

Forest Preserve Work Plan
for
Construction of New Facilities and Expansion or
Modification of Existing Facilities
Fiscal Year 2023
Project # 2023-WB-04; CO-WP-295

<u>Region</u> 5	<u>Project Title</u> Auger Falls Trail Improvements & Rehabilitation
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<u>Project Type</u>	<u>Town(s)</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Management Unit</u>
Trail Re-routes and Tread Construction	Wells	Hamilton	Siamese Ponds Wilderness

Description of Desired Condition(s) for Project:

Auger Falls is a popular destination and trail loop that has experienced increasing visitor use over the last two decades. Visitor use numbers are incomplete but generally, between 2000 and 2010, this location was averaging approximately 3650 users a year whereas since 2015 those numbers have grown to an approximate average of 6700 users per year. This does not account for the people circumventing the register box (see below), so actual numbers are presumed to be significantly higher. User created social trails and denuded areas are a problem, as well as some short, wet sections. It is felt that these problems can be ameliorated through a multi-faceted approach that includes some re-routing of the trail to more sustainable and logical locations, defining and hardening the tread through use of crushed stone material where users have traditionally spread out, and hardening the tread using steppingstones to cross wet areas. Soils are predominantly a sandy loam which is conducive to sustainable tread surfaces, however, without a defined tread or trail corridor, people are spreading out and impacting vegetation in a much greater area than is desired. Because it is also shallow to bedrock, there is limited soil to work with onsite and water can become a problem in some locations. The objective of this project is to direct the public to the established trail. This will be done by visually defining the trail tread and corridor, using appropriate marker frequency and signage, hardening the surface where the resource requires it for sustainability, and providing maps and information to the public near their point of departure from the lot.

Re-routes, Relocations, and Closures:

- 1) When the original trailhead was established, the State did not own the large parking lot that the public currently uses. This lot is now owned by the State. People park in the large lot and many, if not most, leave from there on a user created trail that connects to the original trail near the falls viewing area. These users are bypassing the register box at the original trailhead. A sustainable 0.2 mile re-route has been identified that leaves from the large lot. This proposed re-route utilizes appropriate portions of the user created trail. The trailhead will be formally relocated to where the trail departs from the large lot and the register box will be relocated and upgraded to a larger size with room for a map and safety information. There are two seasonally wet sections in drainages along this stretch of trail where steppingstones will be used to harden the tread and direct users. Large stones are plentiful but if for some reason steppingstones will not work, bog bridging may be utilized. The portion of original trail to be closed for this re-route is 0.2 miles.
- 2) There is one approximately 100-foot section of trail beyond the picnic spot on the loop where blowdown caused a social trail around it that has people scrambling along the shoreline of the river causing erosion. This user created section will be closed and the trail re-located to its former location set back from the shoreline. Other stretches of the trail that are closer to the shoreline but are maintaining stable tread without erosion will remain where they are.
- 3) Where the trail is braided, the most sustainable path will be chosen and clearly marked. In these locations the tread will be reconstructed or defined as necessary.

- 4) One popular, user-created trail from the northern part of the loop trail will be closed and only one path will be maintained as the loop trail. Similarly, the trail going downslope along unsustainable grades downstream from the falls viewing area will be closed and blocked off.

Tread and Trail Corridor definition:

- 1) The UMP describes this as a Class II trail with a corridor width of 2 to 4 feet. Tread construction will generally be 3 to 4 feet in width between the parking lot and the falls. The loop trail tread width will generally be 2 to 3 feet. Along the entire length of trail, the corridor will be made visually identifiable by blocking off any social trails, creating linear lines of sight along the corridor by strategically placing boles of trees or rocks along the side of the trail, and building up the tread where needed so it can be easily identified by users. In the most impacted areas, crushed stone, native to the region, will be used to aid in this effort.
- 2) At the intersection of the spur trail to the falls view and the loop trail, crushed stone will be used to both harden the tread and clearly define the trail corridor for the full length of the spur trail to its end (approximately 85 feet) and for the section of trail that continues past the falls where many social trails have developed (approximately 75 feet). Currently trail users spill out to an undefined area with no clear end point or indication of where they should go, aside from towards the falls. A border of small boulders will be used to define the end of the spur trail and appropriate viewing area for the falls.

