

FOREST PRESERVE DETAILED PROJECT WORK PLAN

Fiscal Year 2025-2026
Project # 2025-ORDA-004
CO-WP-393

<u>Region</u> 5	<u>Project Title</u> Whiteface Mountain Lift Replacement
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<u>Project Type</u> Modification of Existing Facility	<u>Town(s)</u> Wilmington	<u>County</u> Essex	<u>Management Unit</u> Whiteface Mountain Intensive Use Area
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Description of Desired Condition(s) for Project

Existing Conditions

Both the Little Whiteface and Mountain Run lifts (G & H) cause skier congestion at the top terminal of the mid-station unload of G and on the trails when both lifts are operating at full capacity. Both lift G and H have been identified as needing upgrades, as mentioned in the 2018 Amendment to the 2004 Unit Management Plan. The action to remove the Mountain Run Lift (H) and replace the Little Whiteface (G) was approved in the 1996 UMP for Whiteface Mountain. Please refer to the 2022 UMP for Whiteface Mountain "Table 1 Status of Management Actions" under "Previously Approved Action – Lift Improvements" attached to this application. The Little Whiteface Lift spans from the intersection of the Upper and Lower Valley trails to the summit of Little Whiteface Mountain, approximately 4,280 feet.

Desired Conditions

This approved project aims to improve the Little Whiteface Lift, thereby improving the skier experience, which will be conducted in two phases. The project's first phase is permissible before August 1st, starting at Tower 10 and moving downward. Tower 10 is approximately 670 meters from the Bicknell Thrush at the top of Little Whiteface. The second phase will involve any construction work above the mid-station and commence after August 1st.

Description of Project Specifications

Please see the highlighted portion in Figure 2, attached to this application, showing the location of the Little Whiteface Lift/Lift G and removing Mountain Run Lift/Lift H. The first phase, highlighted in blue, is permissible before August 1st, and the second phase, highlighted in orange, will be completed after August 1st. The project will include minor blasting and regrading. It is important to note that the removal of any trees will not be necessary.

Before August 1st drilling and blasting are permissible to occur at Tower 10 (elevation 3,041.00 feet) and continue down to Tower 8 (elevation 2,810.98 feet), which is located below the Midstation Terminal. Maine Drilling & Blasting (MD&B) will drill and blast a 10-foot by 10-foot area to a depth of approximately six feet.

Following this, G.W. Tatro (GWT) will excavate the foundations and prepare them for concrete forms and rebar from Tower 10 to the Bottom Terminal. Once the rebar for Towers 10 through the Bottom Terminal has been inspected, Skytrac will use a helicopter for one day to transport and pour concrete into the tower forms.

After August 1st, once the restriction period for the Bicknell's Thrush has ended, MD&B will mobilize to the top terminal to blast any rock that interferes with the installation of the terminal foundation. Subsequently, GWT will excavate and prepare the site for the terminal's concrete forms and rebar. After the rebar is inspected, a helicopter will be used for two days, approximately fourteen days apart, to transport and place the concrete into the forms and to set up steel towers for tower locations 1 through 8. Once the concrete for the top terminal and towers 10 through 8 has cured, a helicopter will again be utilized for one day to transport and place the top terminal steel and steel towers 10 through 8.

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

The creation of phasing for this project is intended to eliminate any potential impact to the Bicknell Thrush. After consulting with the Wildlife Staff from the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), a 250-meter buffer zone was established around the Bicknell Thrush. The first phase is designed to be approximately 670 meters from the identified Bicknell Thrush. The second phase after August 1st will require excavation and minor blasting at the top terminal to install the foundations. Please see the attached Lift Line Profile document on page 12 and the proposed work schedule. This project will not impact any wetlands or waterbodies, and there will be no adverse effects on any rare, threatened, or endangered species. Please refer to the wetland delineation provided in this application.

Analysis of Project Location and Design Alternatives

The replacement of the Little Whiteface Lift/Lift G and the removal of the Mountain Run Lift/Lift H are imperative, as a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis demonstrates that this option is more advantageous and substantially enhances skier safety during lift operation. This project was reassessed during the 2022 UMP for Whiteface Mountain and was found to be the appropriate solution for the Lift G/Lift H replacement.

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

To effectively replace the Little Whiteface Lift and remove the Mountain Run Lift, we will utilize motorized equipment, including chainsaws, excavators, telehandlers, bulldozers, skidders, bucket loaders, and UTVs. Please see the "GW TATRO INVENTORY EPA 25" document. A helicopter will be used to transport equipment and materials to Little Whiteface Mountain. The helicopter will be used for one day during the first phase, operating at elevations of up to or below 3,080 feet. After August 1st, a helicopter will be used again for two days.

Description of Applicable Standards for Accessibility by People with Disabilities

Whiteface Mountain provides many opportunities for adaptive winter recreation at the mountain. Instructors are trained in adaptive winter recreation practices.

Other Relevant Considerations

This project has been developed with a particular emphasis on the Bicknell Thrush, especially considering that a portion of the work is located at elevations exceeding 2,800 feet. We have appropriately created phases for this project in an effort to minimize any impact to the Bicknell Thrush. Please find the “Whiteface Mtn Bicknell’s Thrush Survey Report 2025” attached to this application.

