
FOREST PRESERVE DETAILED PROJECT WORK PLAN

Fiscal Year 2025
Project # 74076 CO-WP-382

<u>Region</u> 3	<u>Project Title</u> DeBruce Environmental Education Camp Cafeteria Replacement
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<u>Project Type</u> New Construction	<u>Town(s)</u> Rockland	<u>County</u> Sullivan	<u>Management Unit</u> 3A
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Description of Desired Condition(s) for Project

The goal of this project is to replace the existing camp cafeteria and staff housing with new facilities that are in accordance with the current NYS Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code (NYS Uniform Code) in terms of ADA compliance, energy efficiency, fire protection and plumbing fixtures. The current facilities are in urgent need of repair and replacement. Both the cafeteria and staff housing are integral to the mission of the Education Camp, yet are currently uninhabitable. Further, the facilities are not ADA compliant, and the separate staff housing building is reported as uninhabitable due to water damage and mold.

DeBruce camp is not included in any Unit Management Plan (UMP). However, the DeBruce camp is in the vicinity of the Willowemoc Wild Forest, and is listed as a Supporting Facility Outside the Unit in the Willowemoc Wild Forest UMP (1991 – amended 2001 & 2006), in which it is described as: DeBruce Environmental Education Camp provides weeklong environmental education programs for young people; June - August. Since the camp is outside Willowemoc UMP, the UMP does not specifically address management and policy with respect to DeBruce camp. The project conforms to the Willowemoc UMP general goals and objectives to educate visitors to use and enjoy the wild forest without adverse environmental impacts, preserve the natural resources of the unit, and provide outdoor recreation opportunities without degrading the resource or impairing the wild forest atmosphere.

DeBruce camp is situated on over 300 acres adjacent to the Catskill Forest Preserve. Formerly a private estate and fish hatchery, DEC acquired DeBruce camp in the 1940s for a fish hatchery and converted a part of it into a conservation education camp. Operating since the 1940s, DeBruce camp was the second DEC summer camp to open and is the longest running of the four educational camps in operation today. It is the southernmost DEC summer camp located in the Catskills. DeBruce camp is an opportunity for youth to spend a week outside learning about the environment during the summer; in a time when many youths spend much time engaged with electronic media, it's a chance to get outdoors and go on hikes, camp in the woods, go fishing, and such.

DeBruce camp is within walking distance of the famous Willowemoc trout stream. It is also near the Catskill Fish Hatchery. NYS records indicate that the DeBruce Conservation Camp was originally acquired for purposes of the Catskill Mountain Fish Hatchery. Lot 234, Proposal A, 91.44 acres and Lot 486, Proposal B, 243 acres were acquired pursuant to Chapter 57 of the Laws of 1946,

specifically for hatchery purposes. Lot 486, Proposal C, 60 acres was acquired pursuant to Chapter 340, Section 8 of the Laws of 1949 which Law appropriates various sums of money for capital construction projects for the several NYS agencies. Section 8 appropriated an amount of \$6,800 for land acquisition but is silent as to the specific project or the purpose of the acquisition. It appears that Proposal C was acquired to complete acquisition of the fish hatchery, and that this facility is not forest preserve. NYS records further indicate that NYS does not carry it as forest preserve lands on the NYS Office of General Services Land Inventory and that it is not on the list of taxable forest preserve lands administered by equalization and assessment.

DeBruce camp has not been able to open for the past two years. There are two primary reasons. The first is a lack of staff. The second is that the camp needs repair. This project addresses necessary repairs, and will provide safer amenities for staff and campers. Note that the camp will open in 2025 with temporary staff housing and using the current cafeteria, which is not ADA compliant.

The proposal is to construct a new cafeteria building and staff housing cabin that will be compliant with the NYS energy code and fire protection provisions, as well as ADA accessibility and other aspects of the NYS Uniform Code. The new buildings will be ADA compliant; this is consistent with the goals outlined in NYSDEC's Catskill Park State Land Master Plan. A significant primary goal in the Master Plan is to provide ADA accessibility to the outdoor recreation facilities under its authority, to the extent that measures to provide such accessibility will not degrade the fundamental nature of a facility's recreational environment. The NYSDEC uses the US Access Board's Final Guidance for Federal Outdoor Developed Areas as amended in (2013) (Access Boards Guidelines) as guidance for complying with the ADA.

