



Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation

# **WESTERN LASSITER TRACTS CONSERVATION EASEMENT**

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## **Draft Recreation Management Plan for the Beers Lot and Pine Hill Conservation Easement Tracts**

**Town of Edwards**

**St. Lawrence County**



**NYS DEC, REGION 6, DIVISION OF LANDS AND FORESTS**  
Conservation Easement Program

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# Plan Summary

The Western Lassiter Tracts encompass approximately 2,176 acres in the Town of Edwards in St. Lawrence County. The Properties are outside of the Adirondack Park. The Western Lassiter Tracts consists of two separate parcels: The Beers Lot Conservation Easement Tract (BLCE - 1,342 acres) and the Pine Hill Conservation Easement Tract (PHCE - 834 acres). The tracts are adjacent but not connected (see the Location Map on page 14 or the Existing Facilities Map on page 65). The PHCE shares a boundary with a detached parcel of Wild Forest and both tracts are adjacent to sections of the Rock Ridge state forest unit. Numerous parcels of private land surround each of the Western Lassiter Tracts, both of which are located between State Routes 3, 58, and 812.

This Western Lassiter Tracts Conservation Easement Recreation Management Plan (WLCE RMP) outlines public recreation access and facilities which will be provided for public use of the properties. Consistent with the encumbering conservation easement, proposed public recreation is considered only where compatible with sustainable forestry and natural resource protection objectives.

Following is a summary of management proposals in this RMP:

- New informational signage and maps will be placed in a kiosk on the BLCE;
- 1.5 miles of existing roads will be newly opened to public passenger vehicles. In total, 7.0 miles of established roads and trails will be open to the public – all on the BLCE;
- Two (2) parking areas are proposed to be newly constructed on the BLCE, one of which will be designed for access by persons with disabilities;
- This plan proposes use of snowmobiles by the public for the sole purpose of hunting and trapping during the hunting & trapping season. This would open 7.0 miles of established roads and trails to the public – all on the BLCE;
- A designated route for use by persons who hold a Mobility Access Permit for People with Disabilities (MAPPWD) will be established along a 1.3-mile long existing road;
- A 1.0-mile existing non-motorized trail will be proposed to be opened to access the Beaver Lake wetlands complex on the BLCE. In total, 7.0 miles of roads and trails will be open to non-motorized public recreation on the Property;
- Two (2) campsites – one primitive and one meeting universal accessibility standards – will be designated on the BLCE;

- Hunting, fishing, and trapping will be permitted throughout the BLCE, subject to all applicable seasons and regulations;



*Beaver Lake Wetlands Complex, Beers Lot CE.*

# Preface

## *Use of Conservation Easements in New York State*

The New York State Legislature has declared that the public policy of the State is to conserve, preserve, and protect its environmental assets, natural resources and man-made resources. In addition to purchasing lands in fee on behalf of the People of the State, the State also protects land and natural resources by purchasing less than fee, permanent interests in land, termed conservation easements. Conservation easements are used widely across the United States by government and non-profit land conservation organizations to protect a variety of properties with important natural resources and other landscape values such as water quality, wildlife habitat, sensitive ecosystems, wetlands, riparian areas, scenic areas such as meadows and ridgelines, agricultural land, working forests, and historic sites. The primary function of conservation easements is to limit or eliminate future development and undesirable land uses on a property, while allowing for continued private ownership and traditional management.

New York State acquires conservation easements primarily on properties that buffer existing State lands, provide additional public recreation opportunities, and/or maintain large working forests. There are now hundreds of thousands of acres of land in New York that are protected by conservation easements acquired by the State. Most of that land consists of large tracts of commercial timber land in the Adirondack and Tug Hill regions; however, New York State also holds easements on a variety of other properties across the State.

Some conservation easements allow public access to the protected property, and some do not. On many large working forest conservation easement properties, the State has acquired public recreation rights in addition to development and land use restrictions. In some cases, a wide range of public recreational use is permitted; and in others, public access is very limited. The amount of public access depends largely on the goals and objectives of the landowner and the State at the time the easement was negotiated.

This recreation management plan will explain public recreation rights the State acquired through the conservation easement and how these rights are to be implemented compatibly with rights retained by the landowner.

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# I. Introduction

In 1989, the Beers Lot and Pine Hill Conservation Tract Easements were purchased by the People of the State of New York as multiple easements bound by one document from Lassiter Properties. The conservation easement assures that the properties will remain a privately owned sustainable working forest, protect natural resources, continue private recreational leases (where applicable) and allow for specific public recreation opportunities. The conservation easement deed is dated December 23, 1989 and is located at the St. Lawrence County Clerk's Office (Liber 1025, Page 812; Liber 1030, Page 16). Other tracts encumbered by this deed are the Aldrich, Kildare, and Preston Lot Conservation Easements, which are not considered in this Recreation Management Plan. For information on these other Lassiter Tracts, please refer to the Aldrich Pond Wild Forest Unit Management Plan (UMP) for Aldrich, the Raquette Boreal UMP and Amendment to the Kildare RMP for Kildare, and the White Hill Wild Forest UMP for Preston Lot.

The Beers Lot and Pine Hill Conservation Easements will be referred to herein as "Conservation Easements", "Easements", "Western Lassiter Tracts", or "Properties" collectively, or as "the Beers Lot CE" or "the Pine Hill CE" separately. The easement grants New York State a legal interest in the properties and sets forth terms, restrictions, and rights of both the Landowner and the State with respect to use and management of the tracts. The State now owns the development rights on the properties, and specific recreation rights. As with other conservation easements, by purchasing the development rights, the State effectively extinguished development rights on the properties in "perpetuity". The Landowner is responsible for managing the properties in a manner that complies with the conservation easement deed. This requires that they, for example, protect water quality, maintain, and enhance biological diversity, provide for a broad distribution of forest age classes and provide standing dead trees, den and nest trees and large downed trees. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (Department, DEC or NYSDEC) is responsible for managing the rights purchased by the People of the State of New York.

## A. Purpose of the Recreation Management Plan

Public recreation on privately-owned conservation easement lands is guided by Recreation Management Plans (RMPs). This RMP addresses NYSDEC's role in

planning, implementation, and management of the public recreation rights on the Beers Lot and Pine Hill Conservation Easements. It also describes the Department's planning process and provides opportunities for stakeholders to participate in that process. The Landowner has been consulted during the planning process and will have an opportunity to review and comment on this RMP.

The purpose of an RMP is to establish a planned, written management strategy, to implement the State's rights and protect property rights of the Landowner. It is intended that the RMP serve as a consistent guide to management over time, regardless of changes to Department personnel or the Landowner. The RMP integrates Department recreation management with pertinent laws and regulations, policies, easement-specific requirements and conditions, and property-specific information in a single document. Provided in this RMP is a description of the properties and past and present uses; relevant public recreation opportunities and limitations; how public access and recreation will be implemented and managed; who will have responsibility for various management tasks; identification of public recreation facilities that may already exist on the properties; new public recreation facilities and improvements proposed to be constructed and maintained; and how the public is anticipated to interact with other uses of the properties such as active forest management and private lease holders. Periodically RMPs may be amended or revised. Notwithstanding the foregoing, should any discrepancies arise between the RMP and the conservation easement, the easement will prevail.

## **B. Planning Process and Timeline**

### **Scoping/Kickoff Meeting**

In accordance with COVID-19 guidelines at the time, an online scoping session to elicit public input for consideration in development of the draft RMP was held between May 15<sup>th</sup> through Jun 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021. This input in its entirety, along with Department responses to the input, can be found in Appendix C of this draft plan.

## II. Setting

### A. Property Description

The Beers Lot Conservation Easement comprises approximately 1,342 acres of land located within St. Lawrence County, New York, in the Town of Edwards. The Western Lassiter Tracts includes two separate tracts, as seen on the map on page 65. Tract 1 (the western tract) is made up of approximately 1,136 acres, and Tract 2 (the eastern tract) is made up of approximately 206 acres.

The Pine Hill Conservation Easement comprises approximately 834 acres of land located within St. Lawrence County, New York, in the town of Edwards.

Property	Tract	Acreage
Beers Lot CE	1	1,136
	2	206
Pine Hill CE	-	834
<b>Total Acreage under this Draft RMP</b>		<b>2,176</b>

The two Properties lie within the St. Lawrence Rock Ridge Planning Unit, which is managed by the Rock Ridge Unit Management Plan (State-owned lands) (<https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4979.html>) and this RMP (CEs). In addition to the CEs, the Rock Ridge UMP also covers multiple state forests and detached forest preserve parcels in the area. This includes the Bonner Lake State Forest directly across the road from the BLCE, and the detached forest preserve parcel adjacent to the Pine Hill CE.

### B. Location and Access

The Beers Lot CE and Pine Hill CE lie outside of the Adirondack Park Blue Line in the Town of Edwards.

The 0.3-mile-long eastern-most boundary of the Beers Lot CE is adjacent to the River Road. Directly across the River Road is a small parcel of state land named the Bonner Lake State Forest. The remaining 9.9 miles of perimeter abut private property. Internal parking on the Beers Lot CE will be proposed in this plan (see Section D).

The southern boundary of the Pine Hill CE is defined by the town line between the Town of Edwards and the Town of Pitcairn. 0.2 miles of the southern boundary borders a small Detached Forest Preserve Parcel called the Pine Hill Pond Tract, and the other 5.1 miles of the perimeter abut private property.

South/southeast of the Western Lassiter Tracts is the Cold Spring Brook State Forest, which can be accessed via County Route 23 south of the intersection with the River Road.

The parcels of the Western Lassiter Tracts are bordered by numerous tracts of private land. Notably, the large tract owned by the Beaver Lake Club, Inc., through which there is currently no public right of way, separates the Beers Lot CE and Pine Hill CE. Since both tracts are primarily surrounded by privately owned land, management actions are required to guide access and recreation on the easements while protecting the rights of the adjacent private landowners.

More details about these Properties can be found on the NYSDEC Public Website (<https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/96093.html>) and/or the NYS DECinfo Locator (<https://giservices.dec.ny.gov/gis/dil/>).

## C. History

The Properties of the Western Lassiter Tracts lie just outside the Adirondack Park line in St. Lawrence County, NY. This area has a rich history of forestry production and management, hunting, fishing, trapping, lease camps, agriculture, and mining. Due to operations such as forest exploitation, mining, and agriculture, the area also has a history of forest loss. The establishment of conservation easements in this part of New York helped provide protection to these traditional forests, as well as the preservation of timber management and historic uses on the properties. The practice of applying conservation easements to private land in northern New York began in 1963 with the Elk Lake Conservation Easement in the High Peaks region of the Adirondack Park. This easement protected the shoreline of Elk Lake and its islands.

The Western Adirondack Foothills region was home to many indigenous nations prior to settlement by Europeans. The Mohawk, Oneida, and Onondaga tribes all utilized these areas for hunting, fishing, farming, and gathering to live a subsistence style of life. The forests located on and around the Properties provided many vast resources which were used in everyday living.

Much of this land was settled by European immigrants in the early 1800s. Evidence of early farms can be found throughout the region, including fencing, water wells, old house foundations, and more.

After the industrialization of the mid-20th century, the Properties were owned by the Natural Dam Pulp and Paper Company, Inc. Pulp and paper were important products for Upstate New York. Local mills such as the Aldrich Paper Mill in Natural Dam, NY and the Wood Room at the Newton Falls Paper Mill were some of the clients for the Natural Dam Pulp and Paper Company. With World Wars I & II, the need for paper and forestry materials grew, employing hundreds of people to process and produce timber products at local mills using local materials.

In 1955, the Natural Dam Pulp and paper Company, Inc. sold the Properties, alongside other parcels, to the Diamond Match Company. The company was composed of over ten large subsidiaries that combined in the mid-19th century to create a manufacturer that had offices and factories in multiple states, such as Massachusetts, New York, and Washington. Known since 1881 for being the country's oldest match manufacturer, the Diamond Match Company continued the traditional forest production use of the Properties' woodlands. In 1964, the Diamond Match Company became Diamond International Corp., which then acted as a holding company (Prero, 1997).

Diamond International Corp. eventually sold the Properties as a bundle to Lassiter Properties, Inc. in 1988. Lassiter Properties, Inc. is a land subdivision / holding corporation started in 1972 and based in Atlanta, Georgia. The new owner, Henry A. Lassiter, signed into a conservation easement agreement with The Nature Conservancy, Inc. in December of 1988. The Nature Conservancy, Inc. then assigned the conservation easement agreement over to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation in June of 1989. Because Lassiter Properties, Inc. was the landowner at the time the conservation easement agreement was produced and signed, the agreement is known as the Lassiter Conservation Easement, which encumbers five separate properties, named, respectively: the Kildare CE, the Preston Lot CE, the Aldrich CE, the Beers Lot CE, and the Pine Hill CE.

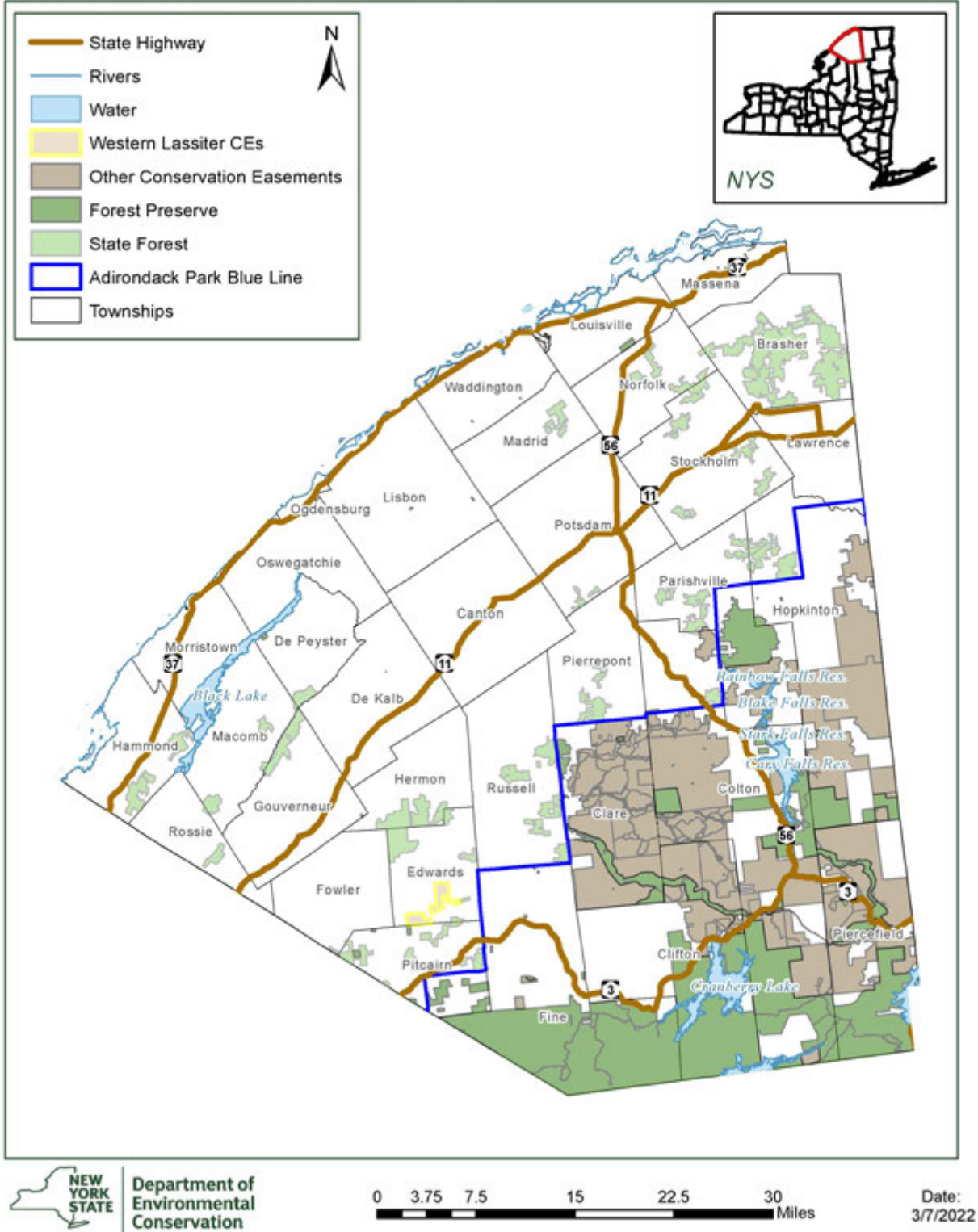
When Lassiter Properties, Inc. sold the Lassiter tracts (and assigned conservation easement) to Rayonier Forest Resources, L.P. in 2008, the Properties continued in their historic role as timber producing forests and hunting club leases. As all DEC conservation easement agreements are in perpetuity, the Lassiter Conservation Easement carried over during the most recent sale of the Properties – from Rayonier Forest Resources, L.P. to the current landowner, MWF Adirondacks (as managed by Molpus Woodlands Group). As of 2019, with the end of the Exclusive Rights period



negotiated in the original easement, public recreation is allowed on the Properties while preserving sustainable working forests and historic hunting leases.

