



## Primitive Camping

### What is Primitive Camping?

Primitive or backcountry camping is a popular activity in the Adirondacks. It involves camping in a tent or lean-to deep in the woods away from civilization. This type of camping offers few or no amenities such as running water, electricity, picnic tables, or restrooms. Primitive camping also requires you to backpack or paddle all of your equipment, food, clothing, toiletries and sleeping gear (sleeping bag, tent and pad) that you will need during your stay.

### Designated Primitive Tent Sites

The **best place** to camp is at **designated primitive tent** sites. These sites are **typically flatter than** other areas and have deeper, harder soils more resistant to heavy use and erosion, minimizing the impacts of camping. Many sites **have nearby pit privies** and **rock fire rings**.

Campers **are encouraged** to use designated tent sites. They are often **close to** trails and provide views of ponds, **lakes**, streams or rivers. These can be a source of water when properly treated.

All **designated primitive** tent sites have yellow and black **"Camp Here"** markers. Many sites **on lakes** and ponds are identified by a yellow number against a dark brown wooden plaque typically attached to a tree **near the water's edge**.



### Rules of Primitive Camping

- Primitive tent sites and lean-tos are available on a first-come, first-served basis and cannot be reserved. If you find a **tent site** or lean-to **with no people or gear**, then **you can camp there**.
- In general, **you can camp anywhere on Forest Preserve lands** in the **Adirondacks** and **Catskills**, but your **tent must be at least 150 feet from a water body**, road, or trail. Do not camp in areas **posted with "Camping Prohibited."**
- **Check the regulations** for the **area you plan to camp**. **Camping is allowed at designated sites only on some areas of Forest Preserve** and Conservation Easement lands, and overnight use is prohibited in other areas. DEC's website provides information on camping regulations for specific areas.
- **Tents are not allowed inside lean-tos and must be at least 150 feet from the lean-to or on a designated tent site with a "Camp Here" marker.**
- Camping for **more than three nights** or with **ten or more people** requires a permit from a **Forest Ranger**. Call 518-897-1300 to get the name and contact information for the local ranger. Please observe all **State Land Camping and Hiking Rules**.
- It is **proper etiquette to share your tent site for one night if a second camper or group of campers arrives after dark**, especially when it is **raining, cold or windy**. In the morning, the second group should pack up and leave to look for another location. **Lean-tos should be shared by multiple parties** until filled to capacity (normally 8 people). These situations are rare, but can happen in heavily used areas, such as the Eastern High Peaks Wilderness.

- Black bears are present throughout the Adirondacks and Catskills. Campers should store all food, garbage and toiletries in a bear-resistant canister or food hang. Bear-resistant canisters are required in the Eastern High Peaks Wilderness.



## Maps and resources for finding a place to camp

Maps of the Adirondacks and Catskills can be downloaded, or are available from our central and regional offices.



*Camp here marker*

- [Adirondack Park maps \(PDF, 4.78 MB\)](#)

Paper maps are available from DEC's Ray brook office (518) 897-1276, Watertown Office (315) 785-2263, or Central Office in Albany (518-473-9518)

- [Catskill Park map \(PDF, 3.78 MB\)](#)

Paper maps are available from DEC's New Paltz office (845-256-3033), Schenectady Office (518-357-2068) or Central Office in Albany (518-473-9518)

If you have a particular region in mind, try the [Places To Go](#) pages, which provide descriptions of individual properties. For recommendations, contact the [forester or Lands and Forests staff person](#) in the regional DEC office nearest to where you'd like to go.

## Camping in black bear country

There are lots of bears in the Adirondack and Catskill mountains. Learn what to do if you encounter a bear, how to cook and store food at your campsite, and other useful bear-related information on the "[Black Bears in New York's Back Country](#)" web page.

## Purchase firewood locally

**Don't bring firewood for your campsite from home.** By transporting firewood, you could be unintentionally spreading diseases and invasive insects that can quickly kill large numbers of trees. Please help us stop the spread and obey the [Firewood Regulation](#).