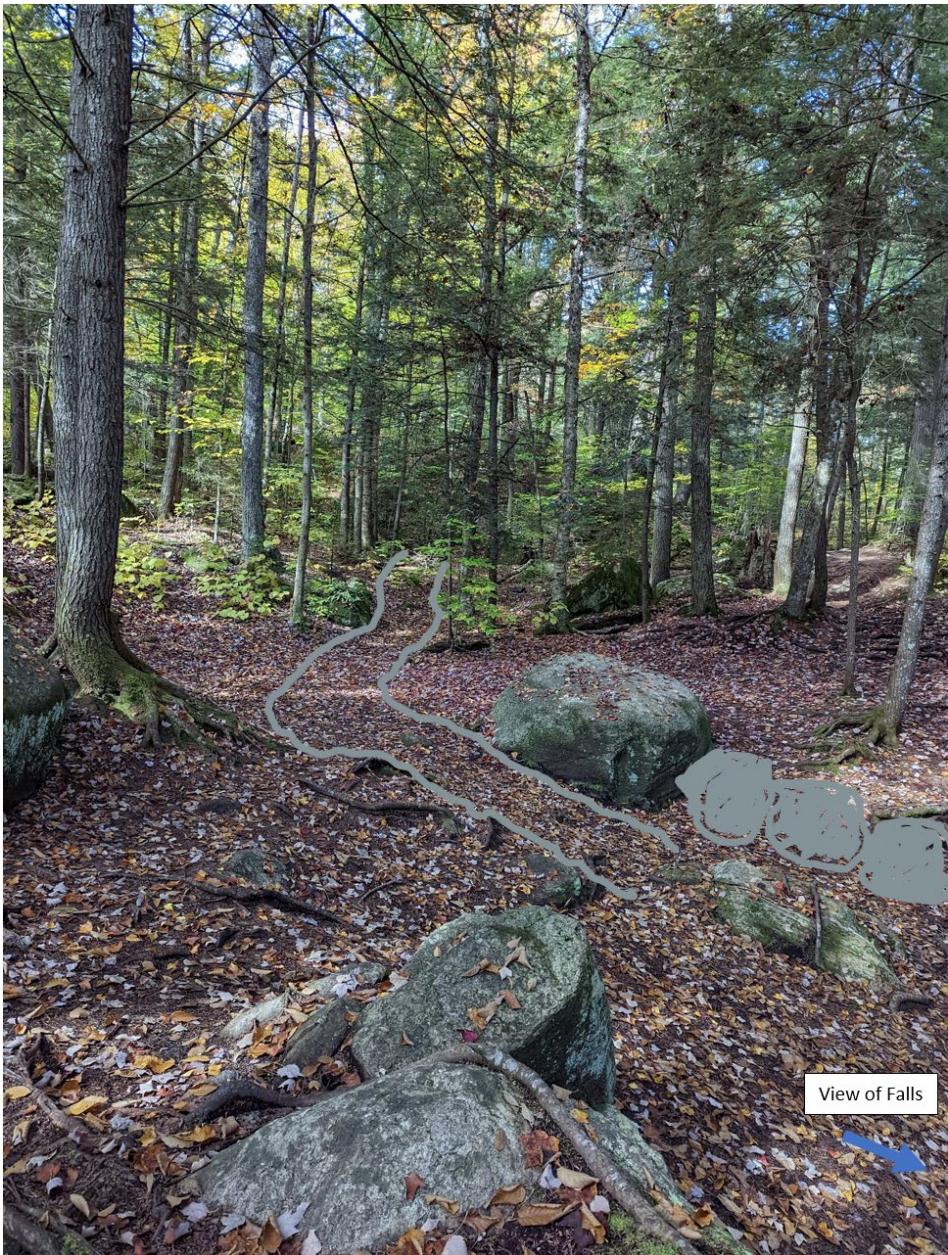
Description of Project Specifications:

Tread will be constructed using hand tools and sustainable trail building best practices. Natural materials will be used.











