



Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation



# Hammond Pond Wild Forest

Revised Draft Unit Management Plan

November 8, 2018

## Location

Essex County

Towns of: Crown Point,  
Elizabethtown, Keene, Moriah,  
North Hudson, Schroon,  
Ticonderoga, Westport

Adjacent to:

High Peaks Wilderness Area  
Hoffman Notch Wilderness Area  
Pharaoh Lake Wilderness Area



Adjacent DEC Campgrounds: Lincoln Pond, Sharp Bridge, Paradox Lake, & Frontier Town

## Planning History

1988: UMP Adopted

1993: Bicycle Trail Designation  
UMP Amendment

2016: Route 73/9N Parking &  
Viewing Area UMP Amendment

2018: Revised Public Draft UMP

Public scoping meeting  
held 2/16/2017



Belfry Mountain Fire Tower

# Natural Resources

## Topography



Bald Peak



Harris Hill

Topography is composed of mostly mid-elevation hills and slopes, with some significant rock outcrops. Max. elevation on Hail Mtn (~2,600 feet), and lowest at Port Henry Boat launch on Lake Champlain. Notable summits are in the ~2,000-foot range and include: Bloody Mtn, Harris Hill, Split Rock Mtn, Bald Peak.

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## Water Resources

Wild, Scenic & Recreational Rivers:

- Boquet River (R)
- East Branch Ausable River (R)
- Schroon River (R)

Wetlands

53 ponded waters (3 dams)



HPWF has abundant and diverse water resources.

Boquet River 0.4 mi near Split Rock Falls.

E. Branch Ausable ~1.5 mi in Keene.

Schroon River flows along the western boundary of the unit for ~14 mi between Route 9 and Northway.

Wetlands – strong diversity, roughly 8,000 acres. East Mill Flow and wetland where SR flows into SL are highly valued freshwater emergent wetlands of significant size.

53 ponded waters associated with HPWF.

3 dams: Eagle Lake, Hammond Pond, Kingdom Dam (Lincoln Pond).

## Fisheries

Wealth of brook trout ponds

Warmwater fishing

Schroon River – Schroon Lake



Round Pond

Four large lakes (Schroon Lake, Eagle Lake, Paradox Lake, Lincoln Pond), but the unit is best characterized by its wealth of small ponds, many of which contain native brook trout. Combined with the adjacent Pharaoh Lake Wilderness Area to the south, this aggregated area provides some of the best pond fishing for brook trout in the Adirondacks.

The unit also has an abundance of warmwater fishing, primarily bass and sunfish.

Schroon River begins in northern reaches of the unit (approx. Deadwater Pond), and flows into Schroon Lake at the southern end of the unit. Both river and lake are extremely important from a fisheries standpoint, with a rich history.

## Wildlife

Unit located between High Peaks area and Lake Champlain basin

Northway underpasses

Belfry Mountain Fire Tower

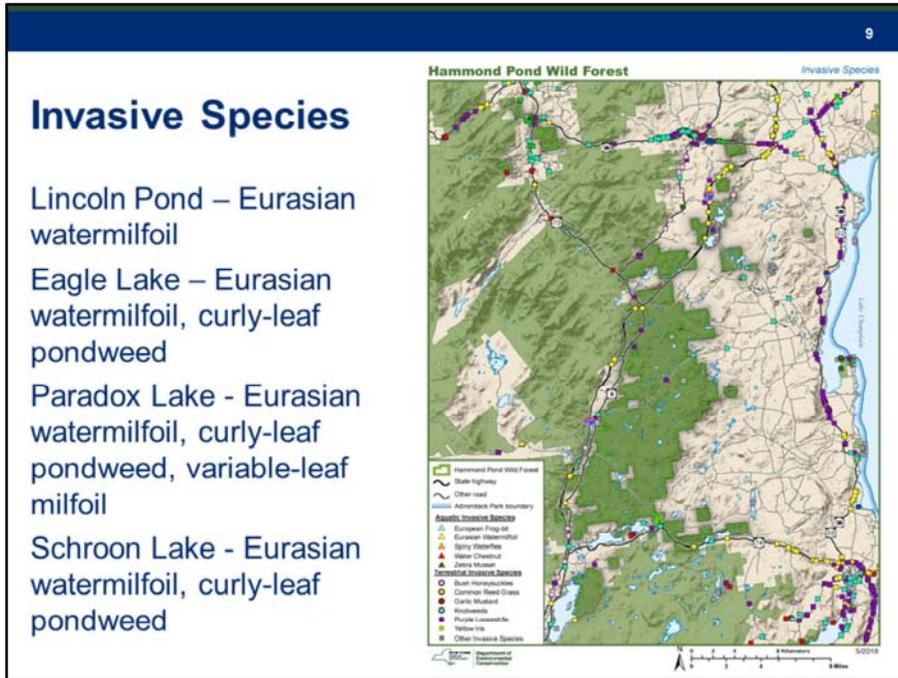


Lincoln Pond Overlook



HPWF is located between the High Peaks area and the Lake Champlain basin. Several Northway pedestrian/vehicle underpasses to facilitate east-west passage for people and wildlife.

The Belfry Mountain fire tower is a well-known spot in the birding community to observe migrating hawks, eagles, and other raptors as they make their way through the Champlain Valley every spring and fall.



Lake AIS data is from APIPP’s 2015 Aquatic Invasive Species Distribution Map & Table. Of monitored lakes, AIS were present in these HPWF-associated waters.

Map shows both aquatic and terrestrial invasive known occurrences. Note that they trend with highway corridors.

## Existing Facilities & Public Use

## Trails & Parking Areas

26 miles of existing trails

Linear, out-and-back trails

Parking areas mostly  
adequate for use levels



Broadly, the HPWF sustains relatively low recreational use levels, based on natural resource and social conditions, with a couple exceptions.

Linear, out-and-back trails, well within a day's trip.

Existing parking areas are mostly adequate for use levels.

## Camping

Overall, overnight use is low

Two existing lean-tos: Moose Mountain Pond & Eagle Lake

Designated and undesignated existing tent sites



Moose Mountain Pond Lean-to

Overall, overnight use of the unit is relatively low. Could be due to several factors, including: trail configuration (lack of backpacking loops or trails of a length inviting an overnight stay), or overshadowed by much more popular and adjacent units (HPWA, PLWA).

However, the relatively easy access and the sense of solitude that can be gained in this unit is a special combination, and may be part of what draws some visitors to the unit.

# UMP Proposals

## Capacity to Withstand Use

*Protect natural resources and ecological value in perpetuity, while facilitating high quality recreational access.*

- Define objectives
- Develop indicators
- Set standards & monitor
- Execute action steps

Phasing



It's my understanding that there is an effort underway to develop a Park-wide approach for carrying capacity. I also understand that this approach will be nuanced, in that one size will not fit all. Each unit, and areas within units, have their own characteristics, use patterns, and capacities to withstand use. Hopefully this new approach will provide a full suite of options to land managers.

That being said, this UMP provides a discussion of the carrying capacity concept, and how it will applied to management and monitoring of the unit.

Phasing:

New recreational opportunities proposed in this UMP have been placed into a phased hierarchy, and will be implemented accordingly over the life of this plan. The phases are not iterative, in that not all projects/activities in phase one need to be completed prior to completing something in one of the later phases. However, management actions that are indeed dependent or conditional upon one another are described as such, and accounted for in the phasing plan.

The phased approach acknowledges that completion of a facility and subsequent use will determine the future of that facility and the future of any other associated or dependent facility. If use level, user experience, or natural resource conditions are not optimized, then facilities may be relocated or closed and rehabilitated.

