

Access and Public Use Plan for Ashland Flats Wildlife Management Area 2022-2025



Scenic view of the wetland at Ashland Flats WMA.

Photo: NYSDEC

Division of Fish and Wildlife
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April 2022



**Department of
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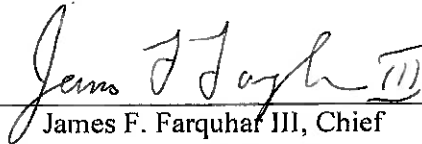
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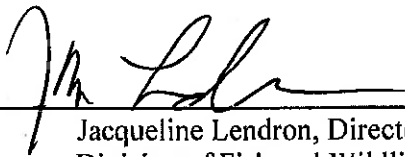
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Financial support for development of this plan was provided by the Federal Aid in Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program and non-federal funds administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation including Environmental Protection Fund, Conservation Fund, and Habitat & Access Stamp.

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SUMMARY

Ashland Flats Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is primarily an area of open meadows, second growth, and young forests typical of the Lake Ontario plains. The WMA is split into two separate parcels with the larger parcel to the north and the smaller parcel to the south along Ashland Road. Small game, deer, and grassland nesting birds are found on the WMA. Shaver Creek and several "potholes" also provide wetland habitat used by waterfowl and several species of furbearing mammals. Common activities on this WMA include bird watching and hunting. Ashland Flats is considered one of the most important areas in New York for breeding and wintering grassland birds.

Management objectives for public use and access on Ashland Flats WMA include:

- Establish a parking area for the southern parcel off Ashland Road.
- Install a small kiosk in the parking area near the observation tower, off Ashland Road.

I. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF ACCESS AND PUBLIC USE PLANS

BACKGROUND

Providing public access to lands owned by DEC is an integral part of state land management. DEC Division of Fish and Wildlife's (DFW) Bureau of Wildlife (BOW) oversees WMAs, Multiple Use Areas (MUA), Unique Areas, and other properties comprising the WMA system. The Bureau strives to provide safe, convenient, and ecologically sound public access to these areas.

The priority public use activity on WMAs is wildlife-dependent recreation such as hunting, trapping, fishing, and wildlife observation. Other public use activities may be appropriate if DFW determines they are compatible with both wildlife conservation and the primary public use activities. Guidance on the use and purpose of WMAs and a list of allowable activities is provided in *Public Use of Wildlife Management Areas*.¹

SCOPE AND INTENT

This Access and Public Use Plan (APUP) complements the Habitat Management Plan (HMP) for Ashland Flats WMA and addresses management objectives for wildlife-dependent recreation, access features, and facility development and maintenance. In conjunction with WMA regulations, APUPs serve as the overarching guidance for providing access to wildlife lands and determining public use activities appropriate for each area. APUPs draw from and build upon other management plans that may exist for the area, including Unit Management Plans (UMP),

¹ Available online at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7768.html>.

previous management planning documents, and feedback received during a public comment period.

Primary purposes of this plan:

- To foster compatible wildlife-dependent recreation and wildlife conservation priorities;
- To identify public use activities and access features, highlighting exceptional opportunities specific to the WMA;
- To describe current management challenges and discuss potential solutions;
- To prioritize necessary improvements and proposed new features; and
- To establish a maintenance schedule for existing facilities and features.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW

Activities described in this plan are included in the 1979 *Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Public Use Development Activities of the DEC Division of Fish and Wildlife*,² which addressed compliance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act, 6 NYCRR Part 617. All proposed management also requires compliance with the Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, the State Historic Preservation Act, Executive Order 13175 *Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments*, and CP-42 *Contact, Cooperation, and Consultation with Indian Nations* prior to implementation.

WMA REGULATIONS

NY Codes, Rules and Regulations, Title 6, Chapter 1, Subchapter G, Part 51: Public Use of State WMAs (“Part 51”) lists regulations for public use of WMAs. Part 51 addresses restricted and prohibited uses of WMAs to prevent disturbance to wildlife and interference with wildlife-dependent recreation.³ Part 51 has recently been revised to include necessary changes that will keep up with new or evolving public uses, updated laws, and current use concerns on our New York State WMAs.

² Available online at https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/wildlife_pdf/eispublic.pdf.

³ Additional information is available online at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/regulations.html>.

II. RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

POINTS OF ACCESS

Ashland Flats WMA is located in northern Jefferson County two miles northeast of the village of Three Mile Bay, along Depot and Ashland roads. Much of the land borders Burnt Rock Road and County Route 8. Ashland Road travels through the WMA. There is parking for one or two cars on Burnt Rock Road and multiple cars along Ashland Road.

- Burnt Rock Road, leads to nice wide trail (44.1141014°N, -76.2303009°W) - Get [Google Map Driving Directions](#)
- Ashland Road (44.1155014°N, -76.1891022°W) - Get [Google Map Driving Directions](#)
- Ashland Road (44.1152°N, -76.1923981°W) - Get [Google Map Driving Directions](#)

CONNECTIVITY TO OTHER RECREATION AREAS

Other public lands in the vicinity of Ashland Flats WMA include French Creek WMA to the northeast and Point Peninsula WMA to the southwest. Due east of Ashland Flats is where Perch River WMA can be found. All of these areas allow access for recreational activity similar to those allowed on Ashland WMA⁴. Snowmobile trail C5J traverses through the northern parcel of the WMA⁵ (Figure 1) and connects Ashland WMA to French Creek WMA while also providing access to towns such as Chaumont and Cape Vincent.