# Western Lassiter Tracts CE Location

St. Lawrence County



## Western Lassiter Tracts Conservation Easements Draft Recreation Management Plan

## **D. Current Uses of the Properties**

### **Forest Management**

A stated purpose of the Conservation Easement is to ensure that the forest resource will continue to be available to the current and future landowners for sustainable forest management and the associated long-term production of forest products. The Landowner (MWF Adirondacks) currently contracts Molpus Woodlands Group for the continuation of sustainable forest management and management of the camp lease program on the Properties. It is common to see foresters, loggers, and logging equipment on the Properties. Members of the public using the Properties for recreation can expect to encounter this type of activity during a typical visit. At times, portions of the Properties may be closed to public recreation during forest management operations (see page 36 for details).

### **Recreational Leases**

There are several private hunting club leases on the Western Lassiter Tracts. While lessees are most active during hunting season, several use their camps for a variety of four-season outdoor-based recreation. In accordance with terms of the Conservation Easement, lessees may access their camps (ingress and egress only) with motorized vehicles (e.g., passenger vehicles, ATVs, and snowmobiles), including the use of roads that are not open to the public for such uses. Beyond the rights of ingress and egress, the lessees may recreate on the property as members of the public – adhering and restricted to those rights as granted in the conservation easement document and delineated in this plan. NYSDEC has recommended that the Landowner provide identification stickers for all lessee vehicles to facilitate this process, and the Landowner has already done so.

## **E. Existing Facilities**

### **Inventory and Condition**

The Conservation Easement grants the People of the State of New York a permanent right of access to the Properties for outdoor recreational use, subject to the specific terms in the recorded easement document agreed to by the State and the Landowner. All management actions on the Properties, as implemented through this Recreation

Management Plan, will be conducted in accordance with those specific easement terms and will consider and strive to be consistent and compatible with the reserved rights of the Landowner. This is to say – public access is based upon rights already determined. This plan does not and cannot grant or deny rights in and of itself.

The following affirmative rights, subject to specific terms, conditions, requirements, limitations, and restrictions stated in the Easement and described in Section D, have been granted to the State of New York and apply directly to the development and implementation of this public Recreation Management Plan:

#### 1. Non-motorized Access - Use and Activities

DEC has the right to provide public access to the Properties for a variety of dispersed, non-motorized outdoor recreational activities, such as: hiking, bicycling, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, photography, bird watching, wildlife observation, picnicking, boating (with car-top watercraft such as canoes, kayaks, or rowboats), camping at designated campsites, horseback riding, dog-sledding, fishing, hunting, and trapping. These activities will be permitted year-round on the entire Property and must be conducted in accordance with applicable State laws and regulations.

#### 2. Motorized Access - Use and Activities

DEC has the right to allow public motor vehicle access to the Properties via certain designated routes. These routes will be signed accordingly as being open to only certain types of motor vehicles, such as passenger vehicles and snowmobiles. Speed limits and other restrictions or safety information may also be posted.

The below table and associated Existing Facilities map in Appendix F, page 65 describe infrastructure currently on the Properties. See Section D for the list of roads proposed to be open by this plan. Please read the road descriptions carefully and refer to the Existing Facilities map when planning a visit to the Properties.

**Table 1. Current NYSDEC Maintained Roads, Trails, and Facilities**

<b>Property</b>	<b>Corridor Name</b>	<b>Mileage</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Current Public Uses</b>
<b>Beers Lot CE</b>	Main Haul Road	1.5	Access from the River Road to the interior of the property	Non-motorized
	West Road	0.5	Access to the western portion of the property	Non-motorized
	South Road	1.1	Access to the southern portion of the property	Non-motorized
	North Road	1.5	Access to the northern portion of the property	Non-motorized
	North Road Spur Trail	0.6	Access to the north / northeastern portion of the property	Non-motorized
	North Road Spur	0.4	Access to the northeastern portion of the property	Non-motorized
	North Road Extension	0.2	Access to adjacent private land to the north of the property	Non-motorized
	North Road Trail	0.6	Access to adjacent private land to the west of the property	Non-motorized
<b>Pine Hill CE</b>	Main Haul Road	0.8	Access from adjacent private property / main road on the property	No public access at this time

**Table 2. Gates**

<b>Property</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Purpose of the Gate</b>
<b>Beers Lot CE</b>	Main Haul Road entrance	Restrict public access.
	South Road	This is a private gate beyond which there is no public access.

**Table 3. Gravel Pit**

<b>Property</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>Beers Lot CE</b>	North side of the Main Haul Road.

## **F. Natural Resources**

### **Geology and Soils**

The Western Lassiter Tracts are located in the Edwards, South Edwards, Harrisville, and Fine USGS Quadrangles. The NW Adirondack Lowlands is the major geologic unit for the Western Lassiter Tracts, specifically the South Edwards Gneiss Dome. The Lowlands are predominantly underlain by metasedimentary rocks and gneiss and cover the area from the eastern shore of Lake Ontario to the Adirondack Highlands further east. The main rock formation underlying the Properties is the Hyde School Gneiss complex (DeLorraine & Carl, 1993).

Soil types inform, to some extent, recreation management decisions and opportunities an area can sustain. Current and proposed recreational activities on the Easements should be designed and managed consistent with the natural resources unique to the area. The associated soil types found on the Easements are depicted on the following Soils Map (Appendix F, page 67). The predominant soil series found within the Easements include:

#### The Tunbridge Series

The Tunbridge series consists of moderately deep, well drained soils on nearly level to very steep glaciated uplands on the tops and sides of hills and mountains. Slope ranges from 0 to 80 percent. The soils formed in loamy supraglacial till of Wisconsin age derived mainly from micaceous schist, gneiss, phyllite, granite, and meta-anorthosite. Saturated hydraulic conductivity is moderately high or high throughout the mineral soil. Elevation ranges from about 10 to 2500 feet above mean sea level. Most areas are wooded. The common trees are American beech, white ash, yellow birch, paper birch, northern red oak, sugar maple, eastern white pine, eastern hemlock, red spruce, white spruce, and balsam fir. Some areas have been cleared and are primarily used for hay and pasture. A few cleared areas are used for cultivated crops.

#### The Pillsbury Series

The Pillsbury series consists of poorly drained soils that formed in loamy lodgment till in glaciated uplands and lowlands. They are moderately deep to a dense substratum and

very deep to bedrock. Estimated saturated hydraulic conductivity is moderately high or high in the solum and moderately low or moderately high in the dense substratum. Slope ranges from 0 to 15 percent. The soils are on nearly level to strongly sloping gradients in glaciated uplands and lowlands. They are typically on slightly convex to concave parts of backslopes, foot-slopes, and toe-slopes. The soils formed in Wisconsin-aged, loamy lodgment till derived mainly from granite, gneiss, and schist. Elevation ranges from about 100 to 800 meters above sea level. Most areas are wooded. The common trees are red maple, sugar maple, eastern white pine, yellow birch, red spruce, balsam fir, and northern red oak.

### The Lyman Series

The Lyman series consists of shallow, somewhat excessively drained soils on glaciated uplands. They are on nearly level to very steep glaciated uplands on the tops and sides of hills and mountains. Slope ranges from 0 to 80 percent. They formed in loamy supraglacial till. The potential runoff is very high. Estimated saturated hydraulic conductivity is moderately high or high throughout the mineral soil. Elevation ranges from about 10 to 2500 feet above mean sea level. Most areas are wooded. The common trees are American beech, white ash, yellow birch, paper birch, northern red oak, sugar maple, eastern white pine, eastern hemlock, red spruce, white spruce, and balsam fir. Some areas have been cleared and are primarily used for hay and pasture. A few cleared areas are used for cultivated crops.

## **Terrain/Topography**

The Properties lie between the towns of Edwards and Pitcairn, in an area labeled the Adirondack Lowlands. This area is generally composed of rolling hills, ridges, and depressions, with metasedimentary rocks and gneiss bedrock geology. Glaciers have removed most of the mineral soil from the mountain region and deposited it in low-lying areas such as the St. Lawrence River Valley and associated foothill regions. The resulting areas of gravel and sandy loam enabled the forest growth and agricultural activities which have shaped the human and natural histories of the Easements and surrounding region.

Elevations within the Beers Lot CE range from around 760' to around 940'. A ridge near the center of the Easement forms the Property's highest point at 942', while the rest of the Property consists of flat terrain with a few rolling hills. Riparian areas along the wetlands and small intermittent streams that transect the Property represent the lowest elevation at 760'.



Elevations within the Pine Hill CE range from 780' to around 970'. The Property consists of numerous rolling hills and wetlands with the highest point at 971' and the lowest elevation at just under 780' around Mott Creek in the northwest corner of the Property.

The map in Appendix F depicts the USGS quadrants that encompass the two Western Lassiter Tracts: the Edwards, South Edwards, Harrisville, and Fine USGS Quadrangles.

## Water Resources

The water resources of the WLCEs are wholly within the Oswegatchie river sub-basin of the St. Lawrence River Basin. There is one major waterbody that spans from the Beers Lot CE to the Pine Hill CE: Beaver Lake. There are no other named waterbodies on the Beers Lot CE. Pine Hill Pond is located along the southern border of the Pine Hill CE. There are also numerous small and unnamed ponds on both Properties.

Pork Creek, an unprotected class D stream, is located on the Beers Lot CE and transects the Beaver Lake Wetlands Complex. A small, unnamed but protected class C(T) stream connects Jones Pond, which is southeast of the Beers Lot CE, to the Oswegatchie River. Mott Creek flows to the West Branch of the Oswegatchie River from the northwest corner of the Pine Hill CE. Several unnamed streams cross and connect other streams, wetlands, and beaver ponds on both Properties. The map on page 68 shows the Hydrography of the Western Lassiter Tracts, and the table below lists all waterbodies and streams.

**Table 4. Hydrography of the Western Lassiter Tracts.**

Property	Waterbody	Fisheries Index Number (FIN)	Total Acreage
Beers Lot CE	Unnamed water	SL-25—75-P5117	43.3
Pine Hill CE	Pine Hill Pond	SL-25-P92	7.9
	Unnamed water	SL-25-P5324	2.2
	Unnamed water	SL-25-P5325	5.4
Both CEs	Beaver Lake	SL-25-75-4-P252	17.0

Property	Stream	FIN	Section Length (Miles)	NHD Water Quality Classification
<b>Beers Lot CE</b>	Pork Creek	SL-25-75	8.8	Unprotected class D
	Unnamed water	SL-25-85	2.5	Protected class C(T)
	Unnamed water	SL-25-81-1	3.6	Unprotected class D
	Unnamed water	SL-25-81-1-3-1	0.6	Unclassified
	Unnamed water	SL-25-81-1-3-3	0.4	Unclassified
	Unnamed water	SL-25-81-1-2	0.7	Unclassified
	Unnamed water	SL-25-81-1-2-1	0.2	Unclassified
	Unnamed water	SL-25-81-1-2-2	0.8	Unclassified
	Unnamed water	SL-25-81-1-2-3	0.4	Unclassified
	Unnamed water	SL-25-81	4.1	Unprotected class D
	Unnamed water	SL-25-81-3	0.2	Unclassified
	Unnamed water	SL-25-81-2	1.1	Unprotected class D
	Unnamed water	SL-25-81-4	0.6	Unclassified
	Unnamed water	SL-25-81-4-1	0.2	Unclassified
	Unnamed water	SL-25-81-4-2	0.1	Unclassified
	Unnamed water	SL-25-81-4-3	0.3	Unclassified
	Unnamed water	SL-25-81-5	0.1	Unclassified
	Unnamed water	SL-25-81-6	0.1	Unclassified
	Unnamed water	SL-25-81-7	0.2	Unclassified
	Unnamed water	SL-25-75-4	0.4	Unprotected class D
<b>Pine Hill CE</b>	Mott Creek	S-25-73-11-1	1.1	Unprotected class D

The wetlands within the Properties offer great ecological, aesthetic, recreational, and educational value. Wetlands have the capacity to receive, store, and slowly release rainwater and meltwater. They protect water resources by stabilizing water flow and minimizing erosion and sedimentation. Many natural and man-made pollutants are removed from the water when it enters wetland areas. As they constitute one of the most productive habitats for fish and wildlife, a great diversity of plant and animal species are found in association with most wetlands. For the visitor, expanses of open spaces provide a visual contrast to the heavily forested environment.

There are scattered wetlands identified on the Western Lassiter Tracts by the National Wetland Inventory and the NYS DEC Regulatory Wetlands Inventory. It is estimated that wetlands within the Western Lassiter Tracts make up 35% of the total area of the Properties. The majority of the wetlands are classified as wetland, bog and shrub areas and boreal acidic peatland systems. These wetlands are often temporarily or seasonally flooded. The New York Natural Heritage Program Database identifies the occurrence of

shrub swamps and shallow emergent marsh communities within the Easements. The attached map (page 68) depicts permanent wetlands as they currently exist on the Properties.

## **Fish and Wildlife**

### **Fish**

The numerous ponds, streams, and wetlands on the Properties provide habitat for various aquatic wildlife. While they may contain fisheries resources, they are not acknowledged by the Bureau of Fisheries and no information exists in our records concerning them.

