Forest Preserve Work Plan
for
Construction of New Facilities and Expansion or Modification of Existing Facilities
Fiscal Year 2023

WP #286

Project # 2023-RB-003

Region	**Project Title**
5	Fowler's Crossing- Turtle Pond Area Bike Trails

Project Type	**Town(s)**	**County**	**Management Unit**
New Construction	North Elba	Essex	Saranac Lakes Wild Forest

Description of Desired Condition(s) for Project:

The 2019 Saranac Lakes Wild Forest Unit Management Plan, on page 118, states: "A trail system may be developed outside the Village of Saranac Lake in the area south of Turtle Pond between State Route 86 and McKenzie Pond Road. This will utilize the Jackrabbit Trail, a former snowmobile trail, some informal trails, and the construction of new trails. The density of these trails would be approximately one mile for every 100 acres of land. This area covers about 600 acres, which means that about six miles of trail could be built here.

Regarding Desired Conditions, the UMP further states:

"Desired conditions for mountain bike trails will be ones that have minimal expansion from the designed footprint of the built facility, minimal erosion, doesn't negatively impact trailside vegetation, is free of occurrences of human waste and litter, illegal operation off designated trails is not occurring, and provides an enjoyable user experience. Monitoring could include photo point locations, control measuring points, occurrences of trash, and user surveys."

"Construct and manage single-track mountain biking pursuant to Management Guidance: Siting, Construction, and Maintenance of Single-track Bike Trails on Forest Preserve Lands in the Adirondack Park."

"Trails that are expected to be used mainly by mountain bikes will be built to standards associated with singletrack trails. Trails that see significant hiking use and those trails intended for beginner bikers will be built wider. The trails listed here will not be built to standards associated with road bikes or front-country bike paths."

Description of Project Specifications:

The goal of the project is to further improve the existing " Fowler's Crossing" trail system by creating a 1.2 mile singletrack trail loop designed for mountain bike and foot travel that compliments and makes appropriate use of existing trails that have been maintained in sustainable condition for many decades.

The Fowler's Crossing trail system is already popular and frequently used. The trails are located adjacent to the Adirondack Rail Trail and the Village of Saranac Lake. This will be a nice side trail destination of the Adirondack Rail Trail once that is completed. This proposal continues new trail projects in the area, for instance, about 1 mile of new singletrack trails were built on the north side of Fowler's Crossing in 2019-2020.

The Fowler's Crossing trails are accessed primarily via parking lots on either side of Route 86, both of which are being expanded as part of the rail trail project. The trail system is also frequently accessed on foot, bike or skis by local residents via the rail trail corridor (coming from both Ray Brook and the Village of Saranac Lake) and via the Jackrabbit Trail from McKenzie Pond Road. There are a handful of informal access trails where the state land abuts residential areas.

The 1.2 mile singletrack loop will be formed through a combination of new construction and the utilization of existing trail - a section of which would be rerouted. The total length of new construction on the main section of the loop is approximately 4,750 feet. The total length of the reroute is approximately 1,250 feet. The original alignment at the reroute will be closed and rehabilitated. The section of trail being closed follows the fall line for an extended distance. While this section is not currently showing signs of erosion, it is anticipated that increased mountain bike and foot travel on this section would eventually result in impacts to the tread surface and the loss of soil. Additionally, maintaining the extended fall line encourages descending mountain bikers to reach higher speeds, which could result in user conflicts. The reroute will be on more sustainable alignment that follows the contour of the surrounding hillside rather than climbing directly up the slope. Such an alignment will be more appropriate for two-way mountain bike and foot traffic, more accommodating of trail users of various abilities, and will reduce potential user conflicts.

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

The new singletrack loop is designed to minimize impacts to natural resources and the wild forest character of the surrounding Forest Preserve lands. The trail is aligned to follow the existing contours of the undisturbed, natural forest floor as much as possible to avoid excessive terrain manipulation during trail construction.

Trees to be Removed:

Construction of the trail will include the removal of trees and other woody stems that are less than 1 inch diameter at breast height (DBH). The trail corridor will be cleared to an average width of 4-feet, with clearing up to 6-feet wide at sharp turns and steeper sections. When trees and other vegetation are removed, they will be cut and dispersed in a manner to avoid visual impacts. There will be two trees 3” DBH and above, and 47 trees between one and three inches DBH, to be removed. A tree tally is attached.

