

2005 UNIT MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

to the

2002-2007 Unit Management Plan

and

**Final Supplemental Environmental
Impact Statement**

for



Prepared for:

Olympic Regional Development Authority

February 2006

**Gore Mountain Ski Center
2005 Amendment
to the
2002-2007 Unit Management Plan
and
Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This 2005 Unit Management Plan (UMP) Amendment addresses changes to the 2002 UMP and adds several new action items. All items are within the scope of the 2002 UMP. This 2005 UMP Amendment reviews the status of the 1995 UMP and 2002 UMP management actions and identifies those management actions which have been completed, those which are pending, and those which are modified or abandoned within this 2005 UMP Amendment. The 2002 UMP is incorporated by references into this document.

Since the completion of the 1995 and 2002 UMP Amendments, Gore Mountain has received recognition from the Ski Industry and the press for, not only its quality skiing experience, but also for its environmental stewardship. In May 2005 the National Ski Areas Association awarded Gore Mountain the Silver Eagle Award for Excellence in Environmental Education. Gore received this award for its unique Northwoods Knowledge program that transforms every gondola ride into an educational experience, its “Fourth Grade Discovery Day” environmental field trips, and its cooperation with community to provide educational experiences. Finalists were Big Mountain, Montana, and Mammoth Mountain, California.



In 1999 Gore Mountain was one of twenty-four parties invited to attend the Environmental Protection Agency’s Sustainable Industry Mountain Resort Development Stakeholder Meeting. Previously, in 1995, Gore Mountain was one of the thirty presenters, and the only representative of the ski industry, to the Environmental Concerns Task Force at the White House Conference on Travel and Tourism.

2005 UMP AMENDMENT

New management actions are identified and analyzed in this 2005 UMP Amendment. The potential environmental impacts and the attendant proposed mitigation measures for any new or modified management actions are identified and discussed in this UMP Amendment. The potential impacts and the identified mitigation measures for the approved 2002 UMP management actions are described in detail in the 2002 UMP and remain in effect and will not be reported herein, but are incorporated by reference.

This 2005 UMP Amendment refers to the 2002 UMP where no revisions in the UMP text or mapping are required, such as the existing environmental setting for such resources as geology, topography and slope, climate, etc. Any available updated information on environmental resources is presented in this 2005 UMP Amendment.

The primary purposes of this UMP Amendment are to improve public access to Gore Mountain and Forest Preserve lands and to improve the skiing experience and provide for a stronger interconnect between Gore Mountain Ski Center and the Historic North Creek Ski Bowl and the hamlet of North Creek. The 2002 UMP included the construction of new ski trails and lifts in the Intensive Use Area that connected with the Town of Johnsbury Ski Bowl Park (Ski Bowl). This UMP Amendment (1) modifies the alignment of some of these previously approved lifts and trails, (2) provides additional ski trails and lifts in this part of the site, and (3) eliminates some of the previously approved trails.

Other important purposes of this UMP Amendment include creating a new novice rated trail connecting the summit of Bear Mountain (top of the gondola) with the Saddle Lodge, and expanding the NYSEF race training building. A new bus parking lot along the Ski Area entrance road is included in this UMP Amendment as a Conceptual Action. Other minor additions to the 2002 UMP are also included.

The amendments put forth in this document are consistent with the specific goals identified in the 2002 UMP-improve infrastructure reliability, reduce operation and maintenance costs, assure environmental compatibility, stabilize the local economy, trail safety improvements, improve trail selection, improve economic return, increase public access and improve overall skier satisfaction. In addition to meeting these specific goals, the proposed amendments to the 2002 UMP continues to achieve the goal of balancing ski facilities on the mountain.

The amendments proposed to the 2002 UMP will help to make Gore a destination ski resort and will help to improve the regional economy and will draw new businesses to the hamlet of North Creek.

SEQRA PROCESS

On December 28, 2005 ORDA, as Lead Agency, accepted the Draft 2005 UMP Amendment and Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (“the Public Draft”) as Complete. Notice of the SDEIS Completion Determination was included in the December 28, 2005 issue of the Environmental Notice Bulletin (ENB) along with the announcement that public comments on the Public Draft would be accepted until January 31, 2006.

Appendix 9 of this document includes copies of the comment letters that were received, some of which were received after the close of the announced public comment period.

Regardless of when letters were received, written responses were prepared for substantive comments in all comment letters. Substantive comments and responses thereto are provided in Appendix 10 of this document.

Appendix 11 of this document, entitled “Errata”, provides a summary of changes that were made to the Public Review Draft of the 2005 UMP Amendment/SDEIS in response to substantive public comment.

On February 22, 2006, ORDA, as Lead Agency, accepted this Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement as Complete, and on this same date a Notice of FSEIS Completion was published in the Environmental Notice Bulletin. After a minimum ten-day contemplation period, the NYSDEC, APA and ORDA will each prepare a written Statement of Findings of Fact which specify potential impacts and mitigation measures, as appropriate. The Findings of Fact form the basis for DEC adoption of the UMP Amendment. After the Commissioner adopts the Final UMP Amendment/EIS, the UMP Amendment will be filed with the APA.

All volumes of the Supplemental EIS are available for review at the following locations: ORDA offices in Lake Placid, Gore Mountain, APA headquarters in Ray Brook, DEC Region 5 headquarters in Ray Brook, DEC Region 5 office in Warrensburg, Johnsbury Town Hall and the Warren County Municipal Center.

ERRATA

The following changes have been made to the Public Draft of the 2005 Gore Mountain UMP Amendment/SDEIS during preparation of this SFEIS.

1. Section 6.D, No-Action Alternative – The version of this section in the Public Draft has been deleted and has been replaced by the following.

“The no-action alternative to this UMP Amendment is the continuing implementation of the approved 2002-2007 UMP Update.”

2. A copy of the November 3, 2005 Master Agreement between the Town of Johnsbury and FrontStreet Mountain Development, LLC has been added to Appendix 2, Documents of Record. The Table of Contents has been amended accordingly.
3. The following language has been added to page 5-3 of the Public Draft where tree cutting is discussed,

“Tree removal will be in accordance with the Department of Environmental Conservation’s (DEC) Lands and Forest Policy LF-91-2 entitled ‘Cutting Removal or Destruction of Trees and Endangered or Rare Plants on Forest Preserve Lands.’”

4. The Table of Contents has been revised to include Appendix 9, Comment Letters; Appendix 10, Responses to Substantive Public Comments on the Public Review Draft of the 2005 UMP Amendment; and Appendix 11, Errata. These Appendices have been added at the end of this document.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APA	Adirondack Park Agency
cfm	cubic feet per minute
dbh	diameter at breast height
DEC	Department of Environmental Conservation
ECL	Environmental Conservation Law
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
gpm	gallons per minute
MVA	Megavolt amperes
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NHP	Natural Heritage Program
NYS	New York State
ORDA	Olympic Regional Development Authority
SAOT	skiers at one time
SEIS	Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement
SPDES	State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
UMP	Unit Management Plan
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

A. Project Purpose

The Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA), in conjunction with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) is amending the 2002-2007 Unit Management Plan (UMP) and Generic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Gore Mountain Ski Center in North Creek, Town of Johnsbury, Warren County, New York. This document serves as an amendment to that 2002-2007 Unit Management Plan. As an amendment to the 2002-2007 Unit Management Plan, this document will discuss changes to actions which have been previously approved, will include any new information relating to changes such that it satisfies State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) requirements, and will refer to the previously accepted and approved EIS for sections which have not changed as a result of this UMP Amendment. The document is organized so that it follows the sequence of the 2002-2007 UMP.

The primary purposes of this Amendment are to improve public access to Gore Mountain and the Forest Preserve and to improve the skiing experience and provide for a stronger interconnect between Gore Mountain Ski Center and the Historic North Creek Ski Bowl and the hamlet of North Creek. The 2002 UMP included the construction of new ski trails and lifts in the Intensive Use Area that connected with the Town of Johnsbury Ski Bowl Park (Ski Bowl). This UMP Amendment (1) modifies the alignment of some of these previously approved lifts and trails, (2) provides additional ski trails and lifts in this part of the site, and (3) eliminates some of the previously approved trails.

This interconnection between the Gore Mountain Ski Center and the Historic North Creek Ski Bowl to the Hamlet of North Creek, that will help to establish Gore as a destination ski area, was the subject of a recent study conducted by the Office of the New York State Comptroller. In its report the Comptroller's Office states that with the interconnect in place, the economic impact of Gore on the regional economy will be significant, and more than double revenues to the regional economy. (See Appendix 1 of this UMP Amendment for a full copy of the State Comptroller's report entitled "Economic Impact Study of the Gore Mountain Interconnect.")

Other important purposes of this UMP Amendment include creating a new novice rated trail connecting the summit of Bear Mountain (top of the gondola) with the Saddle Lodge, and expanding the NYSEF race training building. A new bus parking lot along the Ski Area entrance road is included in this UMP Amendment as a Conceptual Action. Other minor additions to the 2002 UMP are also included.

The amendments put forth in this document are consistent with the specific goals identified in the 2002-2007 UMP-improve infrastructure reliability, reduce operation and maintenance costs, assure environmental compatibility, stabilize the local economy, trail safety improvements, improve trail selection, improve economic return, increase public access and improve overall skier satisfaction. In addition to meeting these specific goals, the proposed amendments to the 2002-2007 UMP continues to achieve the goal of balancing ski facilities on the mountain.

B. Proposed Amendment Actions

The following is a list of proposed New Actions and modifications to actions previously approved (but not yet constructed) from the 2002 UMP. See Section IV of this UMP Amendment for more detailed descriptions of all management actions.

Figure 1-1 “2005 UMP Amendments” is a master plan showing the location of the trails and lifts and their status under this UMP Amendment.

Trails

- Abandon four North Creek Ski Bowl Trails, Pod #11, (previously approved but not built) and add eight new trails on the eastfacing slope, connecting the Historic North Creek Ski Bowl to the Gore Mountain Ski Area. The adjustments to Pod #11 will continue to provide connections to the Ski Bowl as previously approved, but the reorientation of the trails in Pod #11 will improve the skier’s experience.
- Five previously approved trails in the Burnt Ridge Pod #12 will be abandoned and four new trails will be added.
- The construction of a new novice trail from the Gondola at the Bear Mountain Summit to the Saddle Lodge (New Action).
- Abandon two approved trails in Pod #10 and modify an existing trail. This will continue to improve trail-to-trail connections on Gore Mountain.
- The previously approved Tubing Facility at the Bear Mountain Summit will be abandoned.

Lifts

- A new gondola is proposed from the Base Area of the North Creek Ski Bowl to the Base Area of Gore Mountain Ski Area. This new gondola will provide an improved, reliable, four season interconnect between the two base lodge areas which will run both ways for passengers.
- The previously approved North Creek Ski Bowl Lift (Lift #11) will be realigned.
- The previously approved Burnt Ridge Lift (Lift #12) will be realigned.
- The Gore E Gully trail and lift area will be retained for freestyle terrain with minor terrain developments. This will be a snow moving activity, not an earth moving activity. The Gore-E-Gully area was proposed to be abandoned in the 2002-2007 UMP.

Parking

- A new bus parking lot along the access roadway is discussed as a Conceptual Action only, and no construction would be initiated without a future UMP amendment.
- A new sand storage pole barn for parking lot maintenance will be constructed at an existing gravel parking lot.

Lodges

- The NYSEF Race Training Building will have an addition and will be renovated.

The proposed amendments will increase the approved downhill ski trail mileage from 33.9 miles to 35.4 miles. The trails above the 2800' elevation will be reduced by this plan by a total length of 1200 feet.

The amendments put forth in this document are consistent with the specific goals identified in the 2002-2007 UMP-improve infrastructure reliability, reduce operation and maintenance costs, assure environmental compatibility, stabilize the local economy, provide trail safety improvements, improve trail selection, improve economic return, increase public access and improve overall skier satisfaction. In addition to meeting these specific goals, the amendments to the 2002-2007 UMP continues to achieve the goal of balancing facilities on the mountain.

C. General Facility Description

No change to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

D. History of Ski Center

No change to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

E. Description of UMP/EIS Process

The Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan, adopted in 1971, provides guidelines for the preservation, management and use of State-owned lands by State agencies in the Adirondack Park. Gore Mountain Ski Center land is classified under the plan as an "Intensive Use Area." The plan provides that the primary management guideline for Intensive Use Areas is to provide the public opportunities for a variety of outdoor recreational pursuits in a setting and on a scale in harmony with the relatively wild and undeveloped character of the Adirondack Park.

Unit Management Plans must conform to the guidelines and criteria set forth in the State Land Master Plan. The Adirondack Park Agency Act (Section 816) directs the NYSDEC to develop, in consultation with the Agency, individual unit management plans (UMPs) for each unit of land under its jurisdiction that is classified in the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan. Unit management Plans are prepared by the NYSDEC in consultation with the Adirondack Park Agency (APA).

Gore Mountain Ski Center opened in 1964 and early management was under the direction of the NYSDEC. Management was delegated to the Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA) on April 1, 1984 through an agreement with NYSDEC which was authorized by Chapter 99 of the Laws of 1984 (Article 8, Title 28, Section 2614, Public Authorities Law). This agreement transferred to ORDA the responsibility for the use, operation, maintenance and management of the ski area and remains in effect until March 31, 2012. Under the agreement, ORDA is to cooperate with NYSDEC to complete and periodically update the UMP for the ski area. A UMP for Gore was completed in 1987, and was updated in 1995 and again in 2002. This 2002 UMP is still in effect as the document by which Gore is managed and is implemented pursuant to a 1991 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the NYSDEC and ORDA.

