

# **Access and Public Use Plan for Hanging Bog Wildlife Management Area 2021-2025**



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## SUMMARY

Hanging Bog Wildlife Management Area (WMA) supports a variety of outdoor recreational activities. The most common of which are hunting and trapping. The area has been managed for ruffed grouse since the mid-1980s and is well known to grouse and woodcock hunters. The diverse young and mature forest habitat, shrublands, grasslands and wetlands make the area well suited for deer hunting, turkey hunting, rabbit and squirrel hunting, pheasant hunting, and trapping.

Camp Rushford is one of four education camps that DEC operates and is located on the WMA. It is the only camp that was specifically designed and built as a conservation camp. The two main buildings (dining hall and bunk house) are constructed from logs salvaged from the Adirondacks after the blow down of 1950. It opened as a boy's camp in 1952 and became co-ed in 1983.

Since 2010, the Pat Arnold Youth Trapping Camp for 12- to 14-year olds is held every year at Camp Rushford which is sponsored by the New York State Trapper's Association. Experienced trappers and trapper education instructors mentor the youths in trap preparation, setting, and through to skinning and pelt handling.

The area is also very popular for bird watching and wildlife viewing. Bird watchers may encounter a variety of bird species such as : yellow-bellied sapsucker, downy woodpecker, hairy woodpecker, northern flicker, pileated woodpecker and eastern wood-pewee; several species of warblers such as blue-winged warbler, yellow warbler, chestnut-sided warbler, magnolia warbler, yellow-rumped warbler, and black throated green warbler. An accessible wildlife viewing platform is located on the bog where Canada goose, mallard, wood duck, hooded merganser, pied-billed grebe, belted kingfisher, killdeer, green heron and great blue heron may be seen as well. There are several ponds on the area that provide wetland habitat for beaver, mink, wood ducks and Canada geese. There is a motorized access trail for people with disabilities off Briggs Road. With a permit, access is allowed on the trail with an ATV. Also, there is a three- mile trail for hiking and cross country skiing along the Brown Road area.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) will continue to provide, promote and improve public access for wildlife-dependent recreation on this popular WMA.

Management objectives for public use and access on Hanging Bog WMA include:

- Maintain all existing access infrastructure such as parking areas, kiosks, (Commissioner's Policy #3) CP3 trails which is a motorized access program for people with disabilities, viewing platforms and administrative roads.
- As needed, develop additional assets for primary wildlife recreation (parking areas, pull-offs and kiosks).
- Allow for the hiking/cross country and connector snowmobile trails to exist and be maintained by volunteer groups.

- Continue to manage existing habitat and create additional young forest and grassland habitat as stated in the habitat management plan to improve wildlife-dependent recreation such as hunting, trapping and wildlife viewing.

## ***I. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION***

### **PURPOSE OF ACCESS AND PUBLIC USE PLANS**

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#### **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*.<sup>1</sup>

#### **SCOPE AND INTENT**

This Access and Public Use Plan (APUP) complements the Habitat Management Plan (HMP) for Hanging Bog 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), 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.
- To establish a maintenance schedule for existing facilities and features.

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

## **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*,<sup>2</sup> 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**

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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 in order to prevent disturbance to wildlife and interference with wildlife-dependent recreation.<sup>3</sup> Part 51 is currently in the process of being 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. Some uses listed in this document as “prohibited” or “not allowed” may require these changes to Part 51 to be signed into regulation before being considered illegal on a WMA. Those restrictions of uses requiring revisions to the current Part 51 are still being listed in this document due to the fact that this plan is aimed at describing the current and future conditions of public use on this WMA. It is anticipated with reasonable certainty that the revisions to Part 51 will be signed into regulation during the life of this document.

## **II. RECREATIONAL RESOURCES**

### **POINTS OF ACCESS**

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Hanging Bog WMA is accessible from a variety of roadways, many of which are open year-round. From the north, the area can be accessed via Rush Creek Road, Bellville Road, Dolph Road and Luce Road. The access from the south is from Route 305 to New Hudson Road, Brown Road and Habgood Road. From the west is Crab Hollow Road and from the east is Cloverleaf and Slusher Hill Roads.

For additional driving directions and a map of WMA roads, see Figures 1 and 2 of the preceding Hanging Bog WMA Habitat Management Plan (page 33 & 34) or go to the DEC website at: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/82971.html>.

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<sup>2</sup> Available online at [https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/wildlife\\_pdf/eispublic.pdf](https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/wildlife_pdf/eispublic.pdf).

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

## CONNECTIVITY TO OTHER RECREATION AREAS

Hanging Bog WMA is adjacent to two other state land properties. Crab Hollow State Forest<sup>4</sup> (1,154 acres) and Rush Creek State Forest<sup>5</sup> (1,404 acres). DEC state forest lands are administered by the Division of Lands and Forests and allow access for recreational activities similar to those allowed on the WMA.

## 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 Hanging Bog WMA. In addition, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) constructed the forty-five-acre constructed bog in the late 1930s for which the area is named.

