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**PEPPERBOX WILDERNESS AREA  
UNIT MANAGEMENT PLAN**

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March 1985



MEMORANDUM FROM  
**HENRY G. WILLIAMS**, *Commissioner*  
New York State  
Department of Environmental Conservation

MAR 1 1985

TO: The Record

FROM: Hank Williams

RE: Unit Management Plan  
Pepperbox Wilderness Area

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The final Unit Management Plan for the Pepperbox Wilderness Area, which has been developed in consultation with the Adirondack Park Agency, is consistent with guidelines and criteria of the Adirondack State Land Master Plan, involved citizens participation, is consistent with the State Constitution, Environmental Conservation Law, rules, regulations and policy, and projects stated management objectives of such area for a five-year period, accordingly is hereby approved and adopted.



Preface

PEPPERBOX WILDERNESS

UNIT MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Pepperbox Wilderness is the smallest of all the wilderness areas in the Adirondack Park. There are virtually no improvements or facilities on the area, thus providing an opportunity for the bushwacker to create an individual experience of exploration.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	i
Table of Contents	ii
Introduction-Genesis	v
I. INTRODUCTION	
A. Area Description	
1. General location	1
2. Acreage	1
B. History of Land Unit	2
II. RESOURCE AND PUBLIC USE INVENTORY OVERVIEW	
A. Natural Resources	
1. Physical	
a. Geology	6
b. Soils	7
c. Terrain	11
d. Water	12
e. Wetlands	12
2. Biological	
a. Vegetation	14
b. Wildlife	17
c. Fish	22
3. Visual	23
4. Unique/Historical Areas	23
5. Wilderness	24
B. Man Made Facilities	24
C. Cultural	25
D. Economic	
1. Impact of State Ownership on Adjacent Private Land	25
2. Impact of Adjacent Private Lands on State Holdings	26
E. Public Use of the Area	27
F. Capacity of the Resource to Withstand Use	28
III. MANAGEMENT AND POLICY	29
A. Past Management	29

B. Goals	
1. Land Management	31
2. Wildlife Management	31
3. Fisheries Management	31
4. Public Use Management	32
5. Water Quality Management	32
C. Objectives; Long-Term and Short-Term	
1. Land Management	32
2. Public Use Management	33
3. Wildlife Management	33
4. Fisheries Management	34
5. Water Quality Management	34
IV. PROJECTED USE AND MANAGEMENT PROPOSED	
A. Facilities development and/or Removal	34
B. Maintenance and Rehabilitation of Facilities	35
C. Public Use Management and Controls	36
D. Fish and Wildlife	37
E. Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers	38
F. Fire Management	38
G. Administration	
1. Staffing	40
2. Budgeting	42
3. Education	43
H. Problem Areas	
1. Accessibility	44
2. Trespass	44
3. Land Titles	44
4. Environmental Problems	45
I. Land Acquisition	46
J. State Land Master Plan Amendments Recommended	47
K. State Environmental Quality Review Requirements	47
L. Relationship of Management of Area to Forest Preserve and Adjacent Areas.	48
M. Proposed Regulations	48

V. SCHEDULE FOR IMPLEMENTATION	45
Appendix I. Detailed Description	50
Appendix 2. Ponds, Lakes and Streams	52
Appendix 3. Acid Rain	53
Appendix 4. Harvest Data	55
Appendix 4A Wildlife Inventory	56
Appendix 4B Deer Management Unit Boundary Map	57
Appendix 4C Furbearer Management Units Map	58
Appendix 5. SEQRA	59
Negative Declaration	
Appendix 6. Topography	62
Bibliography and References	63



INTRODUCTION - GENESIS

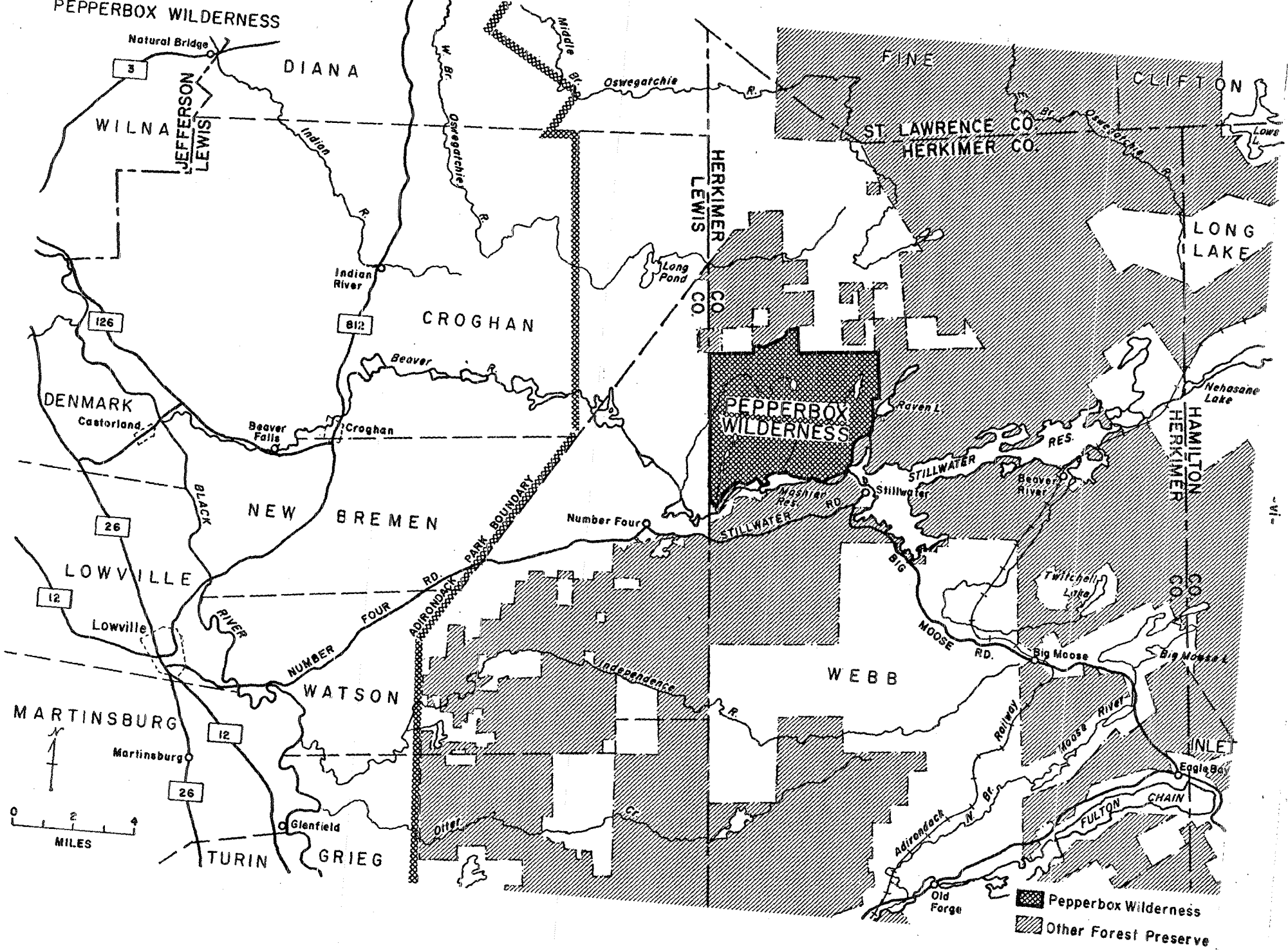
In 1972, Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller approved the Adirondack Park Agency Master Plan for State-owned lands in the Adirondack Park. This culminated many years of work by several legislative study groups and, ultimately, the Temporary Study Commission on the Future of the Adirondacks, appointed by the Governor in 1968.

The Temporary Study Commission on the Future of the Adirondacks made nearly 200 specific recommendations regarding the Adirondack Park. Among its major recommendations were:

- The creation of the Adirondack Park Agency
- The preparation of a master plan for State-owned lands by the Agency
- The classification of these lands "according to their characteristics and capacity to withstand use" and
- A set of extensive guidelines for the care, custody and control of State-owned lands under the master plan with particular emphasis on proposed wilderness and primitive areas.

The Temporary Study Commission also prepared legislation in final draft form, not only establishing the agency, but providing a comprehensive framework for land use, both public and private.

The final legislative mandate provided for the Agency's Master Plan for State-owned lands in the Adirondack Park. A revised master plan, in accordance with Section 816 of the Adirondack Park Agency Act, Article 27 of the Executive Law, was signed by Governor Hugh Carey on October 24, 1979. The Pepperbox Wilderness Unit Plan has been prepared by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation with the State master plan setting the parameters and local citizens providing additional review.



## PEPPERBOX WILDERNESS AREA

### Unit Management Plan

#### I. Introduction

##### A. Area Description

###### 1. General Location and Acreage

The Pepperbox Wilderness Area is located on the western side of the Adirondack Park, entirely within the Town of Webb, Herkimer County. More specifically, the area lies along the western boundary of Herkimer County and just north of the Moshier Reservoir and the Beaver River, and is mostly located in Townships 4 and 5, John Brown's Tract.

(1) See detailed description, Appendix 1. This is the smallest of the presently classified wilderness areas, comprising 14,600 acres, roughly five miles square. The southwest corner of this area is easily accessible via 0.3 miles of foot trail (blue markers) and a bridge over Sunday Creek and the Beaver River, on an easement across Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation lands. The access trailhead parking lot is located on the Moshier Road just off the Stillwater Road, about two miles from the Hamlet of Number Four. There is another foot trail to the southeast corner of the Pepperbox Wilderness Area, just downstream from the Stillwater Dam via the Raven Lake jeep road and the bridge across the Beaver River. This entrance lies just outside the hamlet of Stillwater. Other access is via surrounding private land, not generally open to the public.

B. History of the Land Unit

Almost all of this wilderness area is part of Townships 4 and 5, (also known as Unanimity and Frugality) both part of the John Brown's Tract. This is an original Great Tract comprising 210,000 acres, which has a very interesting history of its own. (1) Prior to 1900 this area, plus most of the John Brown's Tract, was owned by Mary Fisher of Cincinnati, Ohio. The portion of Townships 4 and 5 comprising this wilderness area was then nearly virgin forest.

This area has never been the realm of the settler, farmer or miller. It has always been undeveloped except to suit the temporary needs of the logger, hunter, fisherman, trapper and sojourner. Hunting, trapping and fishing were probably the earliest uses. In the latter half of the 19th century, the hemlock bark cutter and the spruce "gummer" most likely arrived on the scene. In the late 1890's, soft-wood logging began, principally for red spruce, balsam fir, hemlock, and white pine following forest fires that burned some southerly, westerly, and easterly portions of the area along the perimeter.

In order to supply loggers, "tote roads" were developed to camps located at Luvlin Hills east of Alder Creek, Cowboy Beaver Meadow at the intersection of Pepperbox Creek and Alder Creek, Three Mile Beaver Meadow and Lower Moshier Pond about the end of the century: and during the first decade of this century. The last operation was conducted

from Murphy's Camp at Bear Pond in the 1920's (data gathered from conversation with Hunts Andre who had personal knowledge of the logging). It is difficult to tell how much of the area was logged, since only softwoods were harvested on most of the area that was cut. This left much old growth hardwoods on those areas that were cut, partially hiding evidence of logging. However, most of the area was cut over if it contained sufficient softwood trees. Softwood stumps can still be found. It is believed that present stands of second growth hardwoods and softwoods are on areas that were formerly in softwoods and opened through logging, thus giving way to the present stands.

Softwood logs cut in the Moshier Creek drainage area were hauled by team and sled over winter roads to a main haul road running along Moshier Creek. They were then dumped over the "Big Slide" into the Beaver River and floated to downstream mills. Other streams used to float logs were Three Mile Beaver Meadow Brook, Pepperbox Creek, Martin Brook and other tributaries of Alder Creek, all eventually reaching the Beaver River. The logs were sorted out at Croghan.

As mentioned earlier, a fire preceded the earliest logging activity, prior to 1900. A great fire occurred over a broad geographical area in 1903, which burned on the westerly fringe of what is now the Pepperbox Wilderness Area. A similar great fire in 1908 burned the westerly portion of this area along with many thousand adjoining acres. A third fire burned the southeast and easterly

