



20 November 2018

Corrie Magee  
NYS DEC  
232 Golf Course Road  
Warrensburg, NY 12885  
Email: r5.ump@dec.ny.gov  
**RE:** Draft Hammond Pond Wild Forest Unit Management Plan (UMP)

Dear Corrie,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Hammond Pond Wild Forest (HPWF) Unit Management Plan (UMP). ADK is very pleased that DEC carefully considered the comments and adopted suggestions submitted by the Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK) during scoping, which were provided by members Mary Coffin, Norm Kuchar, and Walter Hayes who have been working with DEC in the planning and field siting of the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) in the Adirondack Park.

### **Adirondack Mountain Club**

ADK is dedicated to protecting and advocating for New York State's wild lands and waters while also teaching people how to enjoy natural places responsibly. Since 1922, the organization has offered people opportunities to stay and play in as well as protect, discover, and explore the outdoors. Today, ADK has 30,000 members in 27 chapters statewide and is served by a professional, year-round staff. The organization is recognized as a vital voice in the commitment to environmental stewardship and ethical outdoor recreation in New York State. ADK members hike, camp, snowshoe, cross-country ski, paddle, and cycle the lands and waters of the Adirondack Park and other state lands. Our members are also monitors and maintainers of trails and recreation infrastructure as well as watchdogs of public lands and watersheds to monitor for invasive species or irresponsible and destructive motorized trespass.

We respectfully request that you consider the following concerns and comments outlined below from Norm Kuchar and Walter Hayes, two ADK member leaders who have worked with you to plan this section of the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST). The comments below are arranged following the NCNST from west to east through the unit.

- We agree with the revised routing of the proposed Schroon Falls to Johnson Pond Road Trail (#28), avoiding the use of the existing Peaked Hill Trail and bypassing the top of

Peaked Hill. The existing Peaked Hill Trail is steep and eroded, would probably have to be reconstructed, and would probably be difficult to maintain. Furthermore, the summit of Peaked Hill, that once had a view to the south, is now grown in. The revised route along Johnson Pond Brook is quite scenic and should be easier to maintain.

- We strongly support the construction of the proposed Long Sue Loop Trail. One side of the loop can be used for the NCNST, but the loop will also make a nice day hike from Johnson Pond Road. We have not been to the top of Long Sue, but we suspect that there may also be some views from the top of the high rock face.
- As stated in the Draft UMP, the Long Sue to Moose Mountain Pond Trail (#27) could either go over the shoulder of Owl Pate or along the Berrymill Brook drainage. We believe that it would be easier to construct a trail along the latter route, and this trail would go under some scenic cliffs on the western ridge of Owl Pate and past a nice waterfall on the outlet of Moose Mountain Pond. However, in either case, a footbridge would probably have to be built across this outlet stream.
- We also support the revised routing of the NCNST from the Moose Mountain Pond Trail to the proposed Hammond Pond Trail Extension (#23). As stated, this new trail would traverse a relatively open white pine forest over easy terrain. It also creates a scenic loop trail for day hikers from the Ensign Pond Road parking area.
- The Hammond Pond Trail Extension (#21) should be very easy to establish, since it follows an existing old road that is in good condition. However, a footbridge over Black Brook would be needed.
- We support the proposed route of the NCNST over Bloody Mountain (#18) and Bald Peak (#17). Both of these summits offer great views of the High Peaks and the entire area between the High Peaks and Lake Champlain. The proposed route makes maximum use of public land for the NCNST. However, the feasibility of this route requires a recreation easement from the owner of the private lands. Every effort should be made to secure such a recreational easement. Barring such an easement, alternative routes would certainly

involve long road walks to reach the current eastern terminus of the NCNST at the Crown Point Bridge.

- In addition to the above comments regarding the NCNST in the HPWF, we support the construction of the Harris Hill Trail (#22) and the Split Rock Mountain Trail (#30). Both of these would provide new opportunities for hikers, snowshoers and skiers in an area that today has a limited system of marked trails. Both of these trails would lead to excellent views and, being close to the High Peaks, might take some of the hiking pressure off the overused trails in the High Peaks area.

We respectfully request that the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) construct the NCNST so that it meets National Park Service certification criteria as well as DEC best foot trail construction practices.

Overall the Draft Hammond Pond Wild Forest UMP is an excellent planning document. We are pleased to see the inclusion of Hemlock Woolly Adelgid as an invasive species that threatens the Unit and the actions proposed to protect the dense hemlock stands in the HPWF. We are also pleased to see ATVs and UTVs acknowledged as a threat to the HPWF and to see the proposed actions to discourage the illegal use in the Unit. Although we do not support the creation of additional trails for snowmobile use in the HPWF, we are not against DEC's proposed action to add snowmobile use to the East of Route 9 Multiple Use Trail in this UMP.

Thank you for considering the above comments.

Sincerely,



Neil F. Woodworth  
Executive Director and Counsel  
Adirondack Mountain Club  
neilwoody@gmail.com  
518-449-3870 Albany office  
518-669-0128 Cell  
518-668-4447 x-13 or 25 Lake George office

Cathy Pedler  
Director of Government Relations and Conservation  
Adirondack Mountain Club  
[cathy@adk.org](mailto:cathy@adk.org)  
cathypedler.adk@gmail.com  
518-449-3870 x1001 Albany office