### **Mammals**

Typical of the Western Adirondack Foothills ecozone, wildlife present on the Western Lassiter Tracts include common large mammals such as white-tailed deer, black bear, and coyotes. Fur-bearing species represented in NYSDEC harvest data for the area include bobcat, fisher, and river otter. There were no endangered, threatened, or special concern mammal species identified within the easements. An ongoing mammal survey being conducted by NYSDEC Wildlife staff will provide a greater understanding of the populations and distribution of mammals across NYS and could inform management decisions in the future.

### **Birds**

The New York State Breeding Bird Atlas documents bird species that have been identified in survey blocks encompassing the Properties. Due to the fact that survey blocks encompass an area larger than individual tracts addressed in this RMP, not all species have been observed on the actual Properties. The Breeding Bird Atlas identified 89 confirmed, probable, and possible breeding bird species in the three blocks covering the tract: 4789A, 4790C, & 4790D (complete list of species in Appendix E).

The following are listed on the 2000-2005 Breeding Bird Atlas as protected endangered, threatened, or species of special concern in New York State: Common Loon, Red-shouldered Hawk, and Whip-poor-will.

### **Herpetofauna**

The New York State Herp Atlas documents reptile and amphibian species that have been identified in survey blocks encompassing the Properties. Due to the fact that survey blocks encompass an area larger than individual tracts addressed in this RMP, not all species have been observed on the Properties. The Herp Atlas identified 25 herp species

in the three blocks encompassing the tract: Edwards, South Edwards, & Harrisville (complete list of species in Appendix E).

The following are listed on the 1990-1999 Herp Atlas as protected endangered, threatened, or species of special concern in New York State: Blanding's Turtle, Blue-spotted Salamander, Four-toed Salamander, Jefferson Salamander, Spotted Turtle.

## **Wildlife Harvest**

With the end of the exclusive rights period in 2019, the Western Lassiter Tracts now offer additional opportunities for public hunting, fishing, and trapping during all established seasons, in accordance with NYS rules and regulations. While many factors can affect wildlife harvests and trends, there has not yet been a comprehensive statewide Mammal Survey, so harvest data is used to extrapolate and predict population trends.

Based on the following harvest data for St. Lawrence County, deer harvest trends appear mostly stable, with a total takes averaging 5,608 deer / year for the past 14 years, and 6,014 total takes in 2020. Bear harvests, calculated for the town of Edwards in St. Lawrence County, fluctuate year to year but appear overall stable, with 2020 being the highest recorded year since 2007 at 10 total bears. Overall, in New York State, deer populations appear to be on the rise and black bear populations appear to be increasing in the Adirondack region.

Game bird species found in the associated NYS Breeding Bird Atlas Blocks include American Crow, Canada Goose, and Wild Turkey. Wild Turkey harvests in St. Lawrence County have been relatively stable, with a majority of birds harvested in the spring season. 2020 was the highest year in Spring Turkey Takes in the past 10 years, totaling 940.

Furbearer populations of bobcat and fisher in the Town of Edwards appear to be relatively stable. Fisher populations appear to be decreasing slightly in the Northern New York region but increasing in the Southern New York region. No data was reported for pine marten harvests in the Town of Edwards. The most trapped furbearer species in the Town of Edwards is otter, with 2020 being one of the highest years of reported otter harvests.

The NYSDEC does not collect harvest data for fish species.

**Table 5. Deer Harvest**

Year	St. Lawrence County	
	Adult Buck	Total Take
2020	3,714	6,014
2019	4,465	5,806
2018	3,772	5,046
2017	3,969	4,998
2016	3,258	4,292
2015	2,657	3,827
2014	3,033	4,908
2013	3,452	5,349
2012	3,676	5,456
2011	3,277	5,542
2010	3,662	6,233
2009	3,959	6,850
2008	4,241	7,146
2007	4,193	7,051

**Table 6. Bear Harvest**

Year	Edwards
2020	10
2019	6
2018	5
2017	6
2016	4
2015	9
2014	5
2013	5
2012	5
2011	3
2010	8
2009	6
2008	8
2007	5

Additional Deer and Bear harvest data available at:

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/42232.html>

**Table 7. Turkey Harvest**

Year	St. Lawrence County	
	Fall Take	Spring Take
2020	62	940
2019	67	675
2018	50	906
2017	37	584
2016	77	629
2015	48	494
2014	196	684
2013	78	637
2012	144	494
2011	103	375

Additional Turkey Harvest data available at:

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/8366.html>

**Table 8. Trapping Harvest**

Year	Edwards			
	Bobcat	Fisher	Marten	Otter
2019-20	-	1	-	12
2018-19	1	-	-	4
2017-18	-	2	-	7
2016-17	-	-	-	-
2015-16	1	-	-	4
2014-15	-	1	-	12
2013-14	1	7	-	5
2012-13	-	2	-	7
2011-12	-	0	-	16
2010-11	-	0	-	5
2009-10	2	3	-	7

Additional Trapping Harvest data available at:

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/93855.html>

## Vegetation

Outside of the various wetlands, the lands within these Properties are almost entirely forested, with species composition resulting from past historical events, forest management, and differences in site factors including: soil type, soil moisture, and climatic conditions determined by elevation, slope, and aspect. The Western Adirondack Foothills ecoregion supports common northern hardwood forests. The most common landcover types on the WLCE are deciduous forest and mixed forest. Species in these forests include sugar and red maples, American beech, yellow birch, Eastern hemlock, Eastern white pine, and balsam fir. Shrubs and understory species in these forest types include hobblebush, elderberry, dogwoods, and honeysuckle, along with black raspberry and blueberry bushes.

The wetlands within the Properties support a patterned peatland which is specific to the ecozone the Western Lassiter Tracts are found in. Tree species likely to be found in these wetlands include black spruce, tamarack, and northern white cedar. Bog vegetation can include Labrador tea, bog rosemary, bog laurel, and cranberry species.

The NYS Natural Heritage Program Database identified historical habitat for the threatened Southern Twayblade. The Database also identified Maple-Basswood Rich mesic forest as a vulnerable community present on the Properties. The NYS Natural Heritage Element Occurrence Records for the Southern Twayblade and Maple-Basswood forest can be found in Appendix E.

## Invasive Species

As global trade and travel have increased, so has the introduction of non-native species. Many of these non-native species do not have adverse effects on the areas in which they are introduced, however, some become invasive in their new ranges, disrupting ecosystem function and reducing biodiversity therefore degrading natural areas. Invasive species have been identified as one of the greatest threats to biodiversity, second only to habitat loss. Invasive species can damage native habitats by altering hydrology, fire frequency, soil fertility and other ecosystem processes.

The St. Lawrence Eastern Lake Ontario PRISM (Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management) is a reliable source of information regarding invasive species. PRISMs report and record invasive species occurrences, which are viewable to the public, via the iMapInvasives web application. While the iMapInvasives internet portal (<https://www.nyimainvasives.org/data-and-maps>) does not list any invasive species on



the Properties, that does not mean that they do not exist. There are several invasive species identified nearby, generally on road corridors. Because roads and vehicles are the most common means to spread invasive species, actions must be taken to impart the importance of prevention to the public and to react quickly to new infestations. Best management practices (BMPs) for any improvements on the Properties must be used.

**Table 9. Existing Known Invasive Species Populations in the immediate vicinity**

<b>Invasive Species</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Confirmed</b>
Crested Late-Summer Mint	<i>Elsholtzia ciliata</i>	Terrestrial Plant	Y
Japanese Knotweed	<i>Polygonum cuspidatum</i>	Terrestrial Plant	Y
Pale Swallowwort	<i>Cynanchum rossicum</i>	Terrestrial Plant	Y
Phragmites	<i>Phragmites australis ssp. asutralis</i>	Terrestrial Plant	Y
Purple Loosestrife	<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	Terrestrial Plant	Y

## **G. Cultural Resources**

### **Cultural and Archeological**

There are no Cultural and Archaeological sites reported for the WLCE. However, any findings of potential historical significance should be reported to the Department or the managing forester. This location is not listed as an architectural site under the NYNHP.

### **Visual and Scenic**

There are no recognized mountains or outstanding vistas on the Properties; however, Beaver Lake can be seen from either Property and various wetland complexes and young forests are located throughout the Easements. From the West Road, a generous view of the Beaver Lake Wetlands Complex can be seen. There are several streams and beaver ponds which provide scenic beauty throughout the Properties.

## **H. Economic Impact**

The conservation easement which encumbers the Western Lassiter Tracts is meant to ensure that the Properties will remain privately-owned sustainable working forests, protect natural resources, allow for private recreational leases and for specific public recreation opportunities. The logging industry is an important component of Adirondack Park communities and economies. By facilitating continued traditional management of the Beers Lot and Pine Hill CEs, including forest management and recreational leases, the conservation easement protects these historical and significant economic inputs. Additionally, the protection of natural resources and opening of public recreation opportunities is likely to draw additional visitors to the area to enjoy the natural setting and recreate, expanding tourism and general spending in the vicinity of the WLCE.

# **III. Public Use Administration and Management**

## **A. Management Authority, Staff and Responsibility**

The Regional Natural Resources Supervisor is the Manager of regional staff in the Department's Division of Lands and Forests, the Division of Fish and Wildlife, the Division of Marine Resources and the Division of Mineral Resources. The Division of Lands and Forests has primary responsibility for managing public use of the lands subject to this RMP, including development of this Plan, development of individual work plans and schedules, implementation and coordination of all activities with the Landowner, partners, and other Department Divisions. The Division of Operations, at the request of the Division of Lands and Forests, will oversee construction and maintenance of facilities approved by this RMP. The Regional Forester has overall responsibility for these matters. Reporting to the Regional Forester is a Supervising Forester who is responsible for forestry and land management programs. Reporting to the Supervising Forester are one or more Foresters or Natural Resource Planners that may be assigned to specific tasks in preparing or implementing this Plan. The Regional Fisheries Manager and Regional Wildlife Manager

are responsible for all Division of Fish and Wildlife activities. The Office of Public Protection will be responsible for enforcement of laws and Department rules and regulations. Environmental Conservation Officers and Forest Rangers have primary responsibility for monitoring and enforcement of public use of the Properties.

A land manager will be designated by the Regional Forester as the lead Department staff person for developing and implementing this and subsequent Plans for the WLCE. The land manager will be responsible for:

- Overseeing the coordination and preparation of the RMP, as well as periodic updates, revisions, or amendments;
- Coordinating the implementation of this RMP;
- Overseeing the budget outlined in the RMP;
- Assuring that management activities of all Department Divisions, as they relate to this RMP, comply with applicable laws, regulations, policies, and easement terms;
- Monitoring conditions and public use; addressing conflicts; and assessing the effectiveness of the RMP in addressing resource protection and public needs;
- Fostering communication about management activities within the Department, between the Department and the Landowner, and between the Department and the public. The land manager will be the primary liaison with the Landowner regarding public access and use issues.

The development of this RMP has primarily involved Department staff and the Landowner's land management staff. Communication and coordination of planning efforts between all the parties was critical to formulating management objectives and proposals. Consistent communication is extremely important in preparing and implementing this RMP and adhering to the terms of the Easement. Department staff will regularly communicate with the Landowner to review completed activities, address concerns or problems, and coordinate future work. The Department, Landowner and managing foresters meet, at a minimum, once a year.

## **B. Management Goals and Objectives**

Management goals are broad statements of intent, direction, and purpose. Goals may be based upon law, Department regulations, policies, or general philosophy. Management

objectives are statements that describe specific conditions to manage towards and serve as criteria for deciding what management actions are needed. Objectives are more specific than goals and may be measured or confirmed as having been accomplished within a reasonable timeframe.

Management goals and objectives were developed in consideration of conservation easement terms, Department policies and philosophy, interests of various stakeholders, and use and ownership of the WLCE by the Landowner.

Projected climate change through the 21st century will generate warmer temperatures and changes in precipitation that are expected to decrease the duration and extent of natural snow cover across the northern hemisphere (Wobusa, Small, Hosterman, et al, 2017.) These alterations to the availability and quality of snow has potential to affect snow-dependent winter recreation activities (Perry, Manning, et al, 2018.) Effects upon the predictability and forecast length of the snowmobile season represent a specific concern when drafting management plans such as the CECE RMP. As such, NYSDEC natural resource managers and planners recognize climate change as a serious threat to human and natural systems and are committed to ensuring sustainable natural resources for future generations by identifying climate change vulnerabilities and adaptation strategies that address those vulnerabilities. We are committed to making decisions based on the best available science, which includes resources like the ClimAID Report (New York State Research and Development Authority, 2011), updated in 2014, and the forest ecosystem vulnerability assessments for the Mid-Atlantic (southern New York) and New England and Northern New York, which include information on observed and future climate trends, and also summarize key vulnerabilities for forested natural communities. We also are committed to incorporating that vulnerability information into land management planning by using resources such as the Forest Adaptation Resources: Tools and Approaches for Land Managers document (Swanston et. al., 2016), which outlines an adaptation workbook process and menus of adaptation strategies.

**Goal 1:** Avoid or minimize any negative impacts of public recreation on the natural resources and environmental benefits of the Properties.

### **Objectives**

- 1.1 Enforce all applicable laws and regulations including the Environmental Conservation Law, hunting, fishing, and trapping regulations and seasons.

- 1.2 For all current public recreation facilities and opportunities within areas identified in Natural Heritage Program geospatial data, complete an alternatives analysis addressing environmental impacts and including an alternative in which public facilities are removed and/or recreation opportunities are closed.
- 1.3 When constructing new facilities, infrastructure, or implementing public recreation rights within any area identified in Natural Heritage Program geospatial data, complete an alternatives analysis addressing environmental impacts and including a “no action” alternative.
- 1.4 Do not maintain or establish any snowmobile routes through deer wintering yards, as identified on the map in Appendix F, page 71, without thorough alternatives analysis.
- 1.5 When public facilities are decided to be removed or recreation opportunities to be closed pursuant to this RMP, identify a deadline for such action.
- 1.6 Maintain gates and/or appropriate signage at all intersections of public motorized routes and other motorized and non-motorized corridors.
- 1.7 Follow Best Management Practices (BMPs) identified in Appendix B for all construction and maintenance activities pursuant to this RMP.
- 1.8 Continue monitoring and inventory visits to the Properties to evaluate public recreation impacts on natural resources and complete inspection reports when appropriate

**Goal 2:** Construct, maintain, and manage facilities/infrastructure to facilitate a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities on the Properties, consistent with Department policies and designed to adapt to a climate change-based future.

### **Objectives**

- 2.1 Maintain a total of 1.5 miles of public motor vehicle roads only on the BLCE.
- 2.2 Construct/designate 2 parking areas to serve as access points for the numerous outdoor recreation activities permitted on the BLCE.
- 2.3 Designate 7.0 miles of existing trails on the BLCE for non-motorized public use.
- 2.4 Designate one primitive campsite on the BLCE. Construct at least one universally accessible campsite on the BLCE.
- 2.5 All future maintenance and construction projects will consider the potential effects of climate change (i.e., culverts will be upsized when possible / appropriate).
- 2.6 Create an implementation schedule for all public recreation facility development and implementation.

2.7 The Pine Hill Tract of the Western Lassiter properties is currently inaccessible to the public. The Department should look to future opportunities to provide access through Beers Lot or, if possible, the adjacent wild forest land.