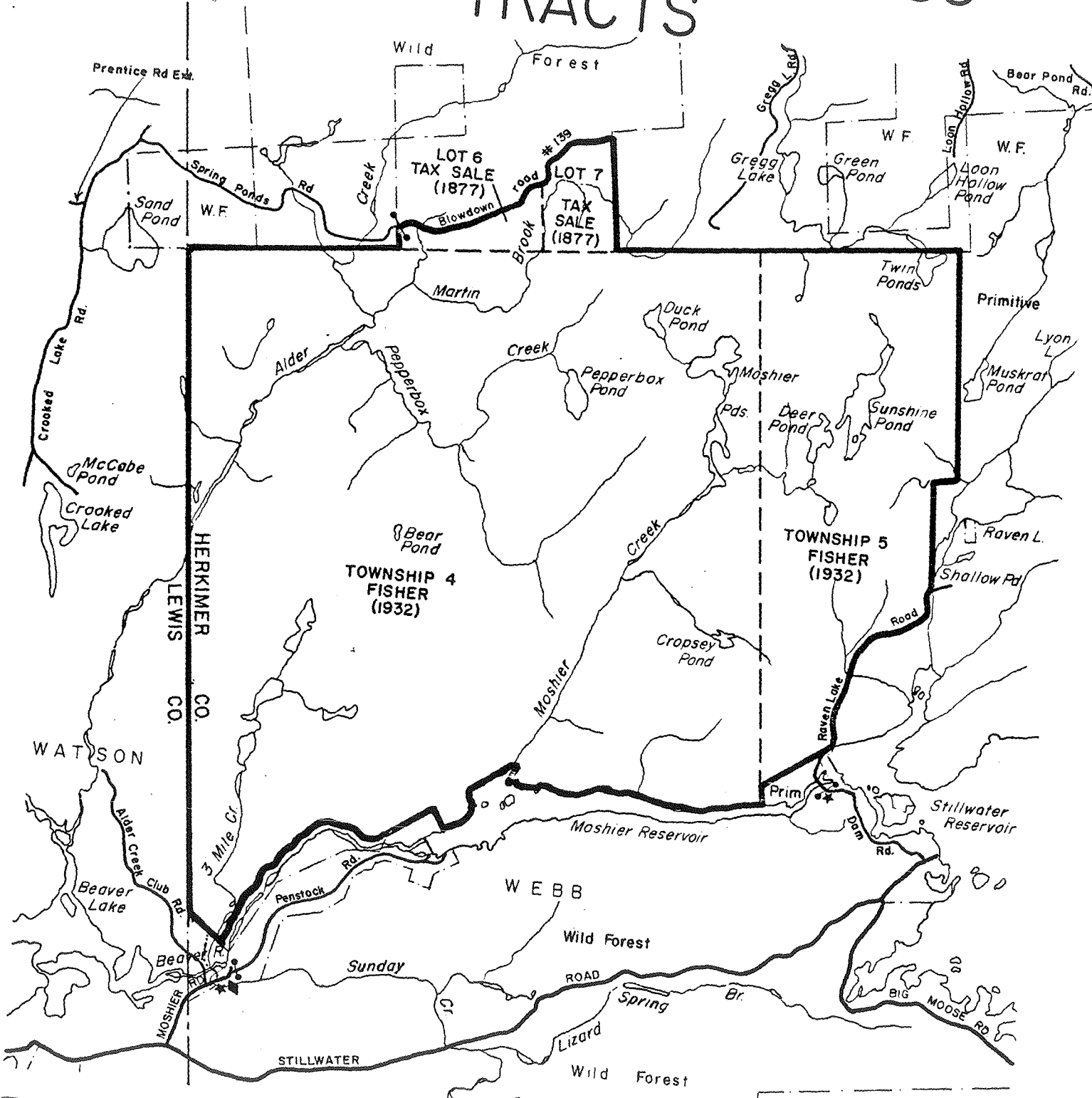
portion of this area in 1913. This fire burned in the vicinity of Cropsey Pond, Deer Pond, Sunshine Pond and Twin Ponds. The 1903, 1908 and 1913 fires are duly recorded by the Bureau of Forest Protection and Fire Management. A fourth fire about 1924 was reputed to have started at Kettle Hole on Stillwater Reservoir and to have burned over the same area as the 1913 fire. There are no records of this fire, nor are there records of additional fires.

The land comprising the Pepperbox Wilderness Area, as part of a much larger tract, was taken by the State of New York by appropriation in 1909. This action was overruled due to "incompleted procedures" in 1922, by the Court of Appeals. Nevertheless, the Pepperbox Area was acquired by New York State in 1932; as part of a larger 21,483 acre purchase. The northerly portion of the area, in Watson's East Triangle, in lot 6 and part of lot 7 were acquired in 1877. (See Tract Map, page 5).

During the hurricane of 1950 a scattering of timber blew down on the Pepperbox Area. Most of the blowdown was concentrated on Martin Brook. This was mostly salvaged via the old blowdown road through lots 6 and 7, along the north boundary of this wilderness area.

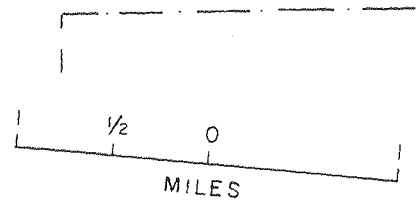
Other than current outbreaks, there are no historical records of serious insect or disease infestations though both have been steadily at work on the overmature, old-growth timber. There are thousands of large, formerly high grade, yellow birch and other species which have reached biological

# PEPPERBOX WILDERNESS TRACTS



- Tract boundary
- Road barrier (gate)
- - - Foot trail
- ◆ Parking area

\*Trail register



maturity. Much beech has died or will succumb to the beech bark disease and aphid complex. Red spruce is declining for unexplained reasons.

## II. Resource Inventory Overview

### A. Natural Resources

#### 1. Physical

##### (a) Geology

"Precambrian rocks originally deposited as sediments of the Granville Series were intruded by granite and syenite batholiths(2). They were subjected to intense regional metamorphism that turned the intrusives into gneisses and the sediments into schists, marbles and quartzites. The resulting Precambrian geology is very complex. The entire area has been glaciated leaving a mantle of relatively coarse non-calcareous till and outwash. These deposits have greatly altered the pre-glacial drainage and formed numerous ponds and swamps.

The western third of the area is composed of Biotite and hornblende granitic gneiss with subordinate leucocratic gneiss, biotite-quartz-plagioclase gneiss, other sedimentary rocks, amphibolite with porphyroblasts of K-feldspar, and migmatite(3). The eastern two-thirds of the unit



is geologically typed as Phgs, Charnockitic granitic and quartz syenitic gneisses, variably leucocratic with varying quantities of hornblende, pyroxenes and biotite. There are three shear zones in the unit showing high angle faults with associated breccia. Several reverse faults also are present on relatively overthrust block.

Glacial ponds are common in the northwest quarter of this unit and the receding glacier left interesting drainage channels, which seem to alternate between running in northwesterly and southwesterly directions. Rock outcroppings are numerous and steep rock faces often require that alternative routes be chosen by the explorer. Conversely, the stream channels beckon the user to utilize the paths of lesser resistance.

Mineral potential is lacking in the entire area. The granites are not generally susceptible to weathering and consequent release of nutrients. Their ability to buffer the effects of acid rain is minimal, resulting in glacial ponds now too acid to support a trout fishery.

(b) Soils

Soils in this unit were delineated in 1968 for the Adirondack Park Agency by the Herkimer County Soil

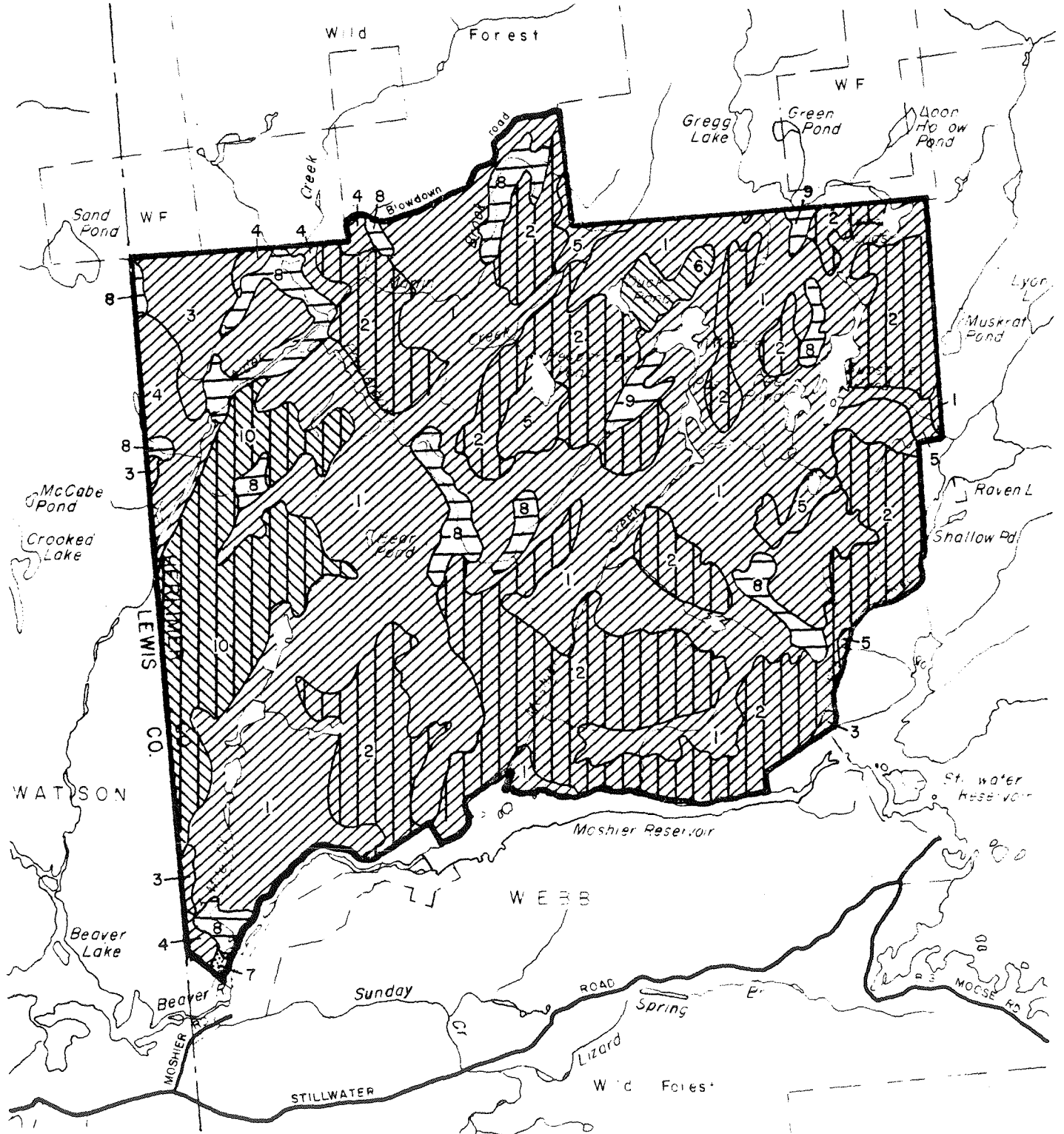
Conservation Service in cooperation with Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station. The soils referred to are not from a true survey but rather a schematic for general planning purposes that represents the best data currently available. No farming was ever known to take place here, resulting in little soil disturbance by man, with the exception of negligible erosion from primarily winter logging operations. (See Soils map, page 9.) Soils may be grouped into the following major components in descending order of occurrence.

Becket-Canaan association, very bouldery and ranging from moderate to steeply sloping, is found throughout the unit. It represents fully 75% of the acreage and predominates the soils present. These soils are deep with fragipans developed in glacial till.

Rock outcrop - Canaan association, moderately steep, is found on the westerly edge of the unit and comprises approximately 9% of the acreage. These are actually non-soil areas.

Greenwood-Cathro association, level, is found scattered throughout and covers approximately 6% of the acreage. These associations are deep and developed in organic deposits.






# PEPPERBOX WILDERNESS SOILS



### SOIL ASSOCIATION

- 1 Becket-Canaan, very bouldery, sloping
- 2 Becket-Canaan, very bouldery, moderately steep
- 3 Potsdam-Crary, very bouldery, sloping
- 4 Brayton-Dannemora, stony, gently sloping
- 5 Ridgebury-Whitman, very bouldery, nearly level
- 6 Canaan-Rock outcrop, sloping
- 7 Colton, sloping
- 8 Greenwood-Cathro, level
- 9 Greenwood-Saco, level
- 10 Rock outcrop-Canaan, moderately steep

### PROPERTIES AFFECTING MANAGEMENT

- |  |  |
|--|--|
|  Steep slopes       |  Seasonal wetness |
|  Stoniness          |  Few hazards      |
|  Shallow to bedrock |  |



Potsdam-Crary Association, very bouldery, moderately sloping, is found only in the northwest corner and along the westerly bounds. It represents 3% of the acreage. These are deep soils with fragipans developed in glacial till.

Ridgebury-Whitman Association, very bouldery, nearly level soils are found in pockets in the northeasterly quarter of the unit. They are also deep soils with fragipans developed in glacial till. They represent less than 2% of the unit acreage.

Brayton-Dannemora Association, stony, gently sloping soils are formed along the westerly edge and represent only 2% of the area. They are deep soils with fragipans developed in glacial till.

Canaan-Rock Outcrop Association, moderately sloping soils represent 1% of the unit and are found in a single pocket just north of Upper Moshier Pond. These soils range from moderately deep to shallow.

Greenwood-Saco Association, level soils are found in a single location off the southwest corner of Upper Moshier Pond. These are deep soils developed in organic deposits and represent less than 1% of the total unit acreage.

(c) Terrain

Most of this area is on sloping, rolling, or steep topography with rock talus. (See Topography map in Appendix 6). Small cobbles and boulders, often covered by vegetation, are usually underfoot, thus impeding stability in walking. The difference in elevation between summits and adjacent low land is not great, usually ranging from 100-400 feet. The most rugged area lies along the westerly boundary with steeply sloping ridges, which generally follow a northeast-southwest orientation. Nevertheless higher elevations exist on a number of more rounded hills over 2,160 feet (elevation) on the westerly and southwesterly portion of this area. Rock ledges are found throughout the area with a few high enough to constitute spectacular cliff-like hillsides.

There is also a considerable area in valleys and flats that lie between the hills and ridges. These generally contain wetlands, watercourses and ponds. The ponds are wholly or partially attributable to beaver activity. Some of these wetlands are perched at a substantial elevation above the main discernable watercourses. At any elevation, flat open areas usually are the site of existing or former beaver ponds. The oldest beaver pond situations are visible as typical beaver meadows, or wetlands. There are no known natural bogs, not related to beaver dams on this area.