2002 UMP

Concurrent with the formulation of the 2002 UMP was the preparation of a Supplemental EIS. ORDA was declared Lead Agency for the SEQRA review for the 2002 UMP and held a Scoping Session on June 21, 2000. An initial draft of the 2002 UMP was submitted to the NYSDEC and the APA for review and comment, prior to the preparation of the final draft plan for public review. ORDA revised this document in response to the comments of the APA and DEC and on March 21, 2001, declared the document complete for public review. A SEQRA Public Hearing was held on April 9, 2001 and the comment period remained open until May 1, 2001.

The Final Environmental Impact Statement was prepared after consideration of all comments and recommendation made on the Draft. The FEIS was deemed complete for review by ORDA on January 31, 2002 and Notice of its publication was made public in the February 6, 2002 issue of the Environmental Notice Bulletin. The Commissioner of the NYSDEC then adopted the 2002 UMP and the 2002 UMP was placed on file with the Adirondack Park Agency.

2005 Amendment

The process for this 2005 UMP Amendment will be similar to the process that led to the approval of the 2002 UMP.

An initial draft of the 2005 Amendment and the Supplemental EIS was submitted to NYSDEC and APA for initial review and comment. Following receipt of comments from NYSDEC and APA the draft document was amended and resubmitted to the NYSDEC for further review.

On December 28, 2005 ORDA, as Lead Agency, accepted the Draft 2005 UMP Amendment and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement as Complete. Notice of the SDEIS Completion Determination was included in the December 28, 2005 issue of the Environmental Notice Bulletin (ENB) along with the announcement that public comment on the Public Draft would be accepted until January 31, 2006.

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contemplation period, the NYSDEC, APA and ORDA will each prepare a written Statement of Findings of Fact which specify potential impacts and mitigation measures, as appropriate. The Findings of Fact form the basis for DEC adoption of the UMP Amendment. After the Commissioner adopts the Final UMP Amendment/EIS, the UMP Amendment will be filed with the APA.

All volumes of the Supplemental EIS are available for review at the following offices: ORDA in Lake Placid, Gore Mountain, APA headquarters in Ray Brook, DEC in Ray Brook, Johnsbury Town Hall and the Warren County Municipal Center.

F. Status of 2002 Unit Management Plan

This UMP Amendment contains specific changes to the approved 2002-2007 UMP. Unless otherwise specified in this Amendment, the management actions contained in the 2002-2007 UMP, including carryover management actions from the 1987 and 1995 UMPs, remain in affect as approved.

Table 1-1, “2005 UMP Amendment and Status of 2002-2007 UMP (with carryover 1987 and 1995 actions)” indicates which management actions approved in the 2002-2007 UMP are completed, partially completed, pending construction, modified in this 2005 UMP Amendment, or are abandoned altogether.

Table 1-1
2005 UMP Amendment and Status of 2002-2007 UMP
(with carry over 1987 and 1995 actions)

ITEM #	MANAGEMENT ACTION	COMPLETED	PARTIALLY COMPLETED (% completed)	APPROVED, CONSTRUCTION PENDING	ABANDONED	MODIFIED/ NEW IN 2005 AMENDED OR UPDATED
2	Downhill Trails					
	• New Trails & Crossovers					
	1-N-M			X		
	1-N-N			X		
	1-N-O Twister	X (Glade)	Trail(5%)			
	1-N-P Twister	X (Glade)	Trail (5%)			
	1-N-Q Wildair (Sunway to 1-N-R)		widening (75%)			
	1-N-Q (1-N-R to 1-B)			X		
	1-N-R Wildair		widening (75%)			
	2-N-L			X		
	6-N-O			X		
	7-N-L Rumor	X				
	7-N-M Lies		widening (75%)			
	7-N-M (Cutoff S. Branch)				X (2005)	
	7-N-O Lower Open Pit		widening (75%)			
	7-N-P Straight Brook Glades		trail (5%)			
	7-N-Q Double Barrel		widening (40%)			
	9-A	½ Width		½ Width		
	10-A Pine Knot		widening (75%)			
	10-B (Upper) Kilcare		Trail (5%)			
	10-B (Lower) Pine Knot		widening (75%)			
	10-C Uncas		widening (80%)			
	10-D				X (2005)	
	10-E (Upper) Topridge	X				
	10-E (Lower) Topridge	X				
	10-F					X(2005)
	10-G				X (2005)	
	10-H (Upper)			X		
	10-H (Lower)			X		
	10-I					X (2005)
	C-4 Fairview	X				
	C-5 (Upper) Sagamore				X	
	C-6 Foxlair		widening (75%)			
	C-7 Hedges					X (2005)
	C-8 Old Gondola		widening (50%)			
	11-A (Lower) Lift Line			X		
	11-B (Upper) Lift Line				X (2005)	
	11-C Access to Pod #12				X (2005)	
	11-D Access to Pipeline				X (2005)	
	11-E Oak Ridge			X		
	11-F Ridge			X		
	11-G North Prop. Bdry.				X (2005)	
	11-H New Quad/Old T-Bar					X (2005)

ITEM #	MANAGEMENT ACTION	COMPLETED	PARTIALLY COMPLETED (% completed)	APPROVED, CONSTRUCTION PENDING	ABANDONED	MODIFIED/ NEW IN 2005 AMENDED OR UPDATED
	11-I Hudson					X (2005)
	11-J North Expert					X (2005)
	11-K (Lower) Rabbit Pond					X (2005)
	11-L Crosscut to Easiest					X (2005)
	11-M (Upper) Rabbit Pond					X (2005)
	11-N Access to New Burnt Quad					X (2005)
	11-O Pipeline Trail		widening (30%)			
	12-A Access to Gore Base			X		
	12-B Access to Pipeline Trail			X		
	12-C				X (2005)	
	12-D				X (2005)	
	12-E				X (2005)	
	12-F				X (2005)	
	12-G Access to N. Lift			X		
	12-H				X (2005)	
	12-I Showcase to Burnt Base					X (2005)
	12-J Burnt South					X (2005)
	12-K Burnt Lift Line					X (2005)
	12-L Burnt North					X (2005)
	13-A Open Space	X				
	• Widening Existing Trails					
	All 1987, '95 incomplete UMP actions			X		
	1-F (Upper) Twister			X		
	1-F (Lower) Twister	X				
	1-G (Upper)			X		
	1-H			X		
	1-K	X				
	1-D (Upper) Showcase			X		
	1-D (Lower) Showcase	X				
	2-A			X		
	2-C			X		
	2-D			X		
	2-E			X		
	6-D-E			X		
	6-F			X		
	7-A			X		
	Upper Loop			X		
	3-A			X		
	3-C (Upper)			X		
2	Lifts					
	Lift #5					
	Abandon				X (2005)	
	Remove				X (2005)	
	Lift #8 (Old Gondola)					
	Abandon	X				

ITEM #		MANAGEMENT ACTION	COMPLETED	PARTIALLY COMPLETED (% completed)	APPROVED, CONSTRUCTION PENDING	ABANDONED	MODIFIED/ NEW IN 2005 AMENDED OR UPDATED
		Remove		X			
		Lift #8 (New Gondola)	X				
		Lift #2 (Replace)	X				
		Lift #3 (Replace)			X		
		Lift #4 (Replace)			X		
		Lift #7 (Replace)	X				
		Lift #1			X		
		Lift #6			X		
		Lift #9A	X (Surface Lift Not Chair)				
		Lift #9B			X		
		Lift #10	X				
		Lift #11 (Ski Bowl Quad)					X (2005)
		Lift #12 (Burnt Lift)					X (2005)
		Lift #13 (Ski Bowl Triple)			X		
		Lift #14 (Gondola)					X (2005)
3		Lodges/Buildings					
	A	Base Lodge					
		▪ Lodge Renovation			X		
		▪ Gondola Bldg. Renov.			X		
		▪ Entry Drive/Drop Off/Parking Renov.			X		
		▪ Add'l Parking			X		X
		▪ Jitney Path			X		
		▪ Base Lodge Patio	X				
		▪ Potable Water Chlorination	X				
	B	Saddle Lodge					
		▪ Potable Water Chlorination	X				
		▪ Add'n & Renov. Ski Patrol/RR			X		
		▪ Wastewater Line Saddle to Base	X				
	C	Bear Mountain Lodge Dev.					
		▪ Build New Lodge			X		
		▪ Build Car Barn		X			
		▪ Wastewater Line Bear to Saddle			X		
		▪ Potable Water		X (install chlorination and equipment)			
	D	NYSEF Building					
	E	Learning Center			X		
4		Cross Country Trails					
		▪ New Trails		X	X		
5		Snowmaking					
		▪ Snowmaking Capacity	X (4400 GPM)		X (6800 GPM)		
		▪ Hudson River Pump House	X (3200 GPM)		X (5000 GPM)		
		▪ Dist. Lines on New Trails			X		
		▪ Rental Diesel Air		X			

ITEM #	MANAGEMENT ACTION	COMPLETED	PARTIALLY COMPLETED (% completed)	APPROVED, CONSTRUCTION PENDING	ABANDONED	MODIFIED/ NEW IN 2005 AMENDED OR UPDATED
	Compressors Add'n w/Fuel					
6	Power/Electrical	X				
7	Maintenance Fac.					
	▪ Relocate Bldgs/Renovate, Add Garages			X		
	▪ New Petrol. Storage		X			
8	Trail Markers & Interpretive Systems					
	▪ Town/Hamlet Trail Head	X (w/Registry)				
	▪ Trails Marked	X				
	▪ Interpretive Systems			X		
	▪ Northwoods Knowledge	X				
9	Sand Pit Reclamation		X			
10	Community Relations		X			
11	Parking					
	▪ New Bus Lot					Conceptual (2005)
	▪ Sand Shed in Existing Lot					X (2005)
	▪ New Passenger Car Lots			X		

G. New Action Outside of Intensive Use Land

A New Action included in this UMP Amendment/SEIS is the construction of new ski trails and a new lift (relocated from location approved in the 2002-2007 UMP) on lands outside of the Gore Mountain Intensive Use Area boundary. The new trails will be constructed on land that is currently under private ownership, but will be transferred to the Town of Johnsbury as per a Resolution adopted by the Town Board on August 9, 2005 (see below) and a “Master Agreement” between the Town and FrontStreet Mountain Development LLC, entered into on November 3, 2005. These new trails will be located on lands that were traditionally part of the Historic North Creek Ski Bowl and will provide an additional and mutually beneficial connection between Gore Mountain and the Town of Johnsbury Historic Ski Bowl/North Creek.

Even though this New Action is being proposed for lands outside the Intensive Use Area, and not on State Lands, a review of potential environmental impacts associated with this New Action can occur as part of APA’s review. Because this action is not proposed for State lands, APA’s review of this action will not fall under State Land Masterplan guidelines, but instead this New Action will be reviewed under APA’s private land use regulations.

Authorization

ORDA currently operates the skiing and tubing portions of Ski Bowl Park that is owned by the Town of Johnsbury. ORDA's operation of these facilities is authorized under New York State's Public Authorities Law. ORDA's operation of Ski Bowl Park facilities is also authorized under a Lease Agreement between the Town of Johnsbury and ORDA, most recently renewed in September 2003.

Title 28 of the Public Authorities Law is known as the New York State Olympic Regional Development Authority Act. Title 28, Section 2614, Item 4 authorizes ORDA to enter into an agreement with the Town of Johnsbury to operate and manage town-owned ski and recreational facilities on Town property in accordance with the aforementioned Lease Agreement. All of the powers of ORDA provided for in Title 28 or any other law, apply in the agreement between ORDA and the Town of Johnsbury. (See copy of Title 28 in Appendix 2.)

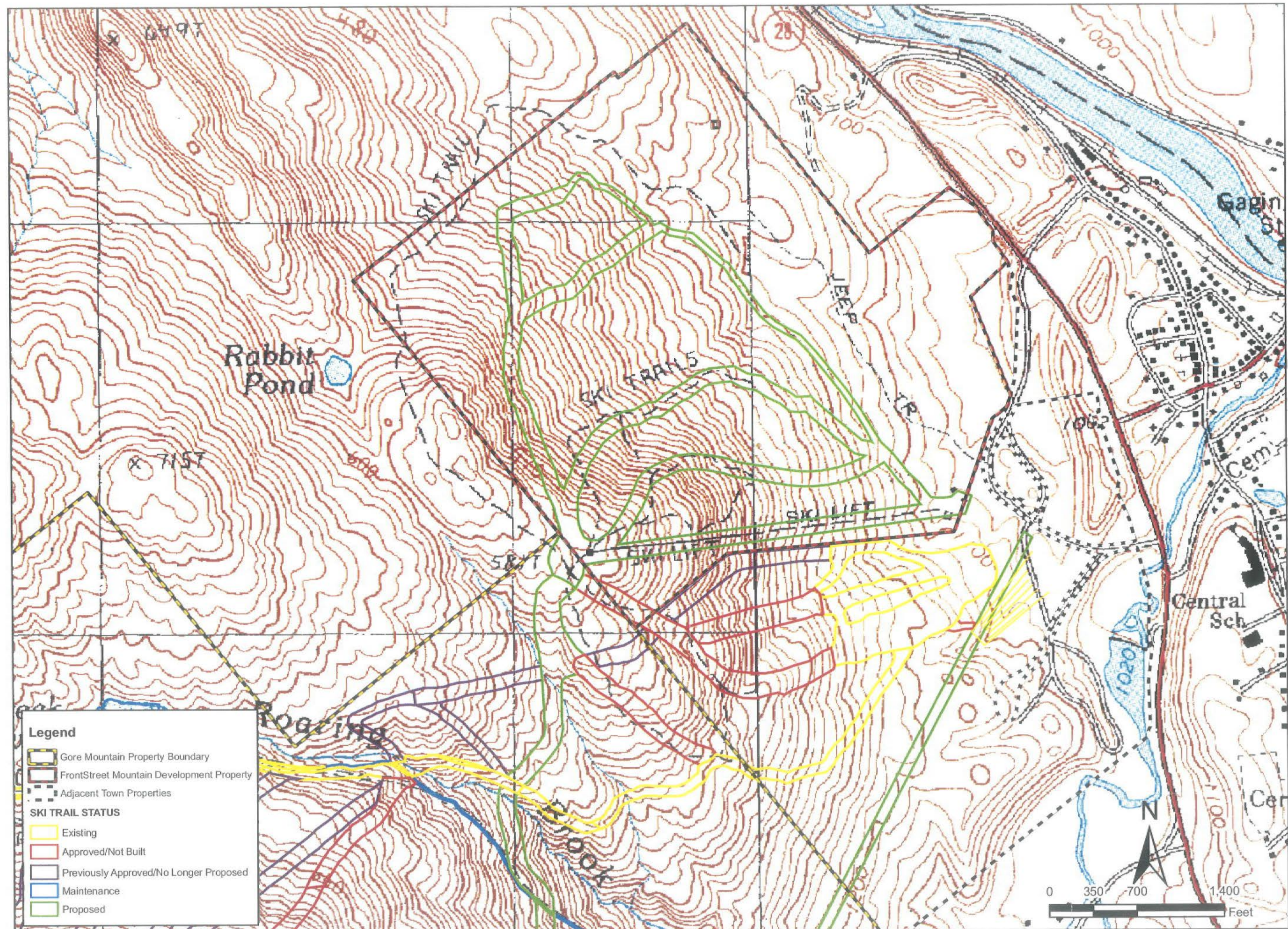
Under the terms of ORDA's lease with the Town of Johnsbury, ORDA exclusively operates the tubing park and ski facilities at the Ski Bowl on Town property (tax map parcel 66-1-14). ORDA is entitled to construct, develop and maintain the tubing park and ski trails in the manner they deem to be appropriate. ORDA also has the right to develop a lift and all facilities incident to operating a snowmaking facility with the tubing park and ski trail. (See copy of Lease Agreement in Appendix 2.)