For additional questions regarding this regulation, please call this toll-free number: 1-866-640-0652 or e-mail: [firewood@dec.ny.gov](mailto:firewood@dec.ny.gov)

Watch a clip about [backwoods camping](#) and check out other clips on DEC's [YouTube Channel](#).

## More about Primitive Camping:

[Contacts for Local Information about Back Country Camping](#) - Local forestry offices and forest rangers can answer back country camping questions for individual properties.

## Primitive camp site Tiedemann comments

1. Best place to camp is at designated primitive camp sites..... pit privies...fire rings.
2. ...are encouraged to use.... (sites) are often close to ...lake
3. ...Designated primitive .... "camp here markers" sites on lakes... (markers) are attached to a tree NEAR the WATERS EDGE

The 3 excerpts above indicate to me that you are encouraged to use but are NOT required to use designated marked sites.

They also imply that camping is allowed where markers exist and that on sites that are near the water these markers will be "typically attached to trees near the water's edge". How close is "near the water edge"? later in the "rules" it states that tents must be set up 150 feet from water edge- I don't think most would consider 150 feet the "water's edge"

4. No reservation ....you can camp there
5. In general you can camp ANYWHERE on Forest Preserve lands..  
'Adirondacks...Tent must be 150 feet away from a water body.... Do not ..  
camp in posted ...

If the designated camp site is occupied you can per the above just pick/ make a "new site" as long as it's not posted or currently occupied- does DEC post every square inch of forest preserve land or even around the designated sites?- camping sounds pretty open in ALL areas to me.

6. Tents are not permitted in a lean-to

So you are exposed to the view of everybody as there are no screens across the front- you are not allowed to have siblings/ your kids enjoy the tent experience near you??

7. 3 nights ...or 10 or more people i

If EL currently has 3 designated primitive camp sites is this count by the per site or total for all sites at this location- most camping is for the weekend 2 nights maybe 3 days is the 2018 document out of touch as to how camping is done on EL when mentioned over used

## From the 2018 HPWF proposed UMP page 75

There are three existing tent sites and one lean-to on a relatively small HPWF land parcel at Crown Point Bay, on Eagle Lake, along with several longstanding non-conforming elements and enforcement issues. The existing lean-to is appropriately located, more than 100 feet from Eagle Lake, and screened from view. There is more camping demand on Eagle Lake than the one lean-to allows for. Eagle Lake is largely privately owned. Another small HPWF parcel on the lake contains very steep shoreline terrain that precludes the possibility of a tent site.

Longstanding non-conforming elements, when were the rules written? By who? And to cover what general ground? Or did they specifically target EL but disguised it under general guidelines?

Lean-to is appropriated located- not by the tent rule of 150 feet set back is more in the 100 foot range

More camping demand- then on lean-to allows- that's why there are the tent sites!

Relatively small HPWF parcel- 310 acres is small? Compared to the thousands of acres else where maybe- but the 310 acres here has most likely never been full used- or seen by humans- it's a shame that with this much property humans- resident lake users and transient lake users are being corralled into less than .24 acres (less than a quarter acre) of space and being told that this is still too much ground to use

## From page 76

Two existing tent sites will be closed and reclaimed. One tent site will remain (approx. 500-600 feet from the lean-to), and be located out of sight and sound from the lean-to, and screened from the lake

Are they too close/near to the water's edge? based on what arbitrary rule? Written for what obscure piece of land? Primitive camp site markers as stated above are placed on trees near the water's edge

If camping demand is so high it sounds like this is a popular spot that may bring some of the economic benefit from the 2018 HPWF UMP proposals notes to the public into reality