Table 1. Summary of existing and desired public use features on Hanging Bog WMA. Features listed here are those that are available to the public.

Category	Feature	Existing (as of 2020)	Proposed Changes
Parking	Vehicle parking lot	4	Increase (as needed)
	Pull-off	4	Increase to 6
Roads	Administrative road	13.9 Miles	Maintain
	Public Roads	3 Miles	Maintain
	Gates	32	Maintain
Camping	Primitive campsites (use by permit only)	5	No Change
Trails	Foot trail (Hiking/cross country skiing)	3.2 Miles	No Change
	Accessible ATV trail	0.25 Miles	No Change
	Snowmobile trail	5 miles	No Change
Accessible Features	Wildlife Viewing Platform	1	Maintain
	Accessible parking area, trail and hunting blind.	0	Increase to 1
Boat Launch	Hand Launch (kayak, canoe)	1	No Change
Water Bodies	Constructed impoundments	14	No Change
	Ponds/open water wetlands	3	No Change
	Vernal pools	6	No Change

<sup>4</sup> Additional information is available online at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/60739.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Additional information is available online at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/60746.html>.



*Table 1. continued*

Structures and facilities	Building or shed	0	No Change
	Informational kiosks	3	Increase to 5

## 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).
- 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



**Existing Conditions:** Hanging Bog WMA currently has four parking areas that are in good condition. The WMA roads also have several pull-offs and wide shoulders for additional parking as well. They are spread out throughout the WMA and provide access to trails, water bodies and popular hunting areas.

**Actions:** The following proposed actions listed in order of priority will be conducted during the timeframe of this plan:

- Maintain existing parking areas by mowing and adding stone and gravel when needed.
- Develop additional parking area on Habgood Road and two pull-offs on Cooper and McElheny Roads.

### ROADS

#### **Existing Conditions:**

Hanging Bog WMA has about 3 miles of public road along with approximately 14 miles of DEC



Federal Road - Hanging Bog WMA  
Photo: Emilio Rende

administrative roads (controlled access) which are in good condition. These roads are maintained to provide access to users of the area and to provide DEC with access for management activities such as shrubland, grassland and timber management. The road shoulders are mowed every year to keep vegetation from encroaching the roadway. Also, the roads are raked every year, and graded and re-surfaced periodically. Additional maintenance includes culvert and ditch cleaning and/or replacing culverts as needed. There are 32 gates located on the property. The gates restrict access to areas and are closed seasonally when necessary due to snow or wet conditions. Other gates restrict motorized access to our ponds, fields, and timber harvesting haul roads.

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

- Maintain the DEC owned roads by mowing shoulders, raking and grading, ditch and culvert cleaning and re-surfacing when necessary.
- Maintain and/or replace gates and culverts as needed.

## **TRAILS**



**Existing Conditions:** The hiking and cross country ski trail on the WMA is located east of New Hudson Road on both sides of Brown Road. This 3.2-mile trail is maintained by a local group under a Volunteer Stewardship Agreement (VSA). These trails are primarily used by cross country skiers and hikers though sometimes they are used by hunters during the hunting season. There are currently no plans to expand this trail system. However, some of these trails may be subject to re-routing due to the ongoing habitat management activities on the WMA.

A motorized ATV accessible trail is located on Briggs Road. This 0.25-mile trail is designated as part of the Motorized Access Program for People with Disabilities (MAPPWD<sup>6</sup>). The MAPPWD permit is a temporary revocable permit (TRP) that provides motor vehicle access on state land. The permit is only issued to qualified people with disabilities. Access is restricted to designated routes only.

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

- Continue to communicate with the local group under the VSA should a temporary or permanent re-route or closure of certain sections of trail be necessary.
- Develop an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) parking area, trail and hunting blind on Habgood Road.

## **BOAT LAUNCHES AND FISHING ACCESS**



**Existing Conditions:** There is a hand launch area on the bog at the parking area off New Hudson Road. It is a stable, hard bottom shallow area to launch

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<sup>6</sup> Additional information is available online at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/76213.html>.

canoes or kayaks. There are several small ponds on the area that are open to fishing as well. Due to their smaller size, there are no plans to create any access features on these water bodies.

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

- Maintain the existing hand launch area.

### **OBSERVATION/HUNTING BLINDS, TOWERS, AND PLATFORMS**



**Existing Conditions:** There is an accessible wildlife viewing platform off New Hudson Road that overlooks the bog. There is a stone surfaced trail to the platform.

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

- Maintain accessible trail and observation platform.



Wildlife viewing platform at Hanging Bog WMA  
Photo: E. Rende

### **BUILDINGS AND OTHER PERMANENT STRUCTURES**



**Existing Conditions:** There are three informational kiosks found at various locations on the WMA.

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

- Install two new informational kiosks on New Hudson and Habgood Roads.
- Maintain all informational kiosks as needed.

