

HIGH PEAKS STRATEGIC PLANNING ADVISORY GROUP **IMMEDIATE ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT**

Dear Commissioner Seggos:

The High Peaks Strategic Planning Advisory Group (HPAG) is submitting this interim report to recommend immediate actions to be undertaken this summer in the High Peaks wilderness region. These actions should be initiated and supported now in order to assist in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and to further management objectives for this world class wilderness.

In reaction to the public desire to be recreating outside in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, public use continues to increase on trails in the High Peaks region even this early in the season. HPAG believes this higher volume of use should be anticipated for years to come. Visitor use of and access to public lands, trails, and associated recreation facilities are vital to the State's recovery and should receive increased resources even in these difficult times.

The primary focus of these recommendations for immediate actions is public safety, communication, education, and data collection needed for assessment of use and impacts. HPAG maintains that protection of the natural resources and wilderness character of the High Peaks region is paramount and essential to the economic well-being of the gateway communities. The recommended actions captured in this interim report are components of a larger, long-term strategic planning effort that complement each other to be effective. The recommendations for immediate actions in this report will provide the framework for long-term recommendations in HPAG's final report later this summer.

HPAG recognizes the importance of continued public engagement and input into its deliberations as well as long-term planning for recreational uses in the High Peaks region. It has posted meeting summaries on the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) website and solicited and received extensive public comments. These comments were considered when developing these recommendations for immediate actions and additional input should be sought as these are presented to the public. A long-term management solution will only be successful with a robust public engagement process. This process must seek broad stakeholder involvement, include voices across the High Peaks region, and have a transparent public meeting/input process.

HPAG appreciates the opportunity to provide input from various partners, particularly the members of HPAG, on managing recreational use of the Adirondack High Peaks. It will take commitment, resources, and the support of partners – including HPAG members and many other stakeholders - to manage

recreational use of this revered wilderness region. HPAG believes these recommendations begin to lay a foundation for future management of public recreation throughout the Adirondack Park.

MEMBERS OF THE HIGH PEAKS STRATEGIC PLANNING ADVISORY GROUP

Dr. Jill Weiss, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry
Joe Pete Wilson, Supervisor, Town of Keene
Rocci Aguirre, Adirondack Council
Pete Nelson, Adirondack Wilderness Advocates
Charlie Wise, The Mountaineer
Seth Jones, Adirondack Mountain Club
Teresa Cheetham-Palen, Adirondack Rock and River Guide Service and Lodge
James McKenna, Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism
Shaun Gilliland, Chair, Essex County Board of Supervisors
Sandra Allen, Esq.

INTRODUCTION

The High Peaks Strategic Planning Advisory Group (HPAG) was established by New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos in November 2019 (Appendix A). This was done in response to requests to initiate strategic planning among key local stakeholders to address critical issues associated with increasing public use of the High Peaks wilderness region of the Adirondack Park.

HPAG is made up of local government officials, private business owners, tourism entities, conservation non-profits, social scientists, and natural resource planners. It was charged to work collaboratively with New York State agency partners and serve in an advisory capacity to DEC by developing action and policy recommendations to inform future planning for managing public use in the High Peaks region. A vision, mission, and goals statement was adopted by HPAG to guide its work (Appendix B).

HPAG has been meeting, in person and remotely, at least twice a month since December 5, 2019. Summaries of HPAG meetings are available at [www.dec.ny.gov/lands/119187.html].

During the course of HPAG meetings, the COVID-19 crisis ensued. HPAG is sensitive to the heightened need for management of visitor impacts under COVID-19 circumstances. Recreation opportunities in the High Peaks region remained open during the crisis, consistent with the Adirondack's rich history as a haven for healing and well-being. Increased public use demonstrates the importance of public lands and their management to people's health and well-being and thus are worth increased investment as outlined in the recommendations for immediate actions in this report.

Recognizing the immediate need to manage public use of this dynamic region, HPAG is submitting to DEC recommendations for immediate actions to be taken this summer. These recommendations for immediate actions come in advance of HPAG submitting long-term recommendations for the High Peaks region to DEC later this summer.

