

# FOREST PRESERVE DETAILED PROJECT WORK PLAN

**Fiscal Year 2025  
Project # CO-WP-399**

<u>Region</u> 3	<u>Project Title</u> Lower Beach Trail Construction
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<u>Project Type</u> New Construction	<u>Town(s)</u> Shandaken	<u>County</u> Ulster	<u>Management Unit</u> Shandaken Wild Forest; Belleayre Mountain Ski Center Intensive Use Area
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Description of Existing and Desired Condition(s) for Project

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.

This project details the final 0.18 miles of the Beach Trail. This trail provides access to both the mountain bike trail network in Shandaken Wild Forest from Pine Hill Lake Day Use Area (Belleayre Mountain Ski Center Intensive Use Area) as well as the anticipated Ulster-Delaware Rail Trail. Final plans for the connection from the Rail Trail to Pine Hill Day Use Area will be detailed in a subsequent Work Plan prepared by the Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA).

The desired condition of the Beach 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. Additionally, the Beach Trail will provide direct access to the Shandaken Wild Forest Mountain Bike Trails from the Ulster-Delaware Rail Trail and the Pine Hill Lake Day Use area once ORDA plans have been finalized.

Description of Project Specifications

Treadway development and grading will be kept to a minimum along a sustainable grade. The proposed realignment measures approximately 956 feet (0.18 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. Areas of wet or poorly drained soils will be avoided in order to mitigate erosion. Crowning will be occasionally



used in areas where the natural topography does not facilitate proper drainage across an adequate outslope.

A 32' wooden bridge (4' wide) will be constructed over the unnamed stream that serves as the parcel boundary for Shandaken Wild Forest and Belleayre Mountain Ski Center Intensive Use Area. The location of the bridge has been selected to accommodate natural hydrology and protect riparian/aquatic integrity while facilitating the designed public recreational use of the surrounding trail network. An old cistern is located directly adjacent to the southern side of the bridge. To improve visitor safety, motorized equipment will be used to remove one of the cistern's walls.

The new trail will be purpose-built for mountain biking but will also accommodate hikers, trail runners, cross-country skiers, and other recreationists. The trail has been designed to meet singletrack trail standards and specifications. 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 the minimum number of trees necessary. Attached is a tally of all trees required for the construction of the new sustainably aligned route. A total of 27 trees will be removed, 9 of which are between 1 and 3 inches diameter at breast height (DBH). Additionally, 8 of the 27 trees are dead.
- 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 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:** Silt fencing will be placed around limits of disturbance during construction when working near stream channels or swales as per NYS Standards and Specifications for Erosion and Sediment Control. During bridge construction, disturbed areas will be restored, and cleaned of debris, graded to existing ground, seeded and mulched. All other disturbed areas, including areas where silt fencing was installed and where machines have entered the construction zone, will be graded, stabilized, seeded and mulched. Any areas where ditching has been crossed by machinery or a vehicle will be restored to operational condition. Construction ditching will be used and modified as necessary to direct storm water runoff during construction. Existing drainage swales will be used (and modified, as necessary) to direct storm water runoff, and some minimal construction of new drainage swales with stone check dams will be used. Surface and ground water will be controlled during all phases of construction to prevent erosion and siltation both at on/off-site locations. Facilities within the unit will be monitored for natural resource degradation. If action is warranted, appropriate measures will be taken to address specific areas of concern.

The trail will cross one stream, but other waterbodies and/or wetlands will not be directly impacted by construction. 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 hydrology.

- 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: Route the trail under the rail trestle**

This alternative was not selected for three reasons. First, routing the trail under the trestle would confine the route to a small area of land that would require multiple tightly stacked switchbacks within a relatively short distance. While switchbacks would allow the trail to gain elevation along a gentle grade, they are not appropriate in this setting; hikers would likely cut off the switchbacks to gain elevation more quickly, and many technical turns right before a stream crossing wouldn't facilitate an enjoyable riding experience.

Second, a section of the stream bank beneath the trestle has recently washed out, indicating the bank's vulnerability to higher rates of water flow at this location. Building significant trail infrastructure in this area poses risks to the sustainability of the trail network.

Finally, roughly 200' of the trail would need to be aligned at an approximate 10% grade. This section would be potentially too challenging for some riders, especially since recreationists would need to travel this section of the trail immediately after beginning their activity from the Pine Hill Lake Day Use Area. The steep grades that would result from constructing the trail in this location would result in a trail experience that would likely not be enjoyed or accessible to the majority of users to this area.

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

Since this alternative would require construction to follow the track in the 2023 Work Plan, it wasn't selected. As mentioned previously, the track in the 2023 Work Plan was intentionally vague due to incomplete plans for the Ulster-Delaware Rail Trail. If the 2023 track were to be followed, the trail would travel directly up and over the steepest part of the trestle, which is not feasible.

### 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. Motorized equipment will also be used for the removal of one of the cistern's walls.

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.