The attached binder to DeBruce work plan contains a map of the proposed work location with respect to existing structures, and a tree tally count for the proposed project.

Description of Project Specifications

Overall, this project includes construction of an expanded parking lot and two buildings with associated walkways and utility connections. The approximate footprint of the proposed cafeteria is 5560 square feet (SF), and the proposed staff housing is 1551 SF. The area of the proposed paved parking lot and that of the proposed sidewalk is approximately 10480 SF and 2770 SF respectively. The proposed parking lot will have parking for 10 vehicles, including one ADA parking space, and provide a truck turnaround path for deliveries.

A tree tally was completed as required for the project. This resulted in 31 trees 3 inches or greater diameter at breast height (DBH) and 31 trees between 1 and 3 inches DBH for removal. The attachments provide tree tallies and species counts for the project. The attached maps provide a broad overview of the project limits where tree cutting will occur. All cutting will occur within the footprint of past development on the property.

The condemned staff housing building will be abandoned and the existing cafeteria no longer be used as a cafeteria and overflow staff housing; however the existing buildings are not being demolished as part of this project. The cafeteria may be used for occasional staff training. The abandoned staff housing is locked and boarded to prevent entry.

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

To minimize tree cutting, new underground service trenches will be excavated along the location of existing utilities where possible, and the new utilities will be installed in combined trenches where possible. Overall, these combined trenches are narrower than separate or individual trenches would be.

With construction set to occur during the off-season, the camp paths, roads and parking areas will be used to stockpile excavated soil and construction materials. Proper fencing and barricading will be used in these areas to prevent damage to areas outside the final footprint of the project. Furthermore, trench widths will be minimized by employing sheeting, shoring or shielding/trench box methods rather than sloping due to a lack of soil stability at the project site. Any disapproved excavated material will be removed and disposed of off-site. With the total area of soil disturbance estimated at 55,000 square feet, areas to be lawn or field will receive 6 inches of topsoil and turf will be established to blend the project into the setting. These practices will help mitigate and minimize the projects impact on surrounding natural resources to the extent practicable.

There are no streams, waterbodies or wetlands that will be affected by this project. There are no rare, endangered, or threatened animal or plant species within a ¼ mile of the project area.

Analysis of Project Location and Design Alternatives

The proposed project is at an existing DEC environmental education camp. The design was chosen because it largely places new facilities in previously disturbed areas that are designated for intensive use.

The following alternatives were considered:

- Continue using the existing cafeteria and staff housing. These facilities are not ADA compliant, and the existing separate staff housing building is condemned due to water damage and mold.
Upgrade the existing building to be ADA compliant / compliant with the Uniform Code. There are two major drawbacks to this alternative: the distance and slope between the existing buildings and camper facilities make it a poor option for ADA compliance, as does the layout of the cafeteria. Additionally, the deterioration of the existing staff housing is significantly beyond repair. Failure to provide safe staff housing would preclude the future operation of the environmental education camp.
- Directional drilling for excavation instead of trenching – this introduces the uncertainty of local geology which can cause re-routing of the drilling, additional entry/exit points (increased soil disturbance) and additional tree removal if shallow bedrock or large boulders are present. This geology is common in the area. Furthermore, adds a significant cost to the project.
- Removal of all facilities without replacement. Failure to address the deteriorated condition of the buildings presents the possibility of the permanent closure of the environmental education camp due to a lack of infrastructure that is necessary to meet current health and safety codes.

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

This project will employ the use of various types of motorized construction equipment and motor vehicles. Hydraulic utility bucket trucks, excavators and dump trucks will be used for work associated with electric lines, water lines and trench digging. Chainsaws and a chipper will be used for tree cutting and removal.

Description of Applicable Standards for Accessibility by People with Disabilities

The new buildings, parking, sidewalks and access routes will be fully in compliance with the ADA standards and the NYS Uniform Code.

Other Relevant Considerations

None

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Date: 5/5/2025

Approvals:

Comments:



Regional Program Manager

Date: Click to enter a date



Regional Director

Date: 8/4/2025



On behalf of Fiona Watt

Division Director

Date: 8/5/2025

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	McGiver	
	SPDES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	McGiver	Renewed
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"/>		
	Tree Cutting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	McGiver	
	Protected Native Plants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Historic Preservation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Corey Walsh	pending
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Walsh	Pending
	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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chris Bates	DEC CEO permit pending
	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"/>	McGiver	DOH has requested review	