HPAG is recommending enhancements to and better coordination of existing efforts as well as additional actions – especially coordinated information and data collection to inform science-based decisions in the future. All HPAG recommendations for immediate actions in this report require additional staffing and funding resources to be implemented. HPAG is identifying initial potential partners and resources to implement recommendations in this report.

Recommendations for immediate actions in this report address the following topics:

- Parking Enforcement
- Human Waste Management at Trailheads
- Education and Messaging
- Shuttle and Electric Powered-Shuttles (e-shuttles)
- Leave No Trace Measures
- Trail Assessments, Maintenance and Funding
- Data Collection and Visitor Information
- Limits on Use

HPAG RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

PARKING ENFORCEMENT

RECOMMENDATION

- Roaring Brook Falls/AMR (DEC Lead)
 - During NY on PAUSE, off-road parking along Ausable Road will be limited to a capacity of 28 vehicles.
 - Establish regular (not constant) law enforcement presence in the vicinity of Roaring Brook Falls. Scheduling of enforcement should be correlated to actual use patterns. Peak need for presence is 0700 to 1100 daily, particularly on good weather days.
 - Coordinate enforcement efforts between all relevant policing entities (DEC, Essex County Sherriff, and State Police).
 - Enforcement efforts will be supplemented by education provided by Front Country Stewards either volunteer or paid by the Town of Keene and/or the Adirondack Mountain Reserve. Message content will be coordinated with DEC Division of Lands & Forests.
 - Monitoring and maintaining parking enforcement in other areas where it is needed, such as Adirondack Loj Road.
 - Consider options to increase fine structure for parking violations on Rt 73. A more significant fine structure could help reinforce compliance when on-site enforcement presence is limited.
 - No Parking action identified for Town streets is also implemented on Ausable Road. Additional actions, including closure of road to non-local traffic could be implemented through emergency action or local ordinance if restrictions prove insufficient in maintaining access for emergency vehicles and safe travel for the public.
- Town Streets – Keene Hamlet (Town lead)
 - Pending resumption of the shuttle between Marcy Field and The Garden, establish “No Parking” zones along Market Street, Adirondack Street, and Johns Brook Road. Additional signage will discourage non-local traffic. Such actions would be enacted under

authority pursuant to a statewide or local State of Emergency Declaration, or otherwise established by duly adopted town ordinance.

- The capacity of Rooster Comb Parking Lot will be reduced by 50%.
- The Town will monitor use of the roads and provide for towing of illegally parked vehicles. DEC will advise the Supervisor of any calls it receives from residents related to parking issues. The Supervisor has authority to have vehicles towed. Should additional assistance be needed the Supervisor will reach out to the Essex County Sherriff or other law enforcement agencies.
- General
 - Identify potential funding sources to support hiring of staff to ticket parking offenders (Town Constable, Parking Enforcement Officer, etc).
 - Monitoring efforts will be focused on enforcement of existing parking restrictions and minimizing deviation from social distancing requirements as established by the New York State Department of Health (DOH).
 - Coordinate messaging regarding parking and social distancing practices between partners – social, print and other means.
 - Further restrictions and/or reductions on parking may be needed based on changing user demand and changes in social distancing requirements.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS AND RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATION

- DEC Office of Public Protection
- Town of Keene (Supervisor and Town Front-Country Stewards)
- NY State Police
- Essex County Sherriff
- Adirondack Mountain Reserve staff
- Adirondack Mountain Club
- ROOST marketing department
- Other Partners

WHY Now

- Provide for and ensure precautions to reduce exposure of local residents and the hiking public to COVID-19 are followed, in coordination with current NYSDOH practices.
- Maintain traveler and hiker safety in locations where poor sight distance and popular trailhead parking areas coexist.
- Maintain momentum initiated in 2019 with establishment of no parking zone along Rt 73 in the vicinity of Roaring Brook Falls.