**Goal 3:** Avoid or minimize conflicts between public recreational use and Landowner forest management activities, permitted structures, lessees, and other Reserved Rights.

**Objectives**

- 3.1 Where possible, route new public recreation corridors and facilities at least ¼ mile away from lease camps on the Properties. Where recreation corridors are less than ¼ mile from lease camps, they should be screened by topography and coordinated with the landowner.
- 3.2 Post signage at all lease camp gates to discourage members of the public from parking in front of gates.
- 3.3 Promote partnerships with the landowner and/or recreational constituencies and secure assistance as necessary to complete management actions.

**Goal 4:** Enforce laws and regulations on the Properties.

**Objectives**

- 4.1 Provide support to NYS Forest Rangers and Environmental Conservation Officers who will enforce laws and regulations on the WLCE.

**Goal 5:** Periodically assess the impacts of recreational use on forest management activities, lease camps, and natural resources.

**Objectives**

- 5.1 Monitor facility/infrastructure conditions using Guidelines and Standards outlined in this RMP.
- 5.2 Regularly complete inspection reports evaluating public recreation impacts on natural resources of the WLCE.
- 5.3 Maintain an open dialogue with the landowner or landowner designated Land Manager.

**Goal 6:** Use the WLCE as a conservation education resource.

### **Objectives**

- 6.1 Place environmental and forest management interpretation signage as appropriate.
- 6.2 Develop a better understanding of the natural resources, environmental benefits, and public recreation opportunities and limitations on the Properties.

## **C. Public Use Management**

### **Shared Maintenance of Improvements**

The Conservation Easement provides general guidance on how the costs of maintaining improvements are to be shared. DEC and the Landowner will share the expense of any maintenance or replacement of improvements for public use based on the proportionate amount of use and benefit that each party derives from the open and accessible improvement. A cost sharing agreement, developed by both parties with due consideration to their respective annual budgets and work-plans, shall be discussed, reviewed and updated, at a minimum, each year at the annual meeting or at whatever interim point deemed necessary by either party.

Neither DEC, nor the Landowner, are responsible for assuming a cost that is not commensurate with the interest they have in a particular shared improvement. With that in mind, DEC is solely responsible for incurring costs unique to providing for public access and use; likewise, the Landowner is solely responsible for incurring costs unique to providing for their reserved rights on the Properties. Any damage caused by public recreational activities shall be the responsibility of DEC to repair. Any damage caused by the Landowner's activities (for example, logging operations or lessee access) shall be the responsibility of the Landowner to repair.

When roads and trails are constructed by DEC, they will be generally built to the standards DEC uses on State forest lands (DEC Unpaved Forest Road Handbook, August 2008). On occasion, roads and trails will be constructed and maintained with consideration to standards that have been mutually agreed to by the Landowner and DEC.



## **“Minimum Tool” Management**

DEC allows and promotes public recreational use of the Western Lassiter Tracts to the extent that the adverse physical and social impacts of public use are controlled and reduced to the greatest extent possible. When public recreational use must be controlled to prevent or correct misuse and overuse, it is best to do so by education and the application of the minimum tools, equipment, regulations, or practices necessary that will bring the desired result. To achieve this, DEC uses the “minimum tool” necessary to obtain specific objectives, employing indirect methods (limiting parking, etc.) whenever possible, and developing regulations only where necessary and as a final resort. Existing programs that promote outdoor recreation use and etiquette will be utilized where appropriate and feasible. Examples of successful programs and messages used in other management units include Leave No Trace™ and Tread Lightly!™.

## **Recreation Monitoring and DEC Access**

DEC staff are responsible for the inspection of the Beers Lot and Pine Hill CEs. Monitoring occurs on a regular basis. Additionally, annual meetings between DEC and the Landowner will provide a chance for both parties to express concerns and bring up violations of the Conservation Easement.

## **Law Enforcement**

DEC’s Office of Public Protection will work with the Landowner and DEC Lands and Forests staff to provide recreation enforcement on the Protected Property. Regarding Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use and trespass, Cordell et al. (2004) report that off-highway vehicle (OHV) (i.e., 4-wheelers, off-highway motorcycles/dirt bikes, 4x4s) use has increased on public lands over the past decade. In 2003, 37.6 million people 16 years and older participated in off-highway vehicle riding in the United States (Cordell, et. al., 2004). This trend holds particular significance for public forests in the northeast United States, where the number of people with access to public lands (which is higher than in the west) tends to magnify issues of recreational use. The increasing presence and use of OHVs in the northeastern United States highlight the need to enhance recreation management strategies on public land. OHV operator behaviors such as unauthorized trail creation and use can result in negative social and environmental impacts (D’Luhosch, et. al., 2004).

On the Western Lassiter Tracts, the landowner has the right to use OHV's. The terms of the Beers Lot and Pine Hill CEs include the right for public OHV use; however, this plan does not propose opening any roads to public OHV use (apart from the proposed MAPPWD route) due to concerns regarding private lands and sensitive areas adjoining the Properties. Also, the existing gravel road network on the Western Lassiter tracts is passable by motor vehicles and will be maintained at current standards.

Lands and Forests and DEC law enforcement staff will continue to monitor the property for illegal OHV use – especially as it relates to incursions onto private property and adjacent forest preserve lands.

## **Barriers, Gates, and Locks**

DEC, in consultation with the Landowner, has the right to install barriers and gates to control public access as needed. Both DEC and the Landowner will have access through all locked gates.

- Gates will be wide enough to accommodate tractor trailer log trucks, skidders or other large vehicles. This is generally 16 feet.
- All new and replacement DEC gates will be constructed of materials that will be highly visible and appropriately signed per DEC safety, color, and design standards.
- Gates may be locked occasionally or during certain times of year because of unsafe conditions, during periods of adverse weather (i.e., “mud season”) and to prevent damage to natural resources or infrastructure. **DEC may close any road to any or all public motorized use for any reason, at any time, by posted notice.** Violators may be prosecuted.

## **Recreation Signs**

DEC will be primarily responsible for installing, constructing, and maintaining all signs deemed necessary for identifying access to designated recreational amenities, roads and trails open to the public. Trails will be signed for modes of transportation and types of use. Appropriate signage and maps will be placed in kiosks including information to inform visitors of steps they can take to help prevent the spread of invasive species. The Landowner may elect to place additional signage that they feel is situation appropriate.

## **Logging Closures**

Logging closure zones (LCZs) may be established to temporarily exclude the public from areas of the WLCE to avoid conflicts and safety issues with logging activities and equipment. The Landowner must give DEC 30 days' notice of setting up LCZs, though preferably be identified at the annual meeting.

If a portion of a recreation corridor is closed, the parties will cooperate to identify and provide an alternate corridor. If an alternative route or trail is established, that route shall not remain a permanent trail after the original route has re-opened. Any agreement of this kind will be in writing.

## **Gravel pits**

Current gravel pits are listed on page 18. DEC may transport and use on-property sand and gravel for the maintenance and construction of roads and trails on the Properties that are designated for public use. To minimize negative environmental impact and maintain forested areas, parties should use existing sand and gravel pits when practical and avoid opening new pits unless necessary. New pits are those not identified in the Baseline Documentation. To create a new pit, the Landowner must approve the area or location from which sand and gravel are to be extracted by DEC. DEC will not create new gravel pits within buffer areas as defined by the Easement and will comply with all applicable laws and regulations when extracting sand and gravel. Existing pits within buffer areas may be used as long as operations minimize adverse environmental and visual impacts.

## **D. Proposed Recreation Management Actions**

### **Tract 1 – Pine Hill CE**

There is a detached forest preserve parcel south of the Pine Hill CE (see Existing Facilities map on page 65) with no means of public access. Currently, only landowners adjacent to this forest preserve parcel or the Pine Hill Tract may continue on by foot for recreational purposes.

Subject to the above noted limitation on public access, all forms of non-motorized recreation (hiking, biking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, etc.) and camping will be allowed as it is on other NYSDEC managed lands: all camping will be done at least 150

feet away from any water, roads or trails, firewood may only be gathered from dead and downed material, and fires are only allowed for warmth and/or cooking.

## Tract 2 – Beers Lot CE

The map for Proposed Facilities on the Beers Lot CE can be found in Appendix F on page 66.

### **Proposed Accessible Features**

Tract	Facility	Description
Beers Lot	Accessible Parking Area	Parking area at the intersection of the Main Haul Road and North Road which meets all required accessibility standards.
	Accessible Campsite	Primitive campsite at the intersection of the Main Haul Road and North Road which meets all required accessibility standards.
	MAPPWD Route	Designated route for members of the public that hold a Mobility Access Permit for People with Disabilities (MAPPWD) from the accessible parking area north to the intersection of the North Road and North Road Spur.

### **Motorized Use**

#### **Motor Vehicle Use**

##### ***Conservation Easement Terms***

The Conservation Easement grants the NYSDEC the right to allow public access by motor vehicle, including motorized bicycles, on all presently established roads. The Conservation Easement also grants the NYSDEC the right to construct parking lots as necessary. See Affirmative Rights, Section 1b & 1i of the easement.

##### ***Discussion***

The roads on the Beers Lot CE have not been accessible to the public due to an exclusive rights period granted to the landowner and lessees in the terms of the easement. With

the end of the exclusive rights period on December 31, 2019, this plan proposes that the Main Haul Road be opened to public motor vehicle use to a proposed parking lot and gate.

### ***Management Actions***

This plan proposes to open the Main Haul Road to public motorized use from where it enters the Property via a gate at its intersection with the River Road. Motorized access leads to a proposed parking area and gates at the intersection of the Main Haul Road with the North and South Roads. This route allows recreationists approximately 1.5 miles of motorized access to the interior of the Property. Currently, this route is an unimproved gravel road suitable only for high clearance and 4x4 motor vehicles. This road will not be plowed in the winter.

A parking area designed for persons with disabilities is proposed to be established at an appropriate location 1.5 miles west on the Main Haul Road, at the intersections of Main Haul Road, South Road and North Road, to allow safe parking for public motor vehicles. An informational kiosk is proposed to be installed at the landing nearest the entrance gate on the east end of the Main Haul Road. This landing will serve as an overflow parking area for the Property if necessary.

Two gates will be required at the proposed interior parking area to prevent unauthorized vehicles from continuing on the North or South Roads. The lessees of the easement will retain access through these gates to continue to their camps with motor vehicles.

Beers Lot Conservation Easement signs will be placed in accordance with NYSDEC standards along routes open to the public and the Property's boundary.

## **Snowmobile Use**

### ***Conservation Easement Terms***

The Conservation Easement grants the NYSDEC the right to allow public snowmobile use of all new and presently established roads. See Affirmative Rights, Section 1b and 1h of the easement.

### ***Discussion***

There are currently no public snowmobile trails on this Property.

## ***Management Actions***

Snowmobile access will be allowed along existing roads and trails when there is adequate snow cover. Winter snowmobile access will be allowed for the sole purpose of facilitating hunting/trapping during the appropriate seasons. This plan does not propose to formalize, designate, or build any snowmobile trails on the Property; however, existing roads and trails may be considered for alternatives or future snowmobile trails to be established or created.

## **ATV Use**

### ***Conservation Easement Terms***

The Conservation Easement grants the NYSDEC the right to allow public ATV use of all presently established roads. See Affirmative Rights, Section 1b, Page 2 of the easement.

### ***Discussion***

There are currently no public ATV trails on this Property. Routes designated for Mobility Access Permit for People with Disabilities (MAPPWD) holders provide access to persons with disabilities for the purposes of hunting, bird watching, nature observation, etc.

## ***Management Actions***

This Plan proposes an ATV Route for holders of a MAPPWD. This route will extend 1.3-miles north from an accessible parking area at the intersection of the Main Haul Road and North Road.

## **Non-Motorized Use**

## **Hiking**

### ***Conservation Easement Terms***

The Conservation Easement grants the NYSDEC the right to allow public access to and over the property by foot. See Affirmative Rights, Section 1a, Page 2 of the easement.

### ***Discussion***

Prior to the end of the exclusive rights period, which ended on December 31, 2019, the public could not access the Property. With the end of the exclusive rights period, the Property is opened to public recreation and is, therefore accessible by foot, horseback, dogsled, bike, skis, snowshoes, etc. for purposes of lawful recreation including but not

limited to: hunting, trapping, fishing, bird watching and nature observation, paddling, and hiking.

### ***Management Actions***

The public will have access to approximately seven (7) miles of established roads and trails for hiking, horseback riding, snowshoeing, biking, and other forms of non-motorized recreation, including the portion of the Main Haul Road open to motor vehicles.

## **Paddling**

### ***Conservation Easement Terms***

The Conservation Easement grants the NYSDEC the right to non-motorized access and travel on any navigable streams which cross the property. See Affirmative Rights, Section 1c, Page 2 of the easement.

### ***Discussion***

There are no navigable streams that cross the Property.

### ***Management Actions***

The South Road will provide a 1.0-mile non-motorized access trail to the Beaver Lake Complex in the southern portion of the Beers Lot CE for interested paddlers possessed of navigation skills and portaging experience over rugged, unmarked terrain. Beaver Lake may provide a possible water connection between the two Western Lassiter Tracts.

## **Hunting**

### ***Conservation Easement Terms***

The Conservation Easement grants the NYSDEC the right to allow public hunting in accordance with established seasons and applicable rules and regulations. See Affirmative Rights, Section 1g, Page 3 of the easement.

### ***Discussion***

Historically, hunting has occurred on this Property. From 1989 through 2019, hunting during big game season was available only to the lessees of the Landowner.

Since the conclusion of the exclusive rights period on December 31, 2019, the public is permitted to hunt all established seasons, including big game season, following applicable rules and regulations.

### ***Management Actions***

This plan proposes opening the Property to public hunting during all established seasons, to be facilitated by motorized access on the Main Haul Road and non-motorized / snowmobile access on all other roads and trails.

## **Fishing & Trapping**

### ***Conservation Easement Terms***

The Conservation Easement grants the NYSDEC the right to allow public fishing and trapping in accordance with established seasons and applicable rules and regulations. Affirmative Rights, Section 1f, Page 3 of the easement.

### ***Discussion***

Fishing and trapping have historically occurred on this property.

### ***Management Actions***

This plan proposes formally opening the property to public fishing and trapping, facilitated by motorized access on the Main Haul Road and non-motorized access on all other roads and trails.

## **Camping**

### ***Conservation Easement Terms***

The Conservation Easement grants the NYSDEC the right to allow public camping which will be regulated in the same manner as on existing State lands or in accordance with this RMP. See Affirmative Rights, Section 1d, Page 2 of the easement. Per Affirmative Rights, Section 1e, Page 3, firewood may be gathered from dead and downed trees only for on-site use to build fires for cooking or warmth only.

### ***Discussion***

The public did not previously have motorized access to the Property, which limited camping opportunities. Currently, dispersed camping is allowable and will be regulated similar to other State lands – camps must be at least 150 feet from water or roads, only dead and down wood may be collected and used for firewood and fires are only permissible for cooking and/or warmth.



## ***Management Actions***

This management plan proposes to identify and establish two campsites on the Beers Lot CE. One campsite will be located near the parking area at the interior of the Property and designated and constructed as an accessible campsite for persons with disabilities. A second campsite, located along the West Road, will be designated as a primitive campsite.