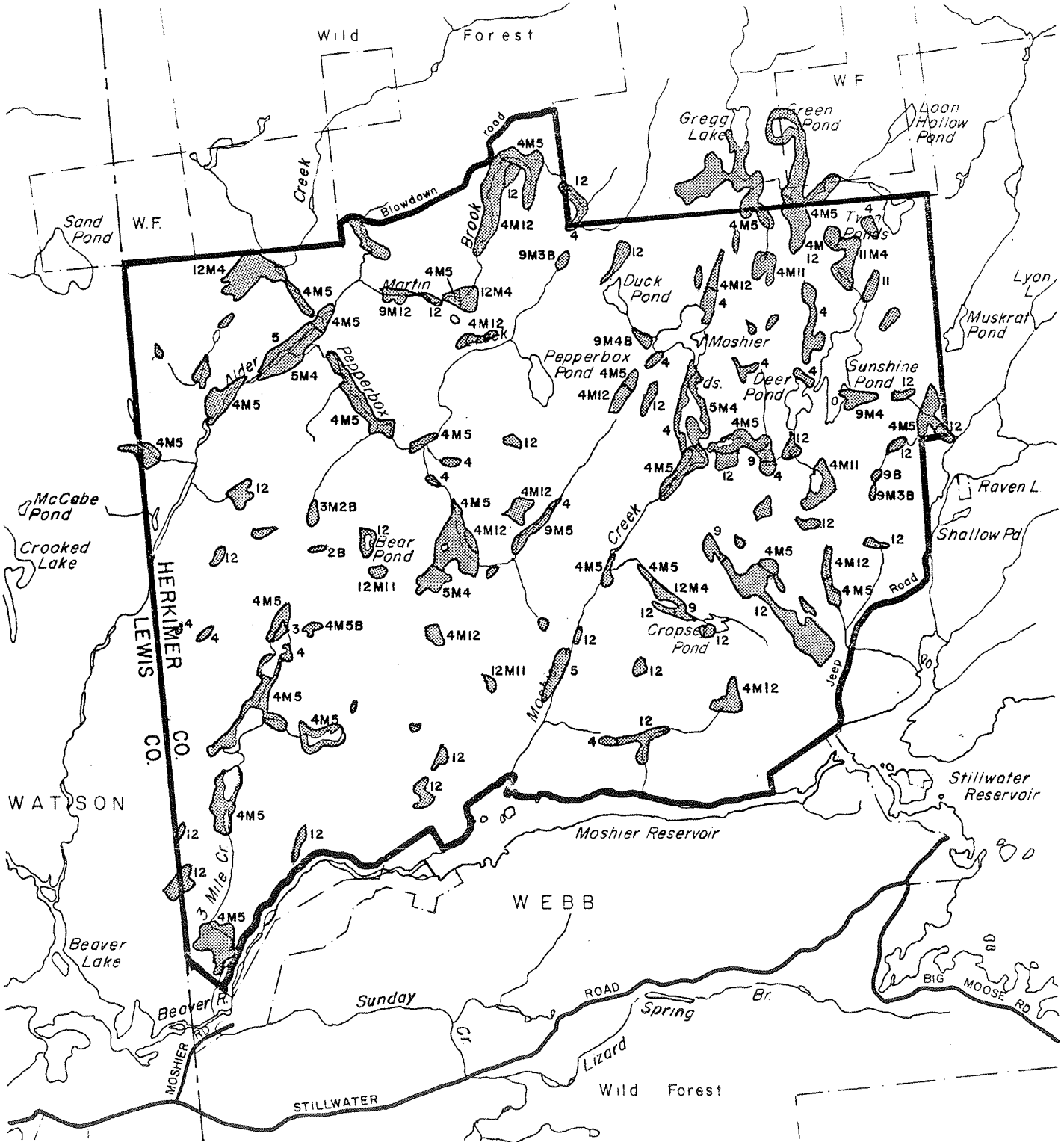
(d) Water


There are numerous small tributary brooks draining this wilderness area. Most of the drainage flows into the Beaver River via Alder Creek, Three Mile Beaver Meadow Creek and Moshier Creek. Only a small area drains into the Middle Branch of the Oswegatchie River. All of the above streams occupy broad, gently sloping water courses, except Moshier Creek which falls quite abruptly through a narrow V-shaped valley in the lower 2 1/2 miles of its course to Moshier Reservoir in the Beaver River. The dominant feature of the lowlands and drainage systems is the many ponds, which are wholly or partly due to beaver activity. These ponds are small, ranging from one to 64 acres, and depths tend to be variable. (See Appendix 2) Many of these waters have been impacted by acid precipitation and are no longer capable of supporting fish life.

(e) Wetlands

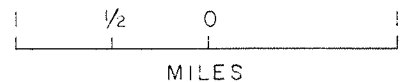
Wetlands occur throughout the unit. They are inventoried, mapped and protected under the 1975 NYS Freshwater Wetlands Act by the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Adirondack Park Agency. The inventory for this area was completed in 1983 and is reflected on detailed inventory sheets for the Soft Maple Reservoir and Stillwater quadrangles, (APA, 1984). Tentative and final wetlands maps and related hearings are not anticipated before FY 1986-87 for this area.

# PEPPERBOX WILDERNESS WETLANDS \*



 Wetlands

- 2 Flooded live deciduous trees
- 3 Flooded dead trees
- 4 Flooded shrubs
- 5 Emergents
- 9 Open water
- 11 Matted vegetation
- 12 Flooded conifers
- M Mix of covertypes
- B Beaver activity



\*See also 1984 APA Wetlands Inventory (Cowardin) Soft Maple and Stillwater 7½' Quads

The recent APA inventory using the Cowardin National Wetlands Inventory and Classification portrays information useful in describing the wetland covertypes and hydrologic regimes. This information can be used to assess general wetlands values which also depend on other information such as wildlife use, rare plant species, fish spawning, etc. The core wetlands, identified in an earlier inventory (APA and Cornell, 1973) are shown on the wetlands map on page 13. Although there are many small isolated pockets, the majority of the wetlands occur contiguously with the major drainages including Alder Creek, Three Mile Beaver Meadow Creek, John Henry Brook, Duffer Mountain Brook, and most conspicuously along Mosher Creek and its numerous tributaries. Periodic beaver activity has led to expanding and then contracting phases of wetland successions. The most extensive interspersions occur in the area between Cropsey Pond on the south, Moshier Ponds on the west, and on the north and east bounds of the unit.

## 2. Biological

### (a) Vegetation

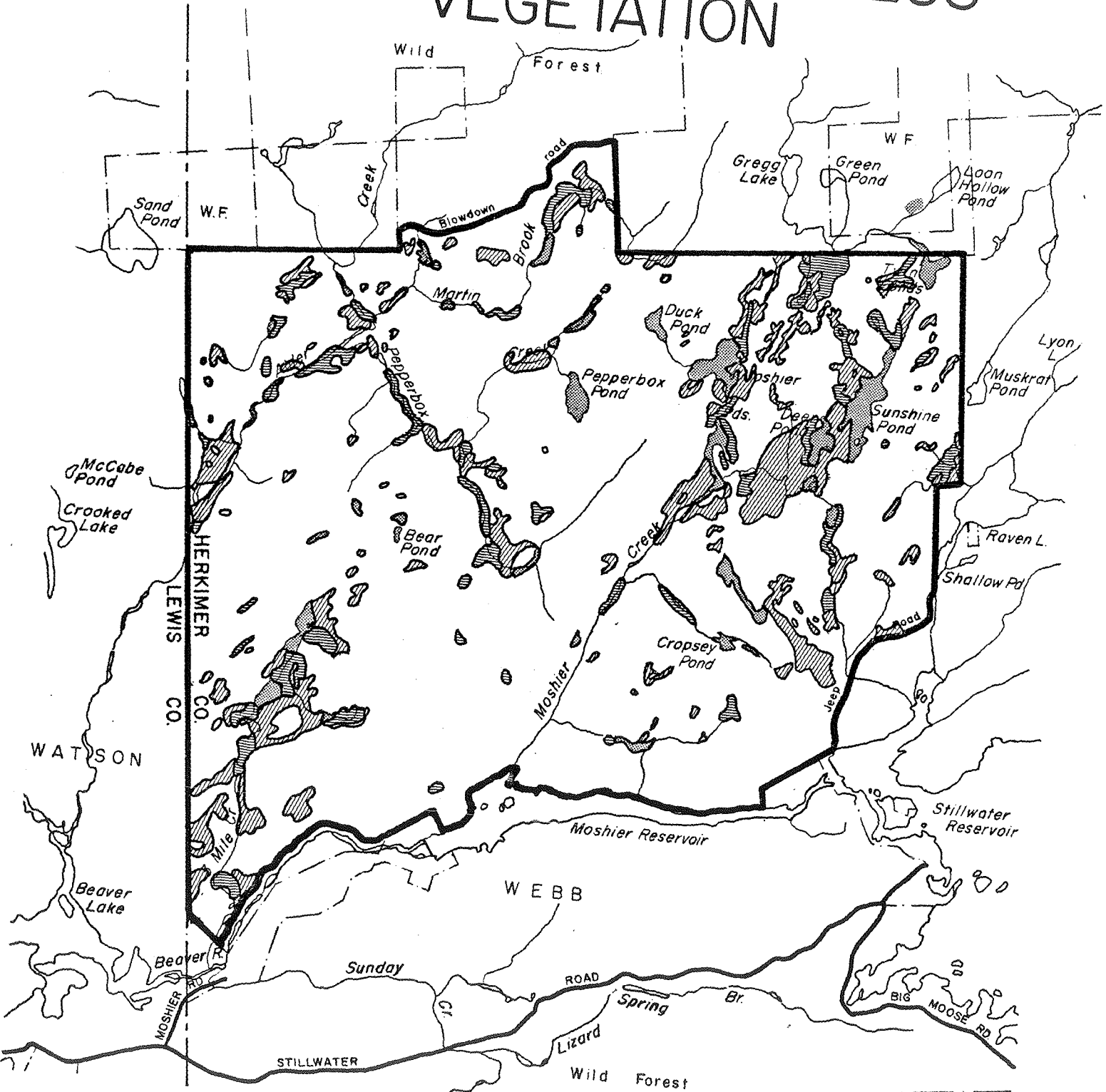
Vegetation is generally influenced by topographical location and internal soil drainage (See Vegetation Map, page 15). The bottomlands are generally in wetland or beaver meadow types of cover. Beaver meadows feature sedges, cord grass, reed grass, and joint grass. The margin of beaver meadows and the flats along open water courses will often exhibit bracken ferns, cinnamon fern, alders, red stem dogwood, tamarack, black spruce, red spruce, balsam fir, red maple, aspen, yellow birch, with some mixture of the beaver meadow grasses mentioned above.

Where trees occur on bottomlands and bottomland fringes, the stands are mostly in conifers, generally red spruce, balsam fir, white pine and an occasional hemlock, with interspersed red maple and yellow birch. Swamps which are

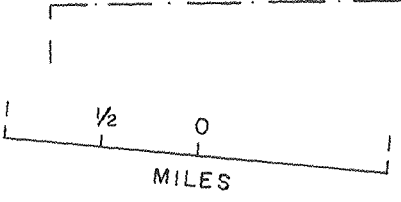


-15-

# PEPPERBOX WILDERNESS VEGETATION



- Open water
- Beaver meadow
- Softwood
- Hardwood



in later stages of succession often present a scattering of black spruce and tamarack, as well as alders and willows. Forest growth along water courses and ponds is heavily coniferous, generally red spruce and balsam fir. There are impressive areas of such softwoods in very dense stands surrounding most ponds and wetlands, particularly in the area of Moshier, Sunshine and Twin Ponds and Three Mile Beaver Meadow. These areas have been cut over in previous logging operations. Predominately softwood areas usually contain much advance spruce and fir regeneration in the understory.

With a modest gain in elevation or a change from the relatively level softwood-flats to sloping ground, there is always an abrupt change in forest type, to stands that are predominantly hardwoods. These hardwood slopes and ridges are mostly red maple with some yellow birch, beech and an occasional black cherry, with interspersions of red spruce and white pine. This upland hardwood type comprises the bulk of the forested acreage located on this Wilderness Area. The size of trees is much diminished where hot fires and/or cutting have occurred at the turn of the last century. The incidence of red maple is much greater on areas that have been burned over.

Uncut upland areas often have very large old-growth yellow birch in various stages of decadence as well as large beech and some large red spruce.

Reproduction in the understory is usually red maple, beech, red spruce balsam fir and occasionally yellow birch or black cherry. Except in clearings, or natural openings, the birch and cherry have no chance of surviving. In addition, the understory is often heavily stocked with witch hobble, and some striped maple. It is strange that sugar maple is conspicuous by its absence over most of this area.

Cover types on this unit can be summarized by the following general categories:

Named Ponds	249 Acres
Unidentified Open Water	92 Acres
Open Beaver Meadow	522 Acres
Coniferous Forest Cover	1,360 Acres
Deciduous Forest Cover	<u>12,377 Acres</u>
Total Unit Acreage	14,600 Acres

(b) Wildlife

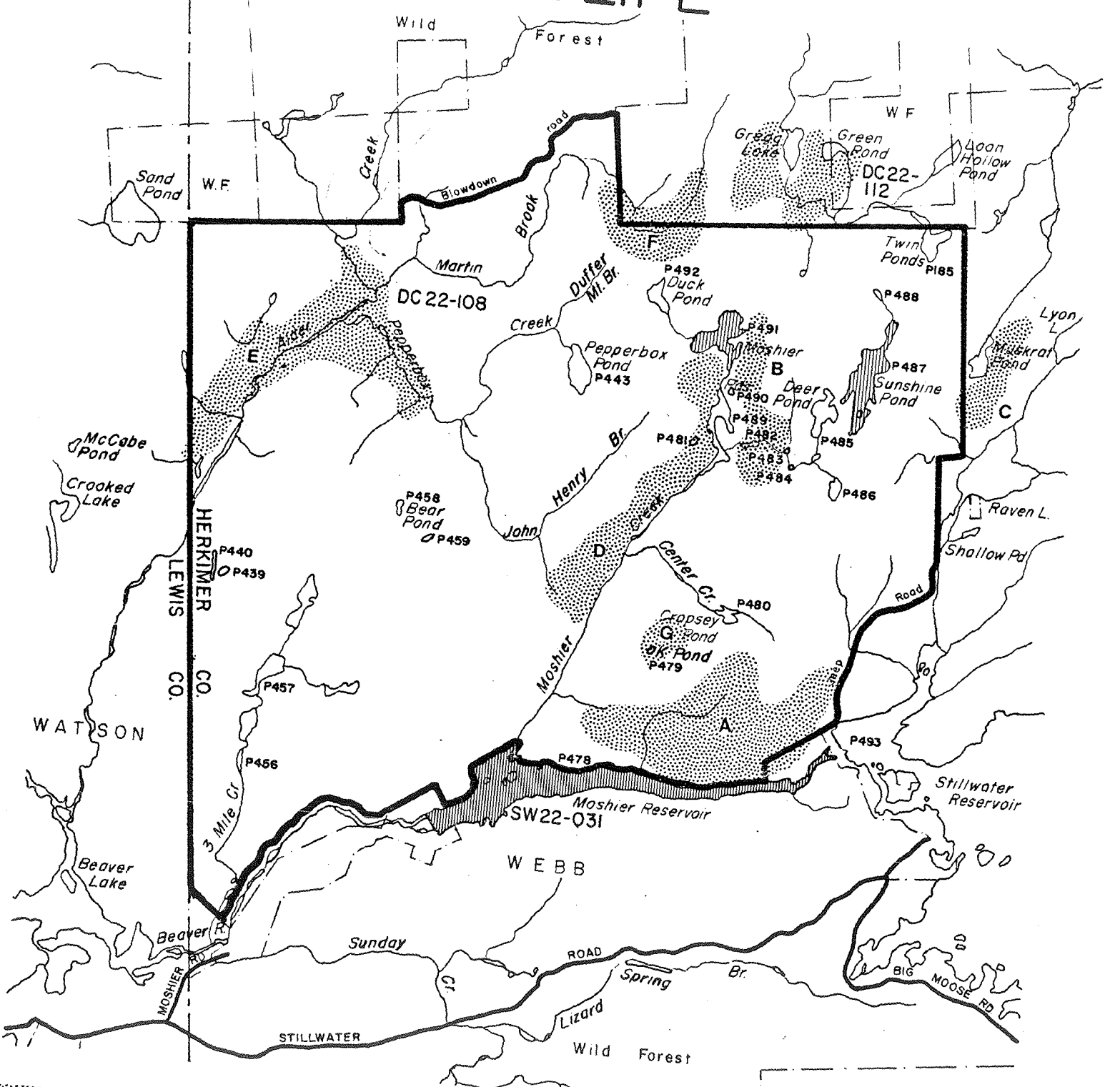
Very little is known about extirpated species within this unit; however, one can speculate that historically the many ponds and wetland ecosystems provided feeding, resting, nesting, and hunting areas for various wilderness species. Apparently, the timber wolf, and wolverine are no longer resident in the area even as occasional transients. However, there have been occasional reports of Canada lynx, mountain lion and moose north of this unit.