HUMAN WASTE MANAGEMENT AT TRAILHEADS

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recognizing the lack of access to public flush-toilets along the Rt 73 corridor, DEC should work with area municipalities to coordinate human waste management including placement and sanitizing of portable toilets for the 2020 summer season, and explore a single point of access to toilets and hand-washing facilities (e.g., Marcy Field). Due to COVID-19, there are greater challenges and costs associated with stringent disinfection standards and the use of portable toilets at trailheads to mitigate human waste issues. DEC should notify the public of limited access to public restrooms in the Rt 73 corridor and the need to bring a personal supply of hand sanitizer (60% alcohol). Notify the public that the High Peaks Welcome Center Rest Area before Exit 30 on I 87 is the last access to public flush-toilets with running water before entering the Rt 73 corridor. Portable toilets should remain stocked with hand hygiene products including hand sanitizer.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS AND RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATION

- DEC
- Ausable River Association
- Adirondack Mountain Reserve
- Town of Keene
- Other Partners

WHY NOW

Currently, there are multiple municipalities and organizations responsible for yearly installation of portable toilets along the Rt 73 corridor. The COVID -19 pandemic has exposed a management challenge as different groups decide when, where, and how many portable toilets to install given the added maintenance costs and liability issues associated with more stringent sanitizing and hygiene requirements during the pandemic. Alternatives to portable toilets do not currently exist in the Rt 73 corridor and portable toilets are still a better option than human waste scattered throughout the woods near trailheads. Coordination, guidelines for sanitizing and associated costs, along with public education, are imperative for the summer 2020 recreation season.

EDUCATION AND MESSAGING

RECOMMENDATION

Formalize coordination of messaging development, education products and goals (in writing/a plan), including Leave No Trace (LNT) messaging, shuttle

schedules, parking availability, trail conditions, regulations and special considerations for COVID-19. Assess and dedicate available funding and resources for these purposes. LNT includes messaging about practices intended to minimize recreational impacts. Continue and expand coordinated, consistent messaging through social media and other means.

Provide support for stewardship programs. Volunteer and professional stewardship programs have proven to be an effective tool in protecting natural resources and managing a variety of front country and backcountry locations. A strong group of partner organizations currently have stewardship operations. Fund and support stewardship programs for the High Peaks region this summer, including Keene Front Country Stewards, Adirondack High Peaks Summit Stewards, Assistant Forest Rangers, Student Conservation Association, and various other groups who assist with stewardship (where resources allow).

POTENTIAL PARTNERS AND RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATION

- DEC Region 5
- Adirondack Mountain Club
- Adirondack Council
- ROOST
- Town of Keene
- Retailers
- Lodging, Restauranters and Hospitality
- Other partners

WHY NOW

High quality, consistent education and outreach across the system will amplify and support the goals of HPAG and allow managers to be responsive to a fluid public health crisis. Having the systems in place to distribute messages among multiple entities and media will not only allow us to be responsive to COVID-19 but will help in the response to high visitor use issues in the High Peaks region into the future. A more informed and educated user will have fewer recreational impacts, creating higher quality recreational experiences in the region. Focus for this summer should be on best practices surrounding COVID-19.

SHUTTLES, E-SHUTTLES

RECOMMENDATION

DEC should continue to work with Essex County and the Town of Keene on a shuttle system and timing for such and lay the groundwork for a green transportation system for hikers and other visitors.

The remainder of this recommendation relates to an e-shuttle initiative only, distinct from petroleum-fueled shuttles also being pursued for the High Peaks

region. There is consensus to develop the infrastructure to establish a future e-shuttle system. The timing to order and secure buses and the need to install charging stations at key locations make Summer 2020 a difficult deadline to meet. While not feasible for 2020, a commitment to use electric vehicles beyond the pilot year will be demonstrated by installing direct current (DC) fast-charging infrastructure at Marcy Field by fall for both public use and shuttle charging and executing a two-weekend pilot of an e-shuttle. The pilot should run from Friday, October 2 through Monday, October 12, 2020 (encompassing Columbus Day weekend and the weekend prior). This pilot will operate on one of the shuttle routes implemented in the summer of 2020 and will involve a demonstration EV shuttle bus provided in a cost-effective manner for the pilot. The pilot will enable the effectiveness of EV shuttles to be evaluated. This transition to EV buses can be phased in as gas buses are phased out over 2-3 years, or accelerated as above logistics allow, possibly as soon as 2021.