Ownership and Operation

The new trails and lift to be constructed outside the Intensive Use Area boundary are proposed on lands that are currently both on Town of Johnsbury Parkland and privately owned lands that will be owned by the Town of Johnsbury in the near future. Figure 1-2 "Trails on Privately Owned Land" (1" = 700') shows the location of these trails and lift as well as the boundaries of the Intensive Use Area, Town lands, and privately owned lands. A copy of the Master Agreement mentioned previously is located in Appendix 2, and included in the Master Agreement in Appendix 2 is a detailed map prepared by a NYS Licensed Surveyor (1"=200') showing the lands to be obtained by the Town of Johnsbury.

A private developer is in the process of formulating a resort development plan for those lands labeled as FrontStreet Mountain Development on Figure 1-1. The FrontStreet Mountain Development, or resort development area includes lands that are currently privately owned and also lands that are owned by the Town of Johnsbury. The resort development plan would involve the Town of Johnsbury providing some Town-owned land to the private developer in exchange for the Town taking ownership of the lands containing the proposed ski trails and lift that will become part of the Ski Bowl.

Under this scenario, and the Town owning the lands for the new trails and lift, ORDA will be authorized to construct and operate the new trails and lift under the provisions of the New York State Olympic Regional Development Authority Act and its Lease Agreement with the Town of Johnsbury.



**GORE
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2005
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**Trails on
Privately
Owned
Land**

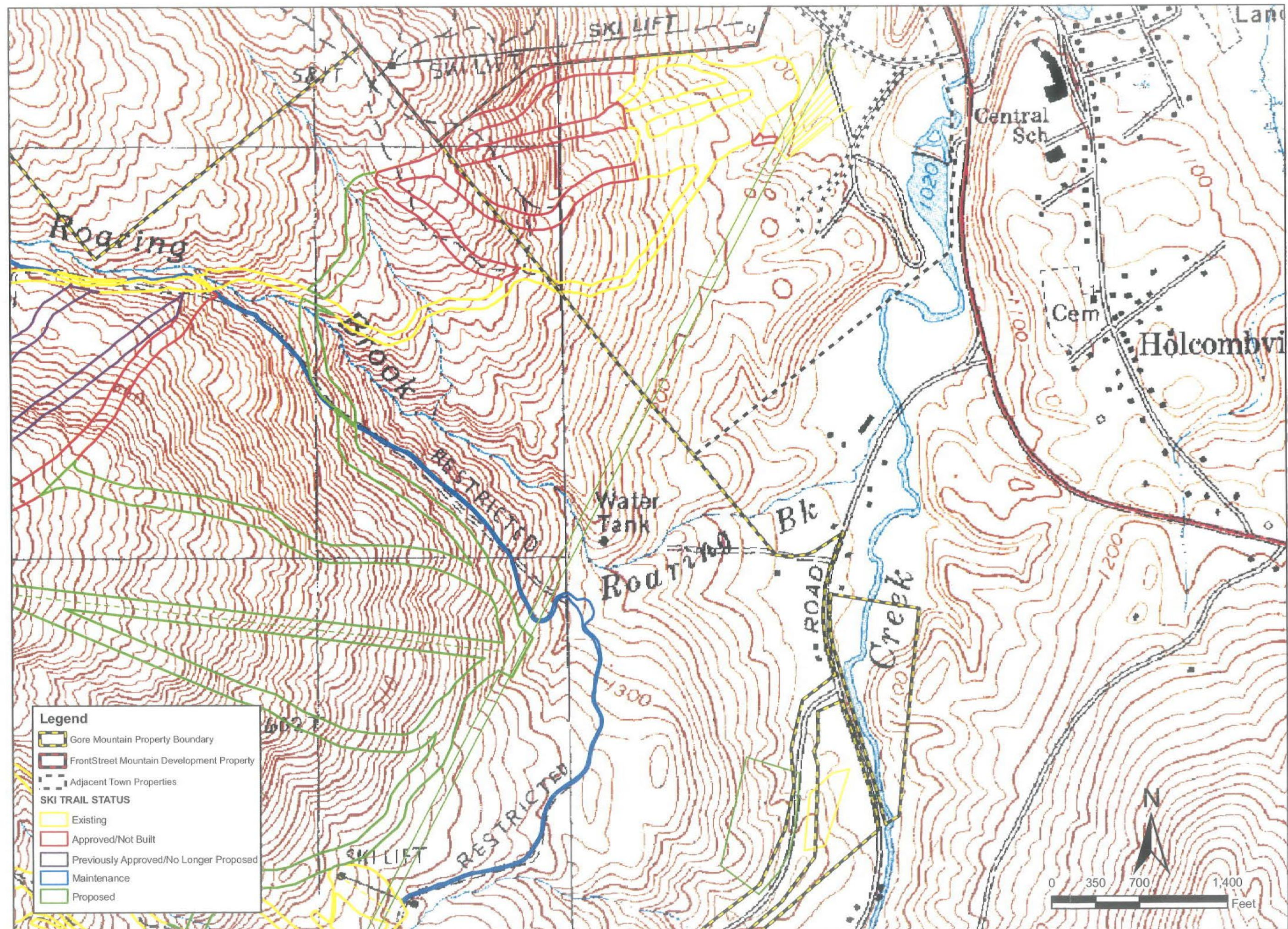
On November 3, 2005 the Town of Johnsbury and FrontStreet Mountain Development entered into a Master Agreement (See Appendix 2 that commits the Town and FrontStreet to an exchange of lands, including lands for ski slopes on lands that will become Town lands.

For whatever reason, if the transfer of lands between the Town and FrontStreet did not occur, all actions included in this UMP involving lands currently owned by the Town could occur, similar to the tubing park constructed on Town-owned lands as per the 2002 UMP. None of the actions in this UMP amendment involving currently owned Town land are dependent on the transfer of currently private lands to the Town.

Likewise, if for whatever reason, the Town of Johnsbury decides not to renew their lease with ORDA, and there is no reason to believe they would make this decision given Master Agreement, ORDA is free to relocate its infrastructure from Town-owned lands to the Intensive Use area for the continued facilitation of improved public access to Gore Mountain (See Item 3 of the Lease included in Appendix 2).

Alternatives

For whatever reason, if the private resort development should not come to fruition, there will still be a viable connection between Gore Mountain and the Historic Ski Bowl, but not on the Historic ski trail alignment described and illustrated above. Under this alternative scenario; (1) new lift # 11 would be shifted to the south (its previously-approved location) and connect the base of the Ski Bowl on Town land with the top of this lift on State Land, and (2) the previously-approved trails from the top of this lift (Trail #'s 11-C, 11-D, 11-E, 11-F, 11-G, and 11 A/B) will be constructed to connect to the Ski Bowl and the existing pipeline trail. See Figure 1-3, "Alternative Ski Bowl Area Configuration."



**GORE
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**Alternative
Ski Bowl
Area
Configuration**

SECTION 2 INVENTORY OF EXISTING RESOURCES, FACILITIES, SYSTEMS, AND USE

This section discusses physical, built and natural resources. Where applicable, the discussion is divided into on-mountain and off-mountain components. The latter applies particularly to the proposed improvements to the Town of Johnsbury Ski Bowl Park for winter facilities only.

A. Natural Resources

1. Physical

a. Geology

On Mountain and Off Mountain

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

b. Soils

On Mountain and Off Mountain

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

c. Topography and Slope

On Mountain

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

Off Mountain

Historic North Creek Ski Bowl property contains areas where slopes range from approximately five to eight percent at the bottom of the ski area up to 40 percent at the top of the proposed ski trails.

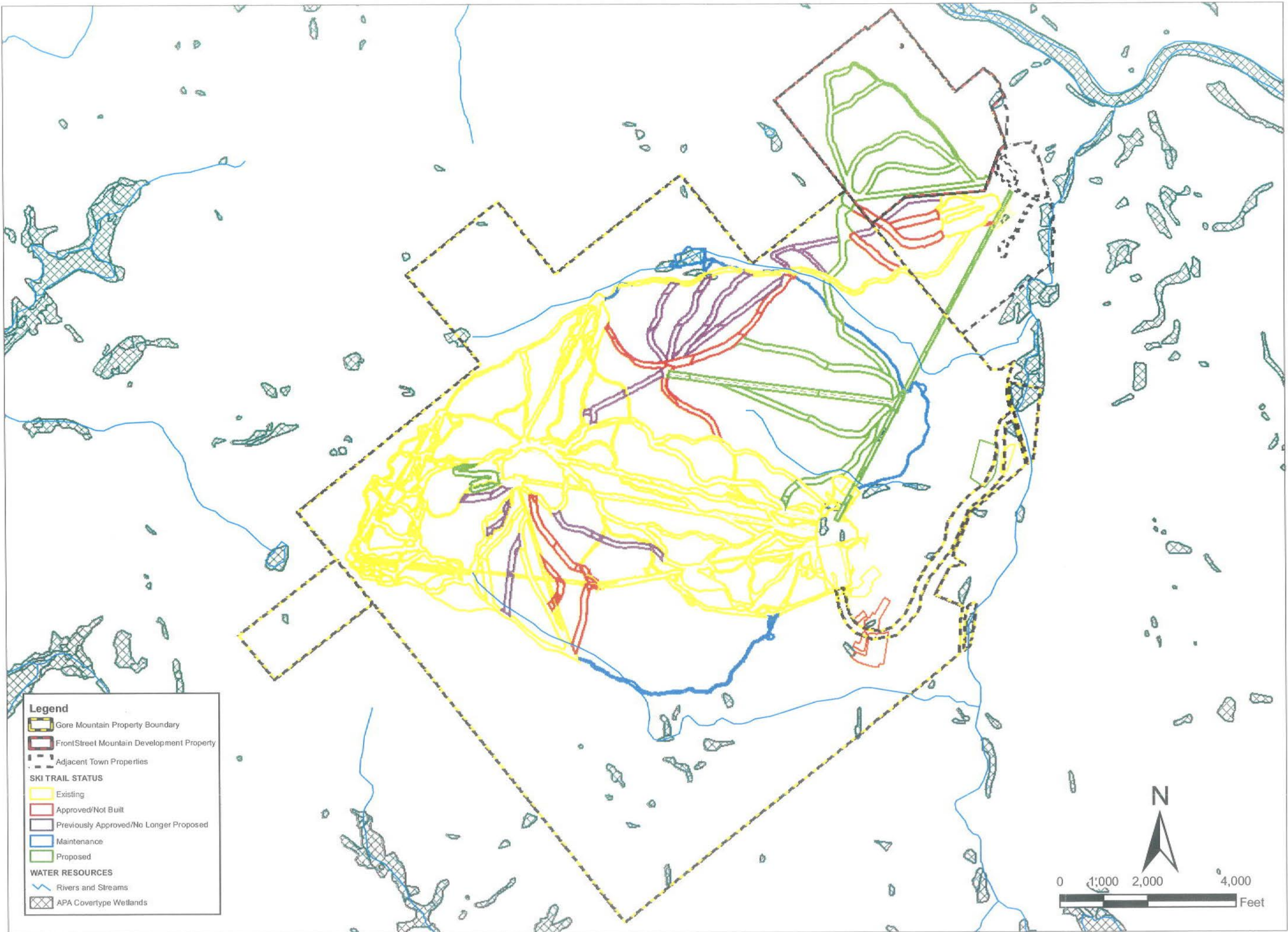
d. Water

On Mountain

A tributary to Roaring Brook is present in the very northeast corner of the Intensive Use Area. The top of Trail 11-N is proposed to cross this narrow (<5 foot wide) apparently intermittent brook. A second ski bridge over Roaring Brook will be required to carry trail 11-N to the bottom of the proposed Burnt Ridge chairlift (Lift #12). See Figure 2-1, "Surface Water Resources".

