

**Participants:**

Adirondack Park Agency: Chris Cooper, Kevin Prickett, Megan Phillips

Dept. of Environmental Conservation: Rob Daley, Ben Thomas

ELPOI: Chris Hyde, Rolf Tiedeman, Keith Park, Cole Hickland, Ed Leahy, Jack Mulcahy

**Agenda:**

1. Introductions (All) – Who is on the call?
2. Review of UMP’s proposed actions and alternatives (Rob) – What did the 2018 UMP propose?

The three alternatives to address the non-conforming boat launch site on Eagle Lake identified in the 2019 unit management plan include:

Alternative 1: No action. This would enable continued “float on/float off” trailered launching of motorized watercraft from the water’s edge in a Wild Forest area, which is inconsistent with the management guidelines for a Wild Forest area.

Alternative 2: This alternative entails converting the facility to a waterway access site. It would enable users to hand launch canoes and kayaks, and also facilitate launching of motorboats from the water’s edge, but boats must be lifted off of the trailer and cannot be floated on or off of the trailer. This action would bring the facility into conformance with the State Land Master Plan (SLMP) guidelines for Wild Forest areas.

Alternative 3: This alternative allows for an assessment of Eagle Lake access and conditions to inform a future decision to either alter the site in accordance with the Wild Forest guidelines (actions in Alternative 2) **or** propose a reclassification of the area to Intensive Use. If the area around the existing site were to become reclassified to Intensive Use, then it would become a boat launching site, allowing for continued float-off, float-on boat launching.

3. DEC consultation request (Ben) – What work did DEC complete to fulfill the preferred alternative in the UMP?

Per the Unit Management Plan preferred alternative, DEC conducted boat surveys during the 2020 – 2022 seasons. These surveys were based on the CSLAP recreational boater survey protocol, and consisted of boat counts on the entire lake at the beginning and end of the season as well as periodic counts of boats recreating on the lake, throughout the season. There were also periodic counts of vehicles using the parking lot as well as along Route 74 throughout the boating season.

DEC reached out to APA to determine if the surveys were sufficient or if additional information was needed and APA made a determination. Sharing that determination and path forward is the purpose of this call.

4. APA determination (Megan, Kevin) – How did APA respond to DEC’s consultation request? What informed their response?

DEC completed during the 2020-2022 boating seasons a recreational survey on Eagle Lake. APA reviewed the data collected and recommended that DEC proceed with implementation of the UMP’s Alternative #2. This action would bring the site into conformance with the Master Plan’s guidelines for Wild Forest Areas and manage the site as a waterway access site (sites that do not accommodate launching of trailered vessels) rather than an improved trailered boat launch site (sites that provide trailered launching).

Alternative #2 will enable users to hand launch canoes and kayaks, and motorboats, but boats must be lifted and rolled over a low bar. Boats cannot be floated on or off of a trailer.

Boat launching sites are only to be provided on large lakes. A large lake is defined by the Master Plan as a lake approximately 1,000 acres or more in area. Eagle Lake is 410 acres. Eagle Lake is less than half of the required size to accommodate a trailered boat launching site offered by the State.

Fishing and waterway access sites may be provided on a water body of any size where public access is warranted. Fishing and waterway access sites facilitate hand launching of boats. They do not accommodate float on/float off trailered launching of boats.

Limiting opportunities to hand launching at NYS access points on water bodies provides the following benefits:

- Opportunities to enjoy waterbodies without the wakes and noise created by large motorboats
- Provides a more conducive opportunity for some uses (swimming, canoeing, fishing)
- Reduces shoreline erosion associated with wake action
- Limits impacts to wildlife (e.g. loons) sensitive to motorboat wakes

Managing pre-existing, non-conforming boat launches has been addressed in several approved UMPs. These UMP’s have addressed non-conforming boat launches with the installation of low-lying barriers – see photo below from Garnet Lake, which is 330 acres in size and located in a Wild Forest unit. Alternative 2, proposed in the UMP, is the only State Land Master Plan conforming option and consistent with previous management actions in other units.

Eagle Lake Boat Launch Meeting Minutes  
February 1, 2023



Photo by Glenn Pearsall

5. Timeline for management action (Rob, Ben) – What is DEC’s timeline for next steps?

After notifying stakeholders, DEC will notice a work plan in the Environmental Notice Bulletin in the spring of 2023. DEC and APA will work to develop signage informing boaters of the upcoming management change, and will post those signs at the facility during the 2023 and 2024 boating seasons. DEC will not formally convert the site to a waterway access site until after the 2024 boating season.

6. Questions (All) – Are there any questions?

DEC and APA staff responded to inquiries and comments from ELPOI members, covering topics including emergency access to the lake, primitive tent sites vs. intensive use campgrounds, Master Plan requirements for boat launching sites (including the waterbody acreage threshold), the 1988 UMP for the Hammond Pond Wild Forest, the three alternatives proposed in the 2019 UMP amendment, the timeline for implementation, etc.

**Action Items:**

- APA to provide minutes from the meeting
- DEC to provide data collected from 2020-2022