## **MANAGING HABITAT TO PROVIDE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

There are several habitat management projects planned to improve wildlife recreation on the area. Please refer to page 31 of the HMP for a detailed habitat management summary. Hanging Bog WMA has been actively managed throughout its history, primarily through a patch cutting program established in 1988 to provide ruffed grouse habitat. The WMA currently has 15% of early successional habitat comprised of 9% young forest, 4% shrubland, and 2% grassland. DEC intends to increase young forest an additional 160 acres to 12%, increase an additional 40 acres of shrubland to 5%, and increase grassland an additional 35 acres to 3.3%. This increased acreage will increase early successional habitat to over 20% of the WMA. These habitat types are specifically aimed at providing habitat for upland game birds such as ruffed grouse, woodcock and wild turkey. Big game, furbearers, and many species of songbirds will benefit as

well. This management will in turn enhance public use opportunities for hunting, trapping, and wildlife observation.

Young forest is created and maintained using a combination of commercial and non-commercial timber harvesting. This timber management creates a mixture of different age classes of young forest (0-5 years, 5-10 years, 10+ years). Shrubland will be created and maintained by periodic brush mowing and cutting. The shrubland areas on the north side of Punky Road have lanes cut in them for pheasant hunting. Grasslands will be created and maintained by brush mowing and periodic block and strip mowing. Fields will be planted with cool season grasses, legumes and warm season grasses using agricultural equipment. The fields are strip mowed to facilitate pheasant hunting as well.

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

- Design and build accessible hunting blind and trail at eastern end of Habgood Road.
- HMP forest management implementation: Scheduled patch cuts in Compartments A, B and C (See HMP, Table 4 on page 15 and 16).
- Shrubland management implementation: Shrubland creation from clearing forest stands: A-99, A-116, A-183, B-121, D-31 and D-43 (See HMP, page 23).
- Grassland management implementation: Shrubland conversion to grassland: A-115, B-35, E-58, and E-59 (See HMP, page 22).

### ***III. PUBLIC USE ACTIVITIES***

#### **RECREATION ON WMAS**

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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*.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Available online at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7768.html>.

## RECREATION ON HANGING BOG WMA

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### **PRIMARY ACTIVITIES**

Primary activities include wildlife-dependent recreation that is compatible with the primary goals and purposes of WMAs. Hunting, trapping, wildlife watching, wildlife/nature photography, and fishing are the primary uses of Hanging Bog WMA. All statewide hunting, trapping, and fishing regulations apply.<sup>8</sup>



**Hunting:** Hanging Bog WMA, located in Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) 9W, provides good hunting for popular game species such as ruffed grouse, American woodcock, eastern wild turkey and ring-necked pheasants. Upland game bird hunting is popular on this WMA due to its management history and abundant suitable habitat. The area has wild apples, hawthorn, dogwood, viburnum, red and white oak and other mast producing trees and shrubs. Along with the abundance of food, there are many areas of dense understory which provide cover and nesting habitat. The conversion of shrubland to grassland along with the existing grasslands provides suitable habitat for pheasants and brood rearing for wild turkeys and ruffed grouse. Most of the fields are near the road which gives hunters good access to pheasants stocked annually by DEC staff.

The HMP will continue to enhance and create early successional habitat through timber, shrubland, and grassland management. Please refer to the HMP for more specific information.

White-tailed deer hunting is also popular on this WMA. The timber management techniques used for upland game birds will benefit deer as well. Opening the forest canopy will stimulate plant regeneration adding browse and cover for deer. The planned management actions are spread throughout the WMA, as are the roads and trails, and will provide good access for the sportsmen and women.

Other hunting opportunities include squirrel and rabbit hunting along with predator (coyote, fox, raccoon) and bear hunting. Squirrels can be found in the stands of hardwood mast producing trees such as oak, hickory and beech. Eastern cottontail rabbits are in the overgrown apple tree stands and in the brush along the field edges. Black bears prefer the mature hardwood stands and some of the open areas as well.



**Trapping:** There are many species of furbearers on the area such as: beaver, muskrat, otter, mink, fisher, weasel, raccoon, opossum, red and gray fox, bobcat, coyote, and striped skunk. Good areas for water trapping beaver are found along several drainages that flow through the area and in some of the ponds. There are small streams and culverts that provide good areas for muskrat trapping, too. The many fields and openings provide good areas for land trapping as well. Every year DEC hosts The Pat Arnold Youth Trapping Camp

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<sup>8</sup> Available online at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/regs/2494.html>.

at Camp Rushford sponsored by the New York State Trappers Association. The event is taught by certified experienced trappers and DEC staff. These features linked by roads and trails on the WMA provide good access for the students and trappers. Also, many of the management practices for creating early successional habitat will provide food and cover for the furbearer prey species such as small mammals, rodents, and cottontail rabbits.



**Wildlife observation/bird watching:** The diverse habitat at Hanging Bog WMA makes it favorable for wildlife viewing especially bird watching. A wildlife viewing platform is located on the bog pond on the east side of New Hudson road. Water birds such as pied-billed grebes, great blue herons and bitterns can be found there along with migrating waterfowl. Also, the extensive road and trail systems provide good access throughout the area.