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The Ridge Trail is existing and due to terrain 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: 7/30/2025


Approvals:


Comments:

*Pine Rocks*

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Regional Program Manager  
Date: 8/22/25

  
Regional Director  
Date: 10/11/25

  
On Behalf of the Division Director  
Date: 10/9/2025



New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

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"/>		





The trail will leave the existing trail and follow the orange flagging.



Approximate location of the 32' span 4' wide bridge. Note the cistern on the right-hand side.

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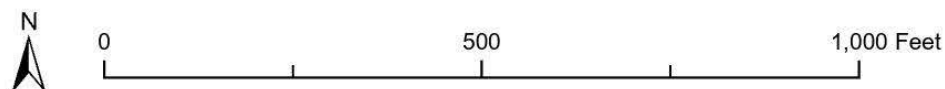
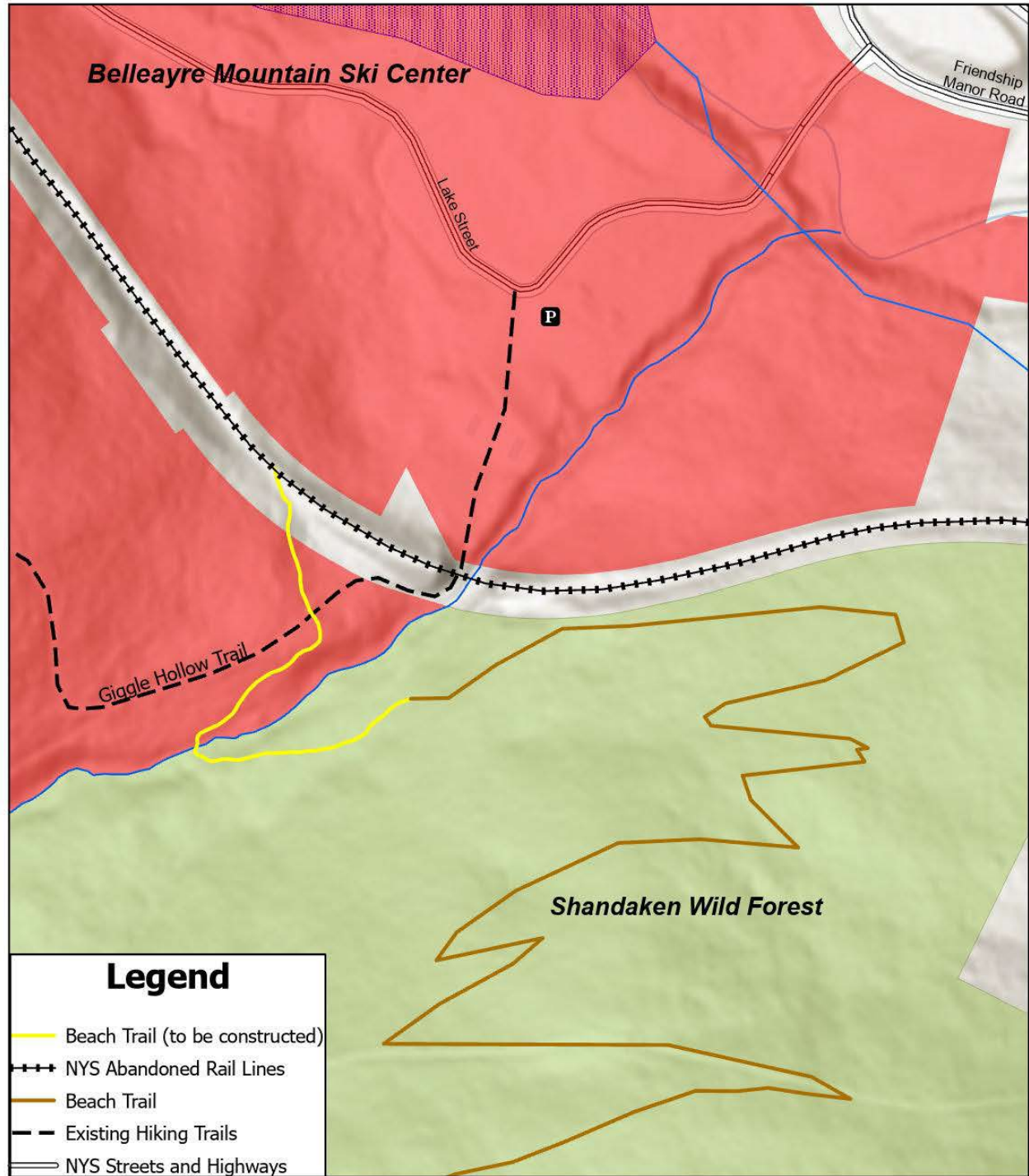
Approximate location of the bridge, viewed from the other side of the stream.



The trail will join the anticipated Ulster-Delaware Rail Trail here.



## Giggle Hollow Trail System - Beach Trail Ending



# Giggle Hollow Trail System