**GORE
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2005
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AMENDMENT**

**Surface
Water
Resources**



Off Mountain

Unmapped and unclassified ephemeral drainages exist in the area where ski trails will be constructed. Existing topography will not be altered where ski trails cross drainages.

- e. Wetlands

On Mountain

The tributary to Roaring Brook and Roaring Brook are considered waters of the United States/wetlands by the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Off Mountain

Fringe wetlands exist along the ephemeral streams described above. No fill is proposed in any of these fringe wetlands.

- f. Climate and Air Quality

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

2. Biological

- a. Vegetation

On Mountain

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

A 2005 search of the files of the New York Natural Heritage Program did not identify any records of rare, threatened, or endangered species of plants or animals on the Gore Mountain Ski Center site.

Off Mountain

The off-mountain portion of proposed Pod #12 and the other Historic North Creek Ski Bowl improvements passes through beech-maple mesic forest similar to that found in the lower elevation portions of the Gore Mountain Ski Center site.

b. Wildlife

On Mountain

Potential Bicknell's thrush habitat, mountain spruce fir forest above an elevation of 2,800 feet, exists in the area of the Hedges trail that is proposed to connect the top of the Gondola at the Bear Mountain Summit to the Saddle Lodge. See Figure 2-2, "Potential Bicknell's Thrush Habitat."

Bicknell's thrush (*Catharus bicknelli*) is a species of special concern in New York State and has been identified as the Neotropical migrant of highest conservation priority in the Northeast. In New York State the species breeds in high elevation conifer forests, primarily above 3,000 feet, on mountaintops in the Catskills and the Adirondacks.

Bicknell's thrush habitat in the US consists of montane forests dominated by balsam fir, with lesser amounts of red and black spruce, white birch, mountain ash, and other hardwood species. It is adapted to naturally disturbed habitats and historically probably sought out patches of regenerating forest. Highest densities of the species are often found in continually disturbed stands of dense, stunted fir on exposed ridgelines or along edges of human-created openings.

Bicknell's thrush wintering habitat is even more restricted than its breeding habitat, with the species preferring mesic to wet broadleaf montane forests in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Cuba, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico.¹

See Section 4, "Proposed Management Actions," for a discussion of potential impacts and mitigation measures.

Off Mountain

A 2005 search of the files of the New York Natural Heritage Program did not identify any records of rare, threatened, or endangered species of plants or animals on the off mountain lands covered under this UMP Amendment.

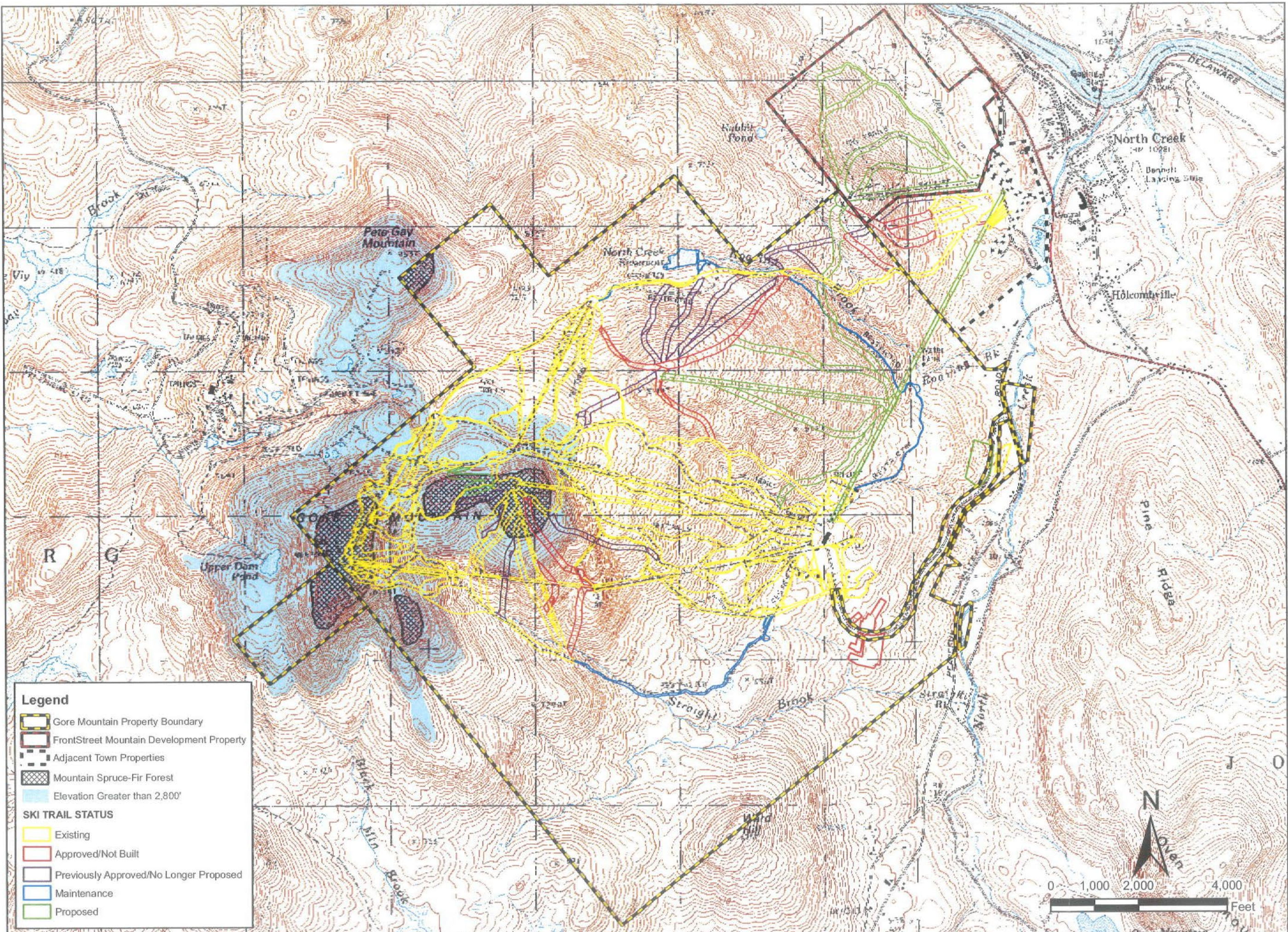
c. Fisheries

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

¹ Rimmer, C.G. et al. 2001. Bicknell's thrush: *Catharus bicknelli*. In the Birds of North America: Life Histories for the 21st Century. Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences.

**GORE
MOUNTAIN
2005
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AMENDMENT**

**Potential
Bicknell's
Thrush Habitat**



d. Unique Areas

On Mountain

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

Off Mountain

No unique areas are known to occur at Ski Bowl Park or adjacent lands.

e. Critical Habitat

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

3. Visual Resources

A new visual inventory from surrounding roadways and other prominent locations has been completed as part of this UMP Amendment. The inventory includes the identification of locations from which Gore Mountain and actions covered under this UMP Amendment are potentially visible. The visual assessment was conducted during April and May 2005. See Figure 2-3 “View from Rt. 28 Existing Conditions”, Figure 2-4 “View from Rt. 28N Bridge over Hudson Existing Conditions”, and Figure 2-5 “View from Johnsbury Central School Existing Condition”. See Section 5.4 of this document for a brief summary of impacts and Appendix 3 for the complete analysis and visual simulations.

B. Human Resources

1. Transportation

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

2. Community Services

No revision to this section is necessary, except to note that in addition to the Johnsbury Volunteer Emergency Squad, Empire Ambulance Service, Inc. is also now available to serve the site. All emergency calls connect through 911 and are then routed to local emergency squads. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

3. Local Land Use Plans

No revision to this section is necessary, with the following note.

The easternmost portion of Ski Bowl Park is classified as “Hamlet.” The majority of Ski Bowl Park is classified as “Low Intensity Use.” Refer to Figure 2-6, “Land Use Classification.”



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**View From
Rt. 28**

**Existing
Condition**

Project: 00030
Date: 5/25/05
Figure: 2-3



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**View From
Rt. 28N
Hudson River
Bridge**

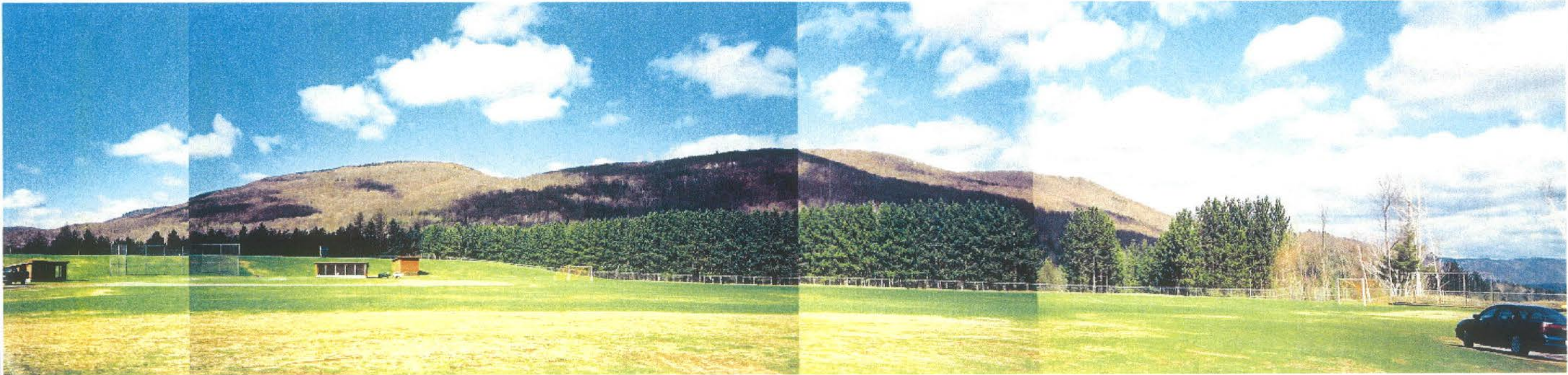
**Existing
Condition**

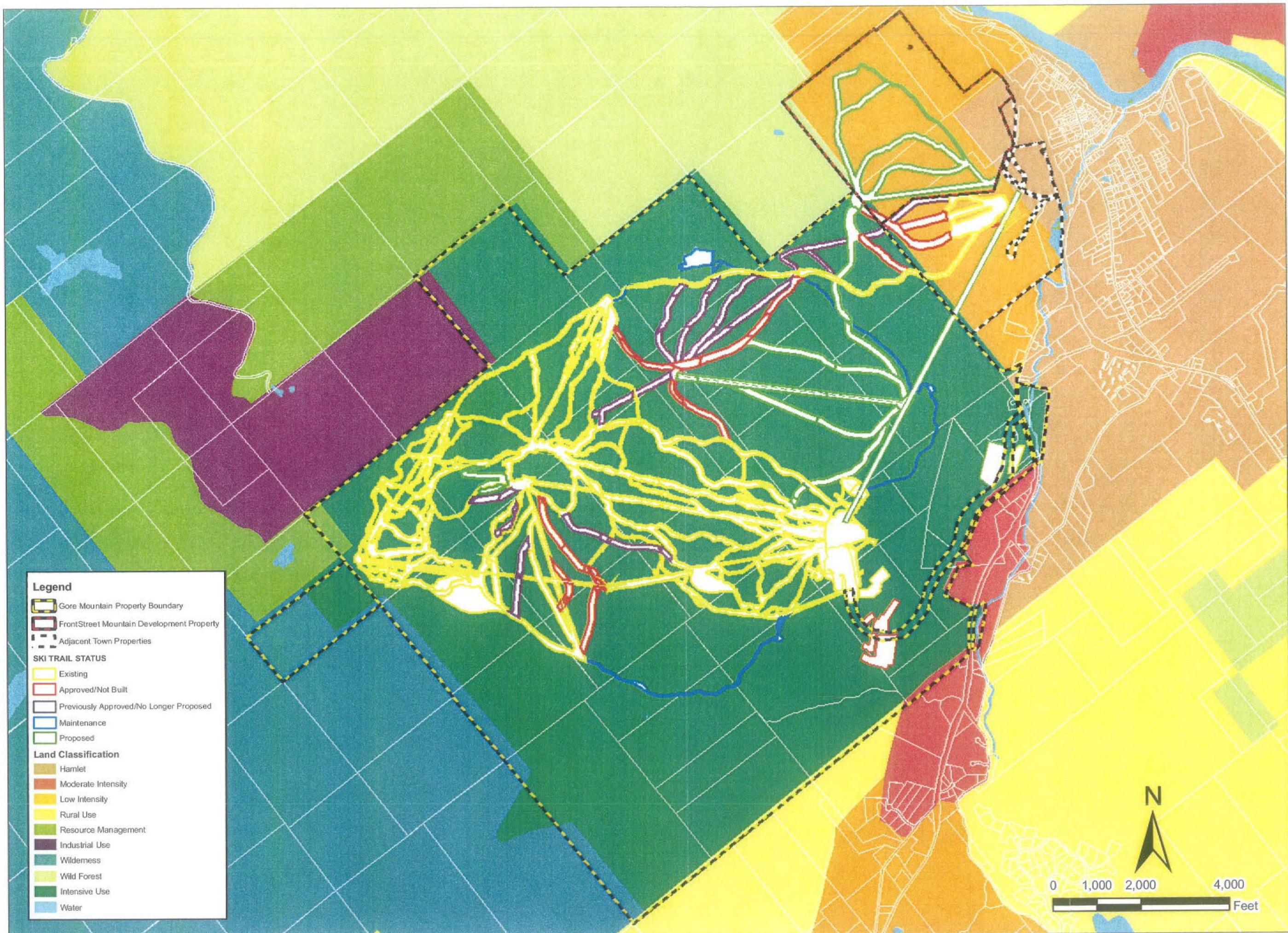
Project: 00030
Date: 5/25/05
Figure: 2-4

**GORE
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UMP
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**View From
Johnsburg
Central School**

**Existing
Condition**





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**GORE
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 2005
 UMP
 AMENDMENT**

**Land Use
 Classification**

C. Man-Made Facilities

1. Inventory of Constructed Facilities

a. Downhill Ski Slopes

Gore Mountain Ski Center currently includes downhill ski terrain on 59 trails which are located predominantly on north and east facing slopes of the peaks which make up Gore Mountain.