**Fishing:** Hanging Bog WMA is not known as a fishing destination, however, there are several ponds on the area that contain warm water species such as blue-gill, pumpkinseed and largemouth bass. Also, at the north end of the area, a section of the head waters of Rush Creek passes through the WMA. This stream contains a fair number of wild rainbow trout. These bodies of water are relatively close to existing roads and trails. There are no management activities planned to enhance or facilitate this activity on the WMA.

## **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 Hanging Bog WMA. These activities are also permitted when used in conjunction with a primary activity (e.g., snowshoeing to go hunting or trapping).



**Hiking:** Hiking is a fairly common secondary use permitted at Hanging Bog WMA. The Brown Road area trails are maintained by a local group under a Volunteer Stewardship Agreement (VSA). There are currently no plans to expand this trail system. However, some of these trails may be subject to re-routing due to the ongoing habitat management activities on the WMA.



**Canoeing and Kayaking:** Some canoeing and kayaking takes place on the area. There is a hand launch on the main bog pond. Also, some if this activity occurs on some of the larger ponds as well.



**Bicycling:** Bicycling is allowed on both the town and DEC owned administrative roads running through the WMA. The amount of bicycle use is relatively light on Hanging Bog WMA. This activity is not expected to impact wildlife at this time.





**Cross country (Nordic) skiing and snowshoeing:** Cross country skiing and snow shoeing are allowed on the administrative roads, timber haul roads, and on the Brown Road area trails. The Brown Road area trails are very popular.

We believe that the disturbance to wildlife is minimal with these types of activities and are an excellent way to view and enjoy wildlife.

### **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 Hanging Bog WMA on a limited basis, with conditions and/or a permit:

**Horseback riding:** Horseback riding is only allowed on roadways that allow motor vehicle traffic (town, un-gated DEC access roads). Riding on foot trails, logging access roads, fields, or any other off-road portion of the WMA is prohibited.

**Snowmobiling:** Snowmobiles are only allowed on approved connector trail segments which include a couple of our administrative roads and town roads. These trails are maintained by a local snowmobile club under a Volunteer Stewardship Agreement (VSA). These machines have the potential to disturb wintering wildlife, hunters and trappers etc.

**Operating motorized vehicles, including ATVs:** As mentioned earlier, snowmobiles are allowed to cross the WMA solely for the purpose of connecting one approved designated trail to another. Snowmobiles are not allowed off trail and their use must not disturb wildlife or wildlife habitats and wildlife-dependent recreation in any way. Hanging Bog WMA also has a designated route for Motorized Access Permit for People with Disabilities (MAWPPD) off Briggs Road. This designated route is for ATV use for people with disabilities that have the special use permit.

**Dog training:** Training dogs on wild game is permitted during the training season (August 16 to April 15). All other training, dog trials, and any training outside the training season dates requires a permit from the regional DEC office. “Dog training” is defined as a single dog owner(s) who has direct control and supervision over his or her dog while engaged in activities at teaching the dog(s) to pursue or retrieve wild game. Other dog training activities that involve a gathering or group of dogs and owners will be considered a “dog trial” and will require a permit from the regional DEC office to use the WMA.

**Collecting edible plants, fruit, or fungi:** The collection of edible plants, fruits or fungi are for immediate personal consumption only.

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

- Dog trials and group training events
- Organized competitive races or group events
- Geocaching

- Drone flying is not allowed unless it is a permitted wildlife, research, or habitat management flight\*
- Camping is allowed on the area at designated sites by permit only.

The following activities are not allowed on Hanging Bog WMA:

- Mechanized boating
- Overnight mooring or boat storage
- Swimming
- Fires, except for cooking or warmth with a camping permit
- Picnicking
- 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.<sup>9,10</sup> 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 special permits and reduced fee licenses through DEC's Special Licenses Unit.<sup>11</sup>
- 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.<sup>12</sup>
- WMA visitors may apply for accommodation permits to request use of power-driven mobility devices on state lands beyond MAPPWD routes.<sup>13</sup> Applications for special accommodation are available through DEC's 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 (Albany).
- 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),

<sup>9</sup> Information about accessible recreation on state lands is available at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/34035.html>.

<sup>10</sup> 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](https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands_forests_pdf/spsfmfinal.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Information about special permits is available at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/30419.html>.

<sup>12</sup> Information about MAPPWD is available at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/2574.html>.

<sup>13</sup> Information about accommodation permits is available at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/73029.html>.



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.

**Accessible Recreation on Hanging Bog WMA:** During the development of this plan, an inclusivity assessment was completed at Hanging Bog 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 Hanging Bog WMA:

- MAPPWD ATV route and parking area off Briggs Road.
- Accessible trail to wildlife viewing platform overlooking the bog pond on the east side of New Hudson Road.

Recommendations for improving usability and inclusivity of wildlife-related recreation are included in this plan. The recommended features include the development of an accessible parking area, trail, and hunting blind. All existing and proposed accessible features on this WMA are also noted in the *Management Strategies* sub-sections below.

## MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

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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.

On Hanging Bog WMA, there are some challenges to maintaining and managing the property. DEC is committed to avoiding impacts to protected bats, whose populations have declined dramatically due to White-nose Syndrome. DEC staff perform acoustic surveys to determine if bats are in the area. If protected bats are detected, staff will avoid or delay work there.

Other challenges involve the illegal use of four-wheel drive trucks “mudding” in our fields, on our administrative roads and ditches, and on our campsites, during wet spring conditions, in addition to the illegal use of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). In recent years, this type of vandalism has increased on the WMA. These vehicles not only disturb wildlife, but they also degrade the habitat and create erosion issues. More funds are then re-directed to repair the trails, roads and other infrastructure which takes away funding that could have been used for new habitat management and access projects. Unfortunately, we have also been forced to install additional barriers and gates not only to deter these activities but to further protect the resources.

## **PERMITS AND USER AGREEMENTS**

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### **TEMPORARY REVOCABLE PERMITS**

Temporary Revocable Permits (TRPs) are short-term permits for certain individual or group activities or events on DEC-managed public lands.<sup>14</sup> 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.

At Hanging Bog WMA, yearly TRPs are issued to National Grid to maintain the utility poles and lines that run through the area. Other TRP's may be issued on a case by case basis.

### **VOLUNTEER STEWARDSHIP AGREEMENTS**

Volunteer Stewardship Agreements (VSAs) are issued when an individual or organization engages in activities to provide positive benefits to state lands.<sup>15</sup> 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 Division of Lands and Forests currently has a VSA for the local snowmobile club to maintain the connector trails that run through Rush Creek SF and Crab Hollow SF which also includes Hanging Bog WMA.

We have an active VSA issued to a local group to maintain the hiking / cross country ski trail on Brown Road.

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<sup>14</sup> Information about TRPs is available at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/51387.html>.

<sup>15</sup> 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 Hanging Bog 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 Hanging Bog WMA, 2021-2025.

<b>Description of Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Estimated cost <sup>a</sup></b>
Create 548 acres of young forest to facilitate improved access for hunting, trapping and wildlife viewing.	High	Variable
Create 71 acres of additional shrubland habitat to provide foraging, nesting and escape cover for various species of wildlife.	High	\$150,000
Enhance grassland fields by converting 35 acres of shrubland for upland bird hunters, trappers and birders.	High	\$20,000
Develop one accessible hunting blind, trail and parking area.	High	\$40,000
Maintain 13.9 acres of DEC owned roads with shoulder mowing, ditching, raking and re-surfacing when necessary.	High	\$1,500/yr.
Maintain 3 existing informational kiosks and install 2 new ones.	Medium	\$1,000
Maintain all existing parking areas/pull-offs add new parking areas/pull-offs as needed.	Medium	\$750
Maintain all existing gates and add new gates if needed.	Low	\$1,500 cost and installation

<sup>a</sup> Cost estimate provided for planning purposes only and is subject to change.

## V. FIGURES

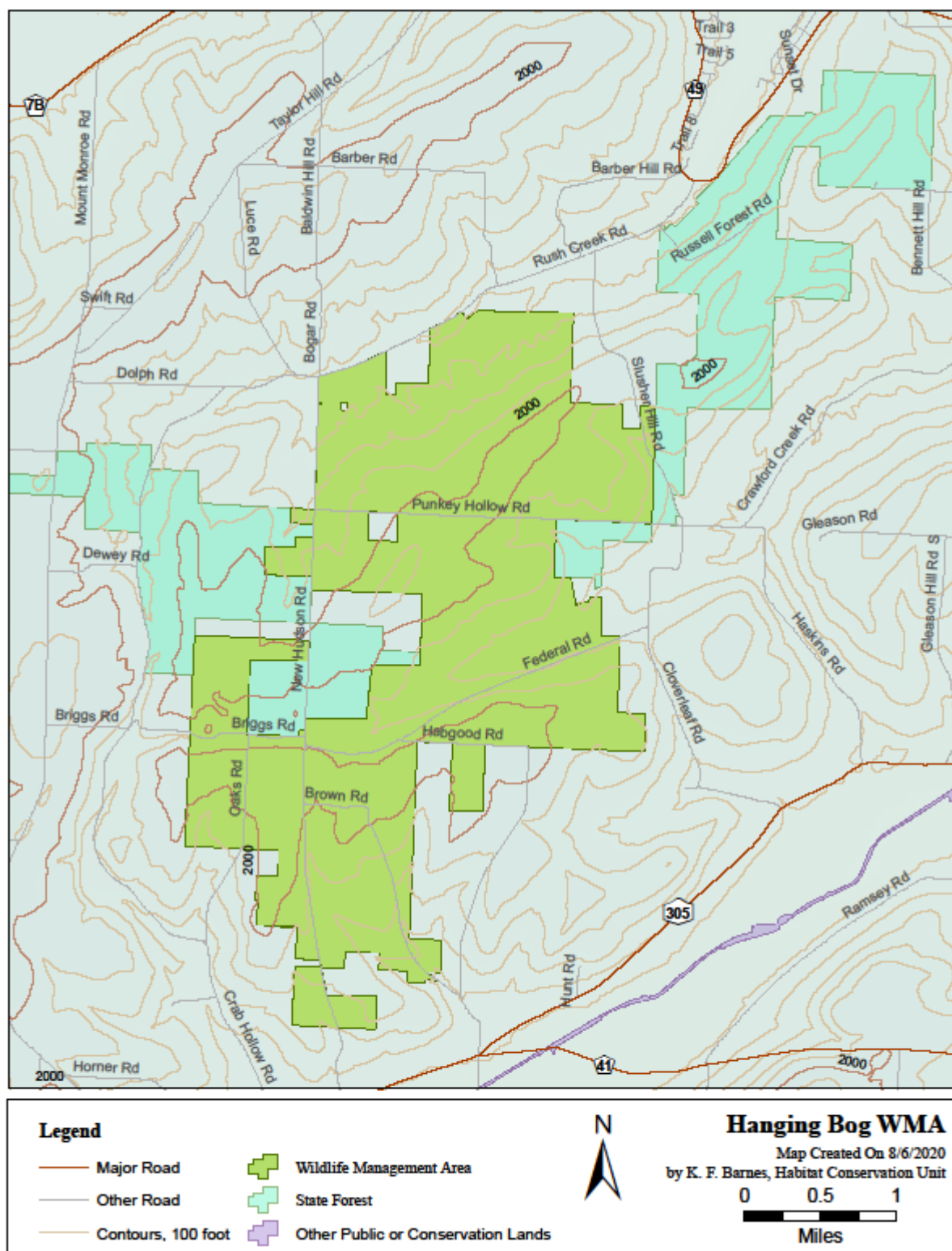


FIGURE 1. Connectivity to other public lands and recreation areas.