Prepared by (Name & Title): Jordan Clymer, Environmental Compliance Manager

Date: 6/27/2025

Phone: (518) 524-3679

Approvals:

Comments:



Regional Program Manager

Date: 7/12/2025



Regional Director

Date: 8/21/2025



On behalf of Fiona Watt

Division Director

Date: 8/21/2025

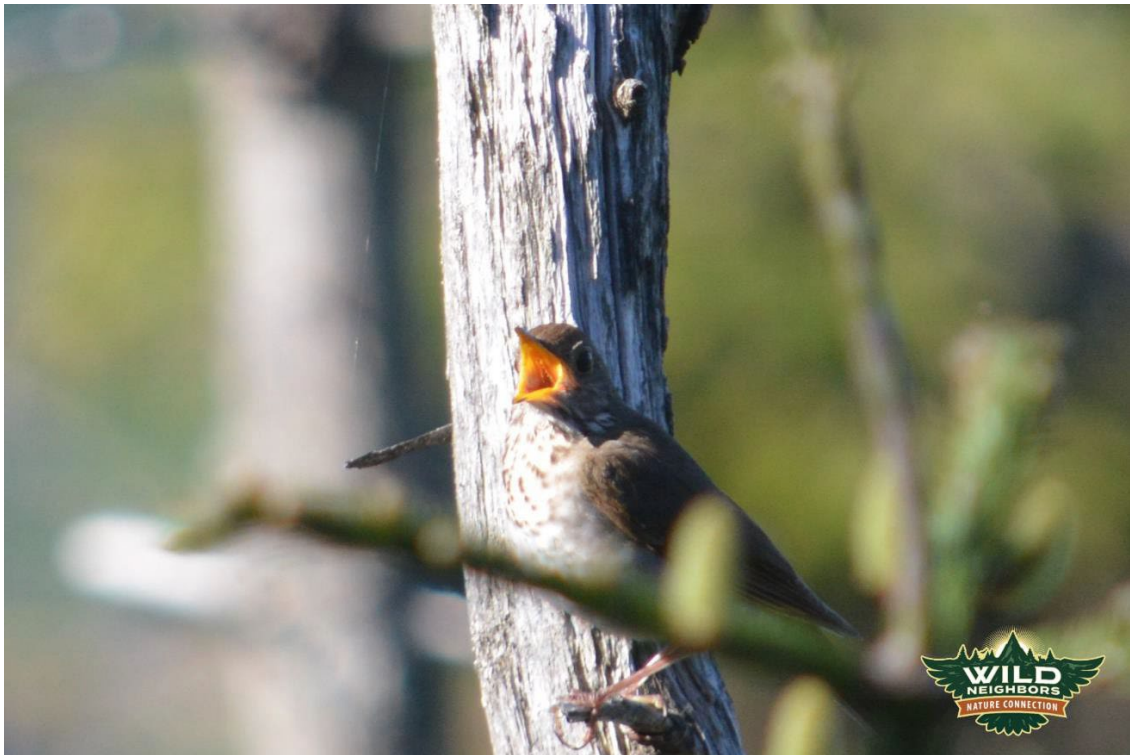
REGULATORY CLEARANCE CHECKLIST – STATE LANDS and CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROJECTS

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"/>		
	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"/>		

Previously Approved Action - Ski Trail Widening			
45	Easy Way	Widen to approximately 80' to improve beginner skiability.	Approved in 2018. Partially Complete.
26	Easy Street	Widen to between 100-120' to improve beginner skiability.	Approved in 2018. Completed.
46	Upper Boreen	Trail is currently very narrow, less than 30' wide. Widen to between 40'-100' where adjacent terrain allows	Approved in 2018. Partially Complete.
82	Boreen loop	Widen up to 80' where terrain allows, to improve beginner skiability.	Approved in 2018. Not yet implemented.
72	Parkway Exit	Widen up to 120' to improve congestion at the bottom of Draper's Drop during race training	Approved in 2018. Construction planned for 2021.
71	Draper's Drop	Widen up to 135' (40m) to meet FIS homologation standards.	Approved in 2018. Construction planned for 2021.
34	Bobcat	Widen to between 70-120' to improve connection from Boreen and beginner skiability.	Approved in 2018. Construction planned for 2021.
36	Flying Squirrel	Widen up to approximately 100' to improve beginner skiability.	Approved in 2018. Construction planned for 2021.
42	Runner Up	Widen narrow connector between Boreen and Moose to improve connection	Approved in 2018. Construction planned for 2021.
43	Moose	Widen to between 100-120' to improve beginner skiability.	Approved in 2018. Construction planned for 2021.
37	Porcupine Pass	Widen where possible to improve skiability and connection from learning area to Base area.	Approved in 2018. Construction planned for 2021.
-	Learning Area	Widen learning area to accommodate new surface lift, improve fall line and expand learn to ski area and operations	Approved in 2018. Partially complete.
81 (3a in 2006)	Niagara	Widen to 170' to meet FIS Downhill Homologation Standards.	Approved in 2006. Not yet completed
30	Mixing Bowl	Widen to improve beginner skiability.	Approved in 2004. 2021 Update: Widening No Longer Proposed, Action abandoned.
48	Ladies Bridge	Widen to meet homologation standards	Approved in 2004, Not yet completed
49	Lower Gap	Widen to meet homologation standards	Approved in 2004, Not yet completed
12	Upper Empire	Widen to improve skiability.	Approved in 1996, Not yet completed
13	Upper Mackenzie	Widen to improve skiability.	Approved in 1996, Not yet completed
15	Upper Wilderness	Widen to improve skiability.	Approved in 1996, Not yet completed
21	Lower Thruway	Widen to improve skiability.	Approved in 1996, Not yet completed, Superseded by 2021 Action
22	Upper Valley	Widen to 120' to improve skiability, relieve bottleneck.	Approved in 1996, Not yet completed
23	Lower Valley	Widen short section near Mid-Station	Approved in 1996, 2004, partially completed
24	Burton's	Widen from approx. 30' to 100' to improve skiability.	Approved in 1996, 2004. Construction planned for 2022.
28	Danny's Bridge	Widen to improve skiability.	Approved in 1996, Completed.
25	Broadway	Widen to meet homologation standards	Approved in 1996, 2004, Not yet completed
27	Boreen	Widen to meet homologation standards	Approved in 1996, 2004, Not yet completed
34	Bobcat	Widen to improve beginner skiability.	Approved in 1996, partially completed
35	Otter	Widen to improve beginner skiability.	Approved in 1996, partially completed
36	Flying Squirrel	Widen to improve beginner skiability.	Approved in 1996, completed.
40	Bobcat Chute	Widen to improve beginner skiability.	Approved in 1996, not yet undertaken.
42	Runner Up	Widen to improve beginner skiability.	Approved in 1996, not yet undertaken.
2 Ski Lifts			
Lift D	New Bear Den to Midstation Lift with midstation offload	install new detachable quad between Bear Den and relocated Midstation Lodge area with a midstation at Boreen around the same elevation as Lower Gap	New Action Item, 2021 UMP amendment
Previously Approved Action - Lift Improvements			
Lift A	Mixing Bowl	Upgrade from double chair to triple chair	Approved in 1996. 2021 Update: Improvement No Longer Proposed. Lift removed and abandoned. Work Completed.
Lift B	Bear Lift	Extend Bear Lift Quad chair from the Base Area to an area west of Calamity Lane near Mid-Station Lodge. Install a new mid-station terminal near the top of existing top of Bear lift.	Approved in 2018. 2021 Update: New alignment no longer proposed, action abandoned.
Lift B	Bear Lift	Upgrade from double chair to quad, lower base terminal	Approved in 1996. Construction planned for 2022. (A different alignment and extension was proposed in 2018, but abandoned in 2021.)
Lift C	Bunny Hutch	Replace existing lift with new Quad chair, re-align and extend upper terminal uphill approximately 500'	Approved in 2018. 2021 Update: Re-alignment of lift and extension of upper terminal 500' uphill no longer proposed. Lift replacement completed in 2021 in its original alignment.
Lift G	Little Whiteface	Replace double chair with with quad.	Approved in 1996, not yet implemented. Construction proposed for 2022.
Lift H	Mountain Run	Replace double chair with with quad.	Approved in 1996, not yet implemented. Construction proposed for 2022.
Lift I	Freeway Lift	Replace existing Freeway lift with new Quad chair extending from the Base area to the top of Upper Empire	Approved 2018. 2021 Update: New lift alignment no longer proposed. Lift will be replaced and remain in existing footprint. Work not yet started.
Lift J	Cub Carpet	Re-align to improve learning area.	Approved in 2018. Completed.
Lift L	New surface conveyor lift	Add new beginner conveyor lift	Approved in 2018. Completed.
Lift N	Bear Den Transport Lift	Install transport lift from Bear Den Lodge to Base Lodge	Conceptual Action Item in 2018. Remains conceptual in 2021.
Lift O	Parking Lot Transport Lift	Install transport lift from the Bus Lot to Lot 1 next to Base Lodge	Conceptual Action Item in 2018. Remains conceptual in 2021.