The alpine trails constructed to date total approximately 265 acres of groomed terrain, with an additional 60-70 acres of woods terrain (glades). The 1995 UMP approved 28.5 miles of trails, the 2002-2007 UMP approved an additional 5.4 miles of trails totaling 33.9 miles, and the 2005 UMP Amendment is proposing a net increase of 1.5 additional miles of trails bringing the new total to 35.4 miles.

b. Backcountry, Hiking and Mountain Biking Trails

No revisions to this section are necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP

c. Lifts

No revisions to this section are necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

There are ten existing ski lifts at Gore Mountain. In addition, there are two surface lifts, a conveyor for Ski School and a rope tow for the tubing operation.

d. Parking

Skier and visitor parking is currently provided in five lots located adjacent to the base lodge and gondola area. Four of these lots are dedicated to cars and one to buses. There is also a 6th satellite parking lot located on the lower portion of the access roadway which is limited to employee parking and some overflow bus parking on busy days.

Using an industry standard range of 140 to 180 cars per acre of parking, Gore Mountain's parking facilities can handle between 1,736 and 2,232 cars. During a typical ski weekend, the resort also accommodates between 20 and 25 buses. At the present time, the current available parking area is adequate to handle the parking demand, except during periods of peak demand when parking overflows onto the access road. Such overflows occur 3-5 times per year.

e. Access Road

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

f. Buildings

No revisions to this section are necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

NYSEF, currently located on-mountain, is in need of more space. A building expansion is proposed.

g. Maintenance Roads

No revisions to this section are necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

h. Summit

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

i. Electric Distribution

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

j. Solid Waste Management

No revisions to this section are necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

k. Snowmaking

Snowmaking is provided on almost 100% of Gore Mountain's trail terrain which covers approximately 265 acres. There are a total of 153 tower guns at Gore Mountain, 85 of which were purchased in 2004. The total system combines both air and airless snowmaking technology. The Ski Center has increased its water use from the snowmaking reservoir from 109 million gallons in 1995-96, to 233 million gallons during the 1999-00 season. In the 2004-2005 season, 260 million gallons of water was used for snowmaking. The amount of water pumped from the Hudson River via the snowmaking pump station was 20 million gallons in 1996-97, and increased to 74 million gallons in 1999-00. The amount of water taken from the Hudson River was further increased to 122 million gallons in the 2004-2005 season. As part of the 2002 UMP, an increase in snowmaking capacity was approved. This action is approved with construction pending, as shown in Table 1-1.

The air capacity has increased from 13,500 cfm in 1994 to 34,500 cfm in 2000, and is delivered by a combination of electric and diesel fuel air compressors. The inventory of electric compressors is aged. It is anticipated that the older air compressor will be replaced as part of on mountain snowmaking improvements.

l. Grooming Equipment

Grooming of alpine and nordic trails is accomplished with a fleet of seven grooming machines. It is anticipated that as terrain is developed as a result of the New Actions, that a total of two new grooming machines will be purchased.

m. Water Supply for Snowmaking

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

n. Water Supply for Domestic Use

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

Chlorination is now in place for domestic use water supply.

o. Sewage Treatment System

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

p. Equipment Inventory

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

2. Inventory of Systems

a. Management

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

b. Organization

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

c. Operations

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

d. Contractual Arrangements

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

3. Inventory of Facilities and Improvements Pending Construction

The following facilities were approved in the 2002-2007 UMP and are pending construction. Refer to Table 1-1.

a. Trails and Crossovers

As part of the 2002-2007 UMP, the following trails to be constructed include, 1-N-M, 1-N-N, 1-N-Q, 2-N-L, 6-N-O, 10-H Lower and Upper, 11-A Lower, 11-E Oak Ridge, 11-F Ridge, 12-A access to Gore Base, 12-B access to Pipeline Trail, and 12-G access to N. Lift.

b. Widening of Existing Trails

As part of the 2002-2007 UMP, the following trails to be widened include, 1-F Upper Twister, 1-G Upper, 1-H, 1-D Upper and Lower Showcase, 2-A, 2-C, 2-D, 2-E, 6-D-E, 6-F, 7-A, Upper Loop, 3-A, and 3-C Upper.

c. Lifts

Lifts #1, #3, #4, #6, #9B, and #13 have been approved and are pending construction.

d. Lodges

Approved actions which are pending construction include base lodge renovations and expansions, gondola building conversion to learning center, and entry drive/drop off renovations, additional parking, jitney path, an addition and renovation of the Saddle Lodge, new lodge building at Bear Mountain, new wastewater line from Bear Mountain Lodge to Saddle Lodge, and additional potable water lines.

e. Snowmaking

An increase in snowmaking capacity and the distribution lines to new trails are approved, but not yet built.

f. Maintenance Facility

The relocation of buildings and renovation of garages is approved, but as of this time has not been constructed.

D. Public Use of the Ski Center

1. Ski Season Use

With reference to Table 2-1, “Public Usage of Gore Mountain Ski Center,” it can be seen that ticketed winter visits to the Ski Center increased by approximately 38% from 1994/1995 to 2004/2005, from 100,461 to 138,811 ticketed skier visits.

The number of season pass holder visits has increased from 6,344 to 69,315, or over 900%, for the same period.

The peak ticketed days of attendance continue to be within the February Presidents’ Week, with a peak day of 5,536 on February 16, 2002.

Table 2-1
Public Usage of Gore Mountain Ski Center
Winter Trend from 94-95 until 04-05 (includes pass holders)

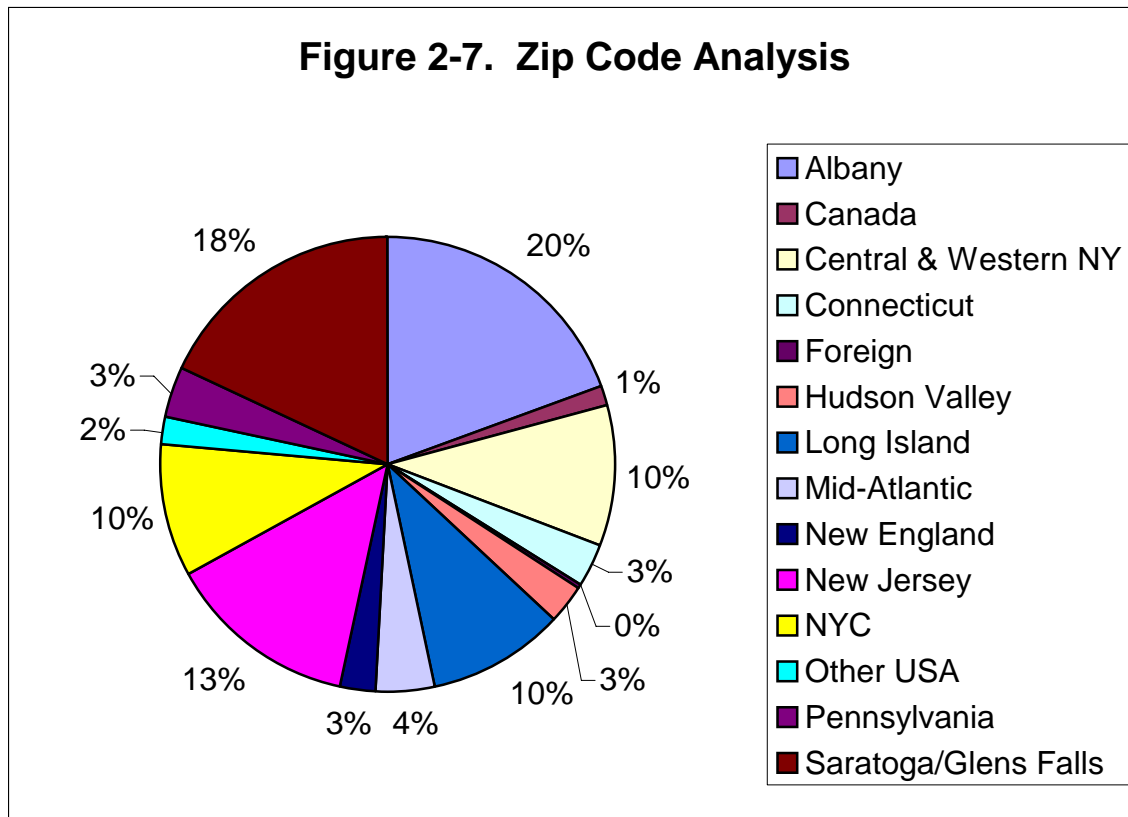
Snow Season	Ticketed Visits	Pass Holder Visits	Total Visits
94-95	100,461	6,344	106,805
95-96	121,803	7,514	129,317
96-97	130,334	7,202	137,536
97-98	132,209	8,008	140,217
98-99	116,853	7,813	124,666
99-00	120,017	25,233	145,250
00-01	155,240	30,660	185,900
01-02	127,150	46,380	173,530
02-03	148,094	65,835	213,929
03-04	133,192	82,515	215,707
04-05	138,811	69,315	208,126

Snow Season	Peak Day	Ticketed Visits
94-95	02/19/95	4,649
95-96	12/29/95	4,148
96-97	02/15/97	5,283
97-98	01/02/98	4,666
98-99	01/16/99	4,341
99-00	02/20/00	5,391
00-01	2/17/01	4,870
01-02	2/16/02	5,536
02-03	12/28/02	4,948
03-04	2/14/04	4,818
04-05	2/19/05	4,796

Snow Season	Presidents Holiday Week (Ticketed Visits)
94-95	26,091
95-96	16,579
96-97	22,526
97-98	22,503
98-99	23,129
99-00	28,234
00-01	28,353
01-02	30,127
02-03	23,158
03-04	25,970
04-05	29,234

2. Skier Characteristics

Figure 2-7 “Zip Code Analysis”, represents the geographic areas that Gore Mountain visitors come from.



3. Non-Ski Season Use

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

Hikers, as well as sightseers, use the Ski Center lands in the off-season. Other non-ski season activities at the ski center include a fall foliage festival and mountain bike races which are held in the summer months. Gondola rides occur during the fall foliage season at Gore Mountain.

Summer use for hiking and sightseeing is approximately 10,400 recreators.

Hunting, trapping and fishing are prohibited at the Gore Mountain Ski Center. Only non-consumptive use of wildlife resources is permitted on Ski Center lands.

4. Annual Energy Consumption

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

5. Potable Water Consumption

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

SECTION 3 MANAGEMENT AND POLICY

A. Orientation and Evolution of Management Philosophy

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

B. Regulatory Issues

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

1. New York State Constitution Article XIV

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

a. Ski Trails

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

b. Vegetative Cutting

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

c. Non-Alienation

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

2. Adirondack State Land Master Plan

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

3. 1995 and 2002 Unit Management Plans

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

4. Environmental Conservation Law

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

5. Olympic Regional Development Authority Act

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

6. DEC-ORDA Memorandum of Understanding

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

7. Other Regulations

Future development of the improvements envisioned at the Historic North Creek Ski Bowl will be subject to a town permit, and potentially will require a permit from the Adirondack Park Agency should any regulatory controls be present, such as expansion of an existing use by 25% or more, any structures proposed that are 40 feet tall or more, etc.

C. Management Goals and Objectives

No revision to this section is necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

SECTION 4 PROPOSED MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

This section describes the proposed management actions which form the basis of this 2005 UMP Amendment, the resulting uses, and the proposed phasing and scheduling of actions. The actions and subsequent discussion of impacts and mitigating measures in Section V, are described at a sufficient level of detail to proceed without subsequent SEQRA or UMP review, provided they are carried out as substantially described in this document.

A. Proposed Management Actions

1. General

Overall actions proposed for this UMP Amendment are described in this section. This amendment includes New Actions and changes to previously approved, never built actions. Some of the actions were proposed and approved in the 1995 and 2002-2007 UMP/GEIS but never implemented. Refer to Table 1-1 for each Action's status.

The recommended development program under the Five-Year Plan encompasses several phases of detailed improvements covering the full spectrum of ski area facilities. This amendment program is based on the Five-Year Plan for the ski area. See Figure 1-1, "2005 UMP Amendments" which illustrates the existing trails, approved and not built trails, and proposed trails as part of this UMP Amendment.

2. New Downhill Trails and Lifts

- a. New novice trail (Hedges) from the top of the Northwoods Gondola (Bear Mountain Summit) to the Saddle Lodge

The addition of this trail will allow all skier skill levels to ride the gondola and access other mountain trails via novice terrain. Currently, there is only a "most difficult" route from the gondola summit to other trails on the mountain.

- b. New Gondola from North Creek Ski Bowl Base Area to Gore Mountain Base Area

A new gondola is proposed from the Base Area of the Historic North Creek Ski Bowl to the Base Area of Gore Mountain Ski Area. This new gondola will provide a reliable interconnect between the two ski area base lodges and, in the future, transport visitors to the Hamlet of North Creek directly from the Historic Ski Bowl to the Base Area of Gore Mountain. This gondola will run during all four seasons and will be used for trips up and down the mountain.

c. Reorient Pod #11 trails

Pod #11 trails will be relocated from their previously approved (not built) location to the east-facing slope of Burnt Ridge. This will connect the Historic North Creek Ski Bowl to the Gore Mountain Ski Area. The adjustments to Pods #11 and #12 will continue to provide connection to the Ski Bowl as previously approved, but the reorientation of the trails on Pod #11 will improve the skier's experience by providing longer runs and better terrain.

