

Keith Park
31 Barkwood Ln.
Clifton Park NY
12065
1/21/19

Robert Stegemann
DEC Regional Director Region 5

Dear Mr. Stegemann,

I am writing you today in concern with changes planned for the Eagle Lake boat launch and public beach that were not conveyed to property owners around the lake and only found buried in the Hammond Wild Forest Draft Unit Management Plan (Draft UMP). A public hearing was scheduled without notifying ANY of the lake residents, despite easy access thru the ELPOI website or Facebook page. This hearing was held in the off-season when nearly all lake residents are away in their winter residence and there was no traceable public posting in any newspapers.

I own land on the North side of the lake, the only access I have for a boat is the public launch site which I use as 3 generations of my family have for over 65 years. My little 12' wooden boat has been on the lake for well over 50 years and is my only transportation on the lake between my camp and neighbors on the other side, a 20-minute drive away using a car. It is my only transportation to the public beach, which I will address later. How am I going to get my boat in and out of the lake if a barrier is installed? This is a vintage '54 Penn Yann and will not be hauled over a barrier and is much too heavy for even 2 people to lift. This "little" 12' boat still weighs several hundred pounds and after spending 2 summers restoring it, I will NOT be scraping it over a barrier trying to get it into the lake, it must be floated off the trailer. What does the DEC consider "small"? I often have visitors come for the day and use the launch to save 45 minutes on the road and boat over and enjoy fishing for the day, no launch would mean the end of that for me. Many of my friends are well into their 70's, do you think it would be safe for our senior citizens to be hauling even smaller boats over a barrier to enjoy the lake for a day?

The Boat launch on this lake is critical for many reasons, it is the only access point for the Fire department, who has responded to several fires in just the past few years, one near another backside camp, one on Fox Island and one along the shore near Rt 74. Pumpers/Fire trucks cannot get into many of the private access roads or access many of the shoreline areas of the lake, this is a CRITICAL SAFETY CONCERN for lake residents. Most of the north shore and all of the southwestern shore are inaccessible by any roads and the only means for fire fighting would be provided from a boat. EMS also needs access to the lake for water rescue, assistance at the public beach site. Utilities need access to the lake for repair and maintenance (they cannot use private watercraft), Law enforcement needs access to the lake with powered watercraft for enforcement purposes. Do you think an Encon or DEC officer wants to paddle their way nearly 3 miles to the public beach and arrive in a canoe to deal with a wild party at the beach? How would they access the beach after dark?

Quite a few residents on Eagle Lake rely on powerboat access thru the public launch as THEIR ONLY MEANS to reach their camps, their property/camp(s) are water access only installing a barrier would strand them. Has this been considered? These residents need means to carry supplies such as groceries, batteries, propane, firewood, maintenance supplies / construction materials etc. in and out of their camps, they cannot do this without the public launch site and even more so than myself they too rely on friends and visitors being able to launch their boats so that they can visit and rely on the health and safety services of Fire and EMS

Eagle lake is stocked yearly to promote Fishing, a very popular activity on the lake, how are Anglers going to get the Bassboat on the lake if there is a barrier in the way at the launch? There very few safe shoreline fishing spots so closing the launch to fishing boats would end the enjoyment of fishing on the lake for the general public. The State has been advertising tourism and fishing for years now but now it appears to want to limit this? What's the logic or thought process here?

Lastly, the report mentions encouraging camping and yet states that 2 of the 4 camp sites be closed and any upkeep of the grass on the public beach be terminated. For as many years as I can remember resident volunteers would help keep the grass trimmed, beach area raked of leaves and debris and Milfoil litter so this limited sandy beach could be used. Would YOU bring your family or children to such a spot if there were long grass loaded with Ticks and Mosquitoes? Most lake residents including myself do not have any kind of a beach to use or a child friendly swimming area, the public beach is used as it has been for over 100 years with volunteer upkeep, WHY would this be stopped? It would ruin the beach. This is the windy end of the lake and stuff gets blown in there and needs to be raked up all the time otherwise other issues like water snakes will become prevalent, and if someone is bitten and there is no way out other than a paddle... this is not good.

If the state wants to aid in the prevention of spreading invasive species trailers are not the only or even biggest issue, ALL water craft, including the smallest Kayak's, fishing gear, kids water sports toys etc. are an issue. To make a REAL impact, the state should install a wash station at the launch similar to the one near exit 28.

I'm as concerned about preserving the character of the lake as anyone, and not altering or damaging the lands around it but for the past 45 years that I can vividly remember, the public launch has not changed ONE BIT with the use it see's nor has the Public beach changed, I have clear color photos going back over 20 years and black and white photos going back 100 years that my Grandfather, Mason Smith took and that public beach area is a time capsule.

In conclusion, I ask as a taxpaying citizen of the state, that plans for changes around Eagle Lake be suspended until there is a proper public input/process for gathering lake and community resident concerns and then a hearing on why this is taking place and allow the property owners and users of the lake to be able to be notified of

Such a hearing and be heard. The plan says Eagle Lake is “out of compliance” but since Sweeping master plans written decades ago that don’t take into consideration any of the individual situations and needs within them are fraught with problems, I say the Master plan is out of compliance with Eagle Lake. This plan was born in 1972, this is 2019, we are living in a very different world now with different needs and much more knowledge about the importance of Safety and what works and doesn’t work when it comes to preserving our beautiful lands. These changes should not just be implemented without any input from property owners or users of the lake, has the DEC considered any legal aspects of such changes, especially when residents were not properly informed? Let’s keep Eagle Lake the peaceful wonderful time capsule it is.

Sincerely

Keith Park