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# FOREST PRESERVE DETAILED PROJECT WORK PLAN

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**Fiscal Year 2025**  
**Project # CO-WP-391**

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| <u>Region</u><br>6 | <u>Project Title</u><br>Scusa Access Trail Relocations 2025 |
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|   |                        |                           |  |
|---|------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| <u>Project Type</u><br>Modification of<br>Existing<br>Structure/Improvement | <u>Town(s)</u><br>Webb | <u>County</u><br>Herkimer | <u>Management Unit</u><br>Ha-De-Ron-Dah Wilderness |
|---|------------------------|---------------------------|--|

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Description of Desired Condition(s) for Project

*Current Conditions*

The Scusa Access Trail, a hiking trail per the respective 1995 Ha-De-Ron-Dah Wilderness Unit Management Plan, is the primary access point for the southern end of this Forest Preserve Unit and popular destinations such as Middle Settlement and Middle Branch Lakes. Past work included an installation of a series of stone steps along with a minor trail relocation on a steep slope at the southern end of this trail. Additional attention is needed on another relatively steep slope and a wet section to the north to produce a more resilient and sustainable foot trail

*Desired Conditions*

The objective of this project is to produce a more hiker friendly and sustainable foot path with less trail tread impacts. Two small trail relocations will be employed to avoid an eroded slope (as is the case in the first location) or a wet, saturated section (at the second site).

## Description of Project Specifications

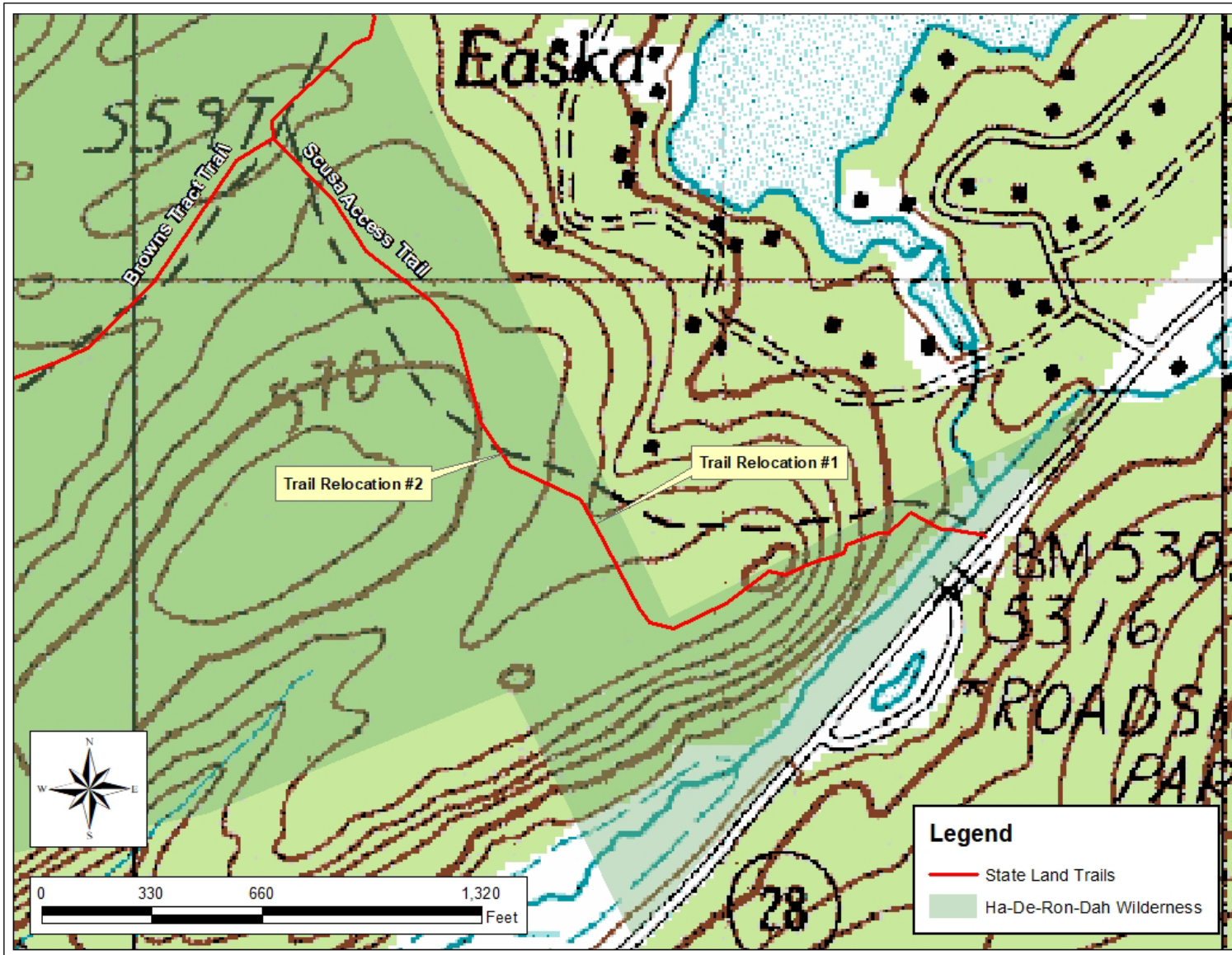
### *Trail Relocation #1:*

Around 0.28 miles north of State Route 28, the Scusa Access Trail travels straight down a steep slope. This section of trail, although short, is beginning to erode. Installing a sweeping switchback to the west will provide a gentler slope and opportunities to shed water from the trail through grade reversals. The proposed trail relocation, which has been flagged on the ground with pink flagging, will be around 120 feet in length. A full bench cut with a slight outslope, both producing a trail tread width of 24" will be required for the entire length of this re-route. If needed, mineral soil will be mined from adjacent pits to aid in trail tread construction. These pits will only be in upland areas, kept as small as possible, and reclaimed with leaves and brush once no longer being used. Vegetation will be cleared an additional two feet on each side of the trail, resulting in a 6-foot-wide corridor. In total, 7 trees under 3" D.B.H. and no trees greater than 3" D.B.H. will have to be cut.

Following installation of this new section of trail, the avoided portion will be closed off, naturalized with leaves and woody debris, and no longer maintained as a hiking trail.



Looking south at the Scusa Access Trail; the proposed trail relocation will bypass this section to the west (right).



Location Map



## Trail Relocation #2

Around 300 feet north of the previous location, the Scusa Access Trail crosses a lower lying depression. Some hikers have begun traveling on the uphill (west) side of this trail. Utilizing parts of this unofficial herd path, a trail relocation that generally parallels the official trail is proposed. Around 200 feet of trail, established with a full bench cut to a 24" tread width will be required. The corridor will also be cleared of any vegetation within 2 feet of either side of the trail. No trees greater than 1" D.B.H. will have to be cut for this new section of trail.

Following construction, the avoided section of trail will be closed off and no longer maintained.



Looking north at the wet section of trail to be avoided. The proposed trail relocation will be on the uphill (west, or in the photograph, left) side of the existing path.

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

Through installing these two minor trail relocations, the impact currently being experienced from either erosion (relocation #1) or wet trail tread (relocation #2) can be mitigated, if not avoided altogether. The trail layout proposed seeks to work with the topography, and integrate drainage structures, ultimately producing a more resilient trail to the environmental factors and use experienced. Overall, consideration of the alternatives (see discussion below) supports the proposed

actions as being the least impactful, with the least number of inputs applied, to achieve the desired results.

Following installation, any disturbed areas, including but not limited to “borrow pits” where mineral soil is to be mined for trail construction, will be naturalized with leaves and brush.

### Analysis of Project Location and Design Alternatives

*No Action:* Without any management intervention, the existing trail will remain unchanged and will continue to degrade over time. This consequence is not desirable environmentally due to the impact to the trail surface or from a recreational standpoint as a less desirable trail for its users has been produced.

*Closing the Trail:* This option would not be socially acceptable given the demand for access to the Ha-De-Ron-Dah Wilderness from State Route 28. As a result, this choice was rejected.

