
FOREST PRESERVE DETAILED PROJECT WORK PLAN

Fiscal Year 2023-24
Project # 2023-RB-16; CO-WP-317

<u>Region</u> 5	<u>Project Title</u> Jackrabbit Ski Trail - Scotts Cobble Section
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<u>Project Type</u> New Construction	<u>Town(s)</u> North Elba	<u>County</u> Essex	<u>Management Unit</u> Sentinel Range Wilderness Area
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Description of Desired Condition(s) for Project

The 2019 Unit Management Plan (UMP) for the Sentinel Range Wilderness Area identified the need to “add and enhance skiing opportunities throughout the area.” The UMP approved a new cross country ski trail as follows: “A ski trail may be built to connect the Jackrabbit Trail at the Craig Wood Golf Course and at Mountain Lane. This new trail would allow people skiing the Jackrabbit Trail to avoid two crossings of State Route 73. The trail will be about 2 miles long. This trail will pass along the base of Scotts Cobble.” (UMP page 104).

Avoiding the two crossings of State Route 73 in this area is necessary to enhance the safety of users. The need for this trail relocation is now essential to ensure the continuity of the Jackrabbit Trail as existing private landowner permission is uncertain. Without this connection the Jackrabbit route could be severed for the first time in 37 years.

Desirable conditions are typically easily achievable for cross country ski trails if the weather cooperates. With adequate snowpack, conditions rarely become deteriorated, which shifts the typical tread concerns, like erosion, to other concerns like the corridor expanding through a loss of vegetation. Desirable cross-country ski trails maintain safe lines of sight and corridors that are free from vegetative obstructions.

Description of Project Specifications

The trail is located to follow the existing contours of the undisturbed, natural forest floor. Trail construction will avoid terrain modifications, soil disturbance, and rock removal, except for 12 loose rocks that could pose a hazard to trail users. The trail will be from 6 to 8 feet wide. Sections of trail with a low slope angle and minimal elevation change are an average width of 6-feet wide. The overall average of the trail is 6 feet wide with 8-foot widths at sharp turns and steep sections. The trail was designed to reduce the number of sharp turns and steep downhill sections, when possible. No work will occur outside the project footprint, other than the disbursement of woody debris from the cleared trail corridor. No brushing will occur outside the cleared trail width. Pruning will occur only for branches that extend into the trail.

Description of Measures Taken to Avoid, Mitigate and Minimize Impacts to Natural Resources

This project will minimize tree cutting to one to three-inch diameter trees to open enough of a clearing for skiers to recognize the trail and allow for turns and climbing on skis. A total of 108 trees in the one to three-inch diameter at breast height size will be removed. No trees greater than three inches in diameter at breast height will need to be cut. Where practical, the trail is routed on portions of old access trails to reduce the number of trees to be removed.

State Land Tree Tally															
Project: Jackrabbit Trail - Ski Trail															
State Land Unit: Sentinel Wilderness Area															
County: Essex										Town: North Elba					
Date Talled: 10/6/2022															
Talled By: Keith Carrow															
Species	Diameter														Total
	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	
Striped Maple	6														6
maple, sugar	6														6
Beech	88														88
Red Spruce	8														8
															0
															0
Total	108	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	108

The trail is sited to follow the existing contours of the undisturbed, natural forest floor. Trail construction will avoid terrain modifications and soil disturbance. Trail construction will avoid rock removal, except for 12 loose rocks located in the centerline of the trail that could pose a hazard to trail users.

No work will occur outside the project footprint, other than the disbursement of woody debris and felled trees from the cleared trail corridor. No brushing will occur outside the cleared trail width. Pruning will occur only for branches that extend into the trail.

Because the trail is for skiing-only and use will only occur in winter, the only direct impact to the existing forest results from the removal of trees, pruned branches and woody vegetation from the trail corridor. Vegetative ground cover will be undisturbed. No manipulation of the tread will occur, and some woody debris will be left in the trail corridor. The debris and low vegetation retained should discourage use in non-winter months.

There are no documented occurrences of Rare, Threatened, or Endangered species within 0.25-miles of the project location.

Analysis of Project Location and Design Alternatives

Terrain: Although there is variation in the terrain, the unit is predominately mountainous upland. The project location mostly consists of gently sloping hillside on the east and southeast facing slopes, and hummocky, rocky terrain on north facing slopes. The ground surface along the majority of the corridor

is relatively flat and lacking in streams, rugged terrain features, and exposed rock, making the undisturbed natural forest floor highly conducive to cross-country skiing.