| Time Frame | E-Shuttle Action | Budget |
|--------------------|--|---------------|
| Immediate, ongoing | Research cost to upgrade service at Marcy Field to support a DC Fast charger (NYSEG). Also follow PSC Make Ready initiative (will take months) | \$500 |
| Immediate, ongoing | Apply to DEC Municipal Zero-emission Vehicle (ZEV) Rebate and Infrastructure Grant Program (covers 80%, requires 20% in-kind match of purchase and implementation costs) | \$0 |
| Immediate, ongoing | Work with the Town of Keene to cover site planning and the 20% in-kind contribution to meet the terms of the grant | \$0 |
| May-June 2020 | Establish a project plan and schedule | \$0 |

POTENTIAL PARTNERS AND RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATION

- DEC, Department of Transportation (DOT) and New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)
- Essex County
- Town of Keene
- Other Partners

WHY NOW

This plan lays the groundwork to make hiker/visitor transportation in the Adirondack Park a best-in-class leader, and to support Governor Cuomo's climate action goals. Direct impacts include reduction in carbon emissions, significantly lower shuttle operating costs, noise reduction, fuel independence, and capacity for visitors with EVs to charge. Indirect impacts include enrichment of front country wilderness aesthetics, a positive transportation identity for the Park and enhanced visitor management. If there is no action this year (i.e., no pilot), EV shuttles may not be feasible for the 2021 season and there will not be enough measured results for effective budget planning.

LEAVE NO TRACE

RECOMMENDATION

HPAG recognizes the significance and timeliness of the recommendations from the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics regarding Leave No Trace education and outreach. HPAG encourages the implementation of those recommendations in the High Peaks region (See Appendix C).

("Recommendations for Managing Recreation-related Impacts in the Adirondack Park and Building a Culture of Wildlands Stewardship – January 10, 2019")

HPAG recommends that Leave No Trace outdoor skills and ethics be a core educational program for users.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS AND RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATION

- DEC Region 5
- Adirondack Mountain Club
- Adirondack Council
- ROOST
- Olympic Regional Development Authority
- Other partners

WHY NOW

Exploring and starting to implement certain components of the *Recommendations for Managing Recreation-related Impacts in the Adirondack Park and Building a Culture of Wildlands Stewardship* will help the region move forward in building a stewardship culture. Some recommendations could take multiple years to implement so starting the process now will help move this initiative forward.

TRAIL ASSESSMENTS, MAINTENANCE AND FUNDING

RECOMMENDATION

DEC should initiate an assessment of critical trails in the High Peaks region to:

- Identify locations and nature of existing trail issues;
- Inform the resources necessary to address critical impacts to the environment and recreation experience in the High Peaks region of the Adirondack Park;
- Work with partners and continue to pursue resources and build capacity for trail maintenance and construction; and
- Provide data to support a wild lands monitoring program with an emphasis on trail assessment using updated technologies.

DEC staff are recommending this assessment begin with inventorying the main Class V trunk trails that serve as major arteries going into the wilderness areas of the High Peaks region. Although the Orebed Trail, cliffs on Saddleback and Basin, the backside of Haystack, Dix from Round Pond, Mt Colden and many other trails are commonly known as the most degraded trails in the High Peaks region (existing on fall-lines, eroded to bedrock, having ladders and other structures of concern, and existing on soils that are mostly organic and shallowest to bedrock), they are accessed via the main trunk trails. Assessing the conditions of these main routes of access will inform where to improve sustainability and points of access to traditionally heavily used secondary trails and will result in an improved trail system and hiking experience moving into the future.

HPAG supports the DEC staff proposal to:

- In Summer 2020, fully inventory/assess approximately 80 miles of main Class V trunk trails with respect to trail condition and needs for establishing sustainable trails/trail features for these major arteries.