The Unit possesses a combination of ecological factors suitable for wilderness wildlife species generally

associated with little disruption by the human influence. Moshier and Sunshine Ponds are known common loon nesting waters while osprey, golden and bald eagles hunt the area during migration. The New York Breeding Bird Atlas project based on incomplete data available as of June 1, 1984 has identified 83 species of birds; possibly, probably, or confirmed as breeding and nesting within the blocks that cover the Pepperbox Wilderness Area. Many additional species undoubtedly pass through and utilize the area during spring and fall migration. A summary breeding bird list is included on Page 21. Specific survey sheets are on file in the Non-Game Section - NYS DEC - Delmar, New York. The area is occasionally visited by transient moose that have been more prevalent in the State since 1980. The unit is still undoubtedly used as a feeding, nesting, resting, and hunting area, on occasion, by bobcats and ravens, and rarely by the pine marten.

This area possesses western Adirondack Foothill Ecological conditions for wildlife(4). This zone is characterized by elevations of 1200-2000 feet, low soil productivity, 120-140 inches of snowfall and a 105-135 day growing season. The more common game species include white tailed deer, black bear, ruffed grouse, and various species of waterfowl. Other game species include varying hare and woodcock. Furbearers represent an important resource and include beaver, fisher, otter, mink, muskrat, raccoon, red fox, and eastern coyote. Appendix 4A contains an inventory which supplements the Breeding Bird Atlas. The native wildlife contribute an important recreational attraction for people using the area. (See Wildlife Map, p. 19). Canada jays undoubtedly traverse the area and spruce grouse may be present here since they are both known to exist on nearby private lands. It is believed that all of the commonly recognized non-game species characteristic of the Adirondacks occur or existed at one time.

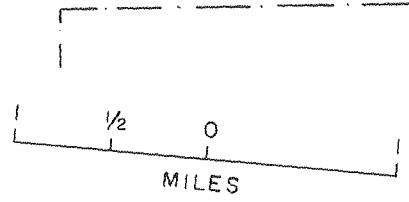
# PEPPERBOX WILDERNESS WILDLIFE



 Deer wintering area  
 Other significant habitat

DC00-000  
 SW00-000 Habitat file number

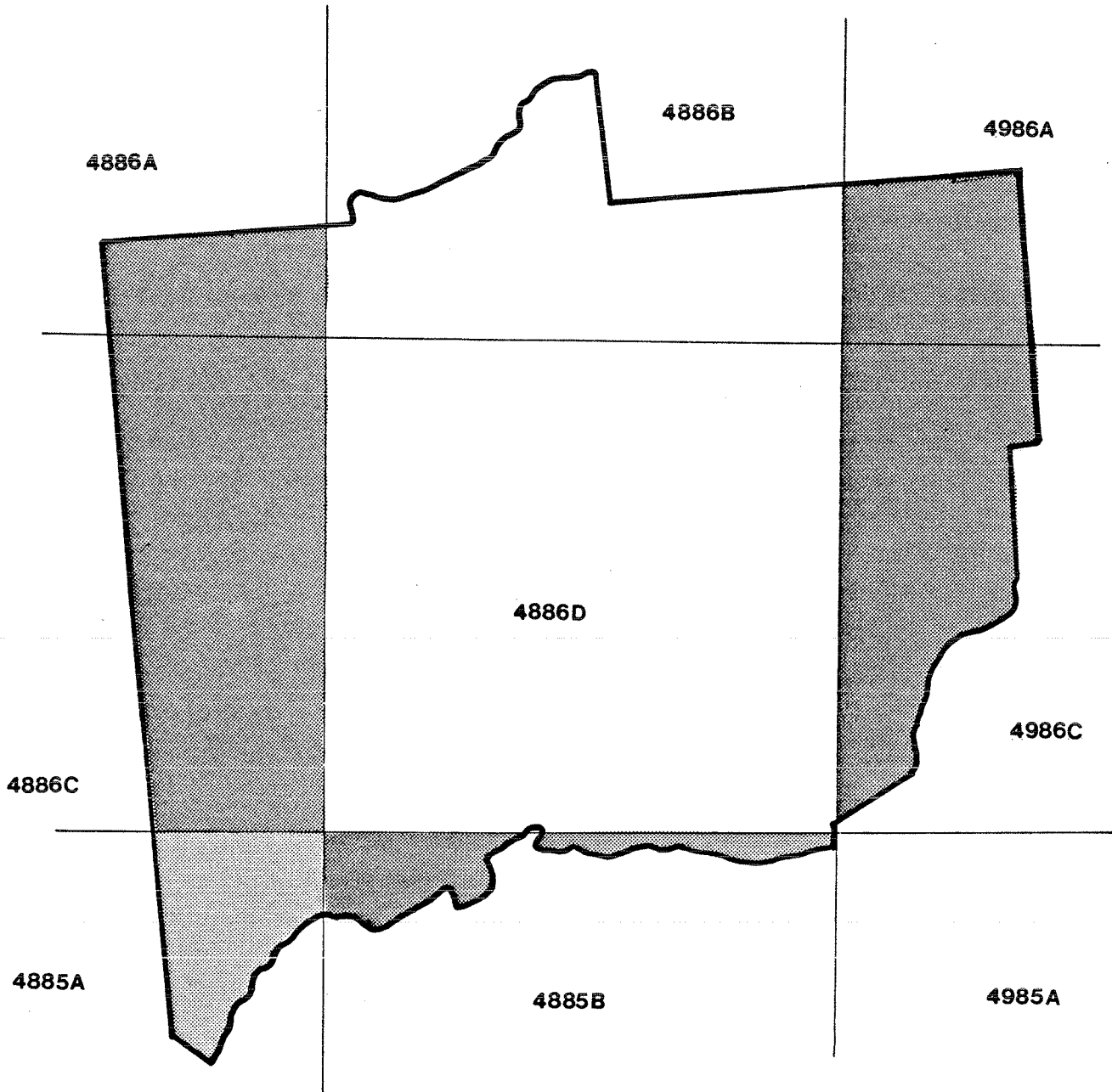
POOO Pond or lake number



A Utilized due to exposure-may hold most deer  
 B,D Used in late 1960's by small herd  
 C Used by small groups, maybe 20 deer

E,F Spotty concentrations-used in severe winters  
 G This and similar pockets hold a few deer

# PEPPERBOX WILDERNESS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS KEY



## ATLAS BLOCKS



Data included  
on summary



Incomplete data included  
on summary



Breeding Bird List for  
Pepperbox Wilderness Area

Region 6 1984

--Occurrence--

<u>Name</u>		<u>Name</u>	
Loon, Common	Confirmed	Swallow, Barn	Confirmed
Mallard	Confirmed	Jay, Blue	Probable
Duck, Black	Probable	Crow, Common	Confirmed
Duck, Wood	Possible	Chickadee-Black	
Goldeneye, Common	Possible	Capped	Confirmed
Merganser, Hooded	Possible	Nuthatch, Red-Breasted	Confirmed
Common	Possible	Creeper, Brown	Confirmed
Hawk, Sharp-shinned	Possible	Wren, House	Possible
Cooper's	Confirmed	Winter	Possible
Red-shouldered	Possible	Robin, American	Confirmed
Broad-winged	Probable	Thrush, Wood	Possible
Grouse, Ruffed	Confirmed	Hermit	Confirmed
Killdeer	Possible	Swainson's	Confirmed
Gull, Herring	Possible	Veery	Possible
Owl, Barred	Possible	Kinglet, Golden-	
Saw-whet	Possible	Crowned	Possible
Swift, Chimney	Possible	Ruby-Crowned	Probable
Hummingbird, Ruby-throated	Probable	Waxwing, Cedar	Probable
Flicker, Common	Confirmed	Vireo, Solitary	Confirmed
Woodpecker, Pileated	Possible	Red-eyed	Confirmed
Sapsucker, Yelled-bellied	Confirmed	Philadelphia	Possible
Woodpecker, Hairy	Probable	Warbling	Possible
Downy	Possible	Warbler, Black and	
Kingbird, Eastern	Confirmed	White	Possible
Flycatcher, Great Crested	Confirmed	Nashville	Confirmed
Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied	Probable	Parula, Northern	Probable
Alder	Probable	Warbler, Magnolia	Confirmed
Least	Confirmed	Black-throated Blue	Probable
Pewee, Eastern Wood	Possible	Yellow-rumped	Confirmed
Flycatcher, Olive-sided	Possible	Warbler, Black-throated	
Swallow, Tree	Confirmed	Green	Confirmed
Grosbeak, Rose-breasted	Probable	Blackburnian	Confirmed
Bunting, Indigo	Possible	Chestnut-sided	Probable
Finch, Purple	Confirmed	Bay-breasted	Probable
Goldfinch, American	Probable	Blackpoll	Possible
Junco, Dark-eyed	Confirmed	Ovenbird	Confirmed
Sparrow, Chipping	Probable	Waterthrush, Northern	Possible
White-throated	Confirmed	Yellowthroat-Common	Confirmed
Lincoln's	Confirmed	Warbler, Canada	Probable
Swamp	Confirmed	Redstart, American	Confirmed
Song	Confirmed	Grackel, Common	Confirmed
Blackbird, Red-winged	Confirmed	Cowbird, Brown-headed	Probable
Oriole, Northern	Possible	Tanager, Scarlet	Probable
Blackbird, Rusty	Confirmed		

(c) Fish Resources

Historically, ponds and streams in the Pepperbox Wilderness Area supported an Adirondack brook trout fishery. The few historical notes we have substantiate this fact, but nothing exceptional as far as sizes or numbers of fish is mentioned (See "A Comprehensive Plan for Fish Resource Management Within the Adirondack Zone", M. H. Pfeiffer, 1979).

At present, the area is in the portion of the Adirondacks most seriously impacted by acid precipitation (5). For this reason, it offers little opportunity for the fisherman. Because of the acidic water condition, no lakes and ponds are stocked in this wilderness area.

Deer Pond, Sunshine Pond, Lower and Upper Moshier Ponds all have histories of brook trout stocking. All four were stocked experimentally beginning in 1957. Because of these stockings, all provided modest fishing opportunity to various degrees. In the early 1970's, as the effects of acid waters became more and more evident, all but Upper Moshier Pond were discontinued from the stocking list. Upper Moshier Pond was the last to succumb to acid precipitation and was dropped from the stocking list in 1981.

Streams including Pepperbox Creek, Martin Creek, Duffer Mountain Brook, and John Henry Brook may support native brook trout populations, but inaccessibility and small size limit this portion of the fishery.



Although brook trout are seriously threatened in this area by acid precipitation, this does not merit endangered or threatened status for the species. The current strain of brook trout found in the area has not been identified as a heritage Adirondack strain(6). A brook trout strain is a genetically distinct group of individuals of common origin and identified by the water(s) of origin of the parent stock(s). Heritage Adirondack brook trout strains include those stocks of brook trout which originated in Balsam, Honnedaga, Horn, Little Tupper, Stink and Tunis Lakes and Dix, Nate, Tamarack and both Windfall ponds. These fish are generally later maturing and longer lived than domestic brook trout and show superior survival in the natural environment. In addition to their inherent value as a heritage, all of these strains offer the potential to provide for better fisheries than is possible by stocking domestics.

3. Visual

The Pepperbox Wilderness offers a variety of scenic impressions to the visitor. This is a very diverse area, creating changing visual impact and perceptible moods; from scenes of sparkling and gloomy ponds, green and barren lowland flats, demonstrations of the struggle of trees to assert their forces in succession on a stubborn ecology, huge yellow birches succumbing to the ravages of decay and time, gentle woodland slopes, deep ravines, rounded rocky hilltops, rock ledges and outcrops, occasional boulders, and rock talus ever under foot just beneath the ferns, spring flowers and other vegetation. All of the scenes and vistas vary with the seasons. Once inside this area, the feeling is that of real wilderness. From the top of the plateau in the southeasterly corner, there is a pleasing view of the Stillwater Reservoir area.

4. Unique Areas

This sparsely visited "pocket-size wilderness" area has its own character, which stems from its own arrangement of features common to the Western Adirondacks. The fact that

the area is trail-less and will be kept this way, may make it unique, in its entirety, among wilderness areas in New York. The profusion of wetlands in the unit add a strong measure of interest.