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

A) Trees to be removed:

Greater than 3"

Beech - 4.5"

Red Maple - 5"

1"- 3" = Total 8

Balsam - 1"

Red Maple - 2"

Balsam - 1"

Yellow Birch - 1.5"

Balsam - 1.5"

Beech - 1.25"

Yellow Birch - 1.25"

Hemlock - 1"

B) Earthwork and Disturbance, Including Identification of Work Outside the Trail Corridor:

Within the trail corridor, the tread will be clearly defined. Crushed stone will be used to define and harden tread in certain places as described above. The boulders surrounding the viewing area will be partially buried in the ground. All work will be done with hand tools and nonmotorized means. Stone or boulders from on-site will be used for tread construction or blocking of social trails when possible and where there will be minimal ground disturbance from moving them. Similarly, there will be limited ground disturbance from moving and placing steppingstones or bog bridging in the wet sections.

C) Impacts to Streams, Waterbodies and Wetlands

By defining the trail corridor, impacts to the surrounding area will be reduced and allowed to recover. By placing steppingstones or bog bridging across the short-wet sections, use will be restricted to the trail tread, reducing impact to adjacent sensitive areas where users currently spread out to get around wet sections. Brushing in of social trails and End of Trail signage on the spur trail should help to discourage users from continuing down the slippery slope (often wet from spray from the falls) to the falls edge and allow some vegetation to recover and soils to stabilize.

D) Identification of Rare, Threatened or Endangered Species:

No known records, however, it is unknown if it has been surveyed.

Analysis of Project Location and Design Alternatives:

The primary objective of this project is to define the trail tread and corridor more clearly for the public and keep traffic contained to a sustainable surface. Other alternatives for doing this include a) hardening the entire length of the trail system with crushed stone, b) fully re-routing the entire trail and constructing all new tread, or c) closing down the user created access from the lot and forcing the traffic along the route used prior to state acquisition of the parking area.

Option A – while this would indeed provide a sustainable surface and accomplish the objectives of the project, the tread along the loop portion of the system is largely sustainable and narrow, aside from braiding associated with a large blowdown and a couple of discrete spots. The trail sees high visitation numbers and the areas that would tend to blow out, have already, and are addressed in the proposed alternative. The portions of the trail that do not have issues have sustained the use levels well. The additional crushed stone tread construction would increase the cost of the project significantly and given that it is not necessary for resource protection, would be a needless intrusion into the wild character of the area.

Option B – The area between the lot and the falls is limited and the existing two paths that go there are largely sited well aside from the minor corrections that are called for in the proposed alternative. Creating another entirely new tread and trail corridor will significantly and unnecessarily increase the amount of land and resources impacted long-term in this area (soil compaction, trees removed, etc.). The objective of limiting impacts to a single trail corridor and tread, would most efficiently be met by utilizing as much of an existing, already impacted corridor as possible, not creating an entirely new one mile long, 4-foot-wide corridor area of impact.

Option C – The proposed alternative would leave directly from the lot and get users into the woods immediately. The former route took users down an old section of road for about 800 feet. The experience is lessened by this road walk and is difficult to direct people towards through just signage as evidenced by the multiple signs and markers that have been placed there in the past. People would likely continue to “cut through” from the lot, presenting a long-term management issue that would need to be repeatedly addressed.

Description of Use of Motorized Equipment and/or Motor Vehicles, if any:

None

Description of Applicable Standards for Accessibility by People with Disabilities:

This trail was not developed as an accessible trail, however, where possible and terrain allows, attempts will be made to incorporate accessible features to maximize accessibility for the widest range of abilities, particularly along the section from the parking lot to the falls. The Department proposes to evaluate and describe the accessible features of the trail and to make this information readily available to the public

Other Relevant Considerations:

Click to enter other relevant considerations

Prepared by (Name & Title): Kirstin Seleen, Forester
Phone: (518) 623 -1200

Date: 2/3/2023

REGULATORY CLEARANCE CHECKLIST – STATE LANDS and CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROJECTS

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

State Land Consultation

File Number:



**Adirondack
Park Agency**

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

BARBARA RICE
Executive Director

STATE LAND PROJECT CONSULTATION FORM

Completion of this form is required to receive a determination of Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP) and/or Unit Management Plan compliance and wetland jurisdiction for all DEC State land projects from the Agency. A site visit by Agency staff may be required depending on the complexity of the project, the natural resources involved and the level of documentation provided.

Part 1

(To be completed by DEC staff)

A. Project Identification

Project Name:

DEC Contact Person:

Telephone:

Email:

B. Project Location and Other Information

State Land Unit:

Region:

Town:

County:

Is a UMP for this unit completed and approved? Yes No

(If yes, please attach a copy of the cover page and all pages relevant to this project.)