These trails include:

- Van Hoevenberg Trail to Mt. Marcy
- Algonquin Trail
- Avalanche Pass Trail through to Lake Colden Dam, South of Lake Colden
- Calamity Trail to Lake Colden Dam
- Phelps Trail
- Pinnacle Ridge Trail to Gill Brook Junction to Elk Lake Marcy Trail Junction
- Porter Mountain Ridge Trail from Keene
- Mr. Van Ski Trail
- Rocky Peak Ridge from Giant Ridge Trail
- (3) Hurricane Mountain Trails
- Ampersand Mountain
- Klondike Trail
- East River Trail to Flowed Lands
- Pitchoff Mountain Trail

POTENTIAL PARTNERS AND RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATION

- Backcountry stewards provided by DEC and partners.
- Increased training to ensure accuracy in implementation of assessment/data collection protocols.
- New tools (including hardware and software) to ensure the data collected may be used instantly and without additional data entry.
- Other Partners.

WHY NOW

Given the exponential increase in use of trails within the High Peaks region, it is essential to initiate data collection immediately to inform a clear understanding of

the extent to which trail issues exist within the High Peaks region. Data collection will be focused on essential areas to prevent further degradation of environmental conditions, measure the capacity of the trails to withstand use and protect the quality of the hiking experience. Without this data, scarce resources will not be focused on the most critical trail degradation issues resulting in the continuation of a “band-aid” approach to managing impacts to trails from rising levels of use. The trails of the High Peaks region have suffered from decades of patchwork construction, partial maintenance measures and emergency repair exaggerating this problem.

DATA COLLECTION AND VISITOR INFORMATION

RECOMMENDATION

HPAG recommends work begin immediately to establish an independent visitor information group. The purpose of this group will be to provide relevant data and analysis to the State and stakeholders on an ongoing basis to help manage visitor use in the High Peaks Wilderness, and to coordinate with other data gathering and surveying projects in the region.

HPAG has accepted HPAG member Pete Nelson as interim coordinator for the visitor information group. There is a significant amount of work related to this role, and a graduate-level intern has been identified to staff this effort. An administrative home and funding are needed to realize this internship.

| Time Frame | Action | Budget |
|-----------------------------|---|---------------|
| Immediate, complete by 5/31 | Find an organizational home and funding source for an intern. Pete Nelson will act as supervisor. Budget \$6,500. There is an ongoing call-out to all partners to find funding for the intern. DEC will try to look, but partners need to assist, including potential private investment. | \$0 |
| Immediate, ongoing | Coordinate surveying and data gathering efforts for the 2020 hiking season | \$0 |
| June 2020 | Complete a project plan and schedule | \$0 |
| 5/31– 8/ 15 | Intern executes project plan, under supervision | \$6,500 |

POTENTIAL PARTNERS AND RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATION

- DEC
- Adirondack Council
- Adirondack Mountain Club
- Adirondack Wild
- Adirondack Wilderness Advocates
- Essex County
- Paul Smith’s Adirondack Watershed Institute
- PROTECT
- ROOST

- SUNY ESF
- Town of Keene
- Olympic Regional Development Authority
- Other Partners

A partner group will need to host the intern as a paid employee. The budget must be raised.

WHY NOW

The Adirondack Park has a critical need for visitor information, usage data and related data for a variety of purposes. In the High Peaks region alone, at least a half-dozen organizations are separately and independently gathering visitor data or are planning to do so. There are no standards or criteria by which this data can be gathered, shared and used in a meaningful way. The interim visitor information effort will immediately address coordination, standards and data sharing and set the stage for a permanent visitor information group.

Establishment of this visitor information group will result in better coordination of data gathering efforts and reduce negative impacts of data gathering and surveying on visitors; more complete, meaningful and statistically significant data; support for visitor use management; better understanding of resource impacts; improved wilderness protection; enhanced visitor experiences; increased economic benefits to our communities; and support of scientific research.

An internship is a cost-effective way to accomplish the recommended immediate actions. If the immediate actions are not taken, data coordination and development of meaningful visitor information will be delayed until the 2021 season and will be more expensive. In the meantime, critical decisions will continue to be made with anecdotal data or no data.

LIMITS ON USE

RECOMMENDATION

On an applicable private lands site that permits public access on private lands or provide access to high use backcountry areas, institute a three (3) year pilot program that places limits on use to help protect the natural resources, provide for public safety, and ensure the long-term preservation of the wilderness character of the site.