- Mixing Bowl (A): This lift is well located and suitably designed for the beginner skier.
- Bear (B): The bottom terminal of this lift is 500 feet from the base lodge and is accessed by Lift A.
- Bunny Hutch (C): Lift C was relocated in 1997 so that its base terminal is at the same level as the Bear Den Lodge (then Kid's Kampus) building. Its top terminal was lowered to provide better and easier access to the trail system and avoid the steep section at the top, which made the trail ability level too difficult for beginner skiers in this area.
- Facelift (E): this lift was installed in 2002 and aging Midstation Shuttle (formerly D) and the Valley Triple (formerly E) were removed. Replacement of these two former lifts with a detachable quad was an approved action of the 1996 UMP. The Facelift is a Doppelmayr detachable quad that services primarily beginner and intermediate terrain.
- Summit Quad (F): Lift F serves the upper mountain terrain in a satisfactory manner. Its hourly capacity is in balance with the trails it serves.
- Little Whiteface and Mountain Run (G & H): The combination of these two lifts causes skier congestion problems at the top terminal of and the mid-station unload of G and on the trails they serve when both lifts (in addition to Lift I) are operating at full capacity.
- Lifts G and H are both aging and have functional problems.
- Freeway (I): Lift I provides excellent skiing opportunities for the intermediate and advanced skiers. It is particularly useful on race event days as it provides a somewhat isolated area for round trip skiing on the race terrain that it serves. It is also useful when wind conditions shut down other lifts.
- Conveyor Lift (J): This is a surface "magic carpet" lift that replaced the former handle tow. The magic carpet generally eliminated the disadvantages formerly associated with the old handle tow. The former handle tow required a short but difficult climb for the new skier from the Bear Den Lodge building to the bottom loading area, and it involved the undesirable mix of beginner skiers with the faster traffic emanating from the Silver and Gold Trails (#34 and #35).
- Gondola (K): The Gondola lift was installed as recommended in the 1996 UMP.
- Summer use of the gondola has proven to be a valuable addition to the Whiteface and Lake Placid venues. Winter use has also proven to be a valuable addition to the ski center by improving the out-of-base capacity and as a means to access the upper reaches of the

2025 Bicknell's Thrush (*Catharus bicknelli*) Survey for
selected Ski Slopes, Lift Pathways, and High Elevation
Access Roads on Whiteface Mountain



Wild Neighbors Nature Connection, LLC was contracted by the Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA) to complete this study and report. This report was submitted by Rich Hanlon, owner and operator of Wild Neighbors Nature Connection, LLC. Rich's contact information is below:

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Purpose

The purpose of this survey was to identify areas of habitat and habitation of Bicknell's thrush on high elevation ski slopes, maintenance roads, and lift trajectories on Whiteface Mountain. The survey area included the trajectories of Summit Lift and Little Whiteface Lift from the top down to 2800 feet elevation as well as the ski slopes and access roads between the top of Summit Lift and the top of Little Whiteface Lift.