The Pod #11 trail development will include a new, but previously approved on trail 11-C, quad chair lift which will connect the top of Burnt Ridge to the connector trail/new Gondola from the base of Gore Mountain to the base of the Historic North Creek Ski Bowl. The Pod #12 trail development will include a new, but previously approved chair lift on trail 12-E to 12-K which will provide access to the Pod #12 ski trails from the Historic North Creek Ski Bowl.

d. New Lifts and Trails to Develop Connection with Town of Johnsbury Historic North Creek Ski Bowl

Two new lifts and related trails will be constructed in order to create an alpine ski trail connection with the Town of Johnsbury Historic North Creek Ski Bowl. These are referred to as Pods #11 and #12 as shown on Figure 4-2 in the 2002-2007 UMP, "2002 Gore Mountain UMP Master Plan (2 of 2)." Lift #12 is proposed to extend from the Ski Bowl onto lands of Gore Mountain. The southernmost ski trail is the existing pipeline trail, which will be widened. A trail will connect to the mid-point of the proposed new gondola (Lift #14). Here, the new lift to the summit of Burnt Ridge will begin (Lift #11). Lift #11 will discharge skiers onto the summit of Burnt Ridge, and skiers can then access either the east side of the mountain onto the Twister Trails, the north side onto the Tahawus Trails or back to the base of Lift #11. This will allow skiers who access the mountain from the Ski Bowl to access all terrain at Gore Mountain.

The trails in Pods #11 and #12 will average 120 feet in width, and will be maintained (including snowmaking) by Gore Mountain staff. The Town of Johnsbury will be making the appropriate permit applications for the proposed improvements to Ski Bowl Park, and will then construct the facilities. Gore Mountain staff will manage and operate Ski Bowl Park facilities, which will include the tubing park, snowboarding park, alpine ski trails, sledding hill, and related snowmaking, ski patrolling, ticket and food concession sales, equipment rental, lodge and parking. Legal and contractual agreements are needed in order to develop this action.

3. New Bus Parking Lot – Conceptual Action

Gore Mountain has identified a need for an additional bus parking lot. A location has been identified that may be suitable for bus parking and conceptual plans have been developed (See Appendix 6). Issues relating to visual impact, stormwater, earthwork, traffic, etc. need to be examined in greater detail before this is pursued as a New Action. The bus parking lot is discussed here as a Conceptual Action only, and would not be undertaken without a future UMP Amendment and attendant public process.

Gore Mountain needs a parking lot dedicated for buses.

The bus business peaked in the mid 1980's and steadily declined until the mid 1990's. From the mid 1990's through the present time the bus traffic has consistently grown. Gore Mountain is the destination of over 20 buses on most weekends and holiday periods. During the 7 weeks of the towns' youth commission programs, Gore Mountain hosts in excess of 30 buses a day. With the current increases in fuel prices, Gore Mountain expects the mass transit of guests to continue to increase.

Presently buses unload the skiers near the base lodge then have to leave the facility, because there is no place for them to park on site. Currently buses park near the train station in downtown North Creek. This displeases downtown business owners because the parked buses take up parking spaces that otherwise could be used by customers of these businesses. At one time buses used the Town Park, and parking of numerous buses in the park conflicted with park uses.

Alternative locations for this facility have been considered, and the proposed location has been determined to be the preferred alternative location. The preferred location for the bus parking lot is on the Gore Mountain access road, which is most convenient for traffic patterns after dropping off the passengers and on the way to pick up the passengers. This location is immediately across the access road from another parking lot, which maintains consistency of shuttle bus patterns and vehicle turning patterns. The stormwater management at this location will be easy to implement due to the presence of deep and well-drained soils and lack of shallow bedrock. Visual impact is restricted to only the Gore Mountain Access Road and a substantial buffer of vegetation can be maintained between the parking area and road to mitigate this impact (See Appendix 6).

An alternative location for a bus parking lot has been discussed before, and in fact in the 1987 UMP, parking was approved east of the Gore Mountain access road, on Peaceful Valley Road. The topography of this site is flatter and stormwater can be managed, however the site has a visual impact for all traffic traveling on Peaceful Valley Road, County Route 29. The remote location of this site also causes more traffic congestion and conflicts on this County road as buses would have to travel on and turn off of and onto a road that is outside of the Ski Area.

4. On-Mountain Tubing Hill

The tubing hill with a surface lift, which was proposed to be developed to the west of the Bear Mountain summit, will be abandoned. The proposed connections to the Historic North Creek Ski Bowl will allow access to the currently operational tubing park at that location.

5. Snowmaking

There are two water resources used for snowmaking including the pump house at the Hudson River, an on-mountain pump house, and the on mountain reservoir.

The Hudson River water intake has been completed and the pump station upgrade is still under construction. As part of the proposed amendments new snowmaking piping will have to be

installed along trails, however, water withdrawal will remain within the limits approved in the 2002 UMP, specifically, an upper limit of 5,000 gallons per minute (gpm) for the Hudson River Pump House.

Expansion of snowmaking capacity from 4400 gpm to 6800 gpm has been approved and is pending construction for the on-mountain pump house.

6. Sand Storage Pole Barn

A sand storage structure is proposed to be constructed in an existing gravel parking lot.

7. Race Training Building Expansion

The existing NYSEF building is 28'x48'. There are plans for two additions, one that is 28'x48' and one that is 24'x30'. See building elevations and floor plans attached as Appendix 4.

The proposed expansion will provide much-needed additional space in the NYSEF building, approximately doubling its size. There is ample space around the existing NYSEF building to construct the expansion. No access drives are needed for the building, and since the building is located within an existing open area, no tree clearing is required for the expansion of the NYSEF building.

8. Potable Water

As part of the 1995 UMP a new potable water supply to the Bear Mountain Lodge was approved, but has not yet been built. As part of the 2005 UMP Amendment, the potable water supply to the Bear Mountain Lodge will be completed with the installation of chlorination and other equipment.

B. Projected Use

As per attendance figures provided previously in Section 2, ticketed winter visits to the Ski Center increased by approximately 38% from 1994/1995 to 2004/2005, from 100,461 to 138,811 ticketed skier visits.

The number of season pass holder visits has increased over 900% over the same period, from 6,344 to 69,315.

The peak days of attendance continue to be within the February Presidents' Week, with a peak day of 5,536 on February 16, 2002.

Summer visits for hiking, mountain biking and sightseeing is approximately 10,400 recreators.

C. Actions Approved in the 1995 UMP/GEIS which are a Part of the Foregoing Five-Year Plan

Refer to Section IV.A “Proposed Management Actions” and Table 1-1 for a description and summary of the proposed Amendment Actions.

D. Prioritization of Management Actions

No prioritization is necessary for this UMP Amendment. Refer to the 2002 UMP for previous prioritization of management actions.

SECTION 5

POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

The analysis in this UMP Amendment provides site-specific information for all aspects of the UMP Amendment. This UMP Amendment identifies threshold issues and alternatives at a level of detail sufficient to demonstrate the environmental feasibility of the proposed improvements.

This section discusses potential impacts from the proposed 2005 UMP Amendment. Where significant impacts are identified, mitigation measures are proposed. Where applicable, the discussion is divided into on-mountain and off-mountain components.

Site-specific impacts generally relate to natural resource features such as vegetation, soils or visual characteristics. The specific number of trees, soil or viewshed affected is presented for such impacts.

There are no other projects of significance in the study area which affect the calculations in this section, hence a separate discussion of cumulative impacts has not been provided.

A. Natural Resources

1. Vegetation

a. Impacts

On Mountain

The proposed amendments will increase the approved downhill ski trail mileage from 33.9 miles to 35.4 miles. The “previously approved/no longer proposed trails” above the 2800’ elevation will be reduced by this plan by a total length of 1200 feet.

Impacts to vegetation from the project will occur primarily in the area of the new Pods #11 and #12 lifts and trails on the east side of Burnt Ridge. There will also be some clearing to create the new beginner trail (Hedges) from the Bear Mountain summit to the Saddle Lodge. The impacts will consist of cutting of all woody plant stems and removal of tree stumps where necessary.

Tree clearing will take place over approximately 88 acres. 49 acres which were previously approved but never cleared are proposed to be abandoned. 88 acres are new proposed tree clearing for trails and lifts.

Article XIV, Section 1 of the New York State Constitution authorizes “not more than forty miles of ski trails thirty to two hundred feet wide, together with appurtenances thereto, provided that no more than eight miles of such trails shall be in excess of one hundred twenty feet wide, on the slopes of Gore and Pete Gay mountains in Warren County.” This language implicitly authorizes the cutting of trees within the footprint of these ski trails. After construction of the trails proposed in the Amendment to this Unit Management Plan, there will be a total of approximately 35.4 miles of ski trails at Gore Mountain. Less than one mile of trail will exceed a width of one hundred and twenty feet. Consequently, the new trails proposed in this amendment are

authorized by and will not exceed the Constitution's mileage, width and implicit tree cutting thresholds.

All vegetative cutting at Gore Mountain Ski Center will be in compliance with the DEC tree cutting policy. Tree removal will be in accordance with the Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) Lands and Forest Policy LF-91-2 entitled 'Cutting Removal or Destruction of Trees and Endangered or Rare Plants on Forest Preserve Lands.' Forest inventory data collected by NYSDEC have been used to estimate the magnitude of these impacts in terms of the number of trees to be removed. Table 5-1, "Summary of Tree Cutting Data," lists the estimated numbers of various species of forest trees that would be removed in creating new ski lifts and trails. The data for each tree species have been divided into two groups: stems of 3-4 inches dbh (diameter at breast height) and stems larger than 4 inches dbh. These estimates indicate that a total of up to 34,393 trees will be cleared. Total clearing for the project, would involve clearing of about 12,880 trees with stems of 3-4 inches dbh and about 21,513 trees larger than 4 inches dbh. Table 5-1, "Summary of Tree Cutting Data," summarizes this data. Table 5-1 also shows the totals of previously approved/no longer proposed trails. In essence, these trees are being "given back" as the proposed trails are now abandoned and will not be cut. The column "Net Trees Cut" shows the difference between new proposed action totals and the previously approved/no longer proposed trails, indicating a gain or deficit in certain tree types. For instance, there will be 6,447 more beech trees cut than in the previously approved trails, but there will be 4,892 less balsam fir trees cut than in the previously approved trails. See Appendix 5 for tree cruise data analysis.

Table 5-1
Summary of Tree Cutting Data

	2005 New Action Totals			Previously Approved/No Longer Proposed Totals			Net Trees Cut
	Trees 3-4"	Trees > 4"	All Trees	Trees 3-4"	Trees > 4"	All Trees	
	dbh	dbh		dbh	dbh		
Sugar Maple	3,754	8,759	12,512	450	1,947	2,396	10,116
Beech	4,190	3,838	8,028	898	683	1,581	6,447
Yellow birch	135	982	1,118	25	296	321	796
White Birch	966	2,700	3,665	2,252	4,225	6,477	-2,812
White ash	2	382	384	-	125	125	260
Black Cherry	-	166	166	-	6	6	161
Ironwood	301	184	484	98	60	159	326
Red Spruce	96	414	510	193	322	515	-5
Red Maple	336	1,182	1,517	-	124	124	1,394
basswood	-	28	28	-	8	8	19
Red Oak	836	874	1,710	19	166	185	1,525
Hemlock	-	6	6	-	11	11	-5
Balsam Fir	2,055	1,601	3,656	4,627	3,921	8,547	-4,892
Striped Maple	114	103	217	1,114	200	1,314	-1,097
Aspen	-	46	46	-	6	6	39
Mountain Ash	96	248	344	193	365	558	-214
Total Trees	12,880	21,513	34,393	9,870	12,464	22,334	12,059

Clearing acreage	88	49	39
All Trees 3-4"	12,880	9,870	3,010
All Trees >4"	21,513	12,464	9,048

Trees lawfully cut in accordance with the policies provided above can be removed from the premises in any manner deemed feasible by ORDA so long as such method is consistent with the guidelines of the State Land Master Plan, this UMP and Article 8 of the ECL. Virtually all trees which are cut for ski trail construction and widening and construction of lifts and other amenities are chipped and used on-site as fill for construction and erosion control projects. Access for the wood chipper on steeper terrain is limited so some trees are buried for use as fill and erosion control.

In order to determine the need for a detailed biological survey of the areas to be impacted by vegetation clearing and new construction (the “project site”), an analysis of the likelihood of rare plant species occurring in those areas was undertaken. Data on plant rarity and areas of occurrence were taken from the Rare Plant Status List (Active Inventory List) of the New York Natural Heritage Program of NYSDEC (Young, 1992). Since the project site is in Warren County, near the boundaries with Essex and Hamilton counties, all rare species listed as occurring in at least one of those counties were used in the analysis.

There are twenty species which were judged to be possible inhabitants of the project site. These are mainly plants which are found in places such as rich beech-maple woods, woods with rocky or sandy soils, and seepy areas along rocky streams. In spite of the existence of suitable habitat, the probability of any one of these species occurring on the project site is very low.

A May 11, 2005 letter from the NYSDEC Natural Heritage Program, provided in Appendix 2, “Documents of Record,” states that the NHP has no records or occurrences of any rare or state-listed animals or plants, significant natural communities, or other significant habitats, on or in the vicinity of the site.

Invasive/Exotic Plants

Nonnative, invasive species directly threaten biological diversity and the high quality natural areas in the Adirondack Park. Invasive plant species can alter native plant assemblages, often forming monospecific stands of very low quality forage for native wildlife, and drastically impacting the ecological functions and services of natural systems. Not yet predominant across the Park, invasive plants have the potential to spread - undermining the ecological, recreational, and economic value of the Park’s natural resources.

Prevention of nonnative plant invasions, Early Detection/Rapid Response (ED/RR) of existing infestations, and monitoring are primary objectives in a national strategy for invasive plant management and necessitates a well-coordinated, area-wide approach. A unique opportunity exists in the Adirondacks to work proactively and collaboratively to detect, contain, or eradicate infestations of invasive plants before they become well established, and to prevent further importation and distribution of invasive species, thus maintaining a high quality natural landscape. The Department shares an inherent obligation to minimize or abate existing threats in order to prevent widespread and costly infestations.

The Adirondack Park is susceptible to further infestation by invasive plant species intentionally or accidentally introduced to this ecoregion. While many of these species are not currently designated a priority species by the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP), they may become established within or in proximity to a unit and require resources to manage, monitor, and restore the site. Infestations located within and in proximity to a unit may expand and spread to uninfected areas and threaten natural resources within a unit; therefore it is critical to identify infestations located both within and in proximity to a unit and then assess high risk areas and prioritize Early Detection Rapid Response (ED/RR) and management efforts.

Currently there is a noticeable lack of invasive terrestrial plants on Gore Mountain including a lack of Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Common reed (*Phragmites australis*) and Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica ssp. japonica*).

Gore Mountain will use straw, erosion control blankets made of excelsior, jute, synthetic fabric or webbing, or combinations of these rather than hay for mulching and other erosion control practices. All equipment used for earth moving, grading or excavating on the site including, but not limited to, trucks, excavators, and tractors, shall be washed with high pressure hoses and hot water, or other similar methods approved by the Engineer in Charge (EIC) prior to being brought on the site. The intent of this management practice is to ensure that all equipment utilized for the project is clean and free of all soil, mud or other similar material that may contain invasive plant materials, seed or other propagules. If washed on the project site, equipment shall be washed in one location to prevent the distribution of propagules among different wash sites. The contractor shall make every effort to prevent invasive plant species from being introduced to the construction site. This management practice does not apply to pavement grinders, paving equipment, dump trucks used to transport hot asphalt or other equipment used solely for highway resurfacing or to remove/install signs or guide rail.

Off Mountain

Construction of the proposed improvements to the Town of Johnsburg Historic North Creek Ski Bowl will involve several new trails and a gondola.

b. Mitigation Measures

The following measures will be employed to mitigate the potential impacts on vegetation during construction.

- Only areas absolutely necessary for construction of ski trails, ski lifts, and other proposed improvements will be cleared of vegetation. All other areas will be maintained in a natural state.
- Erosion control measures (see Section 5.A.3) will be used on cleared areas with disturbed soils to avoid affecting adjacent vegetation by erosion or siltation. Erosion-control devices to be used will include filter fabric fences and staked straw bale filters.

- Upon the completion of clearing of new ski trails and ski lift corridors, they will be seeded with grass mixtures to promote rapid revegetation. Areas disturbed for any other improvements will also be landscaped and revegetated as soon as practicable.
- Plants used to revegetate disturbed areas and planted as part of landscaping will be species which are indigenous to the region.
- No clear-cutting of trees to develop panoramic views is proposed. Views will be framed or filtered by existing vegetation.
- All soil disturbing activities will comply with the NYS DEC General Permit GP-02-01. See Appendix 6 “Example SWPPP”.
- Train staff working at Gore Mountain unit to identify and document the location of key invasive plant species.
- Work towards a complete comprehensive inventory of the presence and extent of invasive plants in the unit.
- Eliminate any identified populations of invasive plant species that are discovered in the unit. These actions may be carried out by DEC personnel or by members of APIPP or other volunteers under supervision of DEC through an Adopt-a-Natural Resource Agreement.
- Continue periodic monitoring and further management of identified invasive plant populations with particular site inspections where hay was used in the recent past.

2. Water and Wetland Resources

a. Impacts

On Mountain

Wetlands on the mountain have been avoided in the planning and design of renovated and new facilities. Intermittent and permanent drainages will be crossed by proposed ski trails, and existing trees and shrubs will be removed and replaced with grasses. Impacts to water resources as a result of this tree clearing will be temporary and minimized by sediment and erosion control measures. If necessary, culverts will be placed in drainageways crossed by ski trails or ski bridges installed in order to keep the trails from flooding during times of runoff. The crossing of Roaring Brook by trail #12-C/11-N, access to Pod #12 trails, will require a second bridge and a tributary crossing.

None of the activities proposed on the mountain have been located on areas that overlay potential aquifer areas. No changes to or impacts on groundwater flow or quality are anticipated.

Clearing of trails and returning them to grass and meadow may not significantly increase stormwater runoff. Therefore, treatment or attenuation of increases in stormwater volumes may

not be necessary for the creation of ski trails. However, implementation of proper sediment and erosion control practices during construction, as well as properly controlling runoff hydrology after construction, are important for protecting water quality in nearby receiving waters. See Appendix 6 for an example of a SWPPP including Erosion and Sediment Control measures to be implemented during construction. Likewise, the SWPPP in Appendix 6 includes operational phase water management descriptions, i.e. in certain slope areas, waterbars will be installed to direct trail runoff into existing forested areas where it can dissipate. Changes to the stormwater runoff calculations presented in the 2002-2007 UMP will be updated, where necessary, as the result of the stormwater analysis performed during the preparation of the SWPPP.

The site's sandy soils are conducive to the development of a stormwater management basin for the proposed bus parking lot. A detailed stormwater management report has been prepared for the proposed bus parking lot and is attached as part of Appendix 6. The stormwater management for the proposed parking lot consists of a forebay to treat the water quality volume and an infiltration basin which attenuates the 10- and 100-year storms to predevelopment rates.

In accordance with the 1995 UMP, water quality in streams around Gore Mountain has been monitored since 1995. Water quality monitoring has been performed in response to concerns expressed during the UMP public review process (1995 UMP FGEIS Section 2.02). Concern was expressed that construction of new ski trails and other improvements described in the 1995 UMP could potentially impact water quality in the brooks that drain the areas of proposed improvements. Water quality data collected to date from Straight Brook and Roaring Brook indicates that ski area improvements that have been made have not resulted in either increased sediment loading or increased nutrient loading to the streams around Gore Mountain.

Off Mountain

Wetlands on the Historic North Creek Ski Bowl portion of the improvements have been avoided in the planning and design of the Project. Intermittent and permanent drainages will be crossed by proposed ski trails, and existing trees and shrubs will be removed and replaced with grasses. Impacts to water resources as a result of this tree clearing will be temporary and minimized by sediment and erosion control measures. If necessary, culverts will be placed in drainageways crossed by ski trails or ski bridges installed in order to keep the trails from flooding during times of runoff.

A preliminary plan for the improvements to the Historic North Creek Ski Bowl has been developed as part of this 2005 UMP Amendment. Conceptually, the work at the Historic North Creek Ski Bowl does not appear to have the potential to create a significant adverse impact on water resources from stormwater. Much of the base of the Historic North Creek Ski Bowl is already cleared, Ski Bowl Road is paved, and gravel parking lots are available.

b. Mitigation Measures

The following measures will be employed to mitigate the potential impacts on streams and wetlands during construction of the improvements and operation of the ski center.

- Filter fabric fences and stone check dams will be installed in places where widening of the snowmaking water pipeline route into a ski trail borders wetlands and streams.
- Soils disturbed by construction will be mulched with straw, erosion control blankets made of excelsior, jute, synthetic fabric or webbing, or combinations of these and seeded with grasses as soon as practicable in order to minimize potential for erosion.
- An amendment to the existing SPDES general permit, or a new permit will be acquired, for work associated with construction activity at the Historic North Creek Ski Bowl prior to beginning work.
- A Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasure Plan is in place for all fossil fuel storage tanks on the facility to ensure proper procedure and preventative measures.

3. Soils

a. Impacts

On Mountain

Impacts to soils associated with the proposed improvements are most likely to occur in areas of construction of new ski trails and widening of existing trails. Trees and other woody vegetation will be removed over a total area of about 88 acres. In some places, it may be necessary to remove boulders and to grade, which will involve cutting and/or filling. These activities may result in exposure of soils, which will then be susceptible to erosion.

There were no significant areas of organic soils, particularly on steep slopes. Most of the soils mapped on the mountain and observed during numerous visits to the site are shallow to very deep, coarse textured glacial till soils. Organic soils (Folists) on steep uplands are generally in a complex pattern with the local deep or shallow glacial till soil. It is unlikely that there will be any extensive areas of folist soils that will be impacted by this project.

Off Mountain

The development of the improvements at the Historic North Creek Ski Bowl will disturb soils and increase the potential for wind and water borne erosion. The soils underlying the proposed improvements consist of Becket bouldery fine sandy loam and Hermon bouldery fine sandy loam, which are suitable for the proposed recreational use. Due to the previous use of the Ski Bowl for skiing trails and a ski lift, and the incorporation into the design of the previous ski trail layouts and the existing snowmaking pipeline trail, the need to clear vegetation and grade the ground surface is minimized.

b. Mitigation Measures

The following measures will be employed to mitigate the potential impacts on soils during construction:

- Erosion control measures such as filter fabric fences, and erosion-control blankets, will be used downslope from all areas where soils will be disturbed by excavation, grading, or deposition of fill and will be specified in a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan.
- As soon as practicable, disturbed soils which are to be restored to a vegetated state will be mulched and seeded with grasses, or planted with groundcover plants or other landscape plants.

Appendix 6 contains an example Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPP) that was prepared for typical ski trail construction. Site-specific SWPPs will be prepared for all construction activities regulated by NYSDEC's General Permit No. GP-02-01.

A site-specific SWPPP will be prepared for all construction activities including trail construction. The plans will include erosion and sediment control components and will address stormwater runoff. Subcatchment areas and all watercourses and wetlands will be identified in the SWPPP as well as an assessment of any potentially significant changes in peak discharges and stormwater volumes between the pre and post development conditions for the areas affected by this plan. Appropriate stormwater management practices will also be included in the SWPPP. This may include sheet flow to wooded areas, water bars, pipe slope drains, etc and, if necessary, structural practices such as sediment basins and detention basins. The goal is to minimize erosion and protect watercourses and wetlands from sediment and other pollutants. A site-specific SWPPP will be submitted to the APA and DEC Natural Resources staff for review and approval prior to the commencement of construction.

- In order to avoid mass movement of the soils on steep slopes, areas under construction will be dewatered and as much natural vegetative cover as possible will remain intact.

4. Visual Resources

a. Impacts

The potential impact of the new actions on visual resources has been assessed.

Visual impact is assessed in terms of the anticipated change in visual resources, including whether there would be a change in character or quality of the view with respect to significant scenic and aesthetic resources.

In general, views of the Gore Mountain Ski Area are limited primarily to its southern and eastern exposures. South and Pete Gay Mountains block the views of the ski area from the north and west to a large degree.

The ski area is partially visible from local roadways: clearly at times, but frequently filtered by topography and mature trees. The views of Gore Mountain from the south are limited primarily to NY Route 28 just south of Weavertown, and then again near Holcombville; a number of local roadways including Durkin Road, Oven Mountain Road, and Peaceful Valley Road (County

Route 29); and sections of NY Route 8, between Weavertown and Bakers Mills. The ski area is also visible from NY Route 28N, heading south from Minerva toward North Creek.

As part of the Vanderwacker Mountain Wild Forest Final Unit Management Plan, NYSDEC has proposed construction of a hiking trail to Moxham Mountain. Moxham Mountain is located approximately four miles to the north/northeast of the ski area. Its southern face, looking toward Gore Mountain, consists of steep cliffs and an exfoliated dome. The ski trails on the northern portion of the existing ski area, as well as the proposed ski trails on the northern and eastern expansion areas, will be visible from the summit of Moxham Mountain on clear days.

Trail cuts and new slopes will be visible from these locations, however, the improvements to the Gore Mountain Ski Center represents a consolidation of visual impacts occurring in an area historically, and currently, used for alpine skiing and other winter sports. Burnt Ridge already has clearing for existing power lines, further consolidating the visual impacts. As shown in the photo simulations in Appendix 3, the proposed trails will be visible from several locations. Although this will change some viewsheds, it is an expected site at a ski mountain. As a result, visual resources will not be negatively impacted. The photos in Appendix 3 simulate how views will look without snow. With snow cover it is likely that there will be an increase in the contrast between the surrounding wooded areas with snow on the ground and the ski trails.

The “Visual Resources Inventory and Impact Assessment” is attached as Appendix 3, including wireframe and photo simulations of the proposed trails.

b. Mitigation Measures

The improvements in the Historic North Creek Ski Bowl represent a consolidation of visual impacts, as they occur in an area historically, and currently, used for alpine skiing and other winter sports. In addition, as previously done for new lifts at Gore Mountain, an indigenous color scheme of granite gray lift towers and forest green terminals and gondola cabins will be used for the proposed lifts and gondola as part of this UMP Amendment.

5. Fish and Wildlife

a. Impacts

On Mountain

Analyses of potential on mountain fish and wildlife impacts contained in the 2002 UMP also pertain to this UMP Amendment.

Since the preparation of the 2002-2007 UMP, the issue of potential impacts to Bicknell’s thrush from ski trail construction has received increased attention.

This 2005 UMP Amendment, because it involves a New Action on lands above 2,800 feet in elevation and in mountain spruce-fir forest habitat, analyzes potential impacts to Bicknell’s

thrush and offers measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate these potential impacts to the maximum extent practicable.