Three Mile Creek⁶ and Chaumont Barrens⁷ Preserve are other areas nearby that provide access for recreational activities. Three Mile Creek Barrens Preserve includes two parcels totaling 413 acres and features a unique alvar habitat where Eastern Whip-poor-will can be observed. Chaumont Barrens Preserve is another unique alvar habitat that supports a wide range of plants and wildlife. Visitors can explore the self-guided, 1.7-mile trail through the preserve.

Other tourism activities can be obtained from the Jefferson County Chambers of Commerce⁸.

⁴ Information available at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/8282.html>.

⁵ New York State Snowmobile Association Snowmobile Webmap. <https://webapps2.cgis-solutions.com/nysnowmobile/>.

⁶ Three Mile Creek Barrens Preserve available at <https://www.obilandtrust.org/alvar-easement.html>.

⁷ Chaumont Barrens Preserve information available at <https://www.nature.org/en-us/get-involved/how-to-help/places-we-protect/central-chaumont-barrens/>.

⁸ Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce. <https://co.jefferson.ny.us/chambers-of-commerce>.

WMA FEATURES

All structures, roads, trails, and other features are documented to track existing conditions and identify future management actions to maintain, repair, or improve public use and access. Table 1 summarizes the existing and proposed features on Ashland Flats WMA.

Table 1. Summary of current and desired public use features on Ashland Flats WMA. Features listed here are those that are available to the public.

Category	Feature	Current Amount (as of 2022)	Proposed Changes
Parking	Vehicle parking area	4	Increase by 1
Roads	WMA road	0.1 Miles	No Change
	Administrative road	5.2 Miles	No Change
	Vehicle bridge	1	No Change
	Gate	2	No Change
Trails	Snowmobile/Foot trail	2.3 Miles	No Change
Boat launch & fishing access	Car top	N/A	No Change
Observation structures	Observation tower	1	No Change
Structures and facilities	Informational kiosks	1	Increase by 1
	Other (cemetery)	1	No Change
Accessible features	Vehicle parking lot	1	No Change
	Trails	1	No Change
	Observation tower	1	No Change

MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING WMA FEATURES

DEC will continue to maintain and improve public use of and access to WMAs in order to provide the following benefits for WMA visitors:

- Provide opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation that are compatible with wildlife habitat management practices and species management considerations;
- Educate and inform WMA visitors about wildlife and habitat, DEC programs, safety and regulations, recreational activities, and other information pertinent to the WMA;
- Provide and improve inclusivity and usability with accessible facilities (i.e., accessibility for people of all abilities); and
- Maintain clean and safe facilities.

Each year, BOW's Land Management and Habitat Conservation Team develops a work plan specifying maintenance and improvements to WMAs that will enhance access and use of the areas. Implementation of the management recommendations proposed in this plan is dependent upon availability of staff and funding. Locations of features that will be installed, improved, replaced, or removed are shown in Figure 2.

PARKING AREAS



Current Conditions: Currently there are four (one parking area is ADA compliant) parking areas for visitors to safely park while recreating. Each parking area is maintained throughout the summer months; however, they are not plowed during the winter season. Parking along Burnt Rock Road and Ashland Road is legal, however it is much safer to park at designated parking areas. Each area consists of signage and gravel surfaces. Parking at Burnt Rock Road commonly provides access for visitors that enjoy big game and waterfowl hunting on the western side of the WMA and in many of the potholes that were created. Ashland Road parking areas not only provide access to hunters, but also visitors that enjoy bird watching, trapping, and photography.

Actions: The following actions, listed in order of priority, are proposed during the timeframe of this plan:

- Create a two-car parking area where there is currently a driveway entrance off Ashland Road for the southern parcel of the WMA; and
- Rehab existing parking area off Burnt Rock Road along the DANC right of way, install large boulders along edge of parking area.

ROADS AND BRIDGES

Current Conditions: There are 5.3 miles of gravel public and administrative roads on the WMA. Along with the limited road network, there are two culverts, one vehicle bridge, and two gates. Given the shortness of these roads, the majority of recreationists rely on foot transportation to travel throughout the WMA.

Actions: The following actions, listed in order of priority, are proposed during the timeframe of this plan:

- Maintain existing condition and repair items as they arise on an annual schedule.

TRAILS



Current Conditions: During the spring, summer, and fall seasons, visitors can enjoy 2.3 miles of unimproved foot trails on the WMA. Depending on the season one could watch birds, hunt big or small game, trap, or take pictures of the wildlife on the WMA. During the winter season the 2.3 miles of trail become the C5J snowmobile trail. This is where the vehicle bridge over Shaver Creek is located. The snowmobile trail on the WMA is under a volunteer stewardship agreement (VSA) with the Thousand Island Snowmobile Club. The use of snowmobiles is confined to this designated trail which traverses the WMA. The permittee is responsible for any inadvertent or deliberate damage to the WMA caused by the exercise of the permit.

Actions: The following actions, listed in order of priority, are proposed during the timeframe of this plan:

- Inspect and maintain the vehicle bridge.

BOAT LAUNCHES AND FISHING ACCESS



Current Conditions: There are no formal boat launches or fishing access sites on the WMA.

Actions: The following actions, listed in order of priority, are proposed during the timeframe of this plan:

- None

OBSERVATION/HUNTING BLINDS, TOWERS, AND PLATFORMS



Current Conditions: There is one observation tower off Ashland Road that was built in 2021 which offers ADA compliant parking and access. This is purely an observation tower to view wildlife from and not to hunt from. This WMA does not have permanent hunting blinds. Many hunters use ladder stands, climbing tree stands, and portable blinds while hunting for deer or turkey. Waterfowl hunters typically use layout blinds or other portable blinds that they bring in and out each day.