See images below for measurements around the beach area

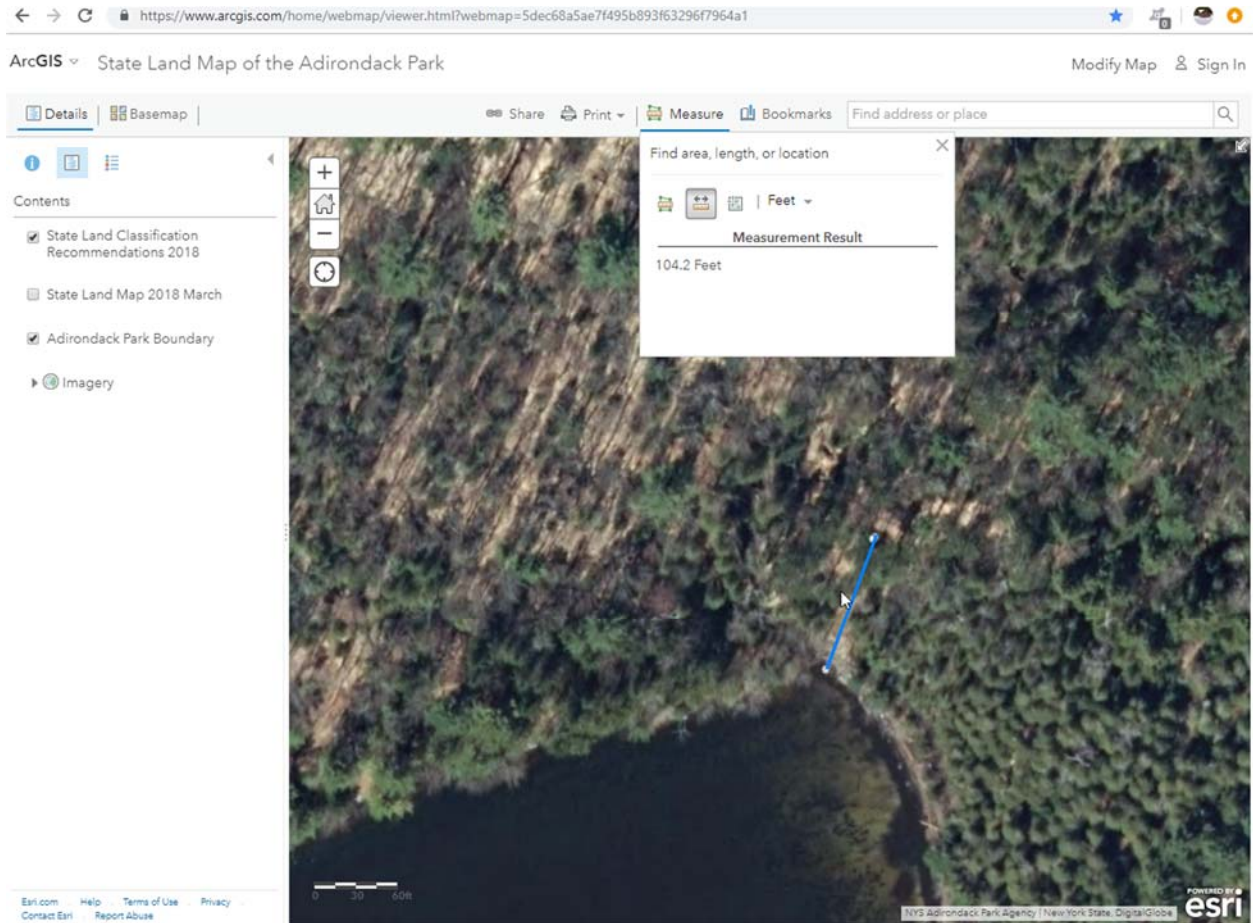


Image of measure for 100-foot suggested setback for lean-to. Per another image current lean-to location is at the cursor arrow, or approximately 50' from water edge. Image at Eagle lake beach, picnic, camp ground





Image of current lean-to location, distance from water per a map with measurement tools is approximately 50' from water edge. Image at Eagle lake beach, picnic, camp ground