Bicknell's thrush is a species of special concern in New York State (NYS) and has been identified as the Neotropical migrant of highest conservation priority in the northeast. In NYS the species breeds in high elevation conifer forests, primarily above 3,000 feet in elevation, on mountaintops in the Catskills and the Adirondacks. The only new action proposed above the elevation of 2,800 feet in this UMP Amendment/Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) is the new Hedges novice trail proposed to be constructed on Bear Mountain to connect the top of the gondola to the Saddle Lodge. Construction of the 1,270 foot long Hedges trail will necessitate the clearing of 6.5 acres of forest that is above 2,800 feet. Field observations suggest that, although this area is above the elevation threshold for Bicknell's thrush to breed, the forest type is such that the habitat quality to Bicknell's thrush is probably marginal. Further, a total of 2,740 feet of previously approved trails covering 9.5 acres above 2,800 feet in elevation are no longer being proposed. Thus, cutting the new Hedges trail is not expected to have an adverse impact on Bicknell's thrush nesting habitat, and there will be a net decrease of trails to be constructed in areas of potential Bicknell's thrush habitat. Where possible the edges of this new trail will be feathered to enhance potential Bicknell's thrush habitat.

In recognition of the importance of this species, a study was conducted in the area of the proposed Hedges trail. A survey involving playbacks of taped Bicknell's thrush vocalizations conducted on June 21, 2005 did not detect presence of this species. A report summarizing the results of field studies conducted by NYSDEC and the Wildlife Conservation Society is included in Appendix 7. Regardless, the UMP Amendment/SEIS proposes measures to avoid potential impacts (see below).

Off Mountain

The potential impact to wildlife in the off-mountain portion of the 2005 UMP Amendment is similar to that described for the on-mountain portion of the 2002 UMP.

b. Mitigation Measures

The following measures are consistent with measures to be implemented by ORDA to mitigate potential impacts to Bicknell's thrush on Whiteface Mountain in accordance with recommendations of the Vermont Institute of Natural Science.

- (1) Avoid tree cutting activity during the breeding season until August 1,
- (2) Feather trail edges,
- (3) Develop an information display to educate visitors about this species and other montane forest bird species, and
- (4) Promote public awareness activities occurring on the Bicknell's thrush wintering ground in the Dominican Republic.

6. Air Resources

a. Impacts

The new bus parking lot (Conceptual Action) is not anticipated to bring new busses to the Mountain, only to move buses from one location to another. Therefore, there would be no new impacts to air quality.

Gore Mountain Ski Center has a current NYSDEC Air Quality Permit and permit conditions are met every year.

b. Mitigation Measures

No significant adverse impact to air resources is anticipated as a result of development of the proposed improvements, therefore, no mitigation measures are proposed.

B. Human Resources

1. Transportation

No revisions to this section are necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

2. Community Services and Utilities

No revisions to this section are necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

3. Local Land Use Plans

a. Impacts

No revisions to this section are necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

b. Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are necessary since no negative impacts have been identified.

4. Economics

a. Impacts

There are several economic impacts that are directly related to the UMP. These include pre-construction spending for professional services such as planning, architectural, permitting, environmental and legal fees; construction spending related to labor and supplies for trail development, snowmaking installation and the building of lodges; spending by new skiers for lift

tickets, ski lessons, equipment rental and meal purchases both on and off the mountain, lodging and entertainment; and payroll spending for new operations employees.

Construction materials will be sent out for bid and, whenever possible will be purchased locally.

Most of the trail work and snowmaking elements will be handled by ORDA workers whereas lift installations, road construction and the construction of the lodges will be contracted to outside contractors.

The annual operating payroll is expected to increase proportionately due to the anticipated hiring of additional ski patrollers, ski school instructors, trail groomers, building maintenance personnel and service workers at the Saddle and Bear Mountain lodges and renovated Base Lodge and Children's Center. The new payroll will in turn generate new spending for rent, mortgages, groceries, gasoline, personal services, retail and recreation by new workers and their families throughout the primary and secondary area of impact.

Additional direct and long-term spending will come from the skiers themselves for ticket purchases, equipment rentals, ski lessons and on-site food purchases. The National Ski Areas Association reports that the average ski dollar buys the following goods and services: 54% on ski lift tickets; 7% on ski lessons; 13% on food and beverage; 5% on equipment and clothing; 4% on equipment rentals; 6% on summer services; 2% on real estate; and 9% on miscellaneous items (NSAA, 1993). These revenues will primarily be used to improve overall economic conditions at Gore and ORDA plus support the new payroll requirements for the ski area. Some money may be contributed to fund continued completion of the UMP actions.

A multiplier effect will occur for revenues that are produced on the mountain and later spent off the mountain. This traditionally includes short-term (5 years) construction spending and long-term operational spending as well. Multipliers have been developed for all industries by the US Department of Commerce. They are used to predict the direct and indirect economic impacts generated by each spending sector. Direct economic impacts refer to additional revenues received from the ski area for construction and from the skiers themselves. Indirect impacts include the additional purchases made by the ski industry from other businesses to satisfy the additional demand, and induced impacts are produced from the new spending of persons employed in the ski industry. Each new dollar that is spent actually "turns over" causing additional dollars to be spent to satisfy a new demand. Each category of industry (construction, recreation, lodging) has separate and unique impacts associated with its own business operation and production.

Generally, each dollar spent in the construction and operational phase generates an additional dollar of spending thereby effectively doubling the total economic impact.

Substantial direct off-site economic benefits will also occur as a result of the project. These include the spending that skiers do off the mountain for goods and services such as food and lodging along the way. Various spending ratios have been developed for the ski industry. The National Ski Areas Association estimates that for every dollar spent on skiing, another six dollars are spent in the local and regional economies. Ski Maine also uses a ratio of 1:6. Ski New

Hampshire estimates that for every dollar spent skiing, another nine dollars are spent in local and regional economies. The 1998 Gore Mountain Support Group Study, funded by the Towns of Johnsbury and Warrensburg, conservatively estimates a spending ratio of 1:5. This spending ratio says that with the 6 million dollars spent on lift tickets in the 2004/2005 ski season, another 30 million dollars would have been spent in the local and regional economies.

The “Economic Impact Study of the Gore Mountain Interconnect,” which is attached in Appendix 1, estimates that if 75 percent of the previously approved real estate development occurs, combined with the proposed additional ski terrain, skiers at Gore will contribute approximately \$44.9 million annually to the regional economy. This represents a 107 percent increase over the 2002-2003 pre-interconnect regional revenue of \$21.7 million.

Off season revenue sources are not considered significant and were not included in this analysis.

b. Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required since the impacts on the economy are entirely positive.

5. Historical and Archeological Resources

a. Impacts

There are no known historical or archeological resources present in the area proposed for the improvements.

b. Mitigation Measures

No adverse impact to archeological or historical resources is anticipated as a result of development of the management actions described in the UMP, therefore, no mitigation measures are proposed.

SECTION 6 ALTERNATIVES

A. Alternative Lift Configurations

Various designs to create the connection to the Historic North Creek Ski Bowl were considered, and the proposed configuration was selected due to the most desirable, operable, ski lift combination that would work with the available terrain. Other locations were also studied, including a portion of the Vanderwhacker Wild Forest and Barton Mines.

B. Alternative Trail Improvements

The current proposal was selected due to the fact that the resultant skiable terrain best balances the mix of available trails by degree of difficulty to meet current industry standards.

Potential trail layouts associated with the above rejected alternative lift configurations were discarded for similar reasons.

Trail designs are influenced by existing surface water drainage patterns and the purpose of each such trail and the desire to create enjoyable and functional ski trails. Trail designs have been altered during the planning process as the environmental analysis for this UMP Amendment progressed.

C. Alternative Development

For whatever reason, if the private resort development should not come to fruition, there will still be a viable connection between Gore Mountain and the Historic Ski Bowl, but not on the Historic ski trail alignment described and illustrated above. Under this alternative scenario; (1) new lift # 11 would be shifted to the south (its previously-approved location) and connect the base of the Ski Bowl on Town land with the top of this lift on State Land, and (2) the previously-approved trails from the top of this lift (Trail #'s 11-C, 11-D, 11-E, 11-F, 11-G, and 11 A/B) will be constructed to connect to the Ski Bowl and the existing pipeline trail. See Figure 1-3, "Alternative Ski Bowl Area Configuration."

D. The No-Action Alternative

The no-action alternative to this UMP Amendment is the continuing implementation of the approved 2002-2007 UMP Update.

SECTION 7 SUMMARY OF UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Some environmental impacts of the proposed action can neither be prevented nor reasonably avoided. This section will describe the unavoidable impacts which may occur due to construction and implementation of the 2005 UMP Amendment.

Construction activities will result in dust, odors, fumes, noise and vibration. A small amount of traffic will be generated. Removal of vegetation, excavation and grading will be required to improve ski trail area, and chair lift support structures and new chair lifts. Immediate seeding and mulching of disturbed areas will greatly reduce the possibility of any serious erosion problems. Final vegetative growth and grades will blend with the existing environmental setting.

Increased noise levels during construction of improved facilities cannot be avoided. The possibility exists for interference with wildlife breeding and nesting seasons. Related noise will have a significant short-term impact, but little long-term permanent impact is expected.

Operational activities will cause a minor increase in peak hour traffic and solid waste disposal needs.

There will be demands on local government offices such as the assessor, tax collector, and building inspector. Fire, police and rescue services will have an increased population to protect. There will be an increase in medical emergencies requiring service. Minor amounts of air pollution and noise will be generated. Fuel will be used. There will be an increase in surface water runoff due to increased impervious areas.

All of these impacts are relatively minor and local in nature. Most do not require mitigation measures. Section V of this Amendment describes those mitigation measures which are required.

SECTION 8 IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES

Expansion of recreational use of the land at Gore Mountain does not represent a significant or irretrievable commitment of resources. Should intensive use recreational facilities and programs be abandoned, the area would revert to natural vegetation and habitat characteristics which are representative of those in the Adirondack Park.

Construction of the 2005 UMP Amendments will result in the permanent commitment of raw materials including concrete, steel, gravel, and wood for construction of the permanent structures, in addition to energy resources required to construct, operate and maintain the recreation area.

Site preparation for the proposed project will remove approximately 88 acres of existing vegetation and disturb soils on the site. Since no rare, threatened or endangered species are known to inhabit the site, the removal of this habitat is not viewed as significant.

Operation of the proposed project will result in the permanent, irretrievable commitment of resources such as energy for heating, lighting and equipment operations, however, such commitment will be extremely minimal. Adverse impacts on air, water and socioeconomic resources will not be irreversible or significant.

Various spending ratios have been developed for the ski industry. The National Ski Areas Association estimates that for every dollar spent on skiing, another six dollars are spent in the local and regional economies. Ski Maine also uses a ratio of 1:6. Ski New Hampshire estimates that for every dollar spent skiing, another nine dollars are spent in local and regional economies. The 1998 Gore Mountain Support Group Study, funded by the Towns of Johnsburg and Warrensburg, conservatively estimates a spending ratio of 1:5. Even more conservative is the 1:4 spending ratio estimated by the study presented below and in Appendix 1.

The information presented below summarizes the key points of the “Economic Impact Study of the Gore Mountain Interconnect,” which is attached in Appendix 1. The purpose of the study, written by the Office of the New York State Comptroller, is to evaluate the economic impact of the construction and development of the ski lifts and trails that will, in effect, interconnect the hamlet of North Creek with the main trail network of Gore Mountain. The study makes projections using ski industry statistical data assessing the monetary impact of the development on the regional economy. This proposed action will help to restore the North Creek downtown commercial district by providing skiers direct mountain access, as well as access to dining, retail, entertainment and lodging facilities.

The study estimates that if 75 percent of the previously approved real estate development occurs, combined with the proposed additional ski terrain, skiers at Gore will contribute approximately \$44.9 million annually to the regional economy. This represents a 107 percent increase over the 2002-2003 pre-interconnect regional revenue of \$21.7 million.

Warren County’s master plan includes 2 phases in an effort to establish Gore as a destination resort. Phase I involved the completion of the 2002 UMP which projected an increase in the mountain’s skiable terrain and Phase II is the development of the local area.

Establishing Gore Mountain as a destination ski resort will generate additional spending on food, transportation, equipment, lodging, and nightlife activities. This additional spending is defined as secondary spending. Typically, ski resorts use a 1:5 spending ratio. The “Economic Impact Study,” however, uses a more conservative ratio of 1:4. Therefore, the additional \$1.85 million in skiing revenue that the report estimates would result from the completion of the 2002 UMP will increase the impact on the local economy by \$7.4 million.

Phase II of the Warren County Master Plan would develop the Hamlet of North Creek into a ski-in/ski-out village. It is estimated that the Town of Johnsburg has the capacity based on the zoning, for accommodations with up to 2,514 beds. The report estimates that Gore will get 50 visits for every additional bedding unit that is built. If 75% of the planned bedding capacity is built, Gore should realize approximately 94,000 more visits to the mountain, \$2.4 million more in skiing revenue, and \$9.4 million in secondary spending, at the completion of Phase II.

The report concludes that the completion of Phases I and II of the Warren County Master Plan may result in total regional impact revenue of \$44.9 million.

Growth inducing and secondary impacts relate to changes in population, land use patterns, and the creation of new businesses. Cumulative impacts relate to changes from the project plus changes from other projects in the region. There are no revisions to the growth inducing, secondary and cumulative impacts presented in the 2002 UMP. The information presented in this Amendment is specifically related to the effects of the proposed Interconnect between Gore Mountain and the Historic North Creek Ski Bowl.

Growth inducing, secondary and cumulative impacts essentially remain as written for the 1995 UMP. Gore Mountain has not reached the goals set in the document but is on its way there. The planned improvements set forth in this document will help the ski area attain the stated goal but will not necessarily cause there to be substantially more skiers, nor a significantly higher amount of impacts.

**SECTION 10 EFFECTS ON THE USE AND CONSERVATION
 OF ENERGY**

No revisions to this section are necessary. Refer to the 2002 UMP.

REFERENCES

Article 8, Title 28, Section 2614, Public Authorities Law.

National Ski Areas Association. 1993. Economic Analysis of United States Ski Areas.

NY State Comptroller's Office. 2004. Economic Impact Study of the Gore Mountain Interconnect.

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