Actions: The following actions, listed in order of priority, are proposed during the timeframe of this plan:

- Maintain/repair annually as necessary.



Photo of tower with accessible platform at Ashland Flats WMA.

MANAGING HABITAT TO PROVIDE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

There are over 400 acres of managed grassland habitat on Ashland Flats WMA. The grasslands are mowed on a rotational basis to enhance the quality of breeding habitat for grassland birds. Common grassland species found on the area include Savanna Sparrow, Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark, in addition to threatened and endangered species such as Northern Harrier, Upland Sandpiper and Short-eared Owl. Pheasants are stocked at this WMA and provide upland game bird hunters many opportunities. Other game birds such as Ruffed Grouse and American Woodcock are occasionally found on this WMA. The southern parcel is being managed for American Woodcock and Golden-winged Warblers. Follow the mowed trail to the back of the parcel and a large 27 acre newly restored shrub stand will be found that includes many older spruces growing in the area. Small game hunters often enjoy pursuing cottontail rabbits and Wild Turkey. The diversity of grassland, shrubland, wetland, and forest habitat create many funnels for big game hunters to pursue white-tailed deer on this WMA. There are two manmade impoundments in addition to several drainage ditches on Ashland Flats WMA. Several waterfowl species including Canada Geese, Wood Duck, American Green-winged Teal, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, and American Black Duck can often be found utilizing the area. Several uncommon wetland dependent species found on the area include chorus frogs, Blanding's turtle, Black Tern, Great Egret, and Pied-billed Grebe. The spring is a great time to listen for amphibians calling and/or look for turtles on the move.

The following actions, listed in order of priority, are proposed during the timeframe of this plan:

- Continue mowing large grassland fields (Stands 27, 28, 29, 53, 54, 56, and 76) on an annual, biennial, or triennial basis depending on vegetation growth to allow for thatch and prevent woody growth;
- Continue routine annual maintenance on dikes and control structures so that they function to impound water (i.e., mowing dikes, beaver debris removal);
- Annually mowing the path on the southern parcel to the Young Forest Initiative project; and
- Implement seeding, disking, cultipacking, and other treatments to improve grassland quality.

III. PUBLIC USE ACTIVITIES

RECREATION ON WMAS

WMAs are unique among other state lands because they are managed for wildlife conservation and wildlife-dependent recreation. DEC adheres to a set of broad goals based on statutory, regulatory, and policy guidance as a basis to determine compatibility of public uses. Briefly, the primary goals are: (1) providing and enhancing wildlife habitat, and (2) providing and enhancing opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation. Secondary goals include: (3) fostering understanding and appreciation of wildlife and their habitats, and (4) allowing non-wildlife-

dependent recreation when it is compatible with the primary goals. DEC carefully considers public use activities and determines whether they are compatible with these goals and the management objectives specific to each WMA. Some activities may be restricted to protect sensitive wildlife or habitats in specific areas or during certain times of year, or to reduce conflicts between user groups. Some activities may be allowed only under certain conditions or by permit. Other activities are not allowed on WMAs because they conflict with the purposes and management of WMAs. Activities that are allowed, prohibited, or may require a permit are discussed in *Public Use of Wildlife Management Areas*.⁹

RECREATION ON ASHLAND FLATS WMA

PRIMARY ACTIVITIES

Primary activities include wildlife-dependent recreation that is compatible with the primary goals and purposes of WMAs. Hunting, trapping, wildlife watching, and wildlife/nature photography are the primary uses of Ashland Flats WMA. All statewide hunting, trapping, and fishing regulations apply.¹⁰



Hunting:

Located in Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) 6G, Ashland Flats offers opportunities for both small and big game hunting as well as waterfowl. During the fall season, this WMA is especially popular for white-tailed deer, American Woodcock, and Ring-necked Pheasant. Part of the WMA is managed for young forest habitat and the HMP calls for increasing this acreage to improve habitat for young forest-dependent species such as Ruffed Grouse and American Woodcock. These species rely on young forest for food and breeding areas as well as cover. White-tailed deer and Wild Turkey also benefit from the young forest management and this area offers many hunting opportunities located within easy walking distance of a road.

Ring-necked Pheasants are stocked along Ashland and Burnt Rock Roads during September and October. The grassland fields are mowed on a rotational schedule leaving some fields unmowed each year to provide opportunity for pheasant hunting as well as habitat for other small game and grassland birds. The variety of potholes and forested wetland habitat provide many good opportunities for duck and goose hunting as well. The water levels on the main pool are managed to promote moist soil plant growth which provides food for waterfowl and marshbirds. Waterfowl hunters may find it beneficial to use a canoe for access to the wetland.



Trapping:

The extensive potholes and forested wetland habitats provide good opportunities for beaver trapping. The manmade emergent marsh/moist soil wetlands provide good locations for muskrat trapping. Shaver creek flows through the middle of the WMA and provides excellent

⁹ Available online at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7768.html>.

¹⁰ Available online at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/regs/2494.html>.

opportunity for mink trapping as well. Other furbearers can be found in the forested and grassland areas of the WMA including coyote, bobcat, red and gray fox, skunk, opossum, weasel, and raccoon. Much of the grassland and young forest management prescribed in the HMP is beneficial to furbearers by providing food and cover for prey species such as rodents and rabbits. Wetland management on the WMA will increase plant growth and diversity which provides abundant food and construction materials for muskrats and beaver.