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

The trail will be bult with a tread width of between 18 and 24 inches. Trail construction will include clearing organic material within the trail corridor to expose a dry, stable soil surface. About 45-55 percent of the newly built trail will require a full bench cut construction. All bench cutting will be confined to the footprint of the trail corridor. The newly built trail will utilize insloped turns only where the terrain and trail alignment justifies their use in order to prevent trail widening and tread creep. The trail alignment incorporates naturally existing terrain as much as possible to provide the benefit of an insloped turn and to minimize tread creep without requiring extensive terrain manipulation. All insloped turns will be constructed in accordance with the DEC mountain bike guideline criteria.

Work to occur outside the project footprint will inlcude the disbursement of woody debris from the clearing of the trail corridor and the collection of rock and mineral soil to be used in the trail construction process

No brushing will occur outside the cleared trail width. Pruning will occur only for branches that extend into the trail corridor.

Impacts to Streams, Waterbodies, and Wetlands: No streams, waterbodies or wetlands are in the immediate area of the project. There will not be any impacts to these features from this project.

Identification of Rare, Threatened or Endangered Species: No rare, threatened, or endangered species area within 1/4 mile of the project location.

Analysis of Project Location and Design Alternatives:

An alternative to building the new main section of the singletrack loop would be to reduce the overall length to reduce terrain disturbance and tree cutting. This option is not preferred because it would also reduce the quality of the experience for trail users.

An alternative for the rerouted section of the current Oseetah Loop trail is to maintain the existing alignment with more minor reroutes that would further minimize terrain disturbance and tree cutting. This option is not preferred because it

would not address the issues of excessive slope and extended fall line on the existing trail alignment. Additionally, this would make it harder for some trail users to enjoy the singletrack loop and the existing Oseetah Loop trail.

Description of Use of Motorized Equipment and/or Motor Vehicles, if any:
Chainsaws will be used for the clearing of the corridor.

Description of Applicable Standards for Accessibility by People with Disabilities:
The construction of this trail will not meet the standards for an accessible trail. Compliance with accessibility requirements is not practical because compliance would fundamentally alter the nature of the proposed mountain bike trails. Bringing the trail into compliance with accessibility standards would also result in more terrain manipulation and tree cutting.

Other Relevant Considerations:
Click to enter other relevant considerations

Prepared by (Name & Title): Steve Guglielmi **Date:** 3/13/2023
Phone: 518-897-1286

REGULATORY CLEARANCE CHECKLIST – STATE LANDS and CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROJECTS					
PROGRAM	PERMIT	REQUIRED		SECURED BY	COMMENTS
		YES	NO	(NAME)	
Air Resources	Restricted Burning	☐	☒		
Mineral Resources	Mining	☐	☒		
Materials Management	Solid Waste Mgt. Fac.	☐	☒		
Water	Dam Safety Review	☐	☒		
	Const. in Flood Hazard	☐	☒		
	Public Water Supply	☐	☒		
	SPDES	☐	☒		
Spills Management	Petro. Bulk Storage	☐	☒		
Lands and Forests	Unit Management Plan	☒	☐		Approved in 2019
	Tree Cutting	☒	☐		approval part of this work plan
	Protected Native Plants	☐	☒		
	Historic Preservation	☐	☒		
Fish and Wildlife	Freshwater Wetlands	☐	☒		
	Wild Scenic & Rec. River	☐	☒		
Compliance Services	Other Protection of Waters	☐	☒		
	EAF	☐	☒		
	Negative Declaration	☐	☒		
	Env. Impact Statement	☐	☒		
	Water Quality Cert.	☐	☒		
DEC (other)	CP-17	☐	☒		
	Commissioner (aircraft,motorized equipment)	☐	☒		
	Flight Request	☐	☒		
	Contract Clearance Sh.	☐	☒		
	DOB Exemption	☐	☒		
Other Agencies	APA MOU	☐	☒		
	APA Wetlands Permit	☐	☒		
	Corps. of Engineers	☐	☒		
	Building Permits	☐	☒		
	Local Permits	☐	☒		
	Easements	☐	☒		
	Highway Enter DOT	☐	☒		
	Wastewater Disposal	☐	☒		

State Land Tree Tally

Project: Fowler's Crossing- Turtle Pond Area Bike Trails
State Land Unit: Saranac Lakes Wild Forest
County: Essex Town: North Elba
Date Tallied: Steven Guglielmi
Tallied By: 3/10/2023