Image of existing swim area and current 3 picnic areas that are deemed out of compliance and will be reclaimed. ONE (1) new area will replace the 3 and will be located some 500 to 600 feet from the existing lean-to and 150 feet from the water edge will be established. Image at Eagle lake beach, picnic, camp ground

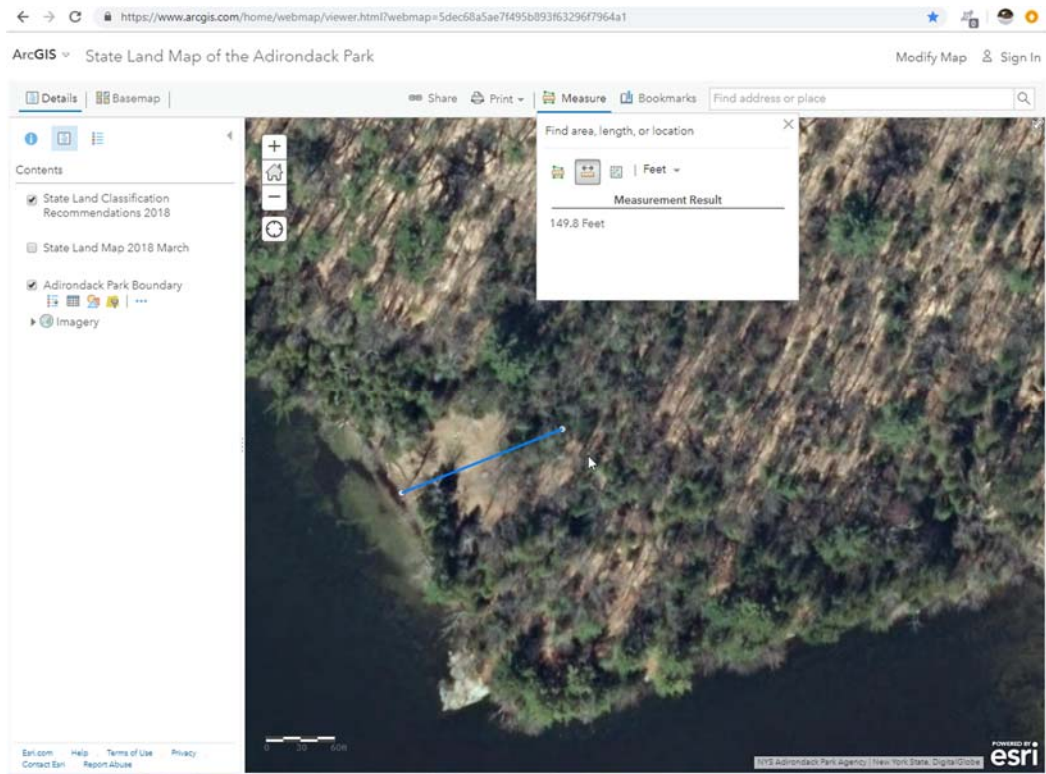


Image 1 of measure for 150-foot required setback for tent camping per DEC primitive camping guidelines. This setback distance puts required tent location into an area that is currently “undeveloped” as part of the current use. image at Eagle lake beach, picnic, camp ground



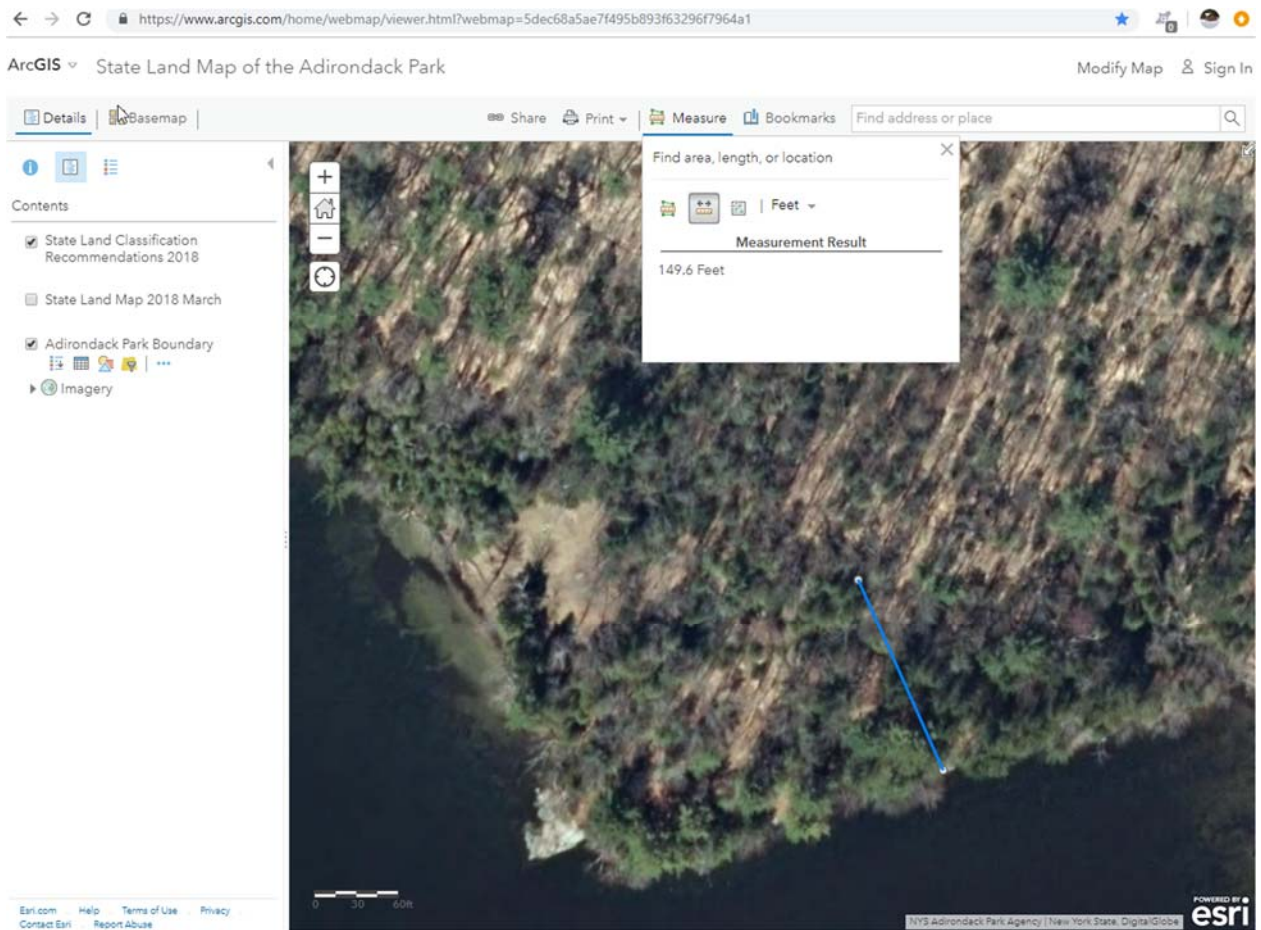


Image 2 of measure for 150-foot required setback for tent camping per DEC primitive camping guidelines. This setback distance puts required tent location into an area that is currently “undeveloped” as part of the current use. image at Eagle lake beach, picnic, camp ground