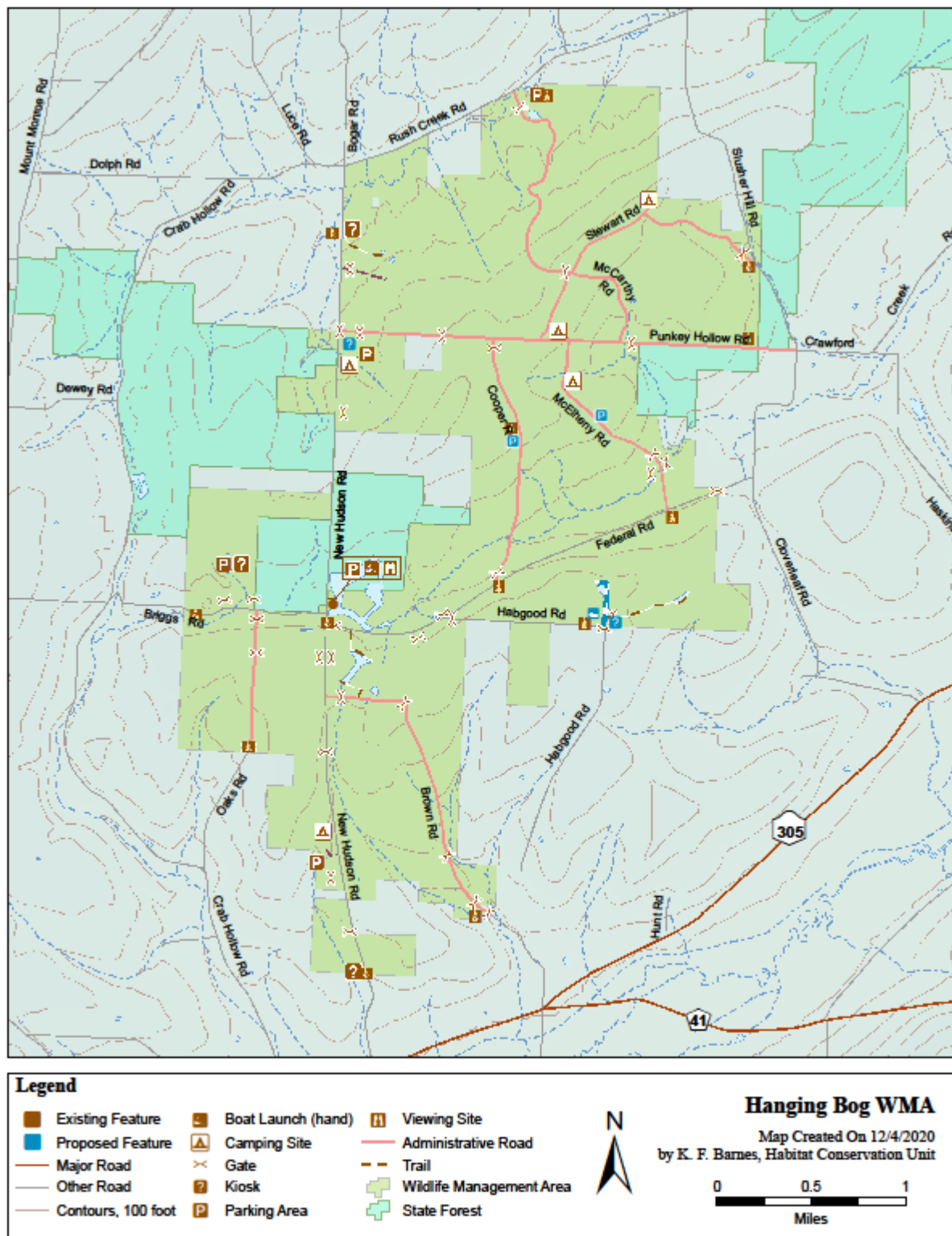


FIGURE 2. Location of existing and proposed access features at Hanging Bog WMA.

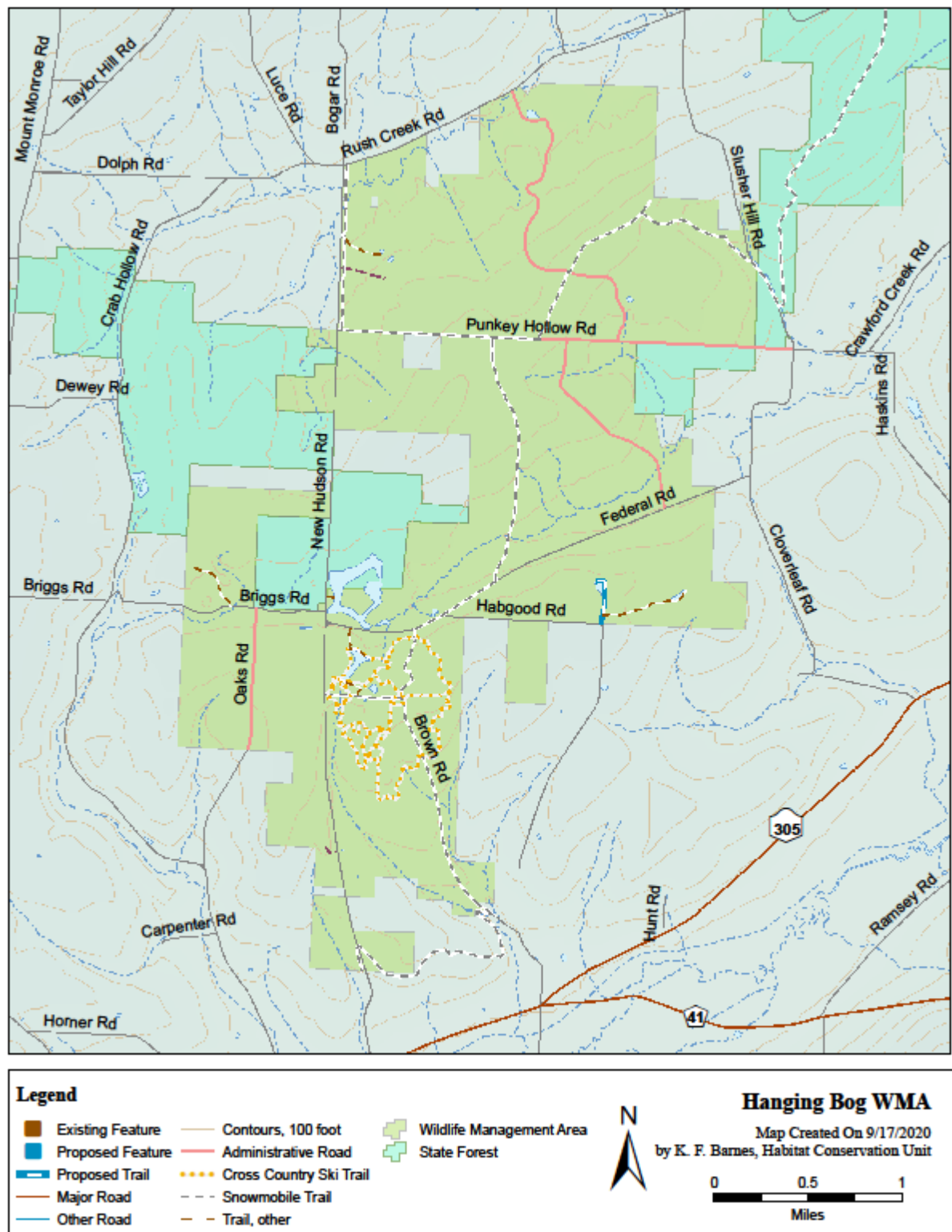
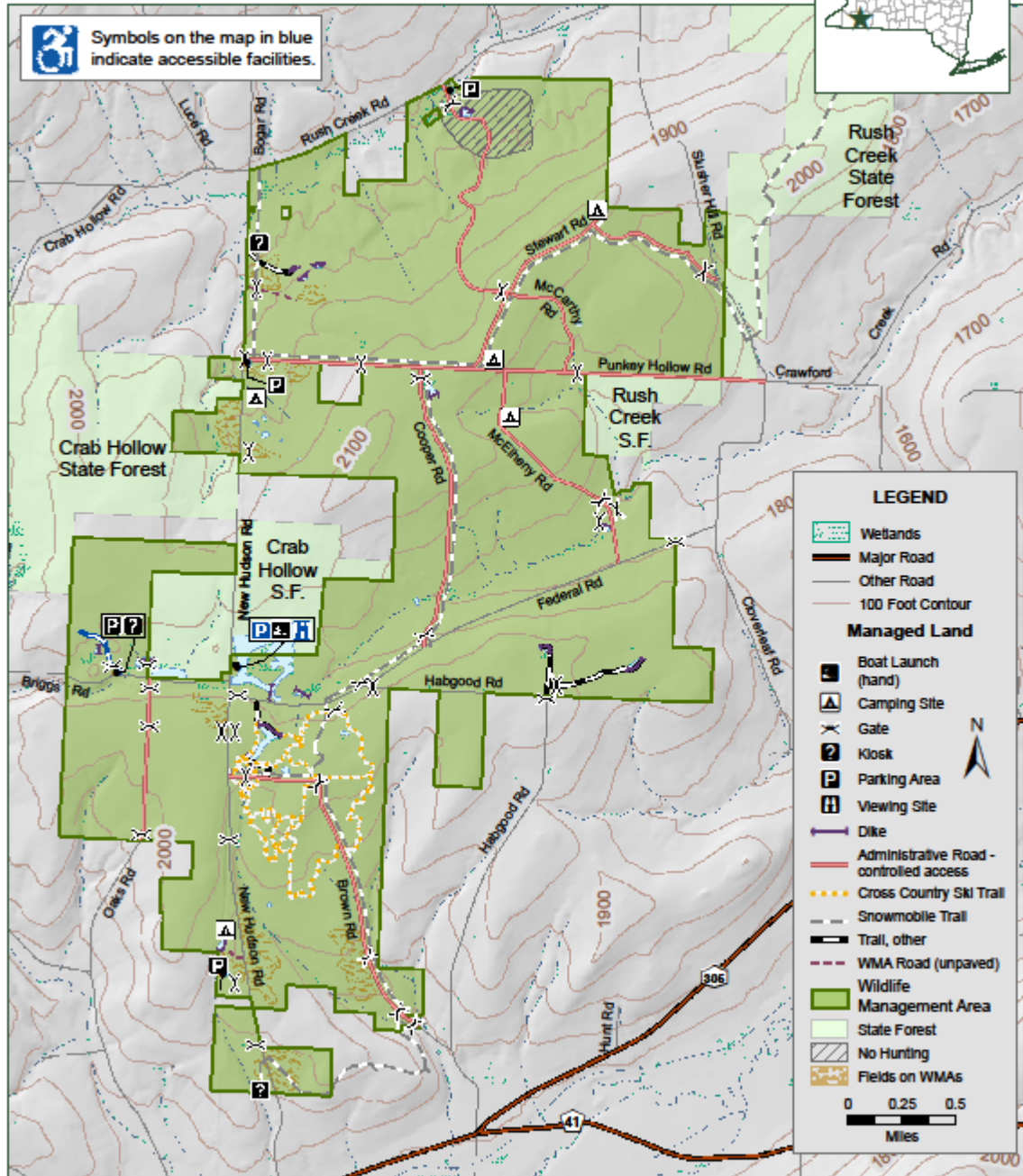


FIGURE 3. Roads and trails on Hanging Bog WMA.



# HANGING BOG

## Wildlife Management Area



New Hudson, Allegany Co.



FIGURE 4. Restricted access areas (gray lined): Camp Rushford / DEC facilities on Hanging Bog WMA.

## ***VI. APPENDICES***

### **APPENDIX A. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS AND RESPONSES**

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The following is a summary of the public comments that were received during the creation of the Hanging Bog WMA 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**

#### **COMMENTS RECEIVED**



## **APPENDIX B. APPLICATION OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**

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The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), along with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Title V, Section 504, have had 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, the Department incorporates accessibility for people with disabilities into the 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 the Department, when viewed in their entirety, are readily accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. The Department 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, the Department 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, transportation and communication to individuals with disabilities.

For outdoor recreation facilities not covered under the current ADA standards, the Department will use standards provided under the Architectural Barriers Act, to lend credibility to the assessment result and to offer protection to the natural resource.

All new facilities, and 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. Compliance is considered structurally impracticable only in those rare circumstances where the unique characteristics of terrain prevent the incorporation of accessibility features. 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.

A record of accessibility determination is kept with the work planning record. 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.

For further information contact the ADA Coordinator at [accessibility@dec.ny.gov](mailto:accessibility@dec.ny.gov).