*Installing Bog Bridging:* Underneath this option, treated lumber would be transported in to construct a boardwalk through the area proposed to be bypassed by Trail Relocation #2. An estimated 200 feet of bog bridging would be constructed. Given the expense required to purchase materials and transport them to the site (without the aid of motorized vehicles), as well as future maintenance costs (both monetarily and in further disturbance to the site) from replacing these resulting structures once they reach the end of their serviceable lifespan, this alternative was rejected.

*Installing Stone Steps or Stepping Stones Instead of Trail Relocations:* At the first proposed trail relocation, stone steps could be installed to harden the trail and guide hikers up the hillside. Stepping stones could be installed at the second site to harden the trail as well. While both stone options would achieve the desired results at their respective sites, a great amount of time and effort would be required to mine, transport, and set these rocks. Installing trail relocations instead presents the option that will achieve the desired results for a lower labor cost.

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

There will not be any motorized vehicles used. However, a chainsaw may be used to clear trees and brush during the appropriate maintenance window in either the spring or the fall. With the limited tree cutting involved, it is likely that hand saws will only be used.

### 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 Scusa Access Trail is existing and is not an accessible trail, and it would not be practical to make

it such due to terrain. These relocated trail segments, and trail hardening, will be constructed with similar techniques to the existing trail, as it would not be pragmatic or serve to increase accessibility to construct just portions of this trail to meet accessibility requirements.

Other Relevant Considerations

*Natural Heritage Data*

A check of the NYS Natural Heritage Database indicates that there are not any known rare, threatened, or endangered species within the immediate area of this proposed trail relocation.

*Cultural Resources*

A check of the available Archeological sites in DEC's GIS database indicates that there are not any known cultural resources at or near the project area.

*Non-Native Invasive Species*

Currently, there are not any known non-native invasive species in the immediate area of this project. To help prevent any from becoming established, sanitation efforts consisting of cleaning any hand tools and boots of trail crew workers prior to mobilizing to the site should be employed.

Prepared by (Name & Title): Michael Marsh, Forester  
Phone: 315-866-6330

Date: 7/1/2025

Approvals:

Comments:



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Regional Program Manager  
Date: 7/2/2025



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Regional Director  
Date: 11/18/2025



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On Behalf of the Division Director

Date: 9/3/2025

**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 type="checkbox"/>            |            |                                     |
| Mineral Resources    | Mining                                       | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            |                                     |
| Materials Management | Solid Waste Mgt. Fac.                        | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            |                                     |
| Water                | Dam Safety Review                            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            |                                     |
|                      | Const. in Flood Hazard                       | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            |                                     |
|                      | Public Water Supply                          | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            |                                     |
|                      | SPDES  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            |                                     |
| Spills Management    | Petro. Bulk Storage                          | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            |                                     |
| Lands and Forests    | Unit Management Plan                         | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |            |                                     |
|                      | Tree Cutting                                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            | Approval as part of this work plan. |
|                      | Protected Native Plants                      | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            |                                     |
|                      | Historic Preservation                        | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            |                                     |
| Fish and Wildlife    | Freshwater Wetlands                          | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            |                                     |
|                      | Wild Scenic & Rec. River                     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            |                                     |
| Compliance Services  | Other Protection of Waters                   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            |                                     |
|                      | EAF  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            | See attached                        |
|                      | Negative Declaration                         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            | See attached                        |
|                      | Env. Impact Statement                        | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            |                                     |
|                      | Water Quality Cert.                          | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            |                                     |
| DEC (other)          | CP-17  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |            |                                     |
|                      | Commissioner (aircraft, motorized equipment) | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            |                                     |
|                      | Flight Request                               | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            |                                     |
|                      | Contract Clearance Sh.                       | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            |                                     |
|                      | DOB Exemption                                | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            |                                     |
| Other Agencies       | APA MOU                                      | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |            | Minor trail reroute <0.25 miles, NA |
|                      | APA Wetlands Permit                          | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |            | No wetlands involved                |
|                      | Corps. of Engineers                          | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |            |                                     |
|                      | Building Permits                             | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            |                                     |
|                      | Local Permits                                | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            |                                     |
|                      | Easements                                    | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            |                                     |
|                      | Highway Enter DOT                            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            |                                     |

|  |                     |                          |                          |  |  |
|--|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|
|  | Wastewater Disposal | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |  |
|--|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|