- Establish a comprehensive and flexible multi-year strategy designed to accommodate front country public safety needs while addressing backcountry access and natural resource impacts.
- Initiate a pilot program starting the summer and fall 2020 (Phase I) (TBD) to increase education and awareness of the public's rights to access these areas and the stewardship responsibilities that are involved. The 2020 private lands Limits on Use (LOU) pilot should:

- Focus on public education and planning for a 2021 Phase II implementation season.
 - Initiate a data collection process to document the number of people and the impact they are having (wildlands monitoring program).
 - Have a strong public education/Leave No Trace platform that identifies the unique stewardship restrictions that are a part of the management of these lands.
 - Utilize state resources (staffing and funding) to manage parking and general public access in partnership with the private landowners.
 - Prioritize existing no parking zones and provide the necessary enforcement to ensure compliance.
 - Establish a small working group to review annual goals and feedback in development of future goals and objectives. This should include some opportunity for public engagement and input.
- Develop Phase II (Summer/Fall 2021) and Phase III (Summer/Fall 2022) goals and objectives based on prior year data and numbers.
 - Provide a summary report and recommendations at the conclusion of Phase III and recommendations on future management actions and goals, including feasibility of permanent limits on use when applicable.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS AND RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATION

- DEC and private landowner should coordinate small working group (TBD by DEC and landowner)
- Staffing and funding resources as necessary to implement parking program and provide technical input on management outcomes and monitoring protocols
- Other Partners

WHY NOW

Implementation of a limits on use pilot program on private lands establishes the baseline data and protocols for possible future management decisions throughout the High Peaks region. Primary goals include:

- **Natural Resource Impacts:** Restoring appropriate public access across and on private lands that are open to recreation by the public. Focus is three-fold: 1) Public safety and parking associated with front country public access; 2) Protection of the natural resources; 3) Preservation of a wilderness character that is an element of the private/public arrangement.
- **Recreational Experience Impacts:** Will enhance the ability of the public to enjoy a more remote and tranquil backcountry experience in one of the signature regions of the High Peaks while honoring the landowner's legacy of stewardship and preservation of these wilderness lands.
- **Support to communities and local economies:** Will allow for the continued access by the public in numbers that exceed the original quotas identified in past management agreements.

- **Future Management Actions:** Provides a mechanism for DEC to develop official procedures and protocols for a limits on use program that could be replicated in other parts of the Park in the future.
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Appendix A



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

For Immediate Release: 11/7/2019

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DEC ANNOUNCES STRATEGIC PLANNING INITIATIVE TO SUSTAINABLY MANAGE ADIRONDACK HIGH PEAKS RESOURCES

*New DEC High Peaks Strategic Planning Advisory Group will Collaborate,
Develop Framework to Balance Region's Public Use Needs*

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos today announced a new strategic planning initiative for sustainably managing public use in the Adirondack High Peaks. The High Peaks Strategic Planning Advisory Group, comprised of key stakeholders with expertise in local government, recreation, natural resource protection, business, tourism, and other priority areas, will collaboratively provide advice on how to balance the critical issues associated with the increased public use of High Peaks resources in order to protect these resources for future generations.

“DEC and our partners are working hard to address impacts associated with increased use of the High Peaks because we all recognize the tremendous opportunities that will be created when we ensure this majestic region is sustainably managed for the enjoyment of both current and future generations,” **Commissioner Seggos said.** “DEC has assembled a team of talented and committed people to work together to provide advice on a strategic approach that will support the Adirondacks’ local economies, protect the environment, and provide safe, quality recreational experiences for visitors.”

DEC has identified five goals for managing public use in the High Peaks Region: ensuring public safety within communities, along roadways, at trailheads, and in interior areas; protecting natural resources and recreation infrastructure; providing a quality recreation experience; supporting local economic vitality; and making decisions based on science using the best available data.

To accomplish these goals, DEC is launching a formal Strategic Planning

process, guided by Acting Executive Deputy Commissioner Judy Drabicki and led by Division of Lands and Forests Director Rob Davies and DEC Region 5 Director Bob Stegