

# FOREST PRESERVE DETAILED PROJECT WORK PLAN

**Fiscal Year 2025  
Project # CO-WP-388**

<u>Region</u> 3	<u>Project Title</u> Ridge Trail Realignment
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<u>Project Type</u>	<u>Town(s)</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Management Unit</u>
New Construction	Shandaken	Ulster	Shandaken Wild Forest

Description of Desired Condition(s) for Project

This project is a 0.17 mile reroute of the Ridge Trail. Since the completion of the 2005 Shandaken Wild Forest Unit Management Plan (UMP), approximately 610.4 acres of the “Big Indian Plateau acquisition” on the eastern slopes of Belleayre Mountain were classified and added to the Shandaken Wild Forest unit. In the 2021 revision of the 2005 Shandaken Wild Forest UMP, DEC approved the development of a mountain bike and cross-country ski-trail system on the newly acquired lands on the eastern slopes of Belleayre Mountain traversing both the Shandaken Wild Forest and the Belleayre Mountain Ski Center Intensive Use Area. The construction of the trail network was approved in the 2023 Shandaken Wild Forest Mountain Bike Trails Detailed Forest Preserve Work Plan.

The initial network relied upon some preexisting abandoned woods roads. Many of these woods roads, including the one which the “Ridge Trail” currently coincides with, were constructed at steep, unsustainable grades that often exceed 20%. This work plan proposes the necessary realignment of the “Ridge Trail,” which was not anticipated at the time of the 2023 work plan. A realignment that follows a contour curvilinear alignment along a sustainable grade is necessary to facilitate both an enjoyable trail experience as well as proper drainage and erosion control to protect the wild forest character of the unit.

The desired condition for the informally named “Ridge Trail” is to provide a positive trail user experience that is appropriate for the Forest Preserve setting without showing signs of erosion, degradation, or other negative impact to the natural resources in the area.

Description of Project Specifications

Treadway development and grading will be kept to a minimal earthen treadway along a sustainable grade. The proposed realignment measures approximately 917 feet (0.17 miles) in length with an average treadway width of 4 feet and grades ranging from 5-10%. The majority of the trail will traverse level and rolling terrain with minimal slope following a curvilinear alignment to match the terrain. Three switchbacks will be incorporated into the realignment to keep the trail at the desired

grades. Areas of wet or poorly drained soils will be avoided in order to mitigate erosion. Crowning will be minimal but will be built occasionally in areas where the trail route is not conducive to shedding water through outslope.

The new trail will be built for mountain biking but will also accommodate hikers and trail runners. High quality mountain biking experiences are created through the development of riding opportunities that incorporate trail styles appealing to mountain bikers. The singletrack trail is designed as a trail narrow to the point that users must generally travel in single file. Tread surface will be firm and stable with some variability.

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

- A) Trees to be removed.** – Whenever possible, trail construction will be completed with the intention of cutting as few trees as possible. Attached is a tally of all trees required for the construction of the new sustainably aligned route. A total of 40 trees will be removed, 23 of which are between 1 and 3 inches diameter at breast height (DBH).
- B) Earthwork and Disturbance.** - Some earthwork will be necessary in order to provide adequate slope along sidehills and to install water control devices such as drainage dips. Trail benches will be composed of consolidated mineral soil, and no outside fill will be used in development of the trail bench. Soil used for the purpose of crowning will be sourced from natural soil pits in the immediate vicinity of the project site.
- C) Impacts to Streams, Waterbodies, and Wetlands.** – The realignment will not impact streams, waterbodies, or wetlands. Drainage devices and erosion control measures such as grade reversals and drainage dips will be instituted to divert the flow of surface water runoff off the trail and subsequently improve forest hydrology. As aforementioned, the current trail is aligned along a steep woods road that is susceptible to severe erosion damage during rain events.
- D) Identification of Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species.** – No rare, threatened, or endangered species are found in the project area.