Wildlife observation/bird watching:



Ashland WMA provides a variety of wildlife viewing opportunities throughout all seasons. The ADA accessible observation tower on Ashland Road offers panoramic views of both the wetland and the grassland habitats. In the spring and summer months viewers can see muskrat, beaver, and multiple waterfowl species such as Mallards and Wood Ducks utilizing the wetland. This area also provides excellent breeding and foraging habitat for a variety of species such as Marsh Wrens, Pied-billed Grebes, and Great Blue Herons. The extensive open fields located throughout the WMA provide crucial nesting habitat for a wide array of grassland birds such as Savannah Sparrows, Bobolinks, Eastern Meadowlarks, and Northern Harriers that can be seen and heard throughout the area. During the fall, this can be a great spot to view migratory waterfowl as well as mammals such as deer, fox, and coyote. Many species of raptors can be seen using the WMA during the winter months as well. Rough-legged Hawks and Short-eared Owls have been known to frequent the area and can be seen perched at the top of a tree or foraging in the fields. Snowy Owls have also been documented on the area during the winter months.



Fishing:

None

SECONDARY ACTIVITIES

Secondary activities are not necessarily wildlife-dependent, but they are generally compatible with the goals and purposes of WMAs. Secondary activities including hiking, bicycling on WMA roads, cross country (Nordic) skiing, and snowshoeing are generally compatible with the goals of Ashland Flats WMA. These activities are also permitted when used in conjunction with a primary activity (e.g., snowshoeing to go hunting or trapping).



Hiking:

Limited hiking trails are available at Ashland Flats WMA, however many of the public roads do offer the opportunity to hike at this WMA. There is a snowmobile trail that can be used for hiking, but it is not maintained as a hiking trail. The southern parcel of the WMA also has a minimally maintained path that leads back to one of the YFI projects.



Canoeing and kayaking:

Canoeing and kayaking is not a common activity at this WMA other than perhaps by waterfowl hunters. Canoes can be launched from the dike to access the main pool for hunting purposes.



Bicycling:

Mountain biking is not recommended at this WMA, however the public roads around the WMA are open for cyclists looking to get out. In general, bicycling off the public roads and on the WMA is not allowed unless specifically authorized by posted notice or a temporary revocable permit is obtained from the Regional Manager.



Cross country (Nordic) skiing and snowshoeing:

Skiing and snowshoeing do occur at this WMA, primarily by trappers. Caution is to be taken while near the C5J snowmobile trail.

RESTRICTED ACTIVITIES

Restricted activities are typically not wildlife-dependent and have the potential to adversely affect wildlife or wildlife-dependent recreation.

The following restricted activities may be allowed on Ashland Flats WMA on a limited basis, with conditions and/or a permit:

Snowmobiling: This is restricted to only where the C5J snowmobile trail traverses the WMA. Snowmobilers are required to stay on the trail and not venture off to explore the WMA while riding a snowmobile.

Dog training: Training dogs on wild game during the training season (August 16 to April 15) does not require a permit.

Collecting edible plants, fruit, or fungi: No person shall remove, cut or willfully damage or destroy living vegetation of any kind, except for immediate personal consumption or with the written permission of the Regional Manager.

The following restricted activities on Ashland Flats WMA are authorized only under permits issued through the Regional DEC office:

- Organized competitive races or group events
- Geocaching
- Motorized equipment except as allowed by Part 51 or a permitted wildlife, research, habitat or maintenance activity

The following activities are not allowed on Ashland Flats WMA:

- Motorized boating
- Horseback riding
- Overnight mooring or boat storage
- Swimming

- Off road use of motorized vehicles
- Fires, except for cooking or warmth
- Use of metal detectors, searching for or removing historic or cultural artifacts without a permit
- Camping
- Dog trials and group training events
- Target shooting

ACCESSIBLE RECREATION



Providing Accessible Recreation through the WMA System: Wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities are available on many state lands for people of all ages and abilities.^{11,12} The WMA system includes accessible trails, hunting blinds, observation platforms, canoe launches, and other opportunities for visitors to hunt, fish, observe, and enjoy wildlife. Throughout the WMA system:

- Service animals (dogs, miniature horses) are welcome at all DEC facilities.
- Hunters with disabilities can apply for various permits and reduced fee licenses through DEC's Special Licenses Unit.¹³
- Through the Motorized Access Program for People with Disabilities (MAPPWD), DEC has established vehicular routes on certain WMAs to facilitate access for wildlife-dependent activities. These mapped routes are accessible by permit only, available through DEC's regional offices.¹⁴
- WMA visitors may apply for case-by-case accommodation permits to request the use of other power-driven mobility devices on state lands beyond MAPPWD routes.¹⁵ Applications for accommodation permits are available through DEC's Central Office (Albany) or regional offices.
- To maintain and improve access for persons with disabilities, DEC employs a network of accessibility coordinators throughout the regions and in Central Office.
- Accessible destinations are shown on DEC's Accessible Recreation Destinations webpage. All WMA maps and webpages show available accessible features and how to get to them.

While not all existing facilities on WMAs are accessible, new features or existing features requiring repair will be evaluated and designed to be inclusive and accessible to the greatest extent possible while retaining the ecological integrity and wildlife value of the site.

Management proposed in this plan is in accord with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title V, Section 504, the Application of the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), and Principles of Universal Design. For more information on how DEC follows ADA guidelines on WMAs please see Appendix B at the end of this document.

¹¹ Information about accessible recreation on state lands is available at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/34035.html>.