Background

Bicknell's thrush is listed as a species of special concern in New York State. Bicknell's thrush breeds in high elevation spruce fir forests in New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, and Canada where Canada borders these US states. Whiteface Mountain is home to a population of Bicknell's thrushes. Preferred habitat is in the Krumholz zone of the mountain, at edge habitat created by the formation of fir waves.

Survey method:

In order to be consistent with past surveys, the survey method chosen is similar to that which was used by Michale Glennon and Leslie Karasin in their 2008 Study, *Use of Whiteface Mountain by Bicknell's Thrush and Other Montane Forest Bird Species*.

Survey points were 200 meters apart and the surveyor remained at each survey point for a duration of 10 minutes. The surveyor noted the presence and behavior as well as song and other vocalizations of the survey's target species, Bicknell's thrush.

At each survey point, the surveyor noted the following:

- 1) The number of vocalizing Bicknell's thrushes.
- 2) Whether or not a survey point contains appropriate breeding habitat, noting fir waves in proximity to survey points where present.
- 3) The names and abundance of other bird species that were present.
- 4) An estimation of the location of each singing Bicknell's thrush at the survey points nearest to the top of Little Whiteface and Summit Lifts.

Survey logistics:

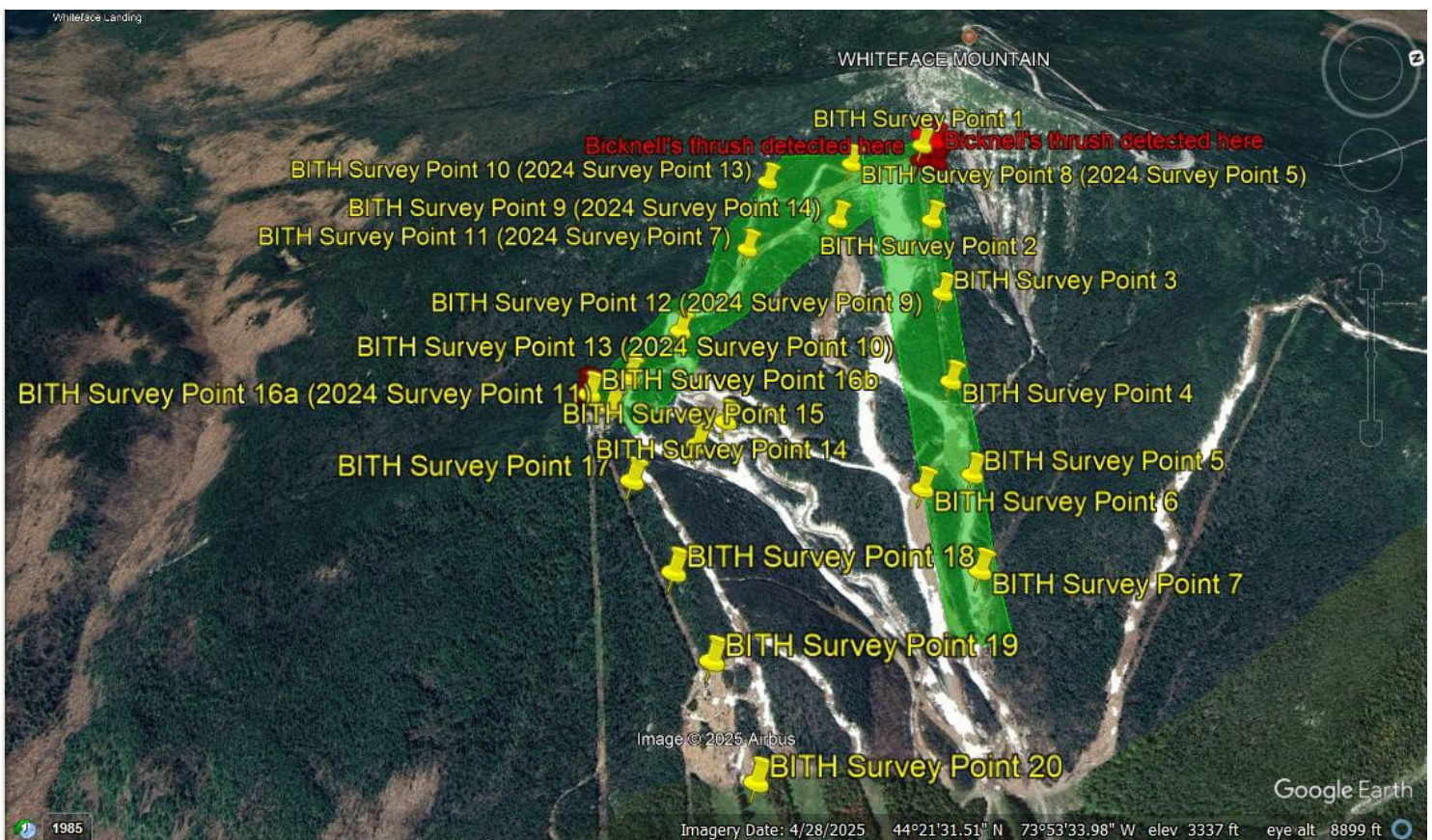
This survey was conducted on ski slopes and access roads between the elevations 2800ft above sea level on the low end and 4400ft above sea level on the high end. An ORDA employee provided transportation via ATV for the contracted surveyor from the base of the mountain to the study area during each of the three days of the Bicknell's thrush survey.

The survey was conducted June 3, 4, and 11 between the hours of 5:20am-7:30am each day.

A total of 21 point surveys were required to survey the area requested by ORDA on Whiteface Mountain's high elevation ski trails, lift trajectories, and maintenance roads between Summit Lift and Little Whiteface Lift.