## **E. Implementation Schedule**

The improvement and maintenance of the proposed roads, routes, and facilities on the protected property will combine the efforts and resources of the NYSDEC and the landowner. All the proposed management activities will involve input from the landowner; MWF Adirondacks, LLC.

The following tables outline a schedule for implementation of the proposed management actions.

**Table 10. Project Implementation Budget**

	<b>Annual Maintenance</b>
1	Routine maintenance to roads, signs, boundaries, and public recreation facilities.
	<b>Proposed Projects</b>
1	Re-sign all property boundaries, roads, and trails with up-to-date signage.
2	Construct an accessible parking area for persons with disabilities 1.2 miles west on the Main Haul Road.
3	Establish a MAPPWD Route for persons with disabilities along a 1.3-mile stretch of the North Road.
4	Install a gate at the parking area.
5	Install a kiosk at the main landing.
6	Install one primitive campsite.
7	Install one accessible campsite for persons with disabilities.

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## **V. Appendices**

### **A. Management and Policy Considerations**

The Department is responsible for managing public access and recreation in a manner consistent with the terms of the Conservation Easement, applicable laws and regulations. This RMP has been developed within the constraints set forth by the Environmental Conservation Law; Title 6 NYCRR of the State of New York; established Department policy and MOUs; and the terms and conditions of the Conservation Easement that encumbers the WLCE.

#### **Laws and Regulations**

##### ***New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR)***

SEQR requires all state and local government agencies to consider environmental impacts equally with social and economic factors during discretionary decision-making. This means these agencies must assess the environmental significance of all actions they have discretion to approve, fund or directly undertake. SEQR requires the agencies to balance the environmental impacts with social and economic factors when deciding to approve or undertake an action. As the lead agency developing this RMP, the Department completed an Environmental Assessment Form and then published a Negative Declaration.

##### ***Application of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)***

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), along with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title V, Section 504, has a profound effect on the manner by which people with disabilities are afforded equality in their recreational pursuits. The ADA is a comprehensive law prohibiting discrimination against people with disabilities in employment practices, use of public transportation, use of telecommunication facilities, and use of public accommodations.

Consistent with ADA requirements, DEC incorporates accessibility for people with disabilities into siting, planning, construction, and alteration of recreational facilities and assets supporting them. In addition, Title II of the ADA requires, in part, that services, programs, and activities of DEC, when viewed in their entirety, are readily accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. DEC is not required to take any action which

would result in a fundamental alteration to the nature of the service, program, or activity, or would present an undue financial or administrative burden. When accommodating access to a program, DEC is not necessarily required to make each existing facility and asset accessible, as long as the program is accessible by other means or at a different facility.

This plan incorporates an inventory of all the recreational facilities and assets on the unit or area, and an assessment of the programs, services, and facilities provided to determine the level of accessibility. In conducting this assessment, DEC employs guidelines which ensure that programs are accessible, including buildings, facilities, and vehicles, in terms of architecture and design, and the transportation of and communication with individuals with disabilities.

In accordance with the US Department of Justice's ADA Title II regulations, all new DEC facilities, or parts of facilities, that are constructed for public use are to be accessible to people with disabilities. Full compliance is not required where DEC can demonstrate that it is structurally impracticable to meet the requirements [28 CFR § 35.151 (a)]. Compliance is still required for parts of the facility that can be made accessible to the extent that it is not structurally impracticable, and for people with various types of disabilities. In addition, all alterations to facilities, or part of facilities, that affect or could affect the usability of the facility will be made in a manner that the altered portion of the facility is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities [28 CFR § 35.151 (b:1-4)].

DEC uses the Department of Justice's 2010 Standards for Accessible Design in designing, constructing, and altering buildings and sites. For outdoor recreational facilities not covered under the current ADA standards, DEC uses the standards provided under the ABA to lend credibility to the assessment results and to offer protection to the natural resource (ABA Standards for Outdoor Developed Areas; Sections F201.4, F216.3, F244 to F248, and 1011 to 1019).

Any new facilities, assets, and accessibility improvements to existing facilities, or assets proposed in this plan, are identified in the section containing proposed management actions. A record of accessibility determination is kept with the work planning record. For further information, please contact Leah Akins, DEC Statewide ADA Accessibility Coordinator, at [accessibility@dec.ny.gov](mailto:accessibility@dec.ny.gov)

## ***New York Freshwater Wetlands Act***

All activities pursuant to this RMP and future amendments must adhere to permit requirements of the Freshwater Wetlands Act. The Act regulates activities within 100 feet of freshwater wetlands in New York State. The APA administers the Freshwater Wetlands Act inside the Adirondack Park and NYSDEC administers the Act outside the Park.

## ***Section 404 of the Clean Water Act***

The Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) is the agency charged with reviewing projects that could affect any “waters of the United States” under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, including wetlands, irrespective of size. All activities, including dredging and/filling, in water pursuant to this RMP or future amendments, must adhere to permit requirements of the ACOE.

## **Policies and Memoranda**

### ***NYSDEC Directive Documents***

- Temporary Revocable Permits for State Lands and Conservation Easements (ONR-3)
- Volunteer Stewardship Agreements (CP-58; formerly Adopt-A-Natural Resource, ONR-1)
- Motorized Access Program for People With Disabilities (CP-3)
- Standards and Procedures for Boundary Line Maintenance (NR-95-1)

## **Guidelines and Standards**

### **Guidelines**

#### ***NYSDEC Conservation Easement Public Recreation Road and Trail Sign Guidance Manual, 2012***

The manual was developed to standardize signs on conservation easements. It is intended to assist Department staff with the development of clear directions for the public. Signs addressing safety issues on roads are addressed in this guidance manual.

#### ***NYSDEC Standard Accessible Designs for Outdoor Recreational Facilities Guidebook, 2014***

As the Department continues to expand outdoor recreation opportunities, the design process will continue to incorporate research and ingenuity to harmonize accessibility and Universal Design principles to provide a quality visitor experience on state lands, including state easements.

## **Standards**

### **Standards for Public Recreational Roads and Trails**

The Department will maintain Easement roads to the standards outlined in the Unpaved Forest Handbook, typically used on state land. Based on need, funding and Landowner activity, the Department will decide whether portions of trails and roads will be repaired, improved, relocated, or if public use will be temporarily suspended. Road maintenance is a shared cost between the Department and Landowner.

## **B. Best Management Practices**

All public recreation management activities will incorporate the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to the greatest practical extent. BMPs are those methods, procedures, and devices that are designed to prevent or minimize soil erosion, water run-off, damage to natural resources or wildlife habitat, pollution, pathogens, or other negative environmental impacts when conducting various management activities. A list of BMPs will also be included in any work plans written prior to starting projects. BMPs related to the implementation of public access and recreational improvements on the WLCE include, but are not limited to:

- Locating improvements away from streams, wetlands, and unstable slopes;
- Locating improvements to minimize necessary cut and fill;
- Locating camping sites or other structures on flat, stable, well-drained sites;
- Locating roads and parking areas on existing old roads, cleared, or partially cleared areas;
- Locating trails to minimize grade and avoid streams, wetlands, and unstable slopes;
- Avoiding areas where threatened and endangered species are known to exist during any period of the year;
- Limiting the size of parking lots and other improvements to the minimum necessary to meet the intended and anticipated use;
- Minimizing tree cutting;
- Using proper drainage devices, such as water bars and broad-based dips, to prevent erosion and damage to improvements;
- Using stream crossings with low, stable banks, firm stream bottom, and gentle approach slopes;
- Constructing roads, trails, bridges and other stream crossings at right angles to the stream.
- Limiting stream crossings and construction on or near streams to periods of low flow;
- Designing, constructing, and maintaining bridges and other improvements on or near streams to avoid disrupting or preventing movement of fish and other aquatic species.
- Minimizing the use of equipment in streams;
- Using soil stabilization practices on exposed soil around construction areas, especially bridges, immediately after construction;
- Properly clean equipment to prevent the spread of invasive species from one site to another.



## C. Public Comment Summary

### Western Lassiter Scoping Session Comment Responses

A total of five (5) comments were submitted in response to the West Lassiter Tracts RMP draft scoping session, which was conducted from May 15<sup>th</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The comments in **bold** and their corresponding NYS DEC responses in *italics* are below.

1. **“There is no reason to make any changes on the Beers Lot in South Edwards. I have hunted that land for 30 years they have pretty well stripped it of the deer herd and the turkeys. There’s no water, there’s no hiking, it’s a flat piece of land. Leave it the way it is and let the wildlife come back. I think you people need to take into consideration the camps around that property. If you opened it up to access of traffic all you’re asking for is the camps to be broken into constantly.”**

*Thank you for your comments. The terms of the Conservation Easement allow for public access to the West Lassiter tracts, which includes the Beers Lot. The people of the State of New York paid for the recreational rights included in those terms, including the right to hunt, fish, hike, etc. There are numerous bodies of water on the tract including the small ponds and potential access to Beaver Lake. Hiking takes many forms and the tracts included in this RMP offer a variety of topography and interest.*

*The draft RMP considers private lease camps in its proposed management goals and objectives. Goals 3, 4, and 5 (beginning on page 32) and associated objectives look to minimize conflicts between the public and lessees, address law enforcement, and assess impacts associated with public recreation. There are currently hundreds of historic hunting/lease camps on Conservation Easements throughout the region. Break-ins have been reported but are not common. All Conservation Easement properties with public rights are patrolled by NYS Forest Rangers and Environmental Conservation Officers.*

2. **“The Beers Lot easement has the potential for some great recreational development. Below are some ideas for consideration. I live in Edwards and would be greatly interested in new recreational opportunities nearby.**

- It appears that the northern end of Beaver Lake falls within this easement. This would be a desirable location for a lean-to (if allowed on an easement) or at least primitive campsites.
- The existing network of woods/logging roads could easily be developed for seasonal vehicle access with the addition of a seasonal mud gate. If motor vehicle access was not granted, perhaps these roads could be used as MAPPWD trails.
- If vehicle access was to be allowed, a hand launch at Beaver Lake would be a nice addition to the easement.
- Development of hiking/snowshoeing/ski trails would be a welcome addition to the easement.

**Thanks for the opportunity to offer input on this easement's RMP."**

*Conservation Easements are negotiated agreements between the landowner and New York State. Planning for the management of these rights centers on the need to provide public access in a manner that protects the natural resources on and connected to the protected property. The draft Western Lassiter RMP proposes opportunities and facilities designed to meet this dual mandate. The RMP proposes about 1.5-miles of motor vehicle use, 1.3-miles of ATV use for MAPPWD permit holders, and about 7-miles of non-motorized use on existing roads and trails. Gates have been proposed in locations to facilitate proposed uses. Two designated campsites are proposed in the draft RMP and dispersed camping is allowed according to current regulations. Paddling opportunities on the properties are not ideal for the average paddler, therefore no formal hand launch is proposed. See the Proposed Recreation Management Action section beginning on page 36 for additional information. Thank you for the thoughtful and specific recommendations.*

3. **"As an avid hunter, I, as well as a number of hunters in St. Lawrence County, would like to see more archery-only pieces of public property to have opportunities at larger bucks."**

*The terms of the easement allow hunting by the public in accordance with established seasons and applicable rules and regulations. Current regulations allow for taking of deer, in the area, by various implements and during the*

*appropriate season. Changing the regulations to taking deer by bow-only is outside the scope of this RMP.*

4. **“Please consider more horseback riding trails. And no hunting or trapping. Whippoorwill State Forest is great, but more trails would be welcome in this area. Thank you.”**

*All forms of recreation that the State has rights for, were evaluated when proposing public access in the draft RMP. Horseback riding and other forms of non-motorized use are proposed on about seven miles of existing roads and trails. Hunting and trapping are popular recreational activities that are also being proposed on the property.*

5. **“As with most of these easements, I know you'll work to restrict unnecessary motorized traffic and maintain habitat. These areas look interesting. Representing the ADK Conservation Committee, let me know if we can help with suggestions for non-motorized access trails or public education. I look forward to exploring there in the future.”**

*All Conservation Easements where the state has negotiated for public rights provide for access appropriate to the tract. Recreational rights are balanced against the need to protect natural resources and the rights retained by the landowner. The scoping process and subsequent public comment period for the draft plan allow individuals and interest groups to participate in the process.*

## **D. SEQRA**

The State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) requires the consideration of environmental factors early in the planning stages of any proposed action(s) that are undertaken, funded or approved by a local, regional or state agency. A Full Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) has been prepared and was used to identify and analyze relevant areas of environmental concern based upon the management actions in this proposed management plan.

**Full Environmental Assessment Form**  
**Part 3 - Evaluation of the Magnitude and Importance of Project Impacts**  
**and**  
**Determination of Significance**

Part 3 provides the reasons in support of the determination of significance. The lead agency must complete Part 3 for every question in Part 2 where the impact has been identified as potentially moderate to large or where there is a need to explain why a particular element of the proposed action will not, or may, result in a significant adverse environmental impact.

Based on the analysis in Part 3, the lead agency must decide whether to require an environmental impact statement to further assess the proposed action or whether available information is sufficient for the lead agency to conclude that the proposed action will not have a significant adverse environmental impact. By completing the certification on the next page, the lead agency can complete its determination of significance.

**Reasons Supporting This Determination:**

To complete this section:

- Identify the impact based on the Part 2 responses and describe its magnitude. Magnitude considers factors such as severity, size or extent of an impact.
- Assess the importance of the impact. Importance relates to the geographic scope, duration, probability of the impact occurring, number of people affected by the impact and any additional environmental consequences if the impact were to occur.
- The assessment should take into consideration any design element or project changes.
- Repeat this process for each Part 2 question where the impact has been identified as potentially moderate to large or where there is a need to explain why a particular element of the proposed action will not, or may, result in a significant adverse environmental impact.
- Provide the reason(s) why the impact may, or will not, result in a significant adverse environmental impact
- For Conditional Negative Declarations identify the specific condition(s) imposed that will modify the proposed action so that no significant adverse environmental impacts will result.
- Attach additional sheets, as needed.

**Q1. Impact on Land**

h. Other impacts:

The following Best Management Practices will be followed for the construction of parking areas and campsites:

Where possible, flat, stable, well-drained sites which have already been cleared, such as old log landings, will be used;

The parking areas will be sloped such that storm water runoff will not drain in the direction of any streams or wetlands, in order to minimize soil erosion and sedimentation;

Gravel will be used to avoid runoff and decrease the likelihood of erosion. Some grading and raking may be required.

Designation of MAPPWD Route:

The route will be along an existing 1.3-mile long stretch of road currently suitable for OHV / 4X4 vehicle passage. Signage will be put in place to discourage OHV trespass anywhere other than the designated MAPPWD route. Gravel may be used to improve the route to avoid runoff and decrease the likelihood of erosion. Some grading and raking may be required.

**Q7. Impacts on Plants and Animals**

j. Other impacts:

The construction of parking lots and campsites may involve the removal of trees and possibly tree stumps. As few trees as possible will be cut for construction. Each of the projects discussed in this RMP will be addressed in a project work plan detailing the number of trees to be removed and other specific project information prior to any work on the ground.