5. Wilderness

The State Land Master Plan submitted to Governor Hugh Carey on April 20, 1979, described wilderness as "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man - where man himself is a visitor who does not remain."

Further definition suggests a lack of improvements; now synonymous with the current situation in the Pepperbox. There are opportunities for solitude here simply due to the lack of any formal trail system. Because of the small size of the unit, it is possible to walk into any part of it and return to the southeasterly or southwesterly access points in a day's time. This makes it particularly important that the area be left trail-less to insure that the sense of wilderness is protected.

B. Man Made Facilities

After the removal of the Beaver Lake Mountain Fire Tower in 1977, it was thought that no other man-made facilities were remaining on the area. The old roads mentioned earlier have practically disappeared. There is a large chimney base and pipe remaining from an early hunting camp, at the southerly part of Three Mile Beaver Meadow. There are some man-made containers and utensils of a durable nature at camping sites at Cropsey Pond, Upper Moshier Pond, Sunshine Pond, Cowboy Beaver Meadow, Pepperbox Outlet and on Three Mile Beaver Meadow below the old logging camp. These are from hunting parties who had used the same area year after year. It has also been noted that a private hunting club to the north of the Pepperbox Area has painted marks on a crude sort of trail for a short distance on State land. This is largely for guidance of those hunters and has resulted in a lightly-used foot trail. The Boundary of the

Pepperbox Wilderness Area lies for a short distance along two adjacent roads, not part of the Wilderness Area. These can be ignored since one road, the Raven Lake Road on the east, does not encroach and the other, on the north, is closed Blowdown Road #139. The blowdown road is signed as a closed road pursuant to 196.1 Rules and Regulations on the easterly end, adjacent to International Paper Company lands. It has a cable gate on the westerly end, adjacent to St. Regis Paper Company lands, 100 feet inside the Forest Preserve boundary. See the Pepperbox Wilderness Tracts map on page 5 for adjacent facilities and roads.

C. Cultural

The only manifestation of cultural activities is in the probable Indian and Caucasian use of the area for hunting and trapping, but not for settlement.

D. Economic

1. Impact of State Ownership on Adjacent Private Lands

There seems to be little impact of State ownership on private lands. One might speculate that a shorter and more direct road might have been built to International Paper Company lands to the north, if this were not State land. In fact, the road forming part of the north bounds (Blowdown Road #139), was temporarily opened after the 1950 hurricane to facilitate salvage. Its subsequent closure limits access options for both St. Regis Paper Company and International Paper Company. There is a minor positive impact on Lewis and Herkimer Counties in terms of economic returns to local businesses from recreational users particularly from those who seek to view or harvest wildlife.

The area complements the recreational values of adjoining land, by providing additional deer winter shelter and habitat for expanded hunting opportunity.

2. Impact of Adjacent Private Lands on State Holdings

Some private adjoiners, sensing the remoteness of State Land, may take liberties contrary to laws and regulations. There is some evidence of this in the marking of the trail close to the north boundary without permission and for personal use. There is also the risk of trespass by adjoining loggers. This likelihood is reduced due to well-marked boundaries and active patrol. The Raven Lake Road on the east bounds will remain open during the eight-year life of the timber reservation on the Wilderness Lakes Tract. Thereafter only the inholder at Raven Lake will have access rights.

This road will allow some users easy access to the easterly side of the unit and tends to lessen the wilderness aspects.

Other adjacent lease holders to the north have been the source of intrusions into the wilderness by ATV's.

E. Public Use of the Area

Public use of the Pepperbox area is slight, probably less than 300 total visitor days per year, based on permits issued and observations of the Forest Ranger stationed at Stillwater. During 1984, only one permit was issued to a group of 8 deer hunters who stayed for three nights at Three Mile Beaver Meadow. This is due to difficult access and the lack of publicity on the unit. The loss of the fishery resource due to high acidity is another inhibiting factor.

The area is mostly used for big game hunting (deer and bear) in the fall. The southern portion of the unit receives moderate hunting pressure from people living outside the area. The remainder receives lesser use with hunting entry by individuals who have exclusive access from surrounding private lands. Some trapping takes place along with occasional visits by winter hikers.

The area is inhospitable during the seasons when insects are active and numerous, and they are numerous due to the ideal breeding places in the many streams and marshes. If the waters in this area were more suitable for fish, then fishing might bring in more people. The area is quite attractive for snowshoeing and limited cross country skiing for the winter hiker.

It is then that the marshes, lakes and water courses become excellent routes to explore this

pocket-size wilderness area. Trips through the area are facilitated by these features of terrain, provided the hiker has an up-to-date map, a compass, and a knowledge of their use. It is unlikely that the projected long term public use of the area will change appreciably from the current levels after a brief influx from those who are enticed by this Plan.

F. Capacity of Resource to Withstand Use

The physical, biological and social capacities of the unit are compatible with current and projected use estimated by this plan. This area can easily stand a doubling of fall hunter use and a tenfold spring and summer use, based on the current extremely low level of use. Initially the plan will address the disposal of accumulated camper residues and the carry-in/carry-out policy. Also, regulations to disperse campers should be easily accepted by the public since there are numerous camping locations to choose from. Current users seem to have developed better habits than prior users as evidenced by less litter and better care of temporary campsites. It should be noted, however, that this unit contains a relatively high concentration of fragile wetland habits and is presently devoid of even the most primitive man-made facilities. Consequently, any expansion of use must be strictly compatible with the primary management objectives of protecting not only the watershed values of this unit but its unique wilderness qualities as well.

### III. MANAGEMENT AND POLICY

#### A. Past Management

Past management in this unit has been related to watershed preservation, fire protection, law enforcement and some limited fish stocking. The Beaver Lake Mountain Fire Tower and Cabin, now removed, provided a year-round manned fire station to watch over this and adjacent forest land. The advent of the wilderness classification and creation of an aerial detection flight contract eliminated the need for those facilities.

Law enforcement activities here have generally been related to Article 9 of the Environmental Conservation Law, providing for care, custody and control responsibilities. Most of the activity here has been related to the issuance of camping permits and the follow-up inspection to insure that no illegal cutting occurred and that refuse was properly taken care of. Boundary lines have been patrolled, signed and periodically painted to discourage trespass. Blowdown Road #139, on the northerly bound, was opened to facilitate blowdown removal after the hurricane of 1950, and then gated when salvage was completed.

Fisheries formerly stocked Deer Pond, Lower Moshier Pond, Sunshine Pond and Upper Moshier Pond. The acidity levels of the Ponds in this unit have gradually achieved levels which will no longer support trout.(7)

Management of deer and furbearers within the unit has not been specific to the area, but included within the statewide regulations where populations are managed by species objectives and on an ecological zone basis commonly identified as DMU (Deer Management Unit) see Appendix 4B or FMU (Furbearer Management Unit) See Appendix 4C. The Pepperbox is located entirely within DMU 25 and FMU 4. Special muzzleloading seasons for deer of either sex have been held in the Pepperbox Wilderness area since 1977. Harvest data for white-tailed deer and common furbearers for the Town of Webb is presented in Appendix 4. Harvest data is not collected specifically for the Pepperbox Wilderness Area; however, if it were

proportioned on a percentage based on acreage, it would amount to 5% of that shown for the Town of Webb. (370 deer were taken in the Town in 1982).

The wilderness wildlife management policy will be to maintain all native wildlife species at levels compatible with their natural environment (9). In the early days of exploration, man used furbearers and game species as he saw fit without any regulation. Regulated harvest, based on ecological principles and statewide season regulation, is the management policy. The classification of wildlife as nuisance species cannot be tolerated within the wilderness concept and people using the area will have to learn to live with or cope with the wildlife species whose ancestors were there long before them. Thus, hikers will learn that beaver ecology often results in flooded meadows and downed timber; however, as the area is opened up to sunlight, regeneration will occur along the edge.

Population of white-tailed deer will fluctuate as influenced by winter severity. Historical records indicate that we can expect at least three severe winters out of ten in the Central Adirondacks; this will result in the starvation loss of deer. Due to constitutional restrictions (Article 14) and wilderness area master plan mandates, it is not anticipated that natural deer populations can be increased by any type of management practice. Utilization of the resource can be achieved by increasing recreational harvest opportunities within a regulated hunting season.



There are important deer wintering areas along the major drainages of Moshier Creek, particularly in the vicinity of Moshier Ponds. As timber on adjacent private lands to the north and west, and the Wilderness Lakes Tract to the east continued to be heavily harvested, the deer yarding areas in this unit became more heavily sought for winter survival.

B. Goals

1. Land Management

- a. To sustain and protect the wilderness atmosphere.

In accordance with the State Land Master Plan, this unit will be managed to protect the wilderness qualities and preserve the solitude which led to its original designation. The dominating forces here will continue to be natural as associated with the ecological balances of the plant and animal communities present, free from any development.

2. Wildlife Management

- a. To maintain all native wildlife species at levels compatible with their natural environment.

b. To provide optimum opportunity for enjoyment and beneficial utilization of the wildlife resources while maintaining a quality recreational experience in a wilderness setting.

3. Fisheries Management

- a. To perpetuate fish as part of the Adirondack environment.

b. To manage fish, insofar as possible, recognizing the limitations caused by acid waters, so that their numbers and occurrences are compatible with their habitat and the public interest.

c. To provide optimum opportunity for enjoyment and beneficial utilization of the fish resource in terms of quality and numbers of sport fish available to anglers seeking fishing opportunity in a wilderness setting.

4. Public Use Management

- a. Provide for public access to the boundary of the unit, from adjacent management units.
- b. Insure that use is compatible with the wilderness features of the area.

5. Water Quality Management

- a. Preserve the aquatic environments within the area.

C. Objectives; Long-Term and Short-Term

1. Land Management - Long Term

- a. Sustain an annual detection system for early fire warning and to protect adequately the plant-soil community from fire and subsequent soil deterioration and erosion.

- b. Maintain a staffing sufficient to provide for fire suppression, on-site inspection of camping and day use activities, public education, user dispersion, and a five-year rotation on boundary line maintenance.

- c. Acquire any private land made available on the market, along the northerly bounds in lots 5, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16 and 18 of Watson's East Triangle to provide a buffer and roadless zone adjacent to this unit.

Land Management - Short Term

- a. Insure that there is no detrimental effect from logging activities currently taking place on the easterly boundaries of this unit.

- b. Aggressively pursue an active boundary line maintenance program to identify the area for public use and discourage timber trespass.

2. Public Use Management - Long Term

a. Control camping and day use activities pursuant to the rules and regulations including enforcement of the permit system, with emphasis on the proper location of campsites in relation to water, and the carry-it-out requirement.

b. Revitalize the western Adirondack Search and Rescue Team to provide back-up protection for public users in this and adjacent units.

c. Retain the unit as is with no trails or other facilities within it.

d. Educate users to understand, appreciate and enjoy the values of this unit.

Public Use Management - Short Term

a. Select a site and provide an eight car parking area just outside the southeast corner of this unit.

b. Insure that major bridges leading into the southeast and southwest corners of this unit are adequately identified and maintained to insure continuing public access.

3. Wildlife Management - Long Term

a. Provide harvest programs which will permit hunting in an unimproved wilderness setting, and which will perpetuate game animals, birds and furbearers found in this area.

b. Monitor for the presence of rare or endangered wildlife species.

c. Inventory all species which are present or transient in the area.

Wildlife Management - Short Term

a. Improve access to the boundaries of the area for the benefit of those who wish either to view or harvest wildlife.

4. Fisheries Management - Long Term

a. Maintain resource inventory data for all waters with fisheries management potential, especially monitoring the acid water conditions in the area's lakes and ponds.

b. Restore Deer Pond, Sunshine Pond, Upper Moshier Pond and/or Lower Moshier Pond to the stocking list if natural or external conditions cause the pH and associated ecosystem parameters to change sufficiently to allow the stocking of indigenous fish species.

c. Protect and restore heritage strain brook trout species within this unit where ecologically feasible.

Fisheries Management - Short Term

a. Complete stream surveys for the major waters where data is currently insufficient.

5. Water Quality Management - Long Term

a. Insure that logging operations on surrounding private lands are in compliance with Article 15 of the Environmental Conservation Law and all phases of the Stream Protection Law, and that timber harvesters are encouraged to follow the Timber Harvesting Guidelines.

Water Quality Management - Short Term

a. Monitor the changing acidity levels and other appropriate chemical parameters in the major ponds and streams to record further change in water chemistry in the unit.

b. Educate users to bury human waste and camp at least 150 feet from all water.

IV. PROJECTED USE AND MANAGEMENT PROPOSED

A. Facilities Development or Removal

1. Trailhead Parking

No development within the unit is now contemplated.

The need for parking in the southeast corner near the Stillwater Dam will be incorporated in the Independence River Wild Forest Unit. The Hudson River-Black River Regulating Board is currently contemplating the addition of an eight-car parking lot here for recreational users, in conjunction with the upgrade of the dam to generate electricity. This will facilitate canoe access as well, for those wishing to utilize the Beaver River downstream from the bridge where this area comes to within 25 feet of the River.

2. Other Development

No formal or informal development is recommended

3. Removals

Some debris is left at abandoned campsites scattered throughout the unit. An effort will be made to locate, bag, and remove the material from the unit. This will include the chimney on the Three Mile Beaver Meadow Cr.

B. Maintenance and Rehabilitation of Facilities

1. Bridges and Trailhead Parking

The bridges and trailhead parking providing access into the southeast and southwest corners of this unit are actually located outside the Pepperbox Unit bounds and will be incorporated in the Independence River Wild Forest Unit. Maintenance of these two trailheads is important since no other reasonable access exists.

2. Boundary Lines

There are approximately 10.2 miles of boundary requiring both painting and posting and an additional 12.20 miles requiring only posting. These totals may change in the future depending on the classification of the adjacent Wilderness Lakes Tract. On a

five year rotational maintenance schedule, it is estimated that 50 work days would be required to both paint and post every fifth year. Fifteen gallons of paint @ \$12/gallon and aluminum signs @ .35¢/sign at the rate of 16 signs per mile or 358 signs, and 50 lbs. of 1/2" aluminum nails @ \$85.00. Prorated per year, costs would be as follows:

	<u>Per Year</u>	<u>Total</u>
Labor	10 MD	50 MD
Supplies and Materials	\$78.00	\$390.00

3. Gates

One cable gate exists on the west bounds of Lot 6 blocking access to Blowdown Road #139 which forms part of the north bounds of this unit. To eliminate maintenance here, a more permanent barrier should be installed at this point.