Results

Map of area surveyed with labelled survey points:



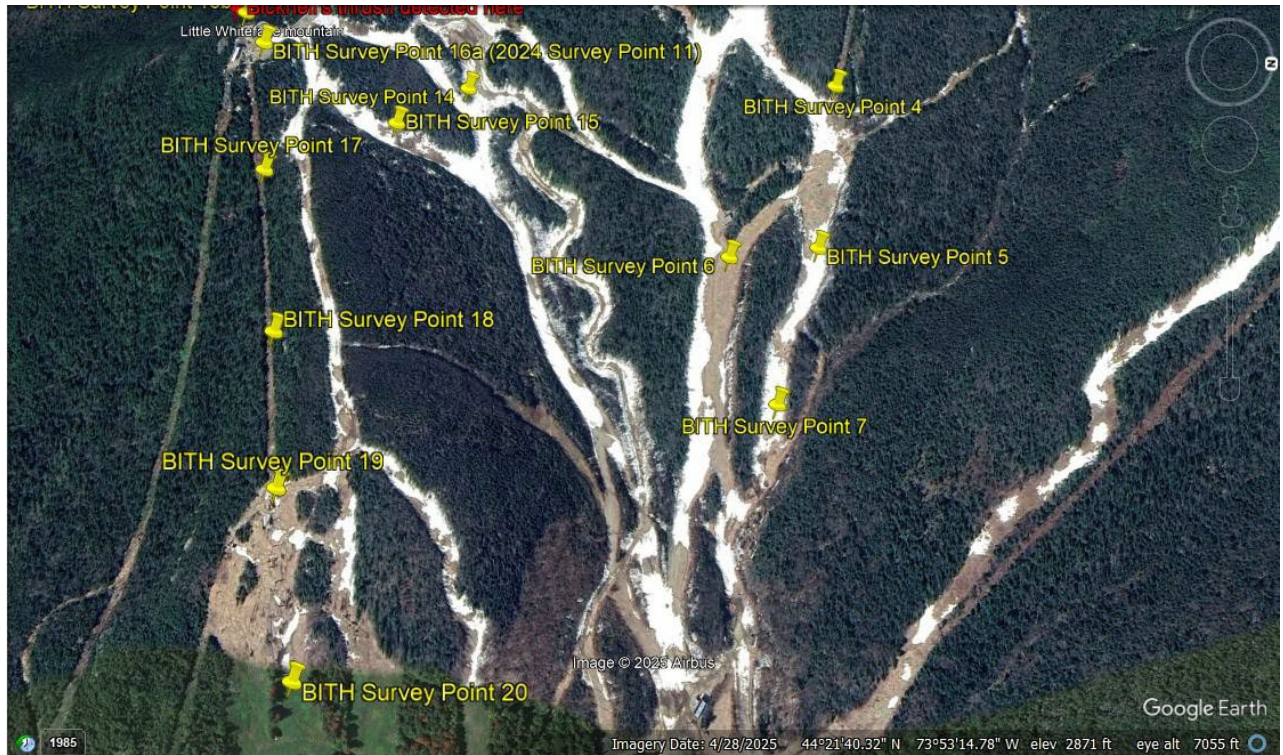
Map of survey points at Summit Lift:



Map of survey points at Little Whiteface Lift:



Map of survey points below Little Whiteface Lift:



Map of survey points above Little Whiteface Lift:



The weather for June 3, 2025 on Whiteface Mountain ski slopes was mid 60's F, clear skies, and sunny with a moderate wind. Surrounding mountains hazy from wildfire smoke blown in from the western US.

The weather for June 4, 2025 on Whiteface Mountain ski slopes was mid 60's F, clear skies, and mostly sunny with moderate wind and intermittent strong wind gusts making listening for bird vocalizations relatively challenging. Surrounding mountains hazy from wildfire smoke.

The weather for June 11, 2025 on Whiteface Mountain ski slopes was mid 60's F and partly cloudy with oscillating periods of wind and calm. Wildfire smoke beginning to dissipate.

Results for each point survey are printed below:

Bicknell's Thrush Survey Point 1

Coordinates: 44°21'51.96"N, 73°53'57.92"W

Date: 6/4/2025

Survey time: 5:26am-5:36am

Number of Bicknell's thrushes detected: 6

Other Species detected:

White-throated sparrow:4

Dark-eyed junco: 1

Boreal chickadee: 1

Winter wren: 2

Ruby-crowned kinglet: 1

Yellow-rumped warbler: 1

Blackpoll warbler: 2

Nashville warbler: 1

Habitat: Spruce/fir forest with fir waves adjacent to nearby slide as well as below lift.

Conditions: Clear, cool, and sunny with moderate wind. Wind not strong enough to significantly inhibit hearing at this location. Surrounding mountains hazy from western wildfire smoke.

Notes: Bicknell's thrushes detected, estimation 50-100 feet from the lift with locations ranging from northwest to northeast to southeast.

Bicknell's Thrush Survey Point 2

Coordinates: 44°21'50.82"N, 73°53'49.16"W

Date: 6/11/2025

Survey time: 5:40am-5:50am

Number of Bicknell's thrushes detected: 2

Other Species detected:

Winter wren: 2

Red-breasted nuthatch: 1

Swainson's thrush: 3

Blue jay: 2

Dark-eyed junco: 2

White-throated sparrow: 1

Yellow-rumped warbler: 1

Magnolia warbler: 1

Nashville warbler: 1

Habitat: Forest composed of red spruce, balsam fir, and white birch trees.

Conditions: Clear skies with some wind but periods of calm between gusts. Beginning temperature today about 50F, but warmed up quickly.