As discussed in the RMP, gates and other barriers will be put in place to protect sensitive areas from being accessed via motor vehicle, such as the wetlands along both the North and South Roads. Monitoring these control points will ensure continued protection of these sensitive areas.

By following the Best Management Practices set forth in this Negative Declaration, the measures put in place to protect sensitive areas, and the limited development proposed in this RMP, there is not expected to be any significant adverse environmental impacts associated with proposed projects in the Western Lassiter RMP.

**Determination of Significance - Type 1 and Unlisted Actions**

SEQR Status: ☒ Type 1 ☐ Unlisted

Identify portions of EAF completed for this Project: ☒ Part 1 ☒ Part 2 ☒ Part 3

FEAF 2019

**Western Lassiter Tracts Conservation Easements**  
**Draft Recreation Management Plan**

Upon review of the information recorded on this EAF, as noted, plus this additional support information  
A map depicting proposed public recreation facilities is attached. Public use of the property will be consistent with proposed facilities and existing uses.

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and considering both the magnitude and importance of each identified potential impact, it is the conclusion of the  
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation as lead agency that:

☒ A. This project will result in no significant adverse impacts on the environment, and, therefore, an environmental impact statement need not be prepared. Accordingly, this negative declaration is issued.

☐ B. Although this project could have a significant adverse impact on the environment, that impact will be avoided or substantially mitigated because of the following conditions which will be required by the lead agency:

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There will, therefore, be no significant adverse impacts from the project as conditioned, and, therefore, this conditioned negative declaration is issued. A conditioned negative declaration may be used only for UNLISTED actions (see 6 NYCRR 617.7(d)).

☐ C. This Project may result in one or more significant adverse impacts on the environment, and an environmental impact statement must be prepared to further assess the impact(s) and possible mitigation and to explore alternatives to avoid or reduce those impacts. Accordingly, this positive declaration is issued.

Name of Action: Western Lassiter Conservation Easement - Beers Lot and Pine Hill Tracts

Name of Lead Agency: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Name of Responsible Officer in Lead Agency: Kramer Kwaczala

Title of Responsible Officer: Forester 1

Signature of Responsible Officer in Lead Agency: Kramer Kwaczala Date: 6/23/22

Signature of Preparer (if different from Responsible Officer) Kramer Kwaczala for Peter D'luhosch Date: 6/23/22

**For Further Information:**  
 Contact Person: Peter D'luhosch  
 Address: 190 Outer Main St., Suite 103, Potsdam, NY 13676  
 Telephone Number: (315) 265-3090  
 E-mail: peter.dluhosch@dec.ny.gov

**For Type 1 Actions and Conditioned Negative Declarations, a copy of this Notice is sent to:**  
 Chief Executive Officer of the political subdivision in which the action will be principally located (e.g., Town / City / Village of)  
 Other involved agencies (if any)  
 Applicant (if any)  
 Environmental Notice Bulletin: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/enb/enb.html>

**PRINT FULL FORM**

Page 2 of 2

## Western Lassiter Tracts Conservation Easements Draft Recreation Management Plan

## E. Inventory Lists (cont.)

### Breeding Bird Atlas Inventory List

Common Name	Scientific Name	NY Legal Status
Alder Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax alnorum</i>	Protected
American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	Game Species
American Goldfinch	<i>Spinus tristis</i>	Protected
American Redstart	<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>	Protected
American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	Protected
Baltimore Oriole	<i>Icterus galbula</i>	Protected
Belted Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>	Protected
Black-and-white Warbler	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>	Protected
Black-billed Cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus erythrophthalmus</i>	Protected
Black-capped Chickadee	<i>Poecile atricapillus</i>	Protected
Black-throated Blue Warbler	<i>Dendroica caerulescens</i>	Protected
Black-throated Green Warbler	<i>Dendroica virens</i>	Protected
Blackburnian Warbler	<i>Dendroica fusca</i>	Protected
Blue Jay	<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>	Protected
Blue-headed Vireo	<i>Vireo solitarius</i>	Protected
Bobolink	<i>Dolichonyx oryzivorus</i>	Protected
Broad-winged Hawk	<i>Buteo platypterus</i>	Protected
Brown Creeper	<i>Certhia americana</i>	Protected
Brown-headed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus ater</i>	Protected
Brown Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma rufum</i>	Protected
Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	Game Species
Canada Warbler	<i>Wilsonia canadensis</i>	Protected
Cedar Waxwing	<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>	Protected
Chestnut-sided Warbler	<i>Dendroica pensylvanica</i>	Protected
Chipping Sparrow	<i>Spizella passerina</i>	Protected
Common Grackle	<i>Quiscalus quiscula</i>	Protected
Common Loon	<i>Gavia immer</i>	Protected-Special Concern
Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Protected
Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	Protected
Downy Woodpecker	<i>Picoides pubescens</i>	Protected



Eastern Bluebird	<i>Sialia sialis</i>	Protected
Eastern Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus tyrannus</i>	Protected
Eastern Meadowlark	<i>Sturnella magna</i>	Protected
Eastern Phoebe	<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>	Protected
Eastern Towhee	<i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus</i>	Protected
Eastern Wood-Pewee	<i>Contopus virens</i>	Protected
European Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Unprotected
Evening Grosbeak	<i>Coccothraustes vespertinus</i>	Protected
Field Sparrow	<i>Spizella pusilla</i>	Protected
Gray Catbird	<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>	Protected
Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	Protected
Great Crested Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus crinitus</i>	Protected
Hairy Woodpecker	<i>Picoides villosus</i>	Protected
Hermit Thrush	<i>Catharus guttatus</i>	Protected
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Unprotected
House Wren	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>	Protected
Indigo Bunting	<i>Passerina cyanea</i>	Protected
Least Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax minimus</i>	Protected
Magnolia Warbler	<i>Dendroica magnolia</i>	Protected
Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	Protected
Mourning Warbler	<i>Oporornis philadelphia</i>	Protected
Nashville Warbler	<i>Vermivora ruficapilla</i>	Protected
Northern Flicker	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>	Protected
Northern Waterthrush	<i>Seiurus noveboracensis</i>	Protected
Olive-sided Flycatcher	<i>Contopus cooperi</i>	Protected
Ovenbird	<i>Seiurus aurocapilla</i>	Protected
Pileated Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus pileatus</i>	Protected
Pine Warbler	<i>Dendroica pinus</i>	Protected
Purple Finch	<i>Carpodacus purpureus</i>	Protected
Red-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta canadensis</i>	Protected
Red-eyed Vireo	<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>	Protected
Red-shouldered Hawk	<i>Buteo lineatus</i>	Protected- Special Concern
Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	Protected
Red-winged Blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>	Protected
Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	Unprotected



Rose-breasted Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus ludovicianus</i>	Protected
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	<i>Archilochus colubris</i>	Protected
Savannah Sparrow	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>	Protected
Scarlet Tanager	<i>Piranga olivacea</i>	Protected
Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	Protected
Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>	Protected
Swamp Sparrow	<i>Melospiza georgiana</i>	Protected
Tree Swallow	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>	Protected
Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	Protected
Veery	<i>Catharus fuscescens</i>	Protected
Warbling Vireo	<i>Vireo gilvus</i>	Protected
Whip-poor-will	<i>Caprimulgus vociferus</i>	Protected- Special Concern
White-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>	Protected
White-throated Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>	Protected
Wild Turkey	<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>	Game Species
Willow Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax traillii</i>	Protected
Winter Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Protected
Wood Thrush	<i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>	Protected
Yellow Warbler	<i>Dendroica petechia</i>	Protected
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>	Protected
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>	Protected
Yellow-rumped Warbler	<i>Dendroica coronata</i>	Protected
Yellow-throated Vireo	<i>Vireo flavifrons</i>	Protected

<b>Herpetofauna Atlas Inventory ListCommon Name</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>NY Legal Status</b>
Blanding's Turtle	<i>Emydoidea blandingii</i>	Protected – Threatened
Blue-spotted Salamander	<i>Ambystoma laterale</i>	Protected – Special Concern
Bullfrog	<i>Rana catesbeiana</i>	Game species with season
Common Garter Snake	<i>Thamnophis sirtalis</i>	Unprotected
Common Snapping Turtle	<i>Chelydra s. serpentina</i>	Game species with season
Eastern American Toad	<i>Bufo a. americanus</i>	Game species with season
Eastern Milk Snake	<i>Lampropeltis t. triangulum</i>	Unprotected
Eastern Ribbon Snake	<i>Thamnophis sauritus</i>	Unprotected
Four-toed Salamander	<i>Hemidactylium scutatum</i>	Unprotected– High Priority
Gray Treefrog	<i>Hyla versicolor</i>	Game species with season
Green Frog	<i>Rana clamitans melanota</i>	Game species with season
Jefferson Salamander	<i>Ambystoma jeffersonianum</i>	Protected – Special Concern
Mink Frog	<i>Rana septentrionalis</i>	Game species with season
Northern Brown Snake	<i>Storeria d. dekayi</i>	Unprotected
Northern Leopard Frog	<i>Rana pipiens</i>	Game species with season
Northern Redback Salamander	<i>Plethodon c. cinereus</i>	Unprotected
Northern Redbelly Snake	<i>Storeria o. occipitomaculata</i>	Unprotected
Northern Spring Peeper	<i>Pseudacris c. crucifer</i>	Game species with season
Northern Two-lined Salamander	<i>Eurycea bislineata</i>	Unprotected
Northern Water Snake	<i>Nerodia s. sipedon</i>	Unprotected
Painted Turtle	<i>Chrysemys picta</i>	Unprotected
Pickerel Frog	<i>Rana palustris</i>	Game species with season
Spotted Salamander	<i>Ambystoma maculatum</i>	Unprotected

**Western Lassiter Tracts Conservation Easements  
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Spotted Turtle	<i>Clemmys guttata</i>	Protected – Special Concern
Wood Frog	<i>Rana sylvatica</i>	Game species with season

New York Natural Heritage Program  
Element Occurrence Record



Species particularly subject to collection and disturbance if location made public: Yes

**Scientific Name:** *Neottia bifolia*

**Common Name:** Southern Twayblade

**Element Group:** Vascular Plant

**NY State Listed:** Endangered

**US Listed:**

**State Rank:** S1S2

**Global Rank:** G4

**Location(s):** Fine

**Date Last Documented:** 1909-08-06

**Date First Documented:** 1909-08-06

**Date Last Surveyed:** no date

**ID Confirmed:** Y

**Observation Date:**

1909-08-06

**Observation EO Data:**

Extant.

**EO Rank:** II - Historical

**EO Rank Comments:**

**EO Data:**

**Site Description:** Big swamp.

**Directions:** Fine (Big Swamp).

**Acres:** 0

**Threats:**

**Management Comments:**

**Protection Comments:**

**County(s):** St. Lawrence

**Town(s):** Fine

**Managed Area(s):** Adirondack Park, Aldrich Pond Wild Forest, Bonner Lake State Forest, Grasse River Wild Forest, St Lawrence-04 State Forest (Greenwood Creek State Forest), St Lawrence-18 State Forest (Cold Spring Brook State Forest), St Lawrence-43 State Forest (Stammer Creek State Forest)

**Primary Reference:**

**Mapping Precision:** G

**Included in Filtered EOs Layer?** Yes

**Principal/Sub EO:**

**Number of Sub EO's:**

**EO\_ID of Principal EO:**

**EO\_ID:** 8498

**ELCODE:** PMORC1N020

**EO Num:** 4

**Shape\_ID:** 6492

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New York Natural Heritage Program  
Element Occurrence Record



**Scientific Name:** *Maple-basswood rich mesic forest*

**Common Name:** Maple-Basswood Rich Mesic Forest

**Element Group:** Community

**ID Confirmed:** Y

**NY State Protection Status:** Unlisted

**State Conservation Status Rank:** S3

**US Listed:**

**Global Conservation Status Rank:** G4

**Location Name(s) for this EO:** Pitcairn Forest

**Date EO Last Observed:** 2018-06-03

**Date EO Last Surveyed:** 2008-07-25

**Date EO First Observed:** 1968-04-13

**EO Rank:** AB - Excellent or good estimated viability

**EO Rank Comments:** 2008: This is an enormous matrix forest occurrence with both maturing and apparently mature patches, including very large, moderately protected, little disturbed sub-occurrences with excellent biotic diversity. The forest is located near the edge of, but remains generally well connected to, its moderately large, locally intact, remote forest landscapes. Exotic species are essentially lacking but many unnatural disturbances and displacements are present.

**Site Description:** This maple-basswood dominated matrix forest covers marble foothills of the northwest Adirondacks. At higher elevations, bedrock is more acidic and the forest grades into beech-maple mesic forest. At lower elevations wetlands and agricultural lands dominate, reducing the forest to large and small patches. The largest patches are centered around Cold Spring Brook State Forest/Graham Park, Aldrich Pond Wild Forest and Greenwood Creek State Forest. Overall five patches exceed 900 acres in size, while 86 are under 90 acres. A major secondary road bisects the community, and two major utility corridors have fragmented the forest into a number of the sub-occurrence patches. The displacement associated with the road bisection has left only 8 narrow natural corridors connecting the two halves. About half of the community is in moderate-sized landscape units of about 5,000-10,000 acres. The remainder occurs in 581,000 acres unobscured by roads and a 54,000 acre undisplaced forest core.

**EO Data:** 2008: This is a rich to semi-rich *Acer saccharum*-*Tilia americana* dominated matrix forest, with varying age classes and disturbance levels, covering hills of marble bedrock with diverse spring wild flowers and vertebrate animals. Numerous small rocky headwater creeks, ponds and deciduous forested sinkhole wetlands are embedded within the forest. The tree canopy (averaging 25 m and 75%) is well developed and the subcanopy is local (averaging 13 m and 30% where it is present). The canopy dominants are *Acer saccharum* (28-55%), *Tilia americana* (0-50%), and *Fraxinus americana* (0-14%) with *Prunus serotina* (0-15%) as a frequent associate. The subcanopy is best developed in the areas still recovering from logging with *Acer saccharum* (0-16%), *Ostrya virginiana* (0-26%), *Tilia americana* (0-7%), and *Fraxinus americana* as its most prevalent species. In the patchy, tall shrub layer (averaging 3.6 m and 15%) *Carpinus caroliniana* (0-6%), *Acer saccharum* (7%), *Tilia americana* (0-2%), *Ostrya virginiana* (0-4%), and *Acer pensylvanicum* (0-6%) are the most common species. The short shrub layer (averages 1 m and 12%) with *Ribes* sp. (0-5%), *Carpinus caroliniana* (0-4%), *Acer pensylvanicum* (0-3%), and *Ostrya virginiana* (0-2%) as its most abundant species. Seedling *Acer rubrum* and *Fraxinus americana* also occur but at 1% or less cover, and in the more disturbed areas *Rubus* sp. (0-4%) are also present. The herb layer is diverse and locally varied with 40-78% cover including *Adiantum pedatum* (0-30%), *Caulophyllum thalictroides* (0-18%), *Allium tricoccum* (0-10%), *Aralia nudicaulis* (0-9%), *Solidago caesia* (0-9%), *Tiarella cordifolia* (0-6%), and locally *Prosartes lanuginosa* (0-20%) as its most abundant species. The community is very diverse with at least 66 species including many rich indicators. The non-vascular layer has only 3% cover. Large calcareous rocks are abundant (15%). Characteristic species include *Juglans cinerea*, *Cornus alternifolia*, *Dirca palustris*, *Oryzopsis asperifolia*, *Geranium robertianum*, and *Trillium grandiflorum* among others. Animals include many forest interior birds (e.g., vireos) and large mammals (e.g., bobcats). Microhabitat features include seeps with *Tiarella cordifolia*, canopy gaps, rock complexes with fissures, and large decaying logs. In mature areas *Tilia americana* ranges to 78 cm dbh, and *Fraxinus americana* to 58 cm dbh and 122 years old.

**Directions:** The matrix forest spans roughly from 1 mile southeast of Harrisville (southwest corner) to 1 mile southeast of Fullerville (northwest corner) to the village of Fine (northeast corner) to 1 mile southeast of Kalurah (southeast corner). The forest is accessible from Route 3, Edwards Road, Garrison Road, Fullerville Road, and Jayville Road. From Harrisville, drive approximately 3.0 miles northeast on Highway 3 and turn north on Edwards Road. Continue for a little more than 0.6 miles, turn northwest on Fullerville Road, drive another 0.6 miles and park, and walk east or west into the forest.

**Acres:** 14,877

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**Western Lasser Tracts Conservation Easements  
Draft Recreation Management Plan**

**Threats:** The primary threat is the loss of the forest's integrity as a matrix occurrence, primarily through geographically extensive, unnatural canopy removal; extensive fragmentation and intrusions; and a loss of internal natural corridors.

**Management Comments:** Work to maintain and restore the forest's integrity as a matrix community, ideally by minimizing fragmentation, restoring old-growth cores, minimizing clearcuts in buffer zones, and restoring wide forest corridors across Route 3. Consider designating the best areas on the state forests as protection management status, particularly in the thin soiled areas of rugged terrain.

**Protection Comments:** Explore obtaining better protection of the sub-occurrences, ideally through timber easements or management agreements. Acquisition of forested corridors across Route 3 is needed.

**County(s):** Lewis, St. Lawrence

**Town(s):** Diana, Edwards, Fine, Fowler, Pitcairn

**Managed Area(s):** Adirondack Park, Aldrich Pond Wild Forest, Lewis-990 (Forest Preserve Detached Parcel), St Lawrence-04 State Forest (Greenwood Creek State Forest), St Lawrence-16 State Forest (Toothaker Creek State Forest), St Lawrence-18 State Forest (Cold Spring Brook State Forest)

**Primary Reference:** Spencer, Elizabeth A. 2008. Field survey to Pitcairn Forest Toothaker of July 25, 2008.

**Mapping Precision:** Medium

**Included in Project Screening EOs?** Yes

**Principal/Sub EO:**

**Number of Sub EO's:**

**EO\_ID of Principal EO:**

**EO\_ID:** 7316

**ELCODE:** CTERFC0J00

**EO Num:** 7

**Shape\_ID:** 31262

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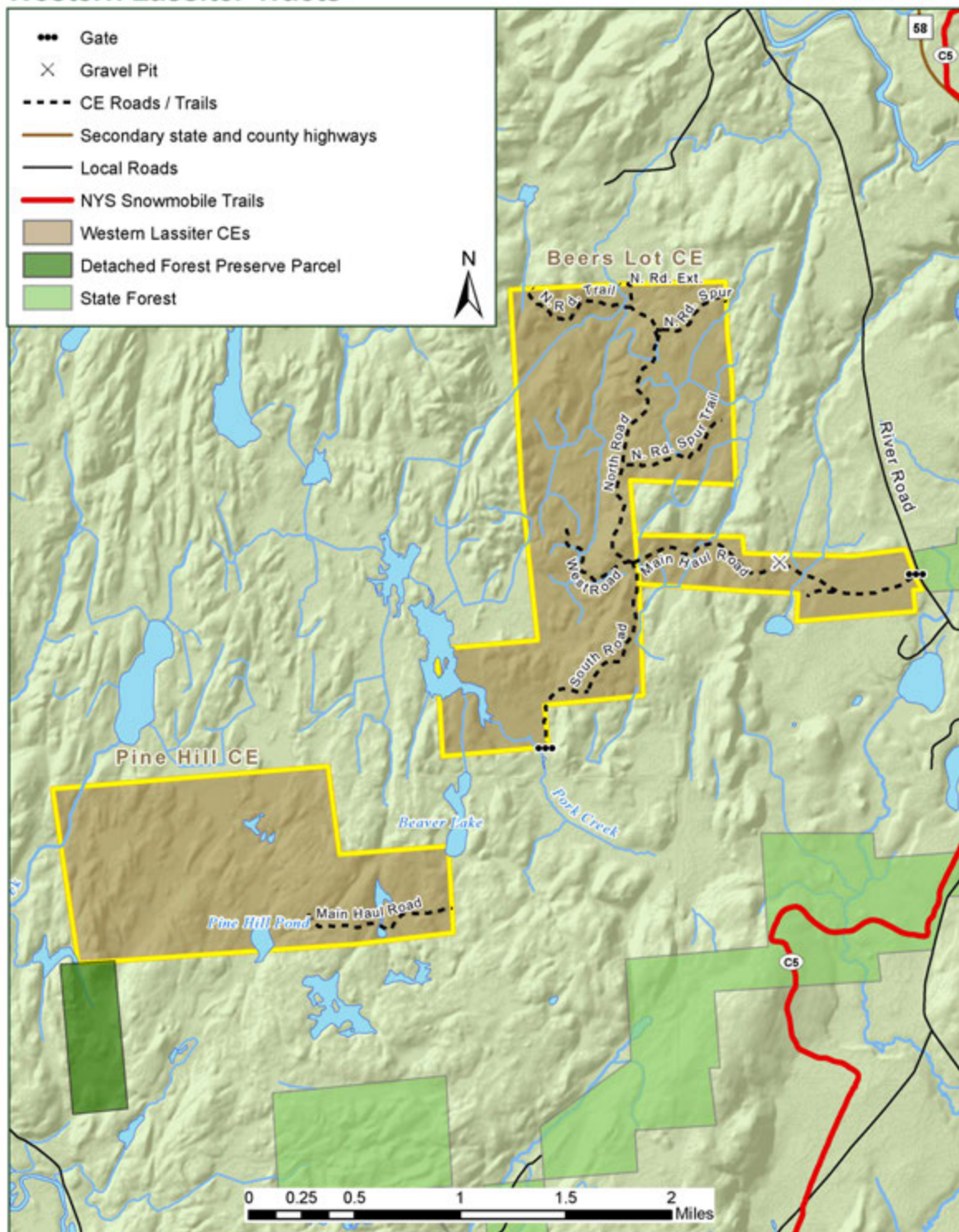
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## Western Lasser Tracts Conservation Easements Draft Recreation Management Plan

## **F. Maps**

1. Existing Facilities Map (page 65)
2. Proposed Facilities Map (page 66)
3. Soils (page 67)
4. Hydrography (page 68)
5. Breeding Bird Atlas Blocks (page 69)
6. Herpetofauna Atlas Blocks & USGS Quads (page 70)
7. Deer Wintering Yards (page 71)



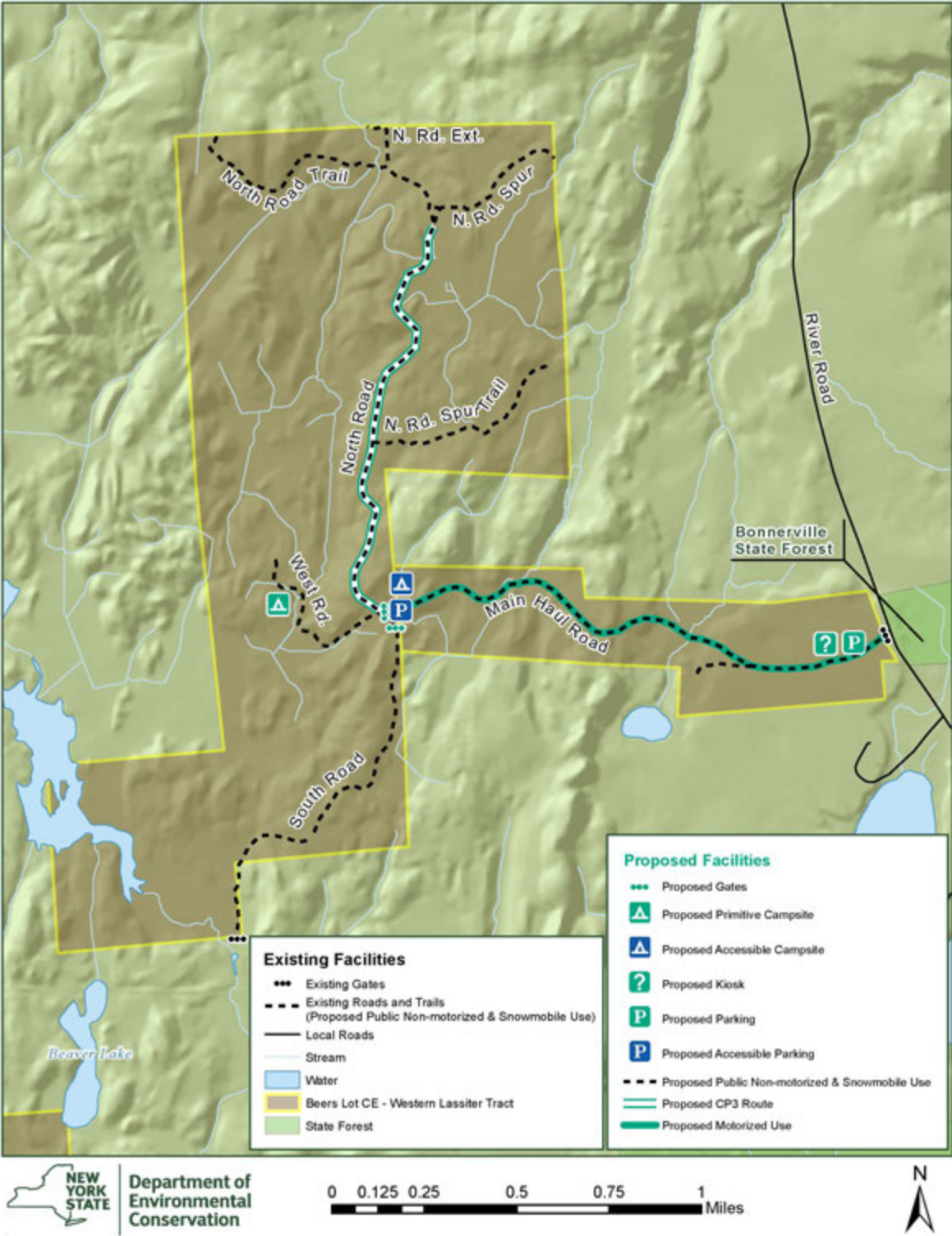


# Western Lassiter Tracts Conservation Easements Draft Recreation Management Plan



Beers Lot - Western Lassiter Tracts

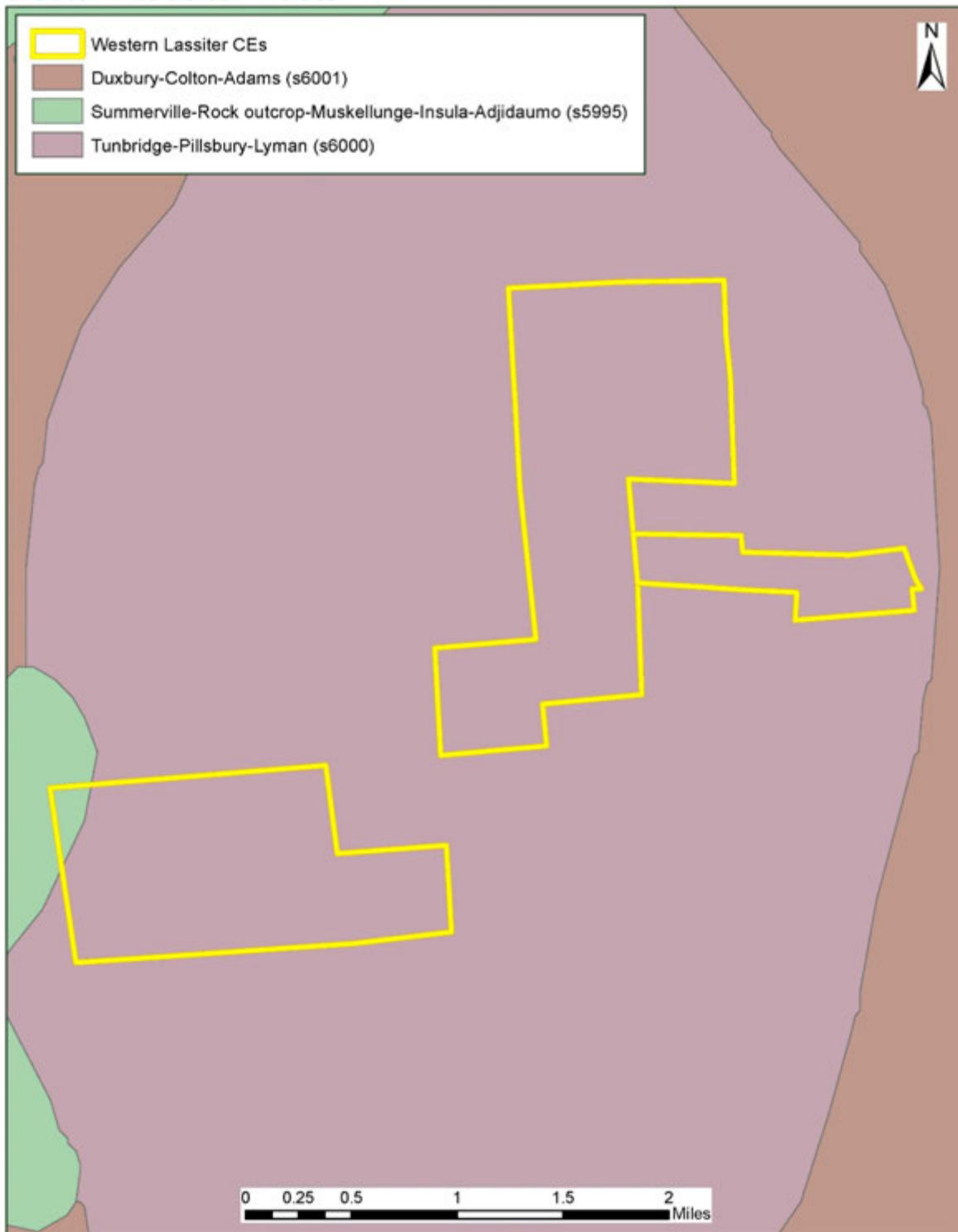
Proposed Facilities



Western Lassiter Tracts Conservation Easements  
**Draft** Recreation Management Plan

## Western Lassiter Tracts

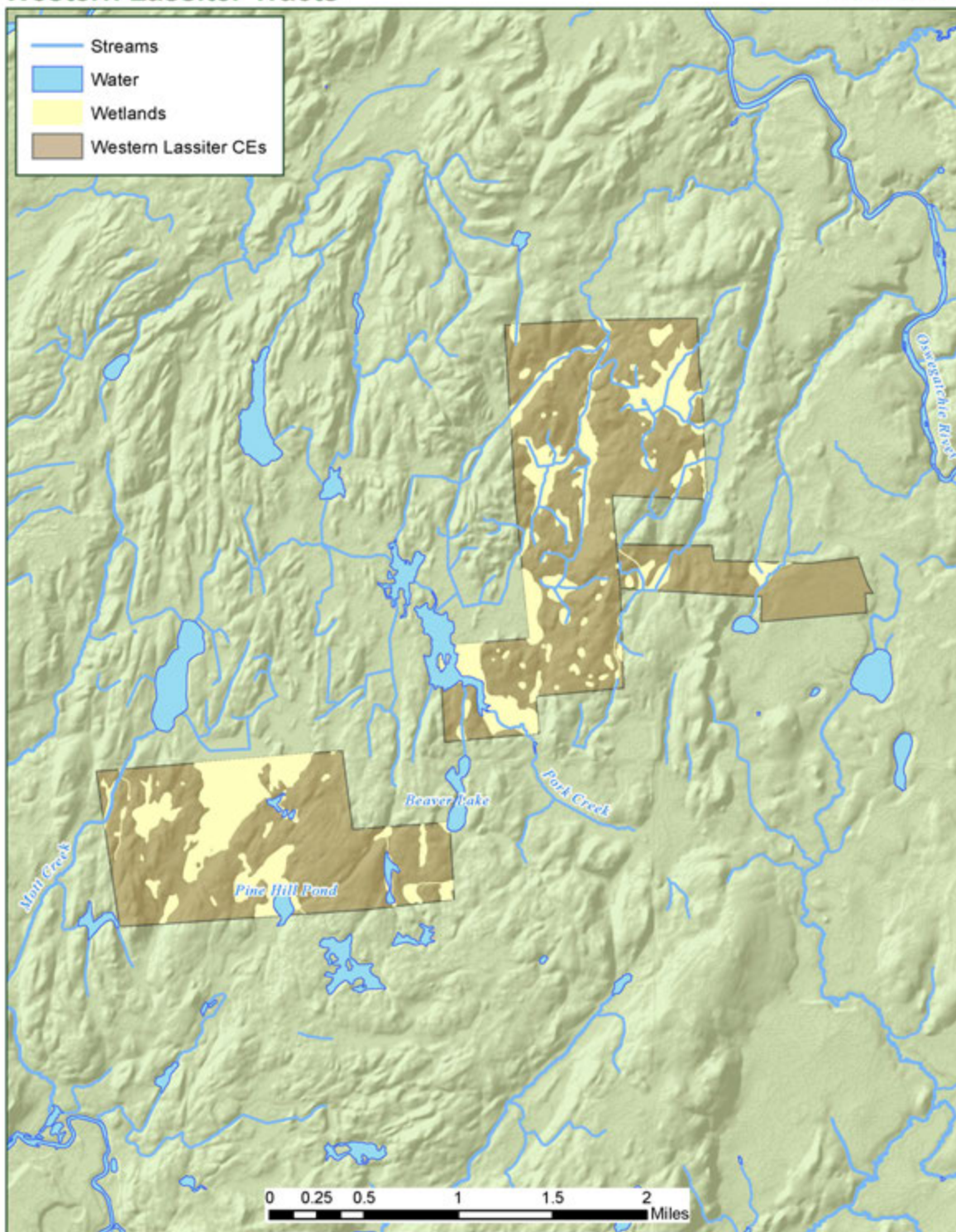
Soils



### Western Lassiter Tracts Conservation Easements Draft Recreation Management Plan

## Western Lassiter Tracts

Hydrography

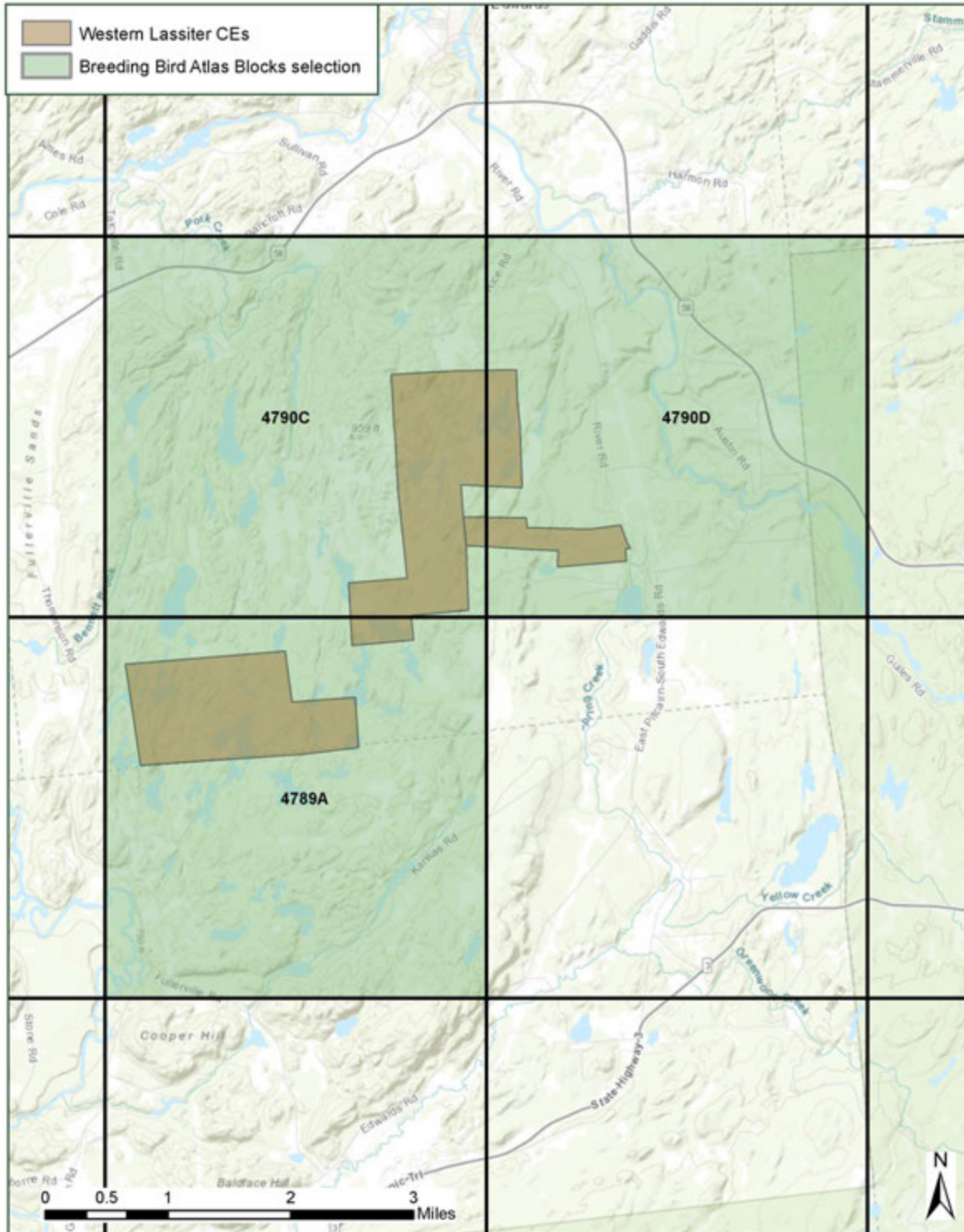


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## Western Lassiter Tracts

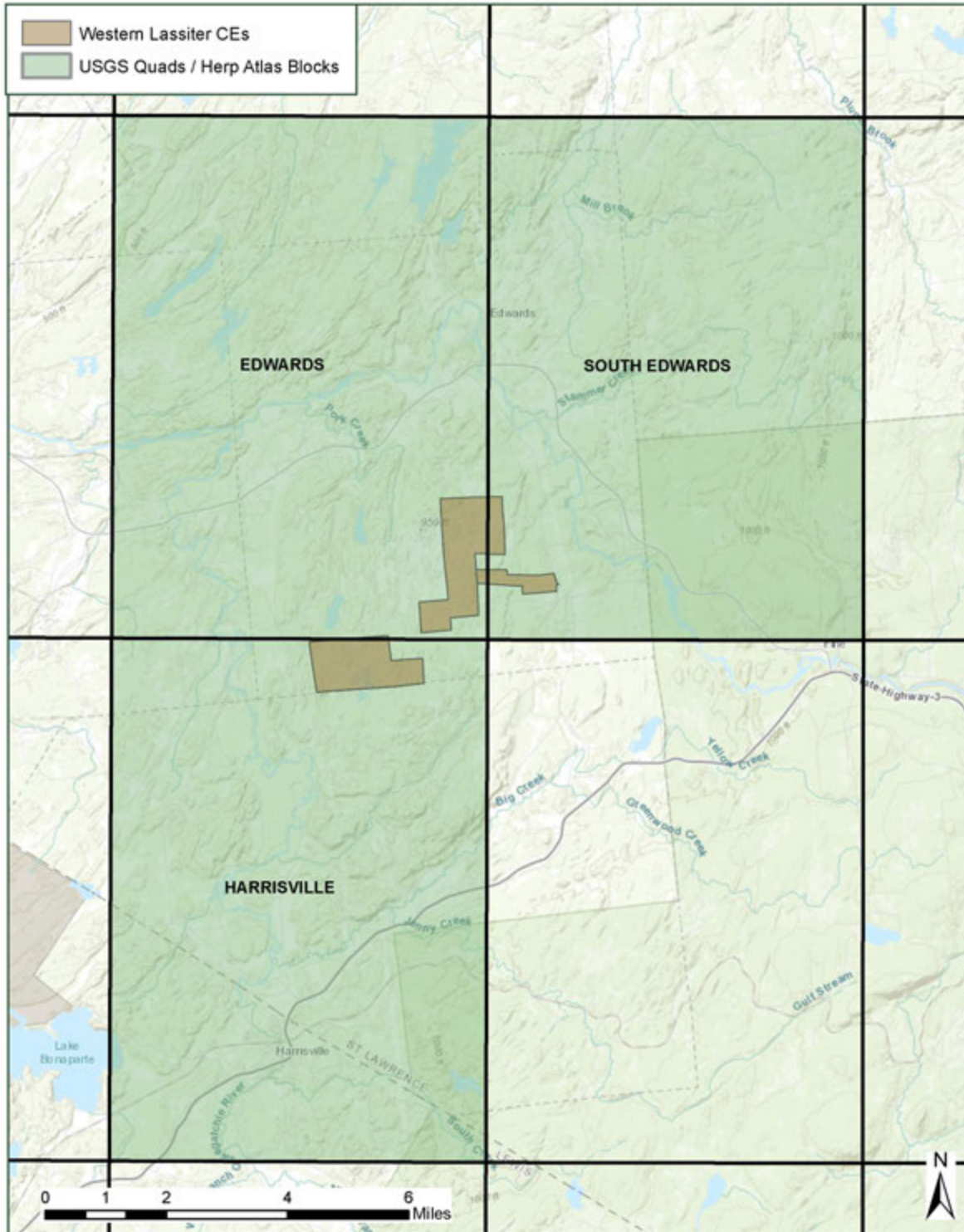
## Breeding Bird Atlas Blocks



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## Western Lassiter Tracts

USGS 7.5 min Quads

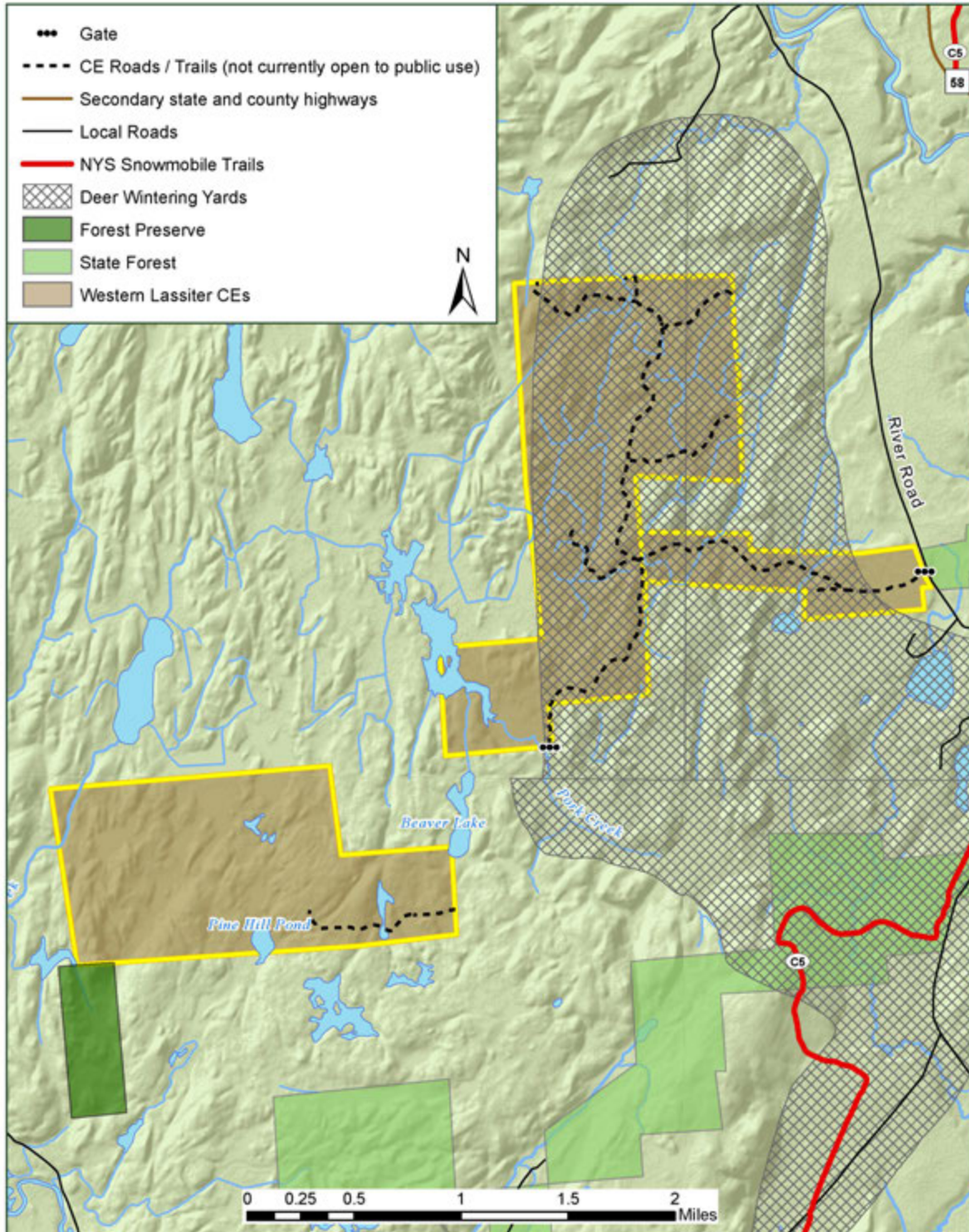


## Western Lassiter Tracts Conservation Easements Draft Recreation Management Plan



## Western Lassiter Tracts

## Deer Wintering Yards



## Western Lassiter Tracts Conservation Easements Draft Recreation Management Plan