Segment 1 - Beginning at the Forest Preserve boundary on the eastern edge of Craig Wood Golf Course, skiers would follow the abandoned water line trail (gray on map) for approximately 0.5-mile to a point where the proposed new ski trail begins. The water line trail has well-established tread with an average width of 6-8 feet and is favorable for cross country skiing. A 12-foot-long ski bridge is required to cross a small stream.

Segment 2 - The new trail, (blue on the map) departs the water line trail at 0.5 mile and gradually climbs through hummocky terrain for a short distance before crossing a small stream. A 12-foot-long ski bridge is required here. From here, skiers climb steadily for about 150 vertical feet to a height of land on the shoulder of Scott's Cobble at approximately one mile from the water line trail. The trail then descends 100 vertical feet on gradual slopes following a meandering trail through open hardwood forest to a large erratic at 1.5 miles from the water line trail (this control point is labeled on the attached map).

An alternative to Segment 2 would take a lower and wider route to the east around the shoulder of Scott's Cobble. It would be about 0.2 miles longer and would have less elevation change, but it would require more tree cutting and pass through a regulated wetland.

Segment 3 - From the large erratic control point, the trail will follow an abandoned doubletrack trail that extends approximately 0.5-miles south to Route 73 (purple on map). This old trail is still passable but mostly disappears to the north of the large erratic control point. The trail below the control point has a well-established tread with an average width of 4-6 feet and is favorable for cross country skiing. However, repurposing the entire doubletrack is not ideal, because it would leave skiers on the shoulder of Rt. 73 approximately 0.5-mile away from Mountain Lane, thereby requiring use of the shoulder of State Route 73 for 0.5-mile.

Segment 4 - (green on map) will bear southeast and descend approximately 0.25 mile to meet the edge of route 73

Segment 5 - This segment serves to connect the built section of trail with Mountain Lane. It will be located directly behind the guard rail bordering Route 73. There is no sustainable alternative to building a trail which avoids the highway shoulder due to the presence of wetlands and difficult terrain. If the route were kept away from Route 73 there would be additional ecological impacts associated with the wetlands, and user experience would be impacted with difficult terrain.

- The SRWA UMP states a preference for the use of old existing roads for ski trails where appropriate
- Use of existing roads for ski trails reduces overall impact to the wild forest character of the project location by concentrating use on a previously disturbed corridor. This is an acceptable location because there will not be non-winter use, so there is no need for formal tread development.
- Routing the trail to end at Mountain Lane instead of the shoulder of Route 73 would require passing through a large wetland. This route would require extensive bridging and tree cutting.

Description of Use of Motorized Equipment and/or Motor Vehicles (if any)

Chainsaws will be used for the initial construction, mostly for removal of blowdown. All chainsaw use will be limited to times allowed under Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan guidelines and Department policy.

Description of Applicable Standards for Accessibility by People with Disabilities

The trail is designed for use when it is covered in snow, so no tread work is proposed. The creation of a firm and stable surface would be a departure from the proposed project. Establishing a firm and stable surface would alter the nature of the project and increase the earthwork needed for the project.

Other Relevant Considerations

Prepared by (Name & Title): Keith Carrow, Forester 1
Phone: 518-897-1336

Date: 7/11/2023

REGULATORY CLEARANCE CHECKLIST – STATE LANDS and CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROJECTS

PROGRAM	PERMIT	REQUIRED		SECURED BY	COMMENTS
		YES	NO	(NAME)	
Air Resources	Restricted Burning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mineral Resources	Mining	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Materials Management	Solid Waste Mgt. Fac.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Water	Dam Safety Review	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Const. in Flood Hazard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Public Water Supply	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	SPDES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Spills Management	Petro. Bulk Storage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Lands and Forests	Unit Management Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keith Carrow	UMP approved January 2020
	Tree Cutting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keith Carrow	Tree cutting to be approved upon acceptance of this work plan
	Protected Native Plants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Historic Preservation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Fish and Wildlife	Freshwater Wetlands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Wild Scenic & Rec. River	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Compliance Services	Other Protection of Waters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	EAF	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Negative Declaration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Env. Impact Statement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Water Quality Cert.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
DEC (other)	CP-17	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Commissioner (aircraft, motorized equipment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Flight Request	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Contract Clearance Sh.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	DOB Exemption	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Other Agencies	APA MOU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	APA Wetlands Permit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Corps. of Engineers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Building Permits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Local Permits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Easements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Highway Enter DOT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Wastewater Disposal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

**Sentinel Range Wilderness
Jackrabbit Trail
Ski Trail Work Plan**