#### Analysis of Project Location and Design Alternatives

##### **Alternative 1: Install water control devices along the existing grade.**

This alternative was not chosen for two reasons. First, erosion would still occur along the trail despite the water control devices due to the extreme grade of the existing woods road. The anticipated erosion to the trail would require frequent maintenance to repair both the drainage devices and sections of trail impacted by such erosion. Second, the existing grade is too steep to provide an enjoyable and safe mountain biking experience for the majority of riders. The installation of water control devices to reduce erosion would likely further impact the rideability and enjoyment for most riders.

##### **Alternative 2: No action.**

This alternative was not chosen because the lack of improvements to the current trail alignment would create downhill bicycling conditions that would cause riders to travel at unsafe and excessive speeds given the slope. In addition, the current alignment of this section of the “Ridge Trail” would be highly susceptible to erosion.

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

Trail crews will perform work with a combination of hand and mechanized equipment. A powered wheelbarrow and a mini excavator will be used to perform the rough trail excavations and to set the treadway and water control devices for increased sustainability in the finished trail. Final shaping will be performed with hand tools. Excavation into the trail bed will be conducted only when necessary to remove protruding roots and rocks which pose a hazard to users of the trail and for creation of trail benches to enhance sustainability of the trail. Any excavation into the trail bed to remove protruding

roots or rocks that cause a hole, will be filled with a combination of mineral soil/aggregate mix and fully compacted.

Trail construction will require motorized equipment to carry in materials and tools in excess of 40 pounds and to aid in the efficiency of trail construction. To make the most efficient use of time during the construction season, it will be necessary to allow the entrance of small, tracked mini excavators and walk behind wheelbarrows. Access will be granted for motorized equipment via existing trail and roadways. During construction, operators of low impact motorized equipment will conduct their work in optimal environmental conditions and in a manner that will not contribute to any potential degradation of the wild forest setting. All work will be completed with appropriate DEC oversight.

#### Description of Applicable Standards for Accessibility by People with Disabilities

Consistent with ADA requirements, DEC incorporates accessibility for people with disabilities into siting, planning, construction, and alteration of recreational facilities and assets supporting them. In addition, Title II of the ADA requires, in part, that services, programs, and activities of DEC, when viewed in their entirety, are readily accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. DEC is not required to take any action which would result in a fundamental alteration to the nature of the service, program, or activity, or would present an undue financial or administrative burden. When accommodating access to a program, DEC is not necessarily required to make each existing facility and asset accessible, as long as the program is accessible by other means or at a different facility. The Ridge Trail is existing and is not an accessible trail. This relocated trail segment will be constructed with similar techniques to the existing trail, as it would not be pragmatic or serve to increase accessibility to construct just one portion of this trail to meet accessible trail requirements.

#### Other Relevant Considerations

Treadway construction will be routed to avoid cutting any large trees and will be installed at a sustainable grade using Best Management Practices, such as reverse grades, whenever possible. Tree cutting will be limited by passing around large trees and cutting smaller understory trees blocking the route. Implementation of this plan is expected to manage and reduce recreational impact by concentrating use on maintained trails.


Prepared by (Name & Title): Ian Thompson, Forester  
Trainee 1  
Phone: 845-256-3083


Date: 6/3/2025

*Pine Rocks*

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Regional Program  
Manager Date: 6/5/25