Bicknell's Thrush Survey Point 3

Coordinates: 44°21'49.78"N, 73°53'40.73"W

Date: 6/11/2025

Survey time: 6:03am-6:13am

Number of Bicknell's thrushes detected: 2

Other Species detected:

Winter wren: 1

Ruby-crowned kinglet: 1

Dark-eyed junco: 2

White-throated sparrow: 1

Swainson's thrush: 2

Yellow-rumped warbler: 2

Nashville warbler: 1

Black-throated green warbler: 1

Habitat: Forest composed of red spruce, balsam fir, and white birch.

Conditions: Mostly clear skies and sunny with some clouds and cap cloud over mountain summit. Some wildfire haze present. Occasional light wind, but not enough to impede listening ability.

Bicknell's Thrush Survey Point 4

Coordinates: 44°21'48.39"N, 73°53'31.74"W

Date: 6/11/2025

Survey time: 6:24am-6:34am

Number of Bicknell's thrushes detected: 0

Other Species detected:

Winter wren: 2

Black-capped chickadee: 1

Blue jay: 1

Yellow-bellied flycatcher: 1

White-throated sparrow: 1

Swainson's thrush: 2

Yellow-rumped warbler: 1

Magnolia warbler: 1

Black-throated green warbler: 4

Habitat: Forest composed of white birch, red spruce, balsam fir, and some mountain ash.

Conditions: Mostly clear skies and sunny with some clouds and cap cloud over mountain summit. Some wildfire haze present. Occasional light wind, but not enough to impede listening ability.

Bicknell's Thrush Survey Point 5

Coordinates: 44°21'47.73"N, 73°53'22.13"W

Date: 6/11/2025

Survey time: 6:55am-7:05am

Number of Bicknell's thrushes detected: 0

Other Species detected:

Winter wren: 1

Blue jay: 1

Yellow-bellied flycatcher: 1

Blue-headed vireo: 1

Red crossbill: 1

White-throated sparrow: 1

Swainson's thrush: 1

Black-throated green warbler: 1

Magnolia warbler: 1

Blackburnian warbler: 2

Mourning warbler: 1

Habitat: Forest composed primarily of balsam fir, red spruce, and white birch, with some mountain ash, striped maple, and red maple.

Conditions: Mostly clear skies and sunny with some clouds and cap cloud over mountain summit. Some wildfire haze present. Occasional light wind, but not enough to impede listening ability

Bicknell's Thrush Survey Point 6

Coordinates: 44°21'43.76"N, 73°53'21.11"W

Date: 6/11/2025

Survey time: 6:41am-6:51am

Number of Bicknell's thrushes detected: 0

Other Species detected:

Winter wren: 1

Dark-eyed junco: 2

Chipping sparrow: 2

Blue-headed vireo: 1

Hairy woodpecker: 1

Swainson's thrush: 3

Yellow-rumped warbler: 1

Magnolia warbler: 2

Mourning warbler: 1

Habitat: Forest composed primarily of red spruce, balsam fir, and white birch.

Conditions: Mostly clear skies and sunny with some clouds and cap cloud over mountain summit. Some wildfire haze present. Occasional light wind, but not enough to impede listening ability.

Bicknell's Thrush Survey Point 7

Coordinates: 44°21'46.04"N, 73°53'12.99"W

Date: 6/11/2025

Survey time: 7:10am-7:20am

Number of Bicknell's thrushes detected: 0

Other Species detected:

Golden-crowned kinglet: 1

Cedar waxwing: 1

Swainson's thrush: 1

Black-throated green warbler: 3

Habitat: Forest composed primarily of red spruce, balsam fir, white birch, and striped maple.

Conditions: Mostly clear skies and sunny with some clouds and cap cloud over mountain summit. Some wildfire haze present. Occasional light wind, but not enough to impede listening ability.

Bicknell's Thrush Survey Point 8 (2024 Survey Point 5)

Coordinates: 44°21'46.11"N, 73°53'58.04"W

Date: 6/4/2025

Survey time: 5:44am-5:54am

Number of Bicknell's thrushes detected: 2

Other Species detected:

White-throated sparrow:4

Dark-eyed junco: 1

Winter wren: 2

Yellow-bellied flycatcher: 1

Yellow-rumped warbler: 2

Habitat: Spruce/fir forest with fir waves.

Conditions: Windy. The surveyor likely detected less birds than are present at this survey point due to the noise generated by the wind rushing through the trees.

Bicknell's Thrush Survey Point 9 (2024 Survey Point 14)

Coordinates: 44°21'43.55"N, 73°53'51.03"W

Date: 6/4/2025

Survey time: 6:00am-6:10am

Number of Bicknell's thrushes detected: 3

Other Species detected:

White-throated sparrow:2

Boreal chickadee: 1

American robin: 2

Winter wren: 1

Ruby-crowned kinglet: 1

Purple finch: 1

Yellow-bellied flycatcher: 1

Yellow-rumped warbler: 2

Magnolia warbler: 1

Blackpoll warbler: 2

Nashville warbler: 1

Habitat: Spruce/fir forest with some white birch present.

Conditions: Only slightly more than a gentle breeze since the trees acted as a wind block here. Listening ability good.

Bicknell's Thrush Survey Point 10 (2024 Survey Point 13)

Coordinates: 44°21'39.87"N, 73°54'1.66"W

Date: 6/4/2025

Survey time: 6:21am-6:31am

Number of Bicknell's thrushes detected: 1

Other Species detected:

White-throated sparrow: 1

Winter wren: 1

Ruby-crowned kinglet: 2

Yellow-rumped warbler: 1

Black-throated green warbler: 1

Habitat: Spruce/fir forest at the edge of a large fir wave.

Conditions: Windy. The surveyor likely detected less birds than are present at this survey point due to the noise generated by the wind rushing through the trees.

Date: 6/11/2025

Survey time: 5:21-5:31am

Number of Bicknell's thrushes detected: 2

Other Species detected:

Winter wren: 2

Swainson's thrush: 2

Dark-eyed junco: 1

White-throated sparrow: 1

Magnolia warbler: 1

Black-throated green warbler: 1

Conditions: A few wind gusts, but relatively calm in-between. Much calmer than on 6/4/2025. Temperature about 50F.