One time expenditure: 6 WD

4. Policing and Cleanup

Several formerly used areas need initial litter pickup. Subsequently annual policing and pickup is estimated at 12 MD.

C. Public Use Management and Controls

Public use of this unit is relatively light due primarily to the absence of trails and to limited fishing opportunities. Excursions into the unit occur on a year-round basis but the heaviest use occurs in October and November during the deer hunting season. Camping permits, required for stays in excess of three nights, has effectively controlled distribution of pressure and litter. Due to this unit's proximity to public and private roads, most user experiences occur on a one day in and out basis. Limited ATU intrusions on Blowdown Road have been ended with the removal of an illegal bridge and better patrol. The gate on the Beaver River at Stillwater and the lack of trails provide all the control presently needed, other than the need for continuing public education.

D. Fish and Wildlife

1. Fish

a. Aerial liming of ponds will only be carried out in accordance with the State Land Master Plan. If ecological concerns, future techniques and policies allow, ponds which historically supported fish will be evaluated for pH correction.

b. Conduct biological surveys of ponds and streams, with particular emphasis on acid and other water quality characteristics.

c. If current acid conditions improve (or are improved), annual stocking of native or extirpated fish species will resume in:

- |                       |                  |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1. Upper Moshier Pond | 3. Deer Pond     |
| 2. Lower Moshier Pond | 4. Sunshine Pond |

2. Wildlife

It is important that the ranger at Stillwater continue to age and measure deer and monitor bear coming out of this unit to help monitor the physical condition of the big game in this area and the DMU. Because of the relatively small size of this unit, harvest data for the Town of Webb and the DMU is representative of the general condition of the deer herd utilizing this unit. A more detailed survey of the unit is required to verify common loon nesting, osprey nesting, and the presence of endangered or threatened species. Furbearer harvest data for fisher, otter, beaver and coyote are collected on a town, county and FMU basis and are not obtainable specific to this unit without conducting special surveys. Better harvest data specific to the Pepperbox would identify trends as an index to population levels, as well as more accurate public use of the area.

The possible reintroduction of native extirpated species will be evaluated in conjunction with the requirements of the much larger Five Ponds area to the northeast. The specific studies and surveys would need to be funded as university research projects.

E. Classified Rivers

None

F. Fire Management

Fire protection within this unit is the responsibility of the NYS DEC under provisions of Article 9 of the Environmental Conservation Law. DEC is charged with maintaining an approved fire protection system for the prevention and suppression of fires including fire management personnel, facilities and equipment. Current DEC policy requires extinguishing all wildfires regardless of cause on both state and private lands.

This unit contains parts of two different Ranger Districts. By internal arrangement Ranger 6706 assigned to the Lowville Office is responsible for a small portion of this unit between Blowdown Road #139 and the south line of Watson's East Triangle. Ranger 6711 stationed at Stillwater, and assigned to the Herkimer Office has the balance of the unit.

The nearest fire towers are outside the unit, one located at Number Four and the second on the Stillwater Mountain. During high fire danger periods, these towers can provide adequate overview for early fire suppression attack. Number Four was unmanned for the first time in 1983 due to lack of funds. Two aerial detection flights with adjacent routes provide instant detection during extreme weather periods. Six-Hotel contracted through the Lowville Office and Six-Kilo through Herkimer provide detection capability for this unit. A fire weather station in New Bremen just west of this unit provides fire weather data. This weather information,



provided from April through November, is used in decision-making both for flight intensity and in making fire attack or woods closure decisions.

Currently, vehicular access for fire suppression vehicles and personnel is available from the Stillwater Dam across the existing bridge over the Beaver River. Foot access is available across two DEC bridges into the southwest corner of the unit. All other access for suppression is dependent upon adjacent private landowner cooperation, involving gated roads.

Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation controls the penstock road into Moshier Dam, which is approximately centered in the south bounds of the unit. Diamond International controls a road across the Beaver River, which extends into the land on the southwesterly bounds of the unit. St. Regis Paper Company controls the road running northeasterly from the end of the Fish Creek Road and a new road off the end of the Prentice Road, into the Crooked Lake - Spring Ponds Club area along the northwesterly bounds of the unit. Diamond International and International Paper Company control the main haul road extending from the end of the Long Pond Road and eventually terminating near Gregg's Lake near the north easterly corner of this unit.

Administrative access for DEC employees on all of these roads would assist in early suppression efforts on fires occurring both on this unit and in Forest Preserve and private lands adjacent to this unit. Some private companies have provided keys to these gates, insuring quick access to the fringes of the unit. All direct suppression efforts in the interior will be on foot using hand tools and supported by aerial drops of water.

The decision to utilize suppression equipment within this unit is the prerogative of DEC fire management personnel within the constraints of the State Land Master Plan, and the official fire management policy. Prevention efforts to reduce man-caused fires must be continued by further educating the public and enforcing existing fire laws. Logging activities, which require top-logging, are currently in progress on the Wilderness Lakes Tract on the east bounds of this unit.

G. Administration

1. Staffing

a. Land Management

It is essential that the four existing ranger Districts be kept intact and ranger vacancies filled expeditiously as they occur. The permanent ranger force forms the core of land managers needed to provide monthly patrols, control public use, manage fire and monitor environmental impact.

The Operations staffing required to handle the litter pick-up, boundary lines, adjacent parking areas and trails serving the unit, is now below minimum. An additional 22 work days per year would be needed to service this unit. Operations, within their personnel and financial limitations, carry out annual work plans developed by Lands and Forests staff.

The current overhead, including associate foresters and regional rangers is adequate to handle the administration of this unit. However, the total Forest Preserve within the Region may have enough workload to justify a plan co-ordinator once the individual unit plans are complete.

It is desirable to have the wilderness ranger, assigned to adjacent wilderness areas, obtain better use figures and assist in public education efforts in this unit.

b. Fisheries

Fish Management activities will be performed by Regional permanent and seasonal personnel. Anticipated activities would not require additions to staff under present workloads and priorities. Only four streams have brook trout populations (see Appendix 2). Where ponds have insufficient data they are generally small and shallow. Future fishing potential in the unit appears limited and public use management concerns are minor because of these limitations.

c. Wildlife

Existing wildlife biologists and technicians can handle the limited requirements for this relatively small unit. Their efforts can, however, be supplemented by deer aging and take data, as well as monitoring, provided primarily by the ranger stationed at Stillwater. This localized monitoring is particularly important to obtain feedback on loon nesting,

fisher, coyote and beaver trapping activity, deer herd conditions, and endangered species sightings. More detailed surveys should be funded by specific university research projects.

## 2. Budgeting

Since this unit overlaps the Lowville and Herkimer Region 6 Lands and Forests sub-offices, a coordinated effort is required. Herkimer will continue to budget for staff and maintenance of the facilities as required to support Herkimer County. The Lowville sub-office will budget for staff and maintenance of facilities in that portion in Watson's East Triangle. A cooperative effort will be made with the Operations Unit in preparing required projects for the needs of this unit.

The Lowville Operations Unit will prepare a budget request for both permanent and seasonal maintenance personnel to support the maintenance needs in this unit. Their budgeting efforts will also address the supplies and materials, equipment and charge-back costs needed to carry out the perpetual maintenance effort.

Routine fish and wildlife management activities are prepared by regional staff, or specifically funded by "Return a Gift to Wildlife". This includes permanent and seasonal personnel, supplies and materials, as well as travel. Rehabilitation projects related to fish and wildlife needs are prepared by the respective bureau staff and in consultation with Operations as required.

New projects generally will be approved by the Division level before funding is submitted in the Department Budget.

### 3. Education

Continuing educational efforts need to be made in fire prevention (Smokey Bear etc.), fire protection (burning permits), and resource protection. Scheduled Smokey Bear visits in nearby schools have proven very effective in getting the prevention message across to youngsters. Spring publicity articles remind landowners in the Town of Webb that burning permits are required for brush disposal. However, additional effort needs to be made to educate the public to reduce littering and carry out what they carry in on recreational excursions. The addition of a part-time wilderness ranger would be most helpful in education on an encounter basis.

A map and brochure on this unit would help facilitate full public enjoyment of the many features found here. It also would provide a way to present some brief guidelines to help protect the area's beauty and fragility.

Other educational programs traditionally carried on through bureaus need to be continued including: legislative and public hearings, meetings with organized groups, speeches to sportsmen and service-oriented groups, publications, brochures, outdoor events, and related activities. A strong effort will continue to be made to reach an appreciation for the wilderness philosophy.

## H. Problem Areas

### 1. Accessibility

This unit is readily accessible by foot at both the southeast and southwest corners. Efforts in the past to acquire access to the northwesterly corner through St. Regis lands have been unsuccessful. However, due to the relatively small size of the unit, access is not considered a serious problem.

### 2. Law Enforcement

Generally, conservation law violations in this area have been limited to the acts of campers or day users and these have been minimal. The key to preventing major trespass here continues to be the ranger's efforts from the Stillwater Headquarters, in patrolling, educating, and painting and signing boundaries. A vigorous boundary maintenance program minimizes major illegal cutting of trees. The only existing problem area is the illegal hunter trail-painting near the north bounds done in the past, apparently by St. Regis Paper Company lessees at Gregg's Lake. Measures will be taken to expeditiously remove signs or any markings and educate users to refrain from illegally identifying such routes.

### 3. Land Titles

Although there are no known title problems, additional survey work is required to finish an incomplete survey on the north bounds around lots 4, 5 and 6 in Watson's East Triangle. Preliminary survey work here does not agree with St. Regis Paper Company corners and lines. Boundaries along the pipeline lot also require survey. There are deed reservations affecting the management of the area. Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation has the right to take sand and gravel from a 200' strip directly north of

the Beaver River between the unit bounds just northeast of the fish hole and the point where the second pipeline lot recrosses the river, approximately 9300' upstream. The Pepperbox boundaries have been moved north to eliminate this concern but if the rights were acquired the boundary could be returned to the river. There is also a reservation to maintain the Raven Lake Road with the right to take gravel adjacent thereto for both Creative Forest Resources, Inc. and Roscoe Reeder.

#### 4. Environmental Problems

Few environmental problems exist due to limited intrusions and the compact, consolidated nature of the unit itself. There is some light littering from day users and transient overnight campers. Occasional washouts on the Raven Lake Road cause some minor erosion along the southeast bounds of this unit.

Lessees on private adjacent lands are making increased use of three and four wheel all-terrain vehicles (ATV's). Because of their maneuverability, they represent a new possibility for unauthorized entry into the wilderness areas. Continuing patrols will be required to ensure that this does not become a significant problem.

There has been heavy mortality here in the beech component of northern hardwood stands due to beech bark disease. Some mortality also is occurring in red spruce in all age classes for scientifically unexplained reasons. Natural forest mortality also has occurred from beaver flooding activity, occasionally reducing the amount of softwood cover available for deer yarding and winter survival.

Acid rain has had a direct impact on the pond habitat for brook trout. (5) The effects of acid rain in the plant community are unknown at this time. However, additional research is needed to determine the impact on this and adjacent units. (7,8)

See appendix 2 for more detailed data on individual waters. Additional data needs to be gathered where current knowledge is limited.

#### I. Land Acquisition

In order to avoid future disturbance along the south boundary of the unit, steps should be taken to acquire a scenic easement on the river bed and the rights of Niagara Mohawk to take gravel from the 200' strip north of that riverbed downriver from the pipeline lot crossing. The acquisition of the Roscoe Reeder property in the adjacent Wilderness Lakes Primitive Area would also eliminate the only in-holding that would influence the taking of gravel from this unit after the Creative Forest Resources timber rights expire. Acquisition of the St. Regis Paper Company and International Paper Company lands on the north bounds of the unit in lots 5, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16 and 18 would create a protective buffer of public ownership on the north side, by consolidating Watsons East Triangle Wild Forest.

At a minimum, an attempt should be made to acquire an easement from St. Regis Paper Company on the new road from the end of the Prentice Road to Sand Pond. This would provide public access to the northwest corner of the unit.



J. State Land Master Plan Amendments

The north bounds of the unit need a more accurate description to include that portion in Watson's East Triangle in lots 6 and 7, south of Blowdown Road #139. If gravel rights can be acquired from Niagara Mohawk along with a scenic easement on the riverbed, north of the pipeline lot, then the south boundary of this unit should be moved south of the river to the north bounds of the pipeline lot. In the meantime, the south bounds along the Beaver River has been moved north to the edge of the 200 foot gravel easement southwest of Moshier Dam. The S.L.M.P. lists 2.0 miles of foot trail, yet there are no foot trails in this unit. The source of the acreage figure for bodies of water is unknown and far exceeds the Fisheries estimate of 242 acres shown in Appendix 2.

K. State Environmental Quality Review Requirements

Appendix 5 contains a completed Environmental Assessment Form and Negative Declaration. SEQR will be specifically addressed for Land Acquisition recommendations of this plan.

L. Relationship of the management of the Pepperbox Wilderness Area to Forest Preserve and Adjacent Areas

1. Independence River Wild Forest Unit - This unit contains both access points for embarking into the Pepperbox. Parking space in this adjacent unit should be commensurate with the needs of the Pepperbox. There is public access in the "dam" road to the beginning of the Raven Lake Road, but the question of maintenance at this road is currently being investigated.

The Raven Lake Road and bridge over the Beaver River are also part of the Independence unit forming the southeasterly bounds of the Pepperbox. The recent acquisition of the Wilderness Lakes Tract includes the use and maintenance of the Raven Lake Road for the duration of the timber rights until 1990. This will limit the public use of this road north of the Beaver River for the duration of this Plan. It is important that bridges over the Beaver River and Sunday Creek be properly maintained to insure continuing access into this unit. Although separated from the unit by 25 feet, the Beaver River near the south bounds is being studied for development by Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation in connection with requirements imposed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for re-licensing existing hydro projects. If approved, it would lead to some additional day use camping related to canoeing along the river, mostly on lands already owned by Niagara Mohawk. The 200 foot strip north of the Beaver River, encumbered by Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation gravel rights, has been classified as primitive. An attempt should be made to negotiate with Niagara Mohawk to acquire those rights. Subsequently, if successful, return the Pepperbox boundary to the north shore of the river.