  
Regional Director  
Date: ~~Click to enter a date~~ 7/18/2025

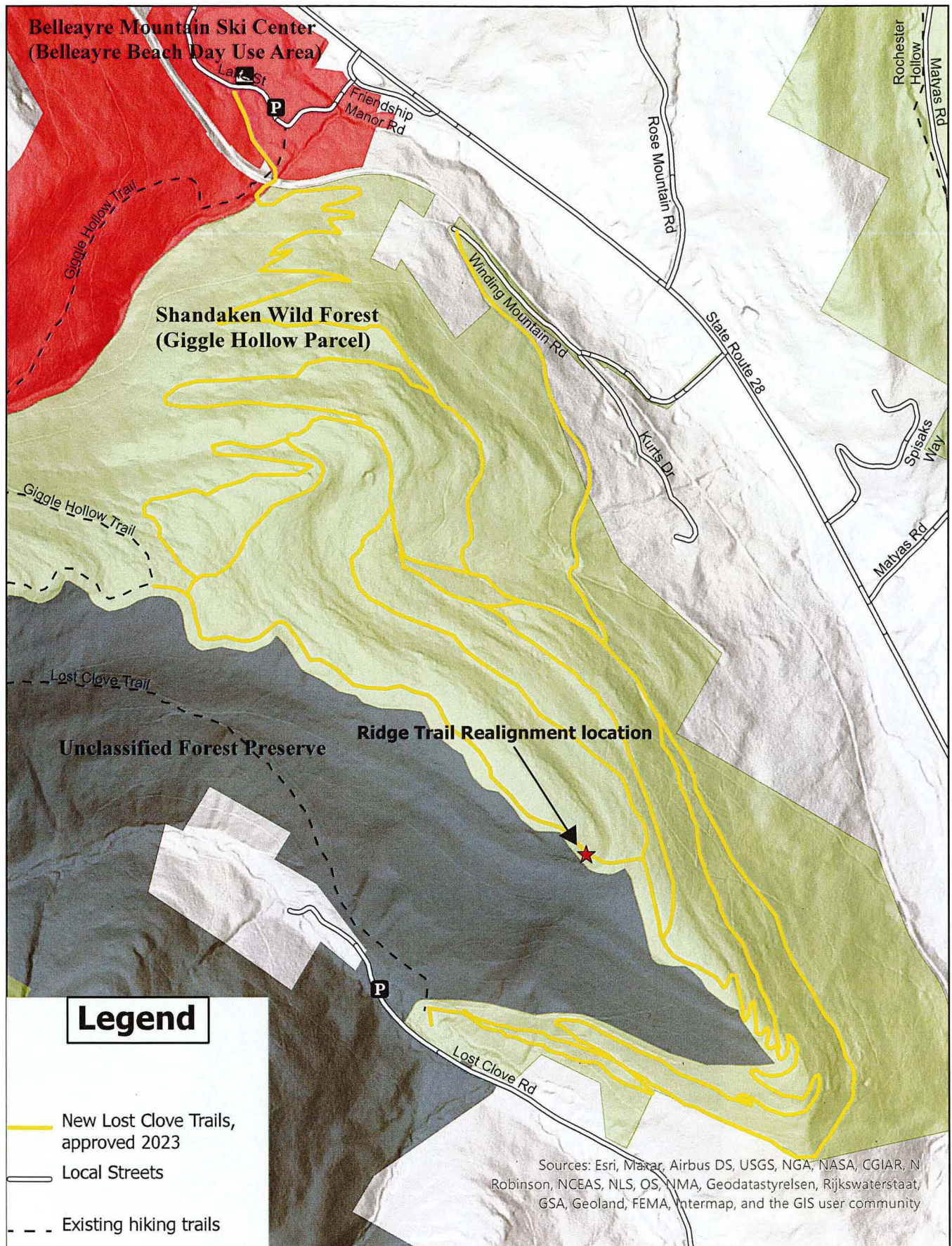
 On behalf of Fiona Watt  
Division Director  
Date: 7/14/2025

**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"/>	Ian Thompson	
	Tree Cutting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ian Thompson	
	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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pine Roehrs	
	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"/>		



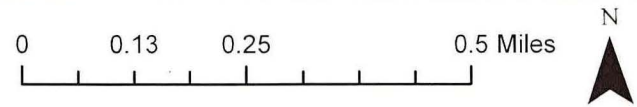
# Shandaken Wild Forest - Giggle Hollow Trail System (approved in 2023 through Work Plan #287)



## Legend

- New Lost Clove Trails, approved 2023
- Local Streets
- - - Existing hiking trails

Sources: Esri, Maxar, Airbus DS, USGS, NGA, NASA, CGIAR, N Robinson, NCEAS, NLS, OS, NMA, Geodatastyrelsen, Rijkswaterstaat, GSA, Geoland, FEMA, Intermap, and the GIS user community



# Giggle Hollow Trail System - Ridge Trail Realignment

