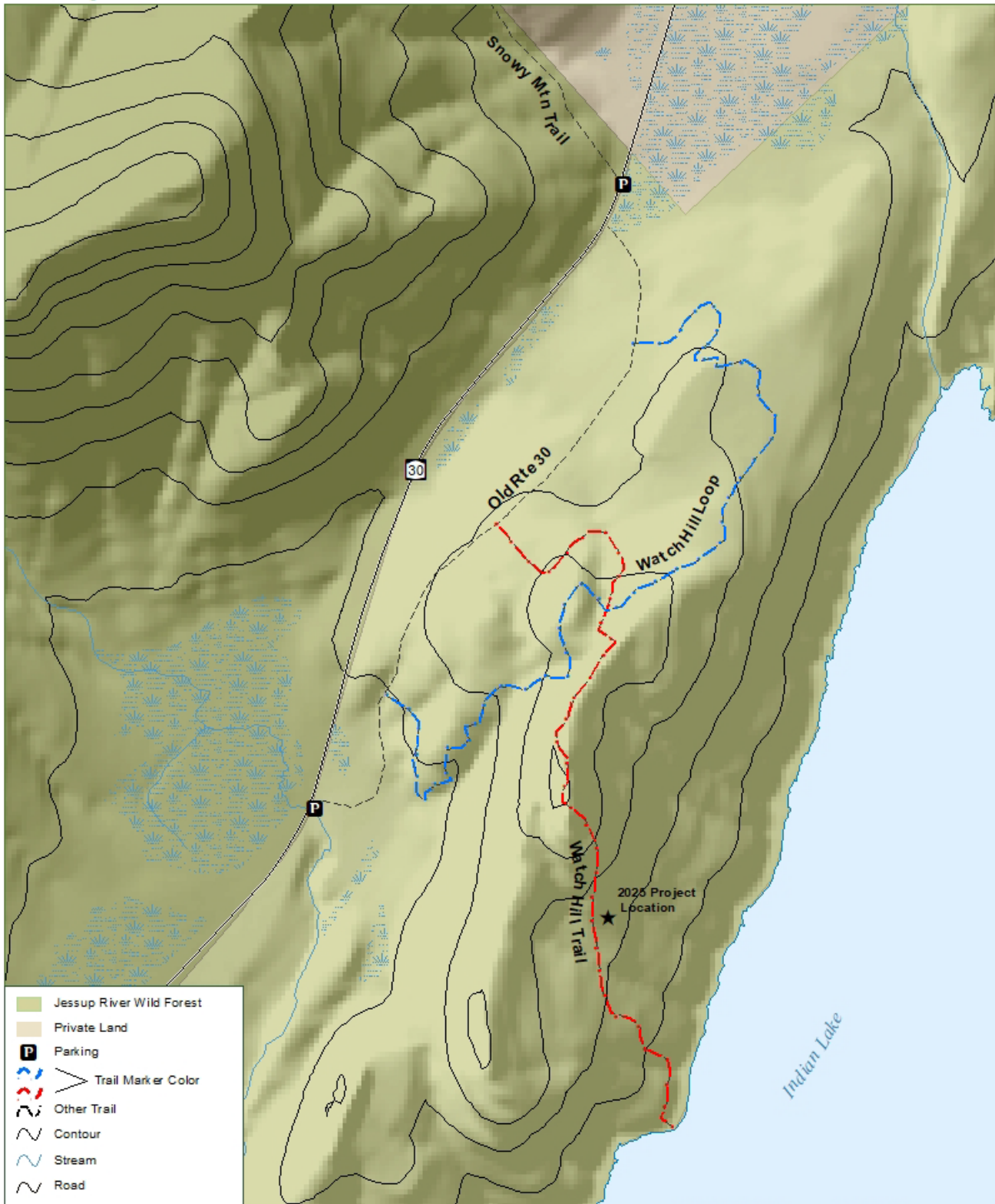
## Description of Project Specifications

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 trail realignment proposed in this work plan will be approximately 440 feet long and built with sustainable trail design. This project is necessary to avoid a steep, slippery, and rock exposed section of trail

Construction of the trail realignment will be done using hand tools. Following sustainable trail design principals, full bench construction is anticipated for the length of the realignment. Where full bench construction is not possible due to landscape constraints, trail tread may be established by pinning rocks to bedrock, installing side slope retention, or turnpiking. To establish full bench cuts, work outside of the trail corridor may be required 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 on stone steps will be installed to ensure a stable tread surface. Power hand tools may be used to assist with splitting rocks for stone steps. Rock pinning may be necessary to provide a safe and sustainable trail tread. Where bedrock is exposed, rock pinning may occur along a segment of trail up to 100 feet in length, see attached map for location. These sustainable techniques will provide users with a durable surface and minimize negative natural resource impacts. 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.

# Jessup River Wild Forest - Watch Hill



NEW YORK STATE Department of Environmental Conservation

0 0.05 0.1 0.2 Miles  
0 0.05 0.1 0.2 Kilometers

October 2022

# Jessup River Wild Forest - Watch Hill Segment 2



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

- 1.) Up to 27 trees between 1 and 3 inches in diameter at breast height (DBH) and four trees greater than 3 inches DBH may be removed (see attached tree tally form). Lateral branch trimming and removal of small (less than 1-inch DBH) trees and brush will be necessary to clear the corridor. The corridor will be cleared three feet wide and ten feet high.
- 2.) Earthwork will vary along the proposed reroute based on slope, terrain, and other landscape features. This includes earthwork to quarry rocks for pinning to bedrock and installation of side slope retention. Earthwork is necessary to ensure the trail is built with proper out-slope and is required for the installation of bench cuts, drainage dips and other sustainable trail features. 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 440 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 former trail corridor will be brushed in to discourage use.

## Analysis of Project Location and Design Alternatives

Alternative 1: 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 the 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 a more sustainable and long-term solution.

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

There will be no motorized vehicles used for this project. Power drills may be used for rock work as needed.

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 CFR § 35.151 (a)].

This project is a modification to an existing 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 2025 field season by contracted labor.

Prepared by (Name & Title): Travis Acuna, Forester 1  
Phone: 518-863-4545 ext. 3019

Date: 1/8/2025

Approvals:

Comments:



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Regional Program Manager

Date: 1/8/2025



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Regional Director

Date: 08/08/2025



On behalf of Fiona Watt

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Division Director

Date: 5/1/2025

**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"/>	DEC	JRWF UMP (2006)
	Tree Cutting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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: Watch Hill Trail Realignment

State Land Unit: Jessup River Wild Forest

County: Hamilton

Town: Indian Lake

Date Tallied: 11/25/2024

Tallied By: Travis Acuna

Species	Diameter															Total
	1 to 3	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	
Beech, Amer.	18	1	1													20
Hemlock	1															1
Maple, red	2															2
Maple, sugar	6															6
hophornbeam		2														2
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>													<b>31</b>

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".