## 2. Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest

The unit of Forest Preserve to the north encompassing Jakes Pond also has limited public access. However, lessees of privately owned paper companies interspersed here have superior access into the western and northern portions of the wilderness area. Limited public access (on foot only) into the Jakes Pond unit will continue to keep most excursions, particularly for the hunter, concentrated in the southerly portion of the Pepperbox.

## M. Proposed Regulations

None Anticipated

V. SCHEDULE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The following schedule will be applied over the next five year plan period:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Equipment Materials Cost</u>
I.	1. Investigate the maintenance responsibility on the Dam Road	
	2. Replace the cable gate on Blowdown Road #139 with a permanent barrier.	\$300.00
	3. Begin negotiations to acquire, if available, private lands in lots 5, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16, and 18 and an easement from the end of the Prentice Road to Lot 4 near Sand Pond.	
	4. Remove illegal hunter trail markings and litter and man-made debris from the interior of this unit.	\$600.00
	5. Begin negotiations with Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation to acquire the gravel rights north of the Beaver River.	Unknown
	6. Evaluate shoreline camping sites if NiMo established a public canoe route on the Beaver River.	\$500.00
	7. Publish a brochure and map on the unit to facilitate public education and use.	\$500.00
II.	1. Install trail register in the proposed Stillwater Dam Parking Lot.	\$200.00
	2. Paint and sign north and east bounds where required.	\$500.00
	3. Conduct terrestrial survey to inventory plant forms particularly in the wetlands ecosystems.	Unknown
III.	1. Conduct a biological re-survey of lakes and ponds under the Federally-funded "Acid Rain Study."	Unknown
IV.	1. Conduct a wildlife survey to document nesting and inventory wildlife species inhabiting the Unit.	Unknown
V.	1. Paint and sign the west and south boundaries as required.	\$500.00
	2. Conduct a biological survey of the streams in the Unit under the program entitled Biological Survey of New York's Watersheds funded by the "Return a Gift to Wildlife Program".	N/A

APPENDIX 1

Pepperbox Detailed Land Description

Beginning on the Herkimer-Lewis County line at the Northwest corner of Township 4 of John Brown's Tract; thence Easterly along the North line of said tract and the Southerly line of Watson's East Triangle 128.06 chains to the Southwest corner of Lot 6. Thence Northerly along the West line of Lot 6 approximately 16 1/2 chains to blowdown road #139. Thence Easterly along the blowdown road approximately 146 chains to the intersection with the Easterly State boundary in Lot 7 in common with the Westerly boundary of International Paper Company; thence S. 60 19' W. approximately 70 chains to the Northerly line of the Fourth Township of John Brown's Tract; thence S. 81o 33' E. 43.74 chains to a spruce stake and stones; thence S. 82o 07' E. 78.68 chains to a Bathey marker and stones; thence S. 82o 08' E., 76.05 chains to the Northeasterly corner of the West 1/3rd of Township 5 of John Brown's tract; thence Southerly along the line between the West third and middle third 136.98 chains to the Southwest corner of Lot 11 of the Wilderness Lakes Tract; thence N. 82oW. 18.62 chains to an iron pipe; thence S. 7o 35' W. 60.61 chains to a bronze plug in a rock; thence continuing S. 7o 35' W. to the Westerly bounds of the Raven Lake Road; thence Southwesterly along the Westerly bounds of the Raven Lake Road approximately 140 chains to the Northerly bounds of a 4.3 acre parcel being sold to the Hudson River Black River Regulating District. Thence S. 53o 44' E. approximately two chains to a 1 1/4" capped iron pipe in the Northeasterly corner of the so-called "Dunbar Club Parcel". Thence S. 67o 30' W. approximately

38.70 chains to a bronze plug; thence S.80 E. 3.03 chains to an iron pipe 25 feet North of high water mark along the Northerly shore of Moshier Reservoir; thence westerly along the Northerly shore of Moshier Reservoir and 25' horizontally back from the high water mark, at 1647.3 feet elevation, approximately 214 chains to the intersection of the Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation so-called pipeline lot; thence N. 33 W. 11.85 chains to an angle point, thence S. 56o 36' W. 18.30 chains; thence S. 44o 46' W. approximately 12.73 chains to a point 200 feet North of the Beaver River bed thence Northwesterly and Southwesterly parallel with the river bed, and 200 feet back from high water, approximately 140 chains to the intersection of the North edge of the 6.07 acre transmission line lot; thence N. 49o 09' W. approximately 26.06 chains to the County line between Lewis and Herkimer Counties; thence N. 8o E. 359.59 chains to the point of beginning. Containing approximately 14,600 acres.

APPENDIX 2

Ponds and Lakes

<u>Key No</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Max. Depth</u>
P438 BK	Ike's Pond	11A	No fish-acid	-
P439 BK	Unnamed	3A	Insufficient Data	-
P440 BK	Unnamed	4A	Insufficient Data	-
P443 BK	Pepperbox Pond	21A	No fish - Acid	17'
P456 BK	Unnamed	3A	Insufficient Data	-
P457 BK	Unnamed	1A	Insufficient Data	-
P458 BK	Bear Pond	3A	Insufficient Data	-
P459 BK	Unnamed	2A	Insufficient Data	-
P479 BK	"K" Pond	2A	Insufficient Data	-
P480 BK	Cropsey Pond	6A	No fish - Acid	25'
P481 BK	Unnamed	2A	Insufficient Data	-
P482 BK	Unnamed	5A	Not Studied	-
P483 BK	Unnamed	1A	Not Studied	-
P484 BK	Unnamed	1A	Not Studied	-
P485 BK	Deer Pond	15A	Bullhead-poor dissolved oxygen	5'
P486 BK	Unnamed	7A	Insufficient Data	-
P487 BK	Sunshine Pond	64A	No fish - Acid	50'
P488 BK	Unnamed	3A	Insufficient Data	-
P489 BK	Lower Moshier Pond	20A	No fish - Acid	35'
P490 BK	Unnamed	4A	Insufficient Data	-
P491 BK	Upper Moshier Pond	50A	No fish - Acid	28'
P492 BK	Duck Pond	12A	No fish - Acid	20'
P185 OW	Twin Pond	<u>9A</u>	No fish - shallow, warm, acid	3'

249A

Streams

0.19-40-18	Alder Creek	Insufficient Data
0.19-40-19	Three Mile Beaver Meadow Brook	Insufficient Data
0.19-40-18-5	Pepperbox Creek	*NSA Brook Trout
0.19-40-18-5-2	John Henry Brook	*NSA Brook Trout
0.19-40-22	Moshier Creek	Insufficient Data
0.19-40-22-1	Center Creek	Insufficient Data
0.19-40-18-53	Duffer Mt. Brook	*NSA Brook Trout
0.19-40-18-6	Martin Creek	*NSA Brook Trout

\*NSA: Natural stocking of fish population - adequate.

APPENDIX 3

ACID RAIN EFFECTS DISCUSSION FOR UNIT MANAGEMENT PLANS - SPECIAL  
EMPHASIS ON PROBLEMS WITH MAMMALS, WATERFOWL AND OTHER FISH-  
EATING WILDLIFE.

W. Gordon 2/83

The effects of acid precipitation on fish and their aquatic environment has been demonstrated. Simply, continued atmospheric pollution causes continued acid precipitation which affects aquatic environments by decreasing its pH\*. Eventually, when acid conditions deteriorate to the intolerable level (somewhere around pH 4.5 or lower) fish populations disappear. Of course this cause and effect relationship is not as simple when examined closely. Acid precipitation works in varying degrees in each part of the environment including chemical, physical and biological components. Within the flora and fauna of an ecosystem, acid precipitation has been shown to have different effects on different organisms. When these effects are plugged into the complex food chain of aquatic (and surrounding terrestrial) ecosystem, changes are often obvious. For example, acid precipitation, if severe, may eliminate a fish population altogether simply by its toxic effects. On the other hand, it may reduce or even eliminate a fish population by limiting, changing or eliminating its food source or its ability to successfully spawn (reproduce).

While acid precipitation effects on fish and closely related aquatic organism (plankton, crustaceans, insects, etc.) have been studied and documented to a fair degree, the problems caused by its indirect effects on larger semi-aquatic mammals and birds is less

\*pH - The symbol for the degree of acidity. Any pH less than 7.0 is acidic, the lower the pH, the stronger the acid.

understood. It would be safe to assume, however, that fish-eating mammals and birds are probably going to avoid lakes with very poor acid conditions (somewhere around pH 4.5 or lower) simply because these lakes are devoid of prey. In lakes with more tolerable acid conditions (between pH 5.0 and 6.0) the situation may be different. In these lakes, fish and other aquatic organisms, which serve as a food source for fish-eating mammals and birds, can survive. In these conditions, the aquatic prey species accumulate toxic substances from their food habits, and in turn pass them up the food chain to the fish-eating mammals and birds. A similar relationship has been shown in the terrestrial ecosystem food chain when affected by acid precipitation. Toxic substances are accumulated in vegetation and passed on to the mammals which feed on the vegetation. Some examples of toxic substance found in ecosystems exposed to acid rain problems are heavy metals like cadmium and lead, and aluminum compounds. The effects of these substances when found in the acid precipitation impacted environment are not well known.

In view of this problem, virtually all wildlife in the Adirondack Region, particularly the heavily impacted Pepperbox Wilderness Area, will be affected by acid precipitation to one degree or another.

It is obvious that more research is needed in the area of acid precipitation. The needed information this research will provide will help us understand and combat the present and future adverse impacts of acid rain.

(Acid Precipitation - Effects on Ecological System - Frank M. D'Itri, Ann Arbor, Science 1982)



APPENDIX 4

HARVEST DATA - TOWN OF WEBB

Deer, Bear and Furbearers

1978 - 1982

	<u>1978-79</u>	<u>1979-80</u>	<u>1980-81</u>	<u>1981-82</u>	<u>1982-83</u>	<u>1983-84</u>
Deer	260	229	349	332	370	366
Bear	27	15	17	27	23	15
Beaver	215	386	219	170	286	227
Bobcat	13	10	6	6	8	5
Coyote	*	22	16	16	24	24
Fisher	42	53	34	25	20	0
Otter	25	31	31	23	30	19

\* No information as pelt tagging was not required prior to the  
1979-80 season.

# APPENDIX 4A

## PEPPERBOX WILDERNESS AREA

### WILDLIFE INVENTORY

#### COMMON WILDLIFE

Black bear	Ursus americanus
White-tail deer	Odocoileus virginianus
Coyote	Canis latrans
Raccoon	Procyon lotor
Fisher	Martes pennanti
Otter	Lutra canadensis
Beaver	Castor canadensis
Mink	Mustella vision
Varying Hare	Lepus americanus
Red squirrel	Sciurus hudsonicus
Eastern chipmunk	Tamias striatus

#### COMMON BIRDLIFE

Ruffed grouse	Bonasa umbellus
Woodcock	Philohela minor
Wood duck	Aix sponsa
Black duck	Anas rubripes
Mallard	Anas platyrhynchos
Common loon	Gavia immer
Great blue heron	Ardea herodias
+Northern raven	Corvus corax

#### LESS-COMMON WILDLIFE

Bobcat	Lynx rufus	- scarce
Lynx	Lynx canadensis	- possible occasional wanderer
Moose	Alces americana	- occasional wanderer
Red fox	Vulpes fulva	- scarce
Gray fox	Urocyon cinereoargenteus	- scarce
Muskrat	Ondatra zibethica	- scarce

#### LESS COMMON BIRDLIFE

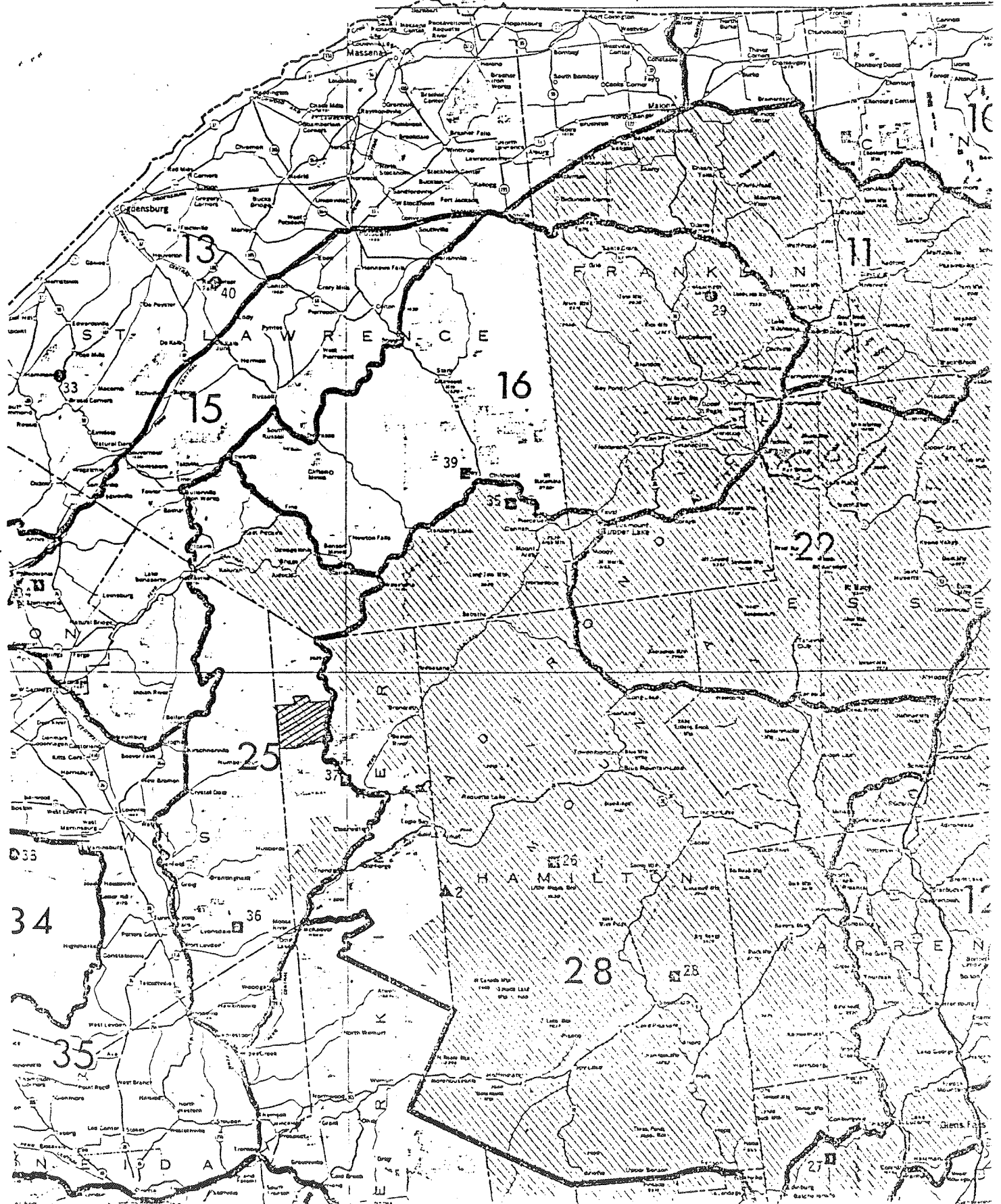
Osprey	Pandion haliaetus	- scarce
Turkey vulture	Cathartes aura	- scarce