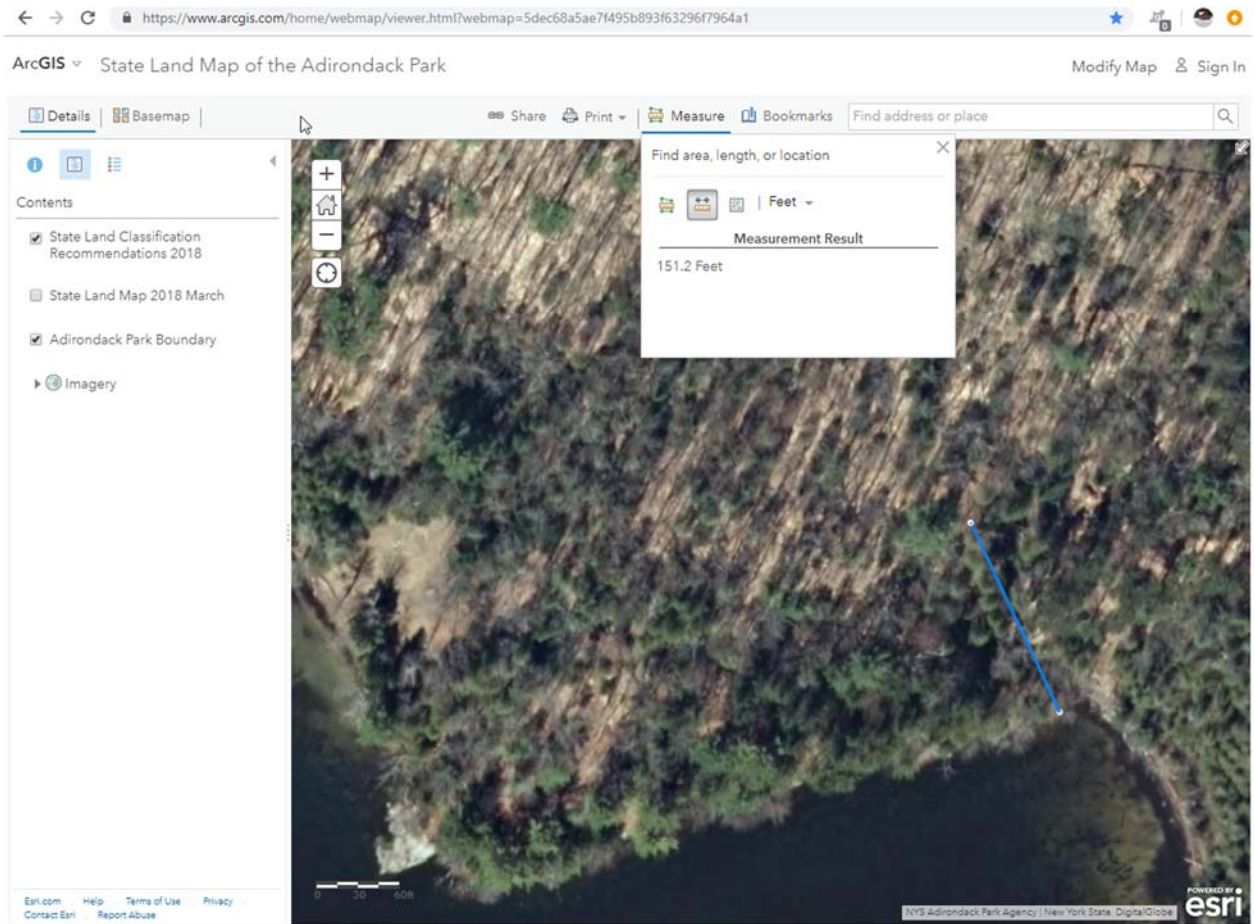


Image 3 of measure for 150-foot required setback for tent camping per DEC primitive camping guidelines. This setback distance puts required tent location into an area that is currently “undeveloped” as part of the current use. image at Eagle lake beach, picnic, camp ground

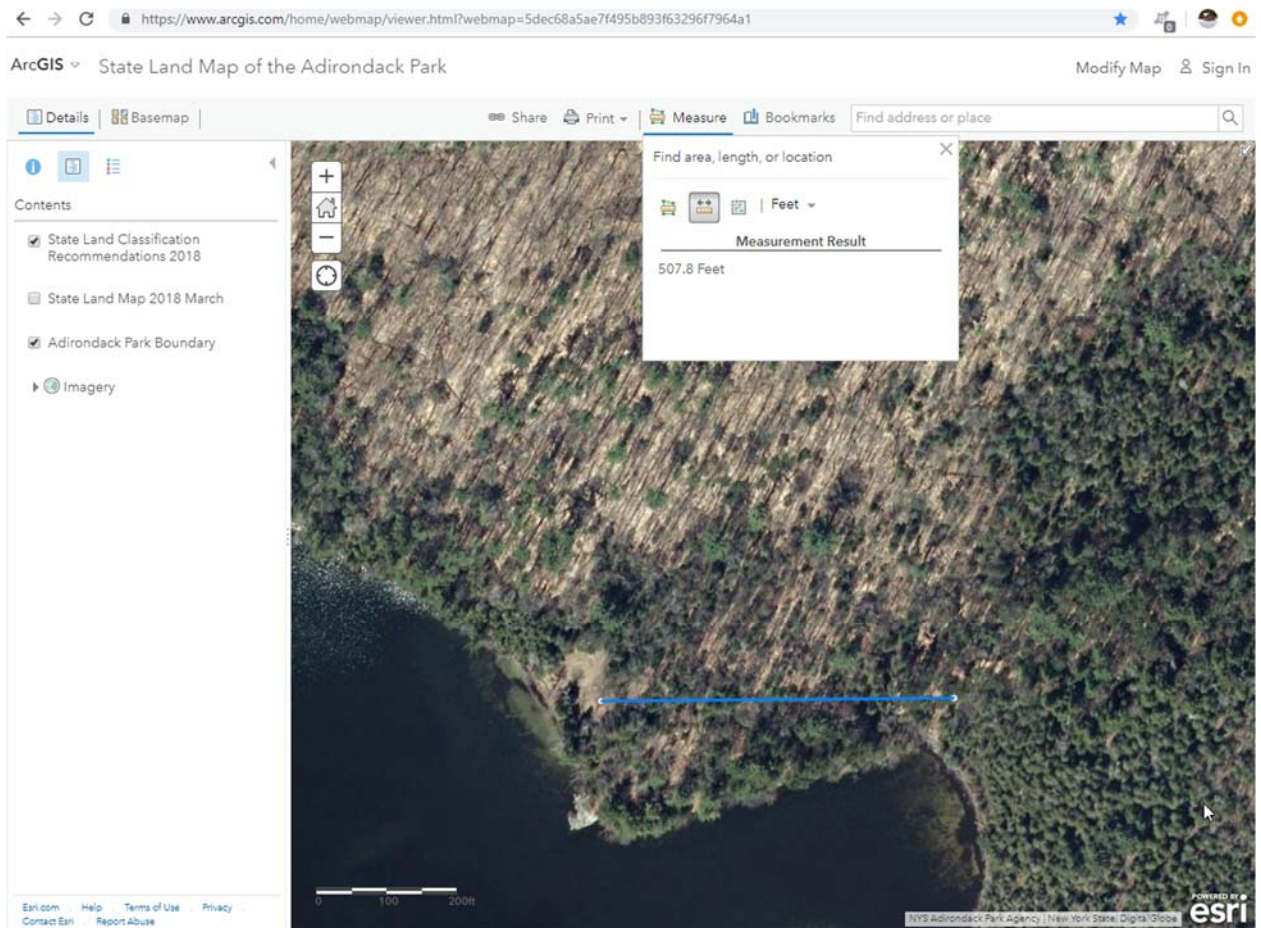


Image of measure for 500-foot DEC suggested separation for lean-to to reconfigured tent camping area. Note primitive camp tent site also needs to be 150- foot from the water edge. If both parameters were applied proposed camp site would be in currently undeveloped area. Image at Eagle lake beach, picnic, camp ground