Bicknell's Thrush Survey Point 11 (2024 Survey Point 7)

Coordinates: 44°21'36.39"N, 73°53'51.28"W

Date: 6/4/2025

Survey time: 6:37am-6:47am

Number of Bicknell's thrushes detected: 1

Other Species detected:

Boreal chickadee: 1

Winter wren: 1

Blackpoll warbler: 1

Yellow-rumped warbler: 1

Habitat: Spruce/fir forest with some white birch and mountain ash present. As mentioned in 2024 report, fir waves are present in the vicinity of survey point 11.

Conditions: Windy. The surveyor likely detected less birds than are present at this survey point due to the noise generated by the wind rushing through the trees.

Bicknell's Thrush Survey Point 12 (2024 Survey Point 9)

Coordinates: 44°21'29.86"N, 73°53'43.32"W

Date: 6/4/2025

Survey time: 6:56am-7:06am

Number of Bicknell's thrushes detected: 0

Other Species detected:

White-throated sparrow: 1

Dark-eyed junco: 2

Winter wren: 1

Yellow-bellied flycatcher: 2

Blue jay: 5

Purple finch: 1

American robin: 2

White-winged crossbill: 15

Yellow-rumped warbler: 1

Magnolia warbler: 2

Nashville warbler: 1

Black-throated green warbler: 1

Habitat: Spruce/fir forest with white birch and mountain ash. Trees tall. No fir waves present here.

Conditions: Some wind. The surveyor might have detected less birds than are present at this survey point due to the noise generated by the wind rushing through the trees.

Bicknell's Thrush Survey Point 13 (2024 Survey Point 10)

Coordinates: 44°21'25.05"N, 73°53'35.42"W

Date: 6/3/2025

Survey time: 6:02am-6:12am

Number of Bicknell's thrushes detected: 0

Other Species detected:

White-throated sparrow:2

Dark-eyed junco: 2

Winter wren: 2

American robin: 2

Swainson's thrush: 1

Blue-headed vireo: 1

Red-breasted nuthatch: 1

Ruby-crowned kinglet: 1

Purple finch: 1

Yellow-rumped warbler: 1

Nashville warbler: 1

Habitat: Coniferous forest composed of balsam fir and red spruce as well as a spattering of white birch and mountain ash.

Conditions: Clear and cool, with only a slight breeze.

Bicknell's Thrush Survey Point 14

Coordinates: 44°21'31.50"N, 73°53'31.97"W

Date: 6/4/2025

Survey time: 7:13am-7:23am

Number of Bicknell's thrushes detected: 0

Other Species detected:

White-throated sparrow:2

Dark-eyed junco: 1

Chipping sparrow: 1

Winter wren: 2

Purple finch: 1

Swainson's thrush: 1

Magnolia warbler: 2

Black-throated green warbler: 3

Black-throated blue warbler: 1

Habitat: Forest of spruce, fir, and birch with tall trees.

Conditions: Gentle breeze. Black flies beginning to swarm for the day.

Bicknell's Thrush Survey Point 15

Coordinates: 44°21'28.79"N, 73°53'27.63"W

Date: 6/4/2025

Survey time: 7:30am-7:40am

Number of Bicknell's thrushes detected: 0

Other Species detected:

White-throated sparrow: 1

Dark-eyed junco: 1

Black-capped chickadee: 2

Boreal chickadee: 1

Red-breasted nuthatch: 1

Blue-headed vireo: 1

American crow: 2

Winter wren: 1

Yellow-bellied flycatcher: 1

Yellow-rumped warbler: 1

Black-throated blue warbler: 1

Black-throated green warbler: 2

Habitat: Forest of tall spruce, fir, and birch trees.

Conditions: Gentle breeze.

Bicknell's Thrush Survey Point 16a (2024 Survey Point 11)

Coordinates: 44°21'23.21"N, 73°53'30.32"W

Date: 6/3/2025

Survey time: 5:33am-5:43am

Number of Bicknell's thrushes detected: 0

Other Species detected:

Dark-eyed junco: 2

White-throated sparrow: 2

Purple finch: 1

Cedar waxwing: 1

Winter wren: 1

Yellow-rumped warbler: 2

Nashville warbler: 1

Black-throated green warbler: 1

Habitat: 90% conifers (balsam fir and red spruce) and 10% birch (white birch)

Conditions: Clear skies, about 45F, moderate wind.

Notes: I could not hear any birds on the other side of the gondola from where I was standing due to the humming of the gondola motor, so I established an additional survey point at the top of the Little Whiteface Lift, labelled "BITH Survey Point 16b.

Bicknell's Thrush Survey Point 16b

Coordinates: 44°21'22.03"N, 73°53'32.88"W

Date: 6/3/2025

Survey time: 5:48am-5:58am

Number of Bicknell's thrushes detected: 2

Other Species detected:

White-throated sparrow: 2

Winter wren: 1

Yellow-rumped warbler: 1

Nashville warbler: 1

Magnolia warbler: 1

Blackpoll warbler: 1

Habitat: 90% conifers (balsam fir and red spruce) and 10% birch (white birch). There is a fir wave located about 20 yards from the viewing platform; this is where the two Bicknell's thrushes were vocalizing.

Conditions: Clear skies, about 45F, light wind.

Notes: See the red pins for exact locations of the two vocalizing Bicknell's thrushes.