#### ABUNDANCE UNKNOWN

Marten	Martes americana
* Bald eagle	Haliaeetus leucocephalus
** Golden eagle	Aquila chrysaetos

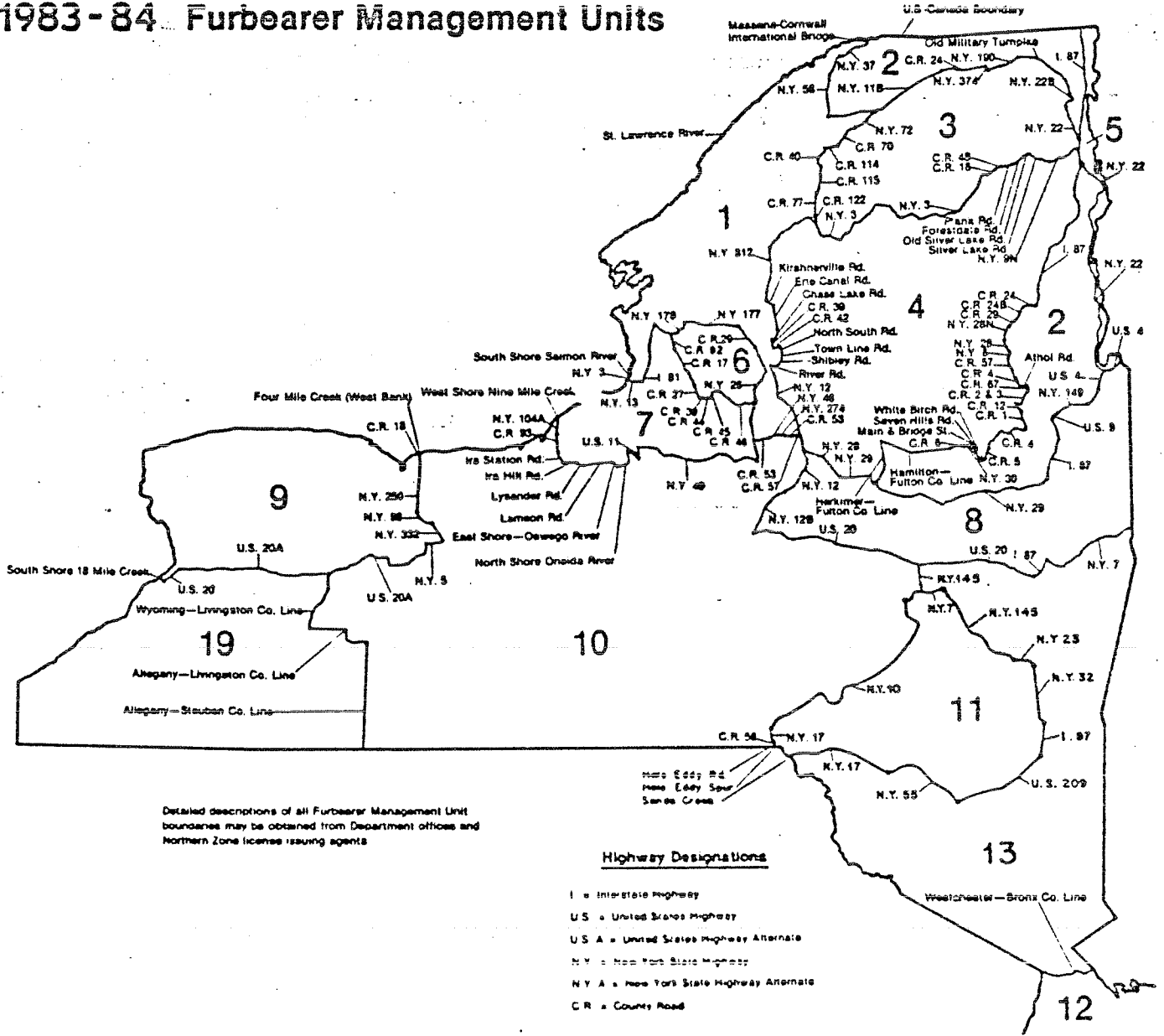
- \* Endangered Species - NYS and USDI
- \*\* Endangered Species - NYS
- + Special Concern Species - NYS

# 1983 Deer Management Unit Boundary Map

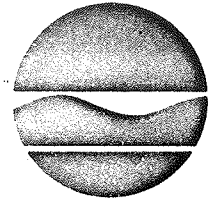


APPENDIX 4C

1983 - 84 Furbearer Management Units



Detailed descriptions of all Furbearer Management Unit boundaries may be obtained from Department offices and Northern Zone license issuing agents



Henry G. Williams  
Commissioner

Identifying No. N6215400-04

SEQR  
NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Date: May 14, 1984

This notice is issued pursuant to Part 617 of the implementing regulations pertaining to Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review) of the Environmental Conservation Law.

The Department of Environmental Conservation, as lead agency, has determined that the proposed action described below will not have a significant effect on the environment.

TITLE OF ACTION: Pepperbox Wilderness Area Unit Management Plan.

SEQR STATUS: Type I [ X ] applicable threshold(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Unlisted [ ]

DESCRIPTION OF ACTION: The authority for program actions in the Pepperbox Wilderness Area is granted by the provisions of Article XIV of the New York State Constitution, Section 9 of the Environmental Conservation Law, various opinions of the Attorneys General and the State Land Master Plan. Such actions involve the overall preservation, protection and management of the lands constituting the Pepperbox Wilderness Area. Actions include boundary line surveying and marking, fire suppression, search and rescue operations, research activities, patrolling and surveillance activities, public information and education, and public use control systems. All actions are carried out in accordance with applicable statutes and are designed to protect the natural environment and maximize the benefits that accrue to the People of the State.

LOCATION: The Pepperbox Wilderness Area is located on the western side of the Adirondack Park, entirely within the Town of Webb, Herkimer County. Specifically, the area lies along the western boundary of Herkimer County and just north of the Moshier Reservoir and the Beaver River mostly in townships 4 and 5 of John Brown's Tract.

REASONS SUPPORTING THIS DETERMINATION:

1. Acquisitions - Acquiring in-holdings along the Northerly bounds of the unit would result in the elimination of hunting camps in

those alienations. This would decrease the visitor days from the North and lead to the eventual obliteration of illegally marked hunting trails. Acquisition of an easement from the end of the Prentice Road is unlikely based upon previous inquiries. However, if that avenue were made available, it would tend to better distribute public use by providing new ingress to the Northwest corner of the unit. Use here is presently nearly exclusively from adjacent lessees or individual private land-owners.

2. Access - The proposed parking lot at the Southeast corner would eliminate the need for roadside parking and get recreational users off of the main access road to Raven Lake. This will reduce conflict with on-going timber harvesting activities in the wilderness lakes tract. It is not anticipated that an eight car parking lot will measurably increase use of the unit. Rather it will provide a formal site where current users can park, find a trail register and posted rules and regulations. This will result in a better assessment of overall use and disbursement, with the opportunity, after review, to improve disbursement patterns. Failure to maintain the existing access bridges to get people to the unit would result in preventing all public use except for those with boats.
3. Camping - Keeping the area trailless will continue to limit the number of people camping inside the unit and provide maximum protection of the resource. The clean-up of former sites will set an example for those who follow to carry out what they carry in. All camping will be in conformance with Section 190.4 of the codes, rules and regulations of the Conservation Law. The availability of trail head parking at both Southerly corners of the unit provides a strategic place to formally educate users with posted rules and regulations and educational material on camping habits, rules and manners.
4. Fish and Wildlife - The current acidity of the ponded waters precludes user trips for fishing objectives. This in itself will limit excursions for consumption purposes. Most other users are in relation to trapping and the Big Game Season. Nothing in this plan will lead to any significant increase for consumptive purposes although it is clearly stated that the unit could support increased use. Canoe and boat access from the proposed parking lot and thence downstream from the Raven Lake bridge will be an improvement primarily for fall hunting parties floating downstream to the mouth of Moshier Creek. As with other parties proceeding by foot, no significant additional useage is anticipated.
5. General - All individual actions are of minor extent and size, and are carried out in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the State Land Master Plan and applicable statutes, allowing the Department little discretionary power. In addition, these actions are covered in the Programmatic EIS entitled Forest Preserve Interior Recreation Management Program. Thus, maximum protection is provided to the resources of the Pepperbox Wilderness Area with little or no adverse environmental impact.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

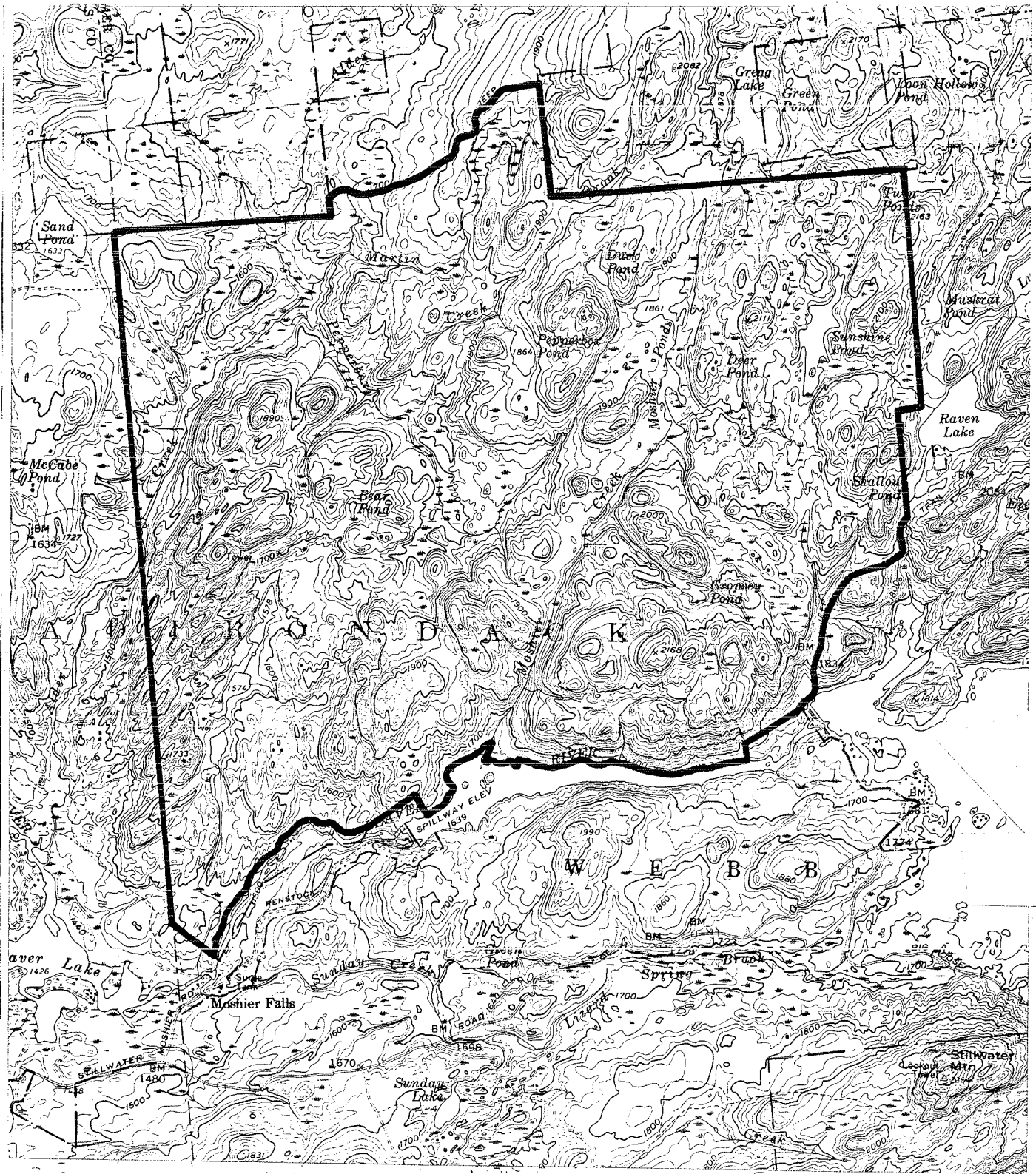
Contact Person: Garry Ives  
Address: Bureau of Preserve Protection & Mgt.  
NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation  
50 Wolf Road  
Albany, NY 12233

Phone: (518) 457-7433

COPIES OF THIS NOTICE SENT TO:

Environmental Notice Bulletin (Room 509)  
Division of Regulatory Affairs (Room 514)  
Appropriate Regional Director(s)  
Chief Executive Officer of the political subdivision in which the  
action will be principally located  
Applicant (if any)  
Other involved agencies (if any)

# PEPPERBOX WILDERNESS TOPOGRAPHY





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