¹² Information about public use of State Forests is available in the *Strategic Plan for State Forest Management* at https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands_forests_pdf/spsfmfinal.pdf.

¹³ Information about permits for hunters with disabilities is available at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/30419.html>.

¹⁴ Information about MAPPWD is available at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/2574.html>.

¹⁵ Information about accommodation permits is available at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/73029.html>.

Accessible Recreation on Ashland Flats WMA: During the development of this plan, an inclusivity assessment was completed at Ashland Flats WMA to determine the current accessible features, determine their condition, and identify appropriate actions such as updating existing facilities or installing new ones. The following accessible recreational opportunities are currently available on Ashland Flats WMA:

- Observation tower, parking area, and short trail off Ashland Road

Recommendations for improving usability and inclusivity of wildlife-related recreation are included in this plan. The existing and proposed accessible features on this WMA are also noted in Table 1 and throughout the *Public Use Activities* section above.

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

Providing safe, accessible, and ecologically responsible public access on WMAs requires balancing recreation with wildlife and habitat conservation. Challenges may arise when these two priorities conflict, such as balancing protection of and providing access to or through inherently fragile habitats (e.g., wetlands, dunes). Responsible management of public access requires maintaining miles of property boundaries, working with user groups to minimize impacts of certain activities, and enforcing violations. This requires regulatory support as well as constant mindfulness of the unique purpose of WMAs.

Ashland Flats WMA has been managed to maintain and improve nesting conditions for grassland birds. There will soon be a new contract agreement established with a local farmer who will be mowing and removing hay from the grassland fields. This process is time sensitive, and the contract will not allow the farmer to be on the area until after peak nesting season. It will be important to keep a balance between providing access to the WMA by working with the public while also protecting vulnerable grassland habitat that is crucial for the nesting success of threatened and endangered bird species that are utilizing the area.

During winter months, this WMA provides access for snowmobilers via a VSA and use of snowmobiles is confined to the designated trail. It is important that this area remains clearly marked and patrolled to discourage misuse. This provides a great winter recreation opportunity while still protecting the bird and mammal species that continue to rely on this area during the winter season.

PERMITS AND USER AGREEMENTS

TEMPORARY REVOCABLE PERMITS

Temporary Revocable Permits (TRPs) are short-term permits for certain individual or group activities or events on DEC-managed public lands.¹⁶ A TRP may be required for some activities on WMAs. TRPs are issued by DEC regional offices and can be revoked at any time due to violations of TRP conditions.

VOLUNTEER STEWARDSHIP AGREEMENTS

Volunteer Stewardship Agreements (VSAs) are issued when an individual or organization engages in activities to provide positive benefits to state lands.¹⁷ For example, a VSA may be established for a local trail group to maintain a hiking trail on a WMA. VSAs are issued by DEC regional offices.

The snowmobile trail on the WMA is under a VSA with the Thousand Island Snowmobile Club. The use of snowmobiles is confined to a designated trail which traverses the WMA. The permittee is responsible for any inadvertent or deliberate damage to the WMA caused by the exercise of the permit.

¹⁶ Information about TRPs is available at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/51387.html>.

¹⁷ Information about VSAs is available at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/90822.html>.

IV. MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

In summary, Table 2 lists facility maintenance and public access actions planned for Ashland Flats WMA for the duration of this plan. Location of management actions are shown in Figure 2. Completion of actions are dependent on staff and funding availability.

Table 2. Summary of management actions recommended for Ashland Flats WMA, 2022-2025.

Description of Action	Priority	Estimated cost ^a
Create a two car pull off parking area (southern parcel Ashland Rd)	Low	\$4,500.00
Rehab existing parking area off Burnt Rock Road along the DANC right of way	High	\$2,000.00
Add a kiosk at parking area on Ashland Road near the observation tower	High	\$500.00
Maintain all parking areas annually		
Maintain all interior (every four years) and roadside boundaries (annually)		
Maintain access signage annually		

^a Cost estimate provided for planning purposes only and is subject to change.