Bicknell's Thrush Survey Point 17

Coordinates: 44°21'23.71"N, 73°53'23.00"W

Date: 6/3/2025

Survey time: 6:21am-6:31am

Number of Bicknell's thrushes detected: 0

Other Species detected:

Boreal chickadee: 3

Ruby-crowned kinglet: 1

Yellow-bellied flycatcher: 1

Winter wren: 1

Yellow-rumped warbler: 1

Nashville warbler: 1

Black-throated green warbler: 1

Habitat adjacent to lift trajectory: Mixed forest of balsam fir, red spruce, and white birch.

Conditions: Clear and calm. Temps warmed up to about 50F.

Bicknell's Thrush Survey Point 18

Coordinates: 44°21'25.09"N, 73°53'13.16"W

Date: 6/3/2025

Survey time: 6:47-6:57

Number of Bicknell's thrushes detected: 0

Other Species detected:

White-throated sparrow: 1

Ruby-crowned kinglet: 1

Blue-headed vireo: 1

Golden-crowned kinglet: 1

Yellow-bellied flycatcher: 1

Black-throated green warbler: 1

Nashville warbler: 1

Magnolia warbler: 3

Mourning warbler: 1

Habitat adjacent to lift trajectory: Mixed forest of balsam fir, red spruce, white birch, and cherry.

Conditions: Calm, no wind. partly clear skies with some high clouds beginning to roll in.

Temperature continuing to warm for the day.

Bicknell's Thrush Survey Point 19

Coordinates: 44°21'26.14"N, 73°53'4.29"W

Date: 6/3/2025

Survey time: 7:07am-7:17am

Number of Bicknell's thrushes detected: 0

Other Species detected:

Song sparrow: 2

White-throated sparrow: 1

Dark-eyed junco: 1

Black-capped chickadee: 1

Boreal chickadee: 1

Yellow-bellied flycatcher: 1

Red-eyed vireo: 2

Pine siskin: 1

Red crossbill: 2

Purple finch: 1

American robin: 1

Black-throated green warbler: 1

Yellow-rumped warbler: 2

Magnolia warbler: 2

Mourning warbler: 1

Black-and-white warbler: 1

Habitat adjacent to lift trajectory: Mixed forest with balsam fir, red spruce, white birch, cherry, and some maple.

Conditions: Calm, no wind. partly clear skies with some high clouds beginning to roll in.

Temperature continuing to warm for the day. Temperature about 50F but feels warmer with sun shining bright. Black flies beginning to come out.

Bicknell's Thrush Survey Point 20

Coordinates: 44°21'27.27"N, 73°52'55.03"W

Date: 6/3/2025

Survey time: 7:25am-7:35am

Number of Bicknell's thrushes detected: 0

Other Species detected:

Song sparrow: 2

Hairy woodpecker: 1

Indigo bunting: 1

Red-eyed vireo: 2

Purple finch: 1

American crow: 1

Black-throated green warbler: 1

Yellow-rumped warbler: 1

Mourning warbler: 2

Habitat adjacent to lift trajectory: Forest almost entirely deciduous, composed mostly of maple with some birch and only a few scattered conifers.

Conditions: Calm, no wind. partly clear skies with some high clouds having rolled in covering half of the sky. Temperature continuing to warm for the day.

Locations of singing Bicknell's thrushes near lifts

Estimated locations of singing Bicknell's thrushes near Little Whiteface Lift (each set of coordinates represents a different individual):

44°21'21.91"N, 73°53'33.97"W

44°21'21.52"N, 73°53'33.52"W

Estimated locations of singing Bicknell's thrushes near Summit Lift (each set of coordinates represents a different individual):

44°21'52.15"N, 73°53'59.12"W

44°21'53.09"N, 73°53'58.40"W

44°21'53.03"N, 73°53'57.07"W

44°21'52.80"N, 73°53'55.76"W

44°21'51.41"N, 73°53'56.16"W

Summary Chart

Survey number

Number of Bicknell's thrushes detected

1	6
2	2
3	2
4	0
5	0
6	0
7	0
8	2
9	3
10	2
11	1
12	0
13	0
14	0
15	0
16a	0
16b	2
17	0
18	0
19	0
20	0

Discussion:

During this study of the Whiteface Mountain ski trails between Summit Lift and Little Whiteface Lift, Bicknell's thrush populations were detected at elevations above 3600' where balsam fir forests exhibit krummholz structure, including thick growth and fir wave formations.

As was the case during the 2024 Bicknell's thrush survey, there are four fir islands inhabited by Bicknell's thrushes in the study area. Three of these fir islands are bordered on all sides by ski trails or maintenance roads and one is bordered by ski trails on two sides and by mixed deciduous/coniferous forest on one side. There are five additional fir islands that are composed of balsam fir trees but are not inhabited by Bicknell's thrushes. The fir islands that are not inhabited by Bicknell's thrushes are likely too small and/or too narrow for Bicknell's thrushes to inhabit them.

It is possible that some disturbance in the form of the maintenance of existing ski trails and maintenance roads in the study area may help to create viable habitat for Bicknell's thrushes. It also seems likely, based on the size of inhabited fir islands versus uninhabited fir islands, that any further fragmentation of ski slope fir islands would likely have a detrimental effect on Bicknell's thrush populations in the survey area.

It is uncertain how the noise produced by lift maintenance may or may not impact Bicknell's thrushes during the summer nesting season. However, it should be noted that Bicknell's thrushes nest in proximity to Whiteface Veterans Memorial Highway and that some road noise does not seem to have a detrimental impact on nearby Bicknell's thrushes. Without knowing the decibel level that Bicknell's thrush is able to tolerate and without knowing the full scope of the nature of the work involved in lift maintenance, one might wonder if some high elevation lift maintenance work might have no effect on nearby Bicknell's thrushes while other high elevation lift maintenance work might be best to delay until after August 1st.

It should be noted that this report carries no legal or conservational authority, but only seeks to provide information that may aid the Olympic Regional Development Authority's management of Whiteface Mountain in collaboration with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.