Is the proposal to replace an existing structure? Yes No

If yes:

a) When was the structure constructed?

b) Will the new structure be the same size and located in the same place?

Yes No (Describe in the narrative, section D.)

C. Prior Agency Contact

Has there been prior contact (including any wetland delineation work) with the Agency regarding this project? Yes No

If yes, name of contact person(s) and date(s) (approximate, if not known):

Contact person: Date:

D. Project Description

Provide a brief, narrative description as precisely as possible with any additional location information necessary. Include/attach map(s), photograph(s) and plan(s) whenever possible. (attach another sheet if needed)

Auger Falls is a popular destination and loop trail that has been experiencing increasing visitor use as well as search and rescue incidents. There have been 3 dogs that have fallen in as well as several people in the last two years alone and rangers have expressed concern. To address both negative resource impacts and safety concerns at this site, the Department is proposing several measures to more clearly define where the public should be walking on the trail and safely viewing the falls. A re-route is proposed to follow a largely sustainable user created route that leaves from the parking area rather than following the old road down to where the trail register box

If the proposed project is determined to be compliant with the APSLMP but jurisdictional for wetlands, the Agency can determine if the project qualifies for *General Permit 2005G-1R* or if an individual Article 24 Freshwater Wetlands permit will be required. If either of these wetlands permits is applied for, additional information about the project will likely be requested. Agency staff can provide the appropriate permit application form with the return of this completed State Land Consultation Form, if requested.

Submitted by:

Date:

Return this form to the Agency (preferably electronically) for APA staff completion of Part 2.

Part 2

(To be completed by APA staff)

ADIRONDACK PARK STATE LAND MASTER PLAN COMPLIANCE REVIEW

Planning Status (check one)

- A) The project, as planned, is described sufficiently in an approved UMP and does not require additional consultation with APA State land staff before being undertaken.
- B) The project is proposed in insufficient detail in an approved UMP and so does require additional consultation with APA State land staff before being undertaken.
- C) The project is not proposed in an approved UMP and – via this submission - is the subject of consultation with APA State land staff to determine if it may be undertaken, as per Section V of the DEC/APA MOU.

DEC/APA Consultation Guidelines

Planning Status “A” Projects:

- The proposed project has been determined by the APA Board, via approval of a UMP, to conform to APSLMP guidelines and criteria in all respects other than potential wetland impacts.
- IF the result of the “Preliminary APA Wetlands Jurisdiction Assessment” (page 6) is an APA staff conclusion that jurisdictional wetlands:
 - WILL NOT be involved or affected by the proposed project, THEN, the project may be undertaken.
 - MAY BE involved or affected by the proposed project, THEN, the Agency can determine if the project qualifies for *General Permit 2005G-1R* or an individual Article 24 Freshwater Wetlands permit and may request additional information.

Planning Status “B” Projects:

- The proposed project, via review and approval of a UMP, has received conceptual approval by the APA Board but must still be reviewed by APA State land staff in sufficient detail before it may be determined to conform to APSLMP guidelines and criteria in all respects other than potential wetland impacts.
- IF the result of the “Preliminary APA Wetlands Jurisdiction Assessment” (page 6) is an APA staff conclusion that jurisdictional wetlands:
 - WILL NOT be involved or affected by the proposed project, THEN, the project may be undertaken.
 - MAY BE involved or affected by the proposed project, THEN, the Agency can determine if the project qualifies for *General Permit 2005G-1R* or an individual Article 24 Freshwater Wetlands permit and may request additional information.
- IF the result of the “APSLMP Compliance Review” is a conclusion that the proposed project:
 - DOES NOT CONFORM to APSLMP guidelines and criteria regardless of wetland impacts, THEN, the project should not be undertaken by DEC staff.

Planning Status “C” Projects:

- The project has NOT been proposed within a UMP approved by the APA Board, and so it has not been determined to conform to APSLMP guidelines and criteria. It must therefore be determined by APA State land staff to meet the definition of “ordinary maintenance,” “rehabilitation” or “minor relocation” of conforming structures or improvements as per Section V of the DEC/APA MOU if it is to be undertaken without being included in such a UMP.
- IF the result of the determination is that the proposed project:
 - CANNOT BE so defined, THEN, the project should not be undertaken by DEC staff at this time.
 - CAN BE so defined, THEN, the Agency can determine if the project qualifies for *General Permit 2005G-1R* or an individual Article 24 Freshwater Wetlands permit and may request additional information.
- IF the result of the “Preliminary APA Wetlands Jurisdiction Assessment” (page 6) is an APA staff conclusion that jurisdictional wetlands:

- WILL NOT be involved or affected by the proposed project, THEN, the project may be undertaken.
- MAY BE involved or affected by the proposed project, THEN, the Agency can determine if the project qualifies for *General Permit 2005G-1R* or an individual Article 24 Freshwater Wetlands permit and may request additional information.

APA State Land Staff Determination Regarding Consistency with the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan

Staff have determined the proposed project – in all respects other than potential wetlands impacts – conforms , does not conform , to the guidelines and criteria of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan.

/s/ Megan Phillips

9/13/23

Deputy Director, Planning or designee

Date

Rationale for Determination

See Rationale for Determination.pdf

PRELIMINARY APA WETLANDS JURISDICTION ASSESSMENT

1) Is the proposed project located in a wetland? Yes No

2) Does the project involve any of the following activities whether or not it is located in a wetland? Yes No

Discharge of liquid wastes into (or so as to drain into) a wetland, including sewage treatment effluent within 100' of a wetland? Yes No

Any other form of pollution of a wetland? Yes No

Any activity that may substantially impair the functions served by, or the benefits derived from, wetlands?

Yes

No

APA RASS Staff Preliminary Assessment Regarding Adirondack Park Freshwater Wetlands Jurisdiction

Staff have determined that wetlands subject to the review jurisdiction of the Adirondack Park Agency may , will not , be involved or affected by the proposal.



Supervisor, Natural Resource Analysis or designee

9/7/23

Date

Rationale for Determination

RASS wetlands staff have reviewed the proposal using remote sensing information and have determined no wetland jurisdictional to the Agency will be impacted from the proposal.

If the project is determined to be jurisdictional for wetlands, the Agency will determine if the project qualifies for *General Permit 2005G-1R* or an individual Article 24 Freshwater Wetlands permit and may request additional information.

Form completed by APA State Land member: Kevin Prickett

Completion Date: 9/6/23

Distribution:

DEC Contact: Kirstin Seleen

Regional Forester: Robert Daley

Natural Resources Supervisor of Region: Kristofer Alberga

Forest Preserve Coordinator, Central Office: Josh Clague



New York State
Adirondack
Park Agency

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

BARBARA RICE
Executive Director

September 13, 2023

Kirstin Seleen
Forester, Division of Lands and Forests
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
232 Golf Course Rd.
Warrensburg, NY12885

RE: State Land Consultation Determination SL2023-0014

Dear Kirstin Seleen:

I understand this project proposes several management actions to address visitor impacts on the Auger Falls Trail in the Siamese Ponds Wilderness including relocating sections of the trail, relocating the trailhead, hardening portions of the trail, closing user created trails, and installing boulders to mark the end of the trail at the falls viewing point. Pursuant to the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP), the proposed project is considered ordinary maintenance or rehabilitation of conforming structures or improvements, or minor trail relocation on lands classified as Wilderness.

Agency staff have determined that the project, as proposed, does not involve wetlands.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Agency.

Sincerely,

Kevin Prickett
Environmental Program Specialist 2 (Natural Resources)

ec: Josh Clague, Forest Preserve Coordinator, Central Office
Kris Alberga, Supervisor of Natural Resources, Region 5
Rob Daley, Regional Forester, Region 5

Rationale for Determination

This project includes numerous management actions to address visitor use at the Auger Falls Trails in the Siamese Ponds Wilderness. The Auger Falls Trail was identified in the 2005 Siamese Ponds Wilderness UMP. The project involves trail relocation, closing portions of the existing trail, relocating the trailhead, installing more sustainable tread, closing user created trails and placing boulders to encourage visitors to stay on the trail.

Pursuant to the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP), the proposed project is considered ordinary maintenance or rehabilitation of conforming structures or improvements and minor trail relocation on lands classified as Wilderness. Although the project is not described in the Siamese Ponds Wilderness UMP, staff interpretation of the APSLMP allows for such maintenance or rehabilitation, and minor relocation of the existing Auger Falls Trail without a UMP or UMP amendment.