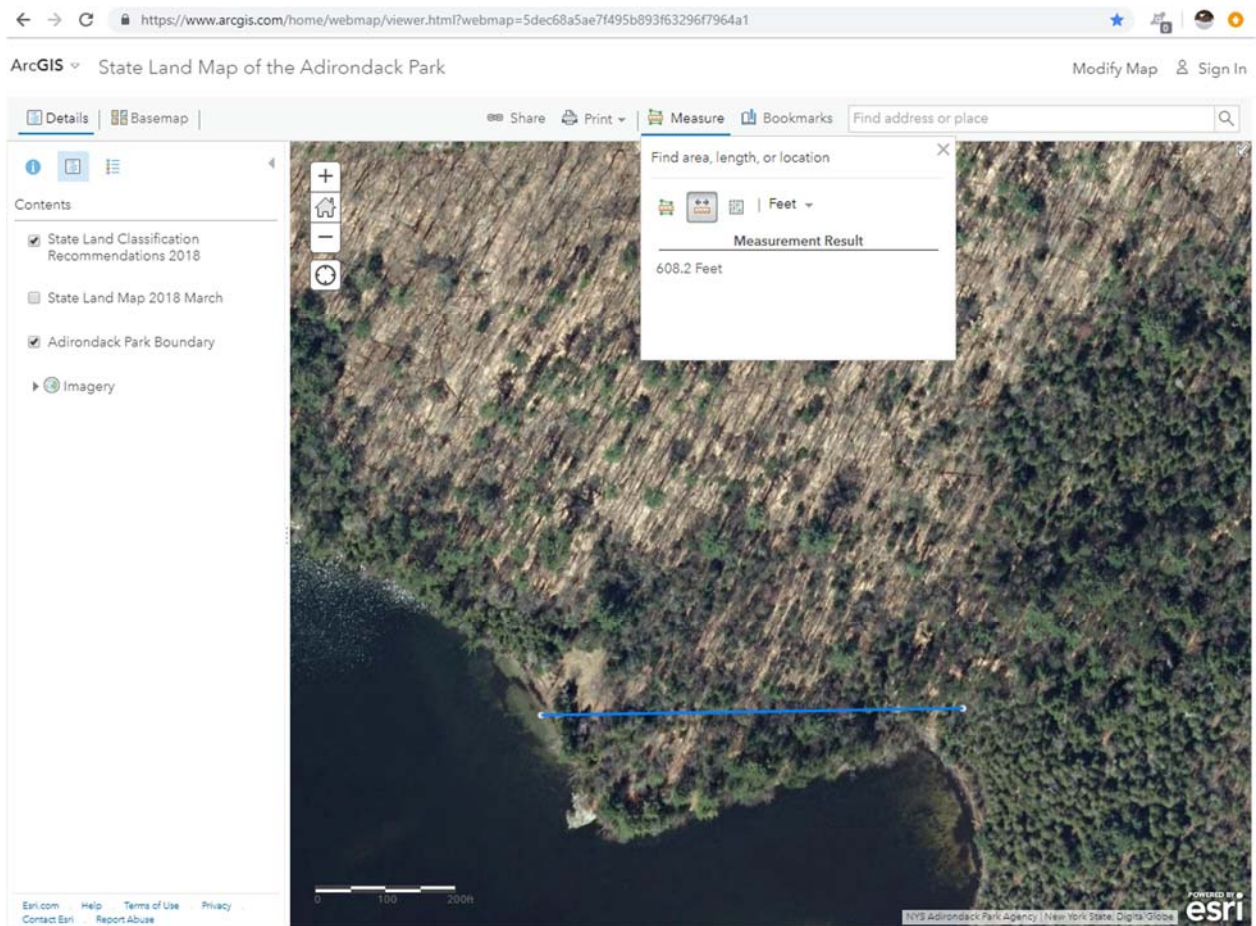


Image of measure for 600-foot DEC suggested separation for lean-to to reconfigured tent camping area. Note primitive camp tent site also needs to be 150- foot from the water edge. If both parameters were applied proposed camp site would be in currently undeveloped area. Image at Eagle lake beach, picnic, camp ground