Species	Diameter (inches)														Total
	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	
ash, black															0
ash, white															0
aspen															0
beech, Amer.		1													1
birch, paper															0
birch, yellow															0
cherry, black															0
fir, balsam		1													1
hemlock															0
maple, red															0
maple, sugar															0
oak, red															0
pine, red															0
pine, Scotch															0
pine, white															0
spruce, black															0
spruce, Norway															0
spruce, red															0
spruce, white															0
															0
															0
															0
															0
Total	47	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	49

Fowler's Crossing- Turtle Pond Area

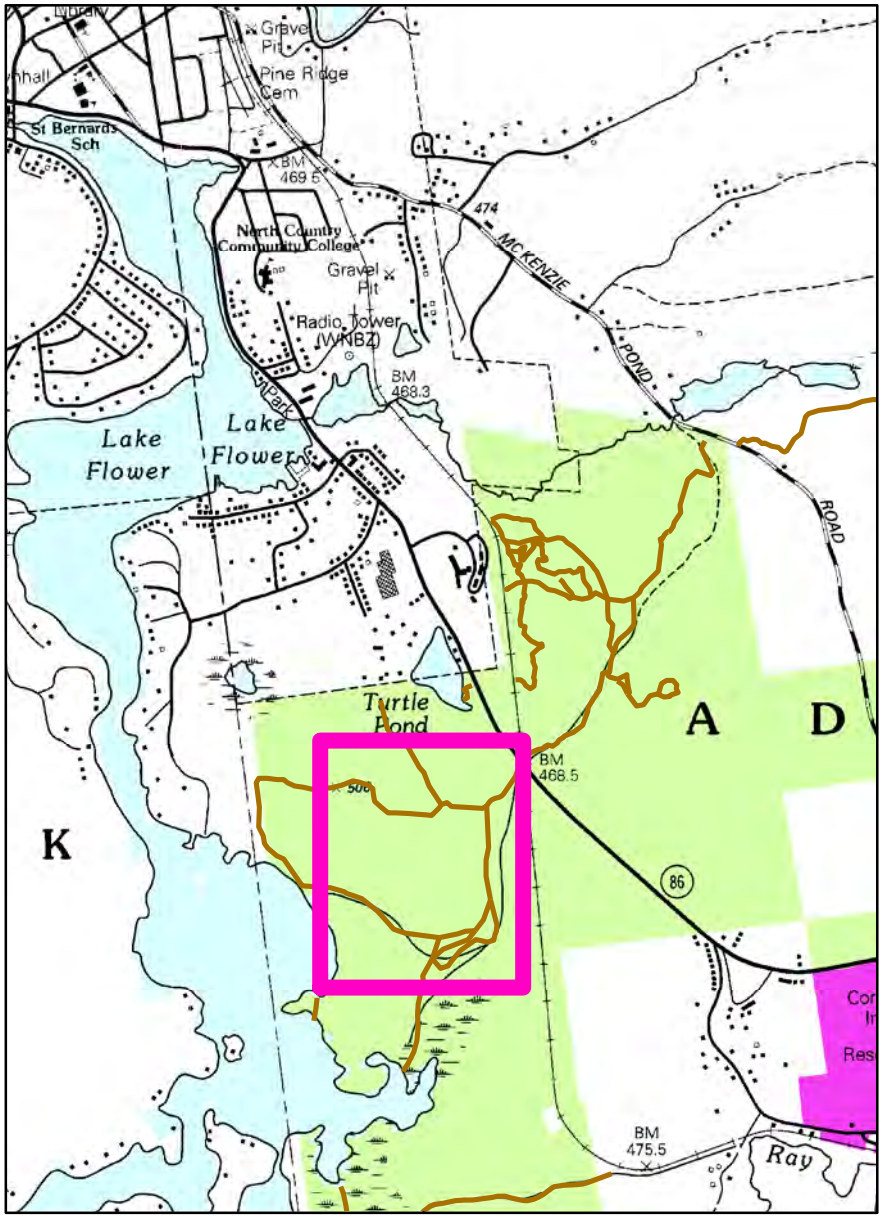
0 0.05 0.1 0.2 Miles

3/13/2023

N

Legend

- Current Tails
- Proposed Trails



0.5 0.25 0 0.5 Miles

Legend

APA Land Classes

- Wild Forest
- State Administrative

- Area of Detail

Flagging shows trail route.

Flagging shows trail route.

Flagging shows trail route.

Flagging shows trail route.