V. FIGURES

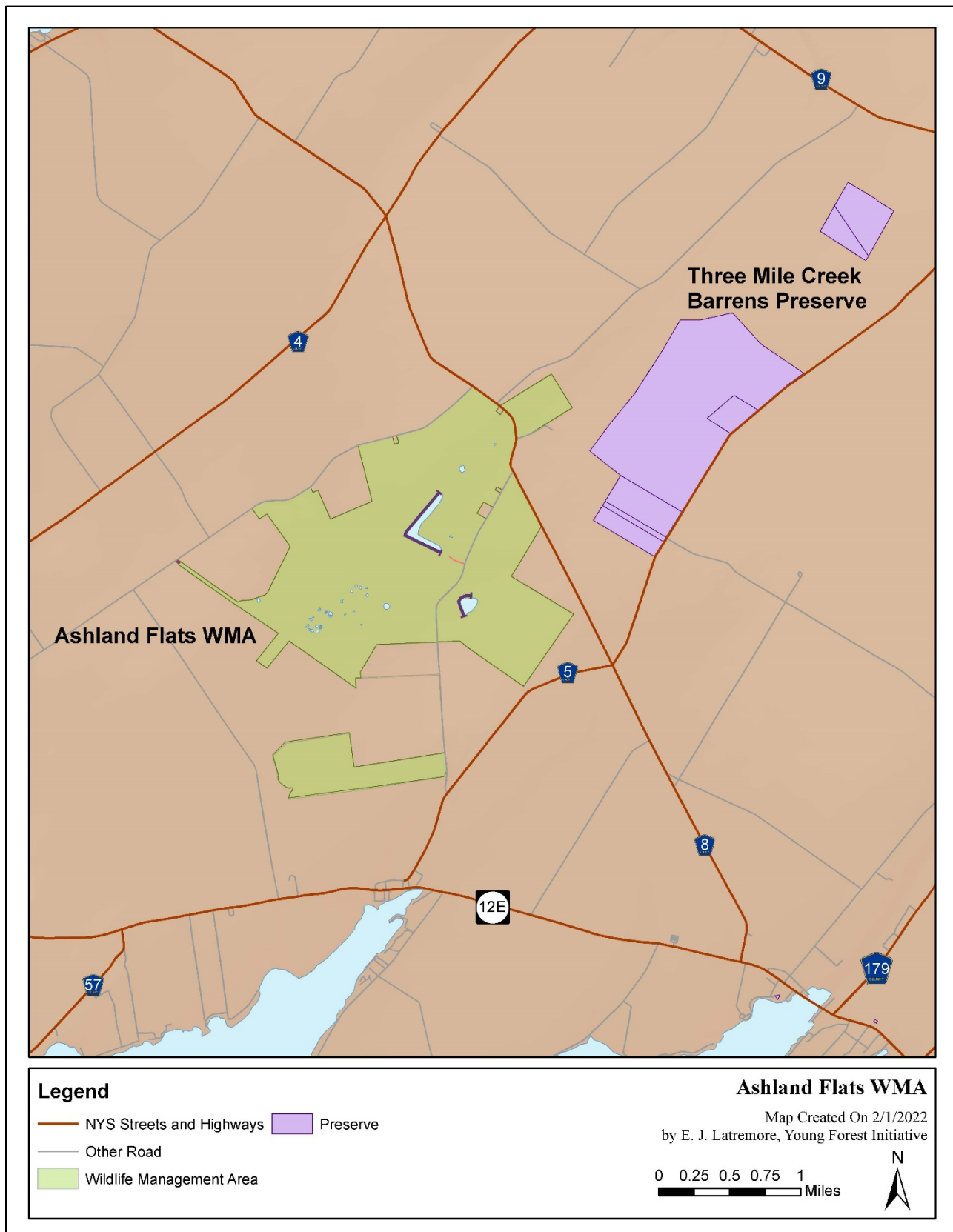


FIGURE 1. Connectivity to other public lands and recreation areas.

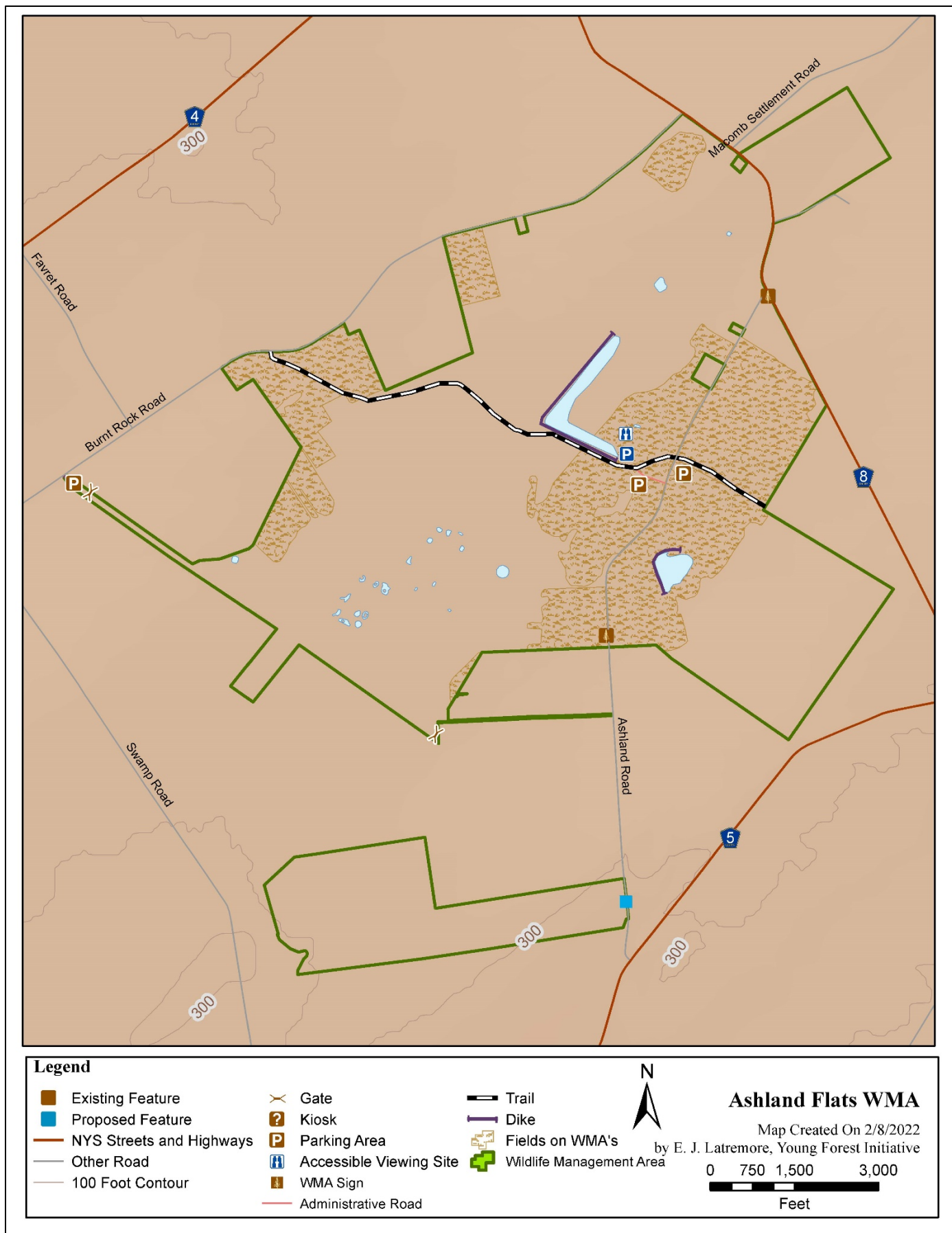


FIGURE 2. Location of existing and proposed access features at Ashland Flats WMA.

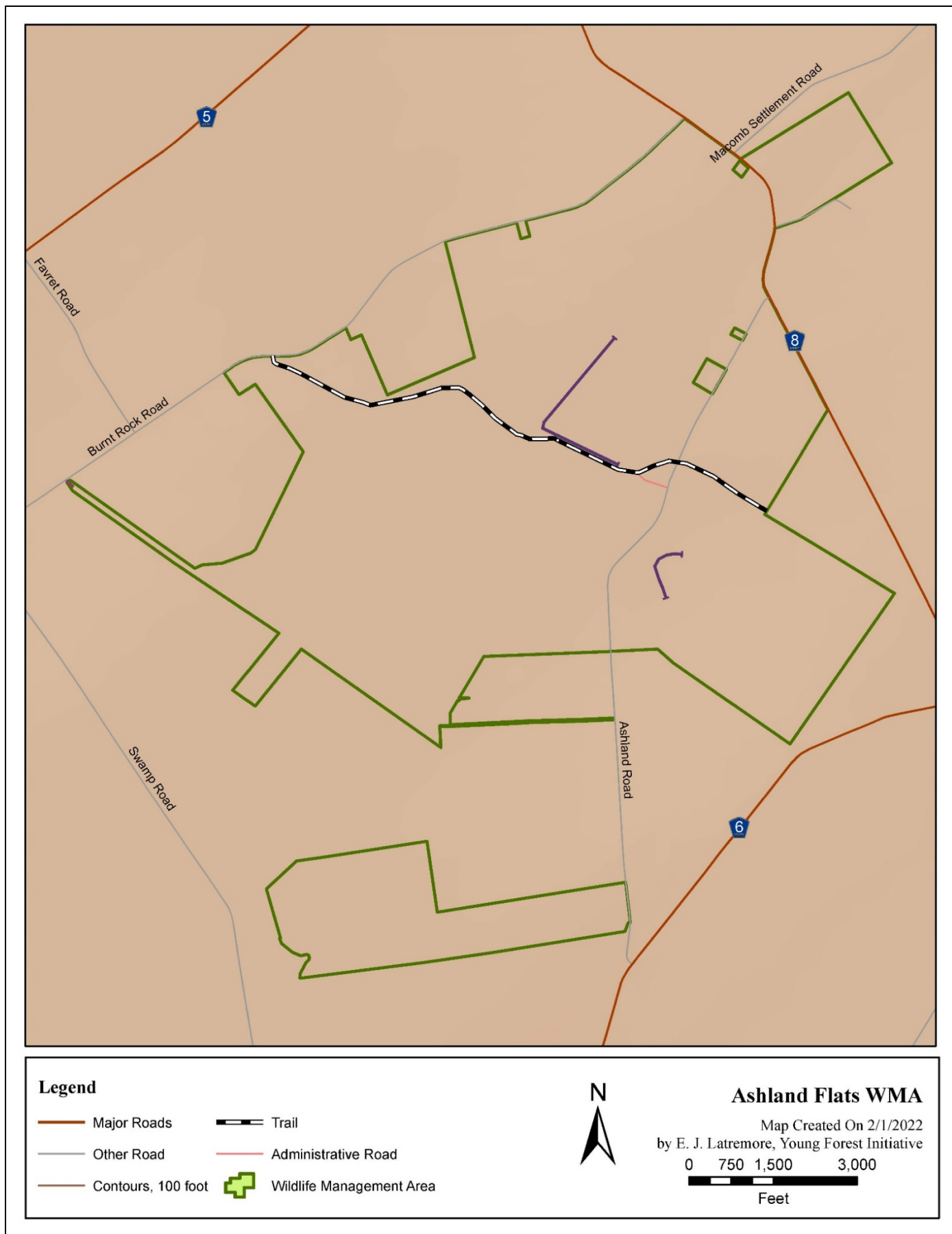
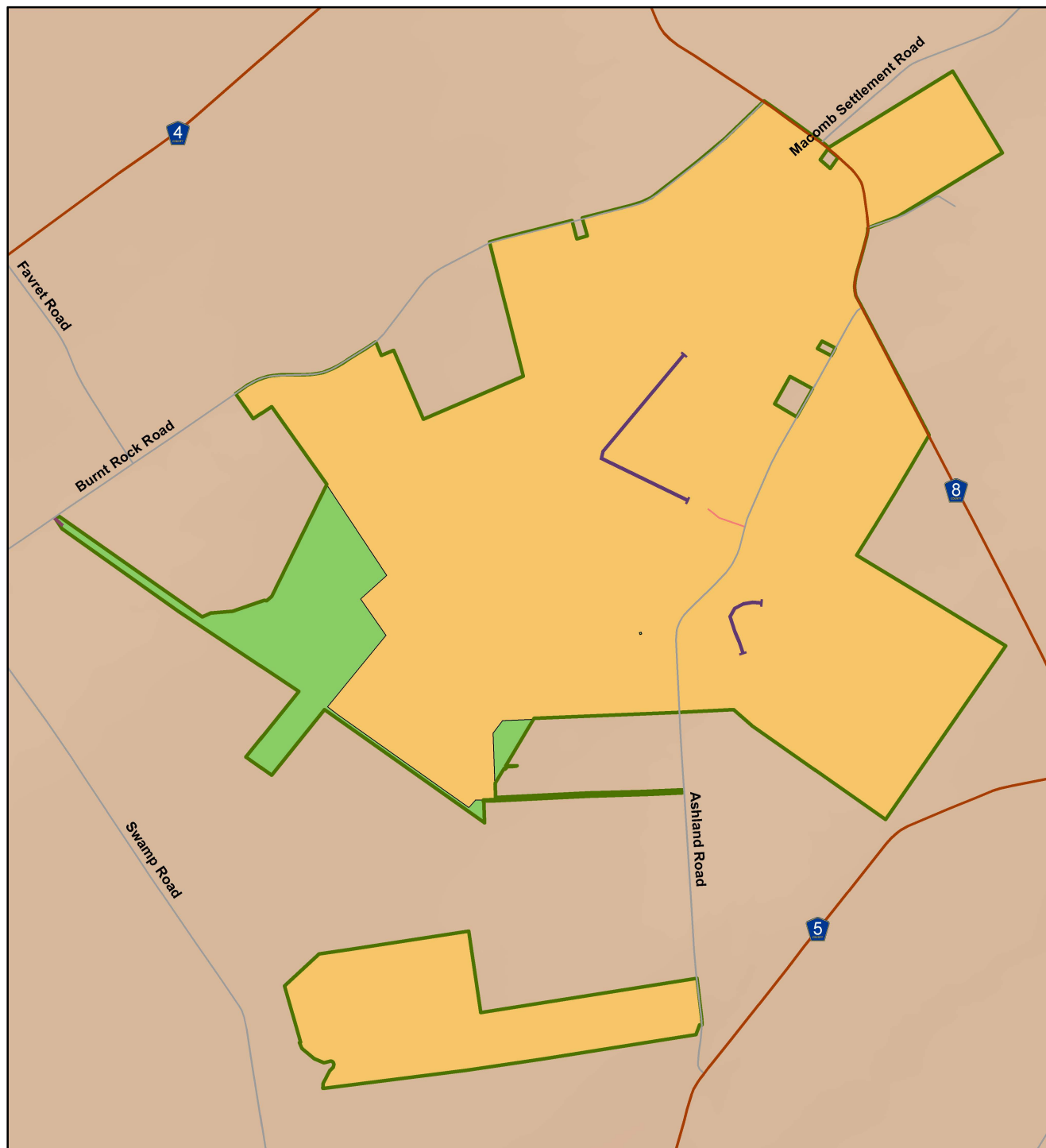


FIGURE 3. Roads and trails on Ashland Flats WMA.



Legend

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Major Roads | ACQUISITION FUNDING SOURCE |
|  Other Road |  Pittman Robertson |
| |  State |



0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 Miles

Ashland Flats WMA

Map created on 8/22/2022
by E. J. Latremore, Young Forest Initiative

FIGURE 4. Acquisition of lands for Ashland Flats WMA.

VI. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

The following is a summary of the public comments that were received during the creation of the Ashland Flats Access and Public Use Plan and subsequent changes to the plan. Comments are in **bold** text, with DEC responses in *italics*.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES MADE TO THE PLAN

None.

COMMENTS RECEIVED

Stop all hunting and trapping in this area. Hunters kill all animals with no regard for any wildlife. Stop logging trees. they protect climate and stop erosion, keep it cool in summer warmer in winter, provide homes for wildlife. Stop applying toxic chemicals in this site. No toxic chemicals should be used at any time. Do not implement prescribed burns which pollute the air causing lung cancer, heart attacks, strokes, asthma and allergies. Do not allow farm leases on this site as they are incompatible. Do not encourage wholesale use by humans and make sure they are not stealing the plants. Human stealing of plants from open space is well known.

DEC Response:

Thank you for your comment and we appreciate your concerns. Healthy populations of wildlife are created with proper management of those species. Responsible harvesting of trees is a sustainable resource and required best management practices are followed to protect the natural resources while harvest projects occur. Many non-native invasive and native interfering species are controlled to allow for more desirable native forest species to outcompete the invasive and interfering species being treated. Chemicals used are used by the label instructions to provide a safer environment. Prescribed burning is a tool used primarily for manipulating grassland habitat for many species of greatest conservation need in NY. Agricultural agreements/contracts primarily involve single harvests of hay, however on occasion some agreements/contracts are utilized for growing row crops. Both activities are beneficial for a plethora of wildlife species. Part 51 regulations makes it illegal for constituents to remove living plants from state lands.

Dear Sirs:

On page 24 (Figure 3) of your PDF document, you show Wetland 1 as a diked wetland area. Over the last 8 to 10 years, it is a dry area most summer's and fall's holding little to no water. I don't think you are showing a true representation of this wetland area on the map as it is mostly dried up vegetation.

This problem should be corrected for nesting waterfowl and shore birds (the dike needs to be holding enough water so it will not dry up every year)! Please, get out in the field and check it out.

DEC Response:

Thank you for this comment. This comment refers to the Habitat Management Plan (HMP) and we will investigate the functionality of the created wetland.

APPENDIX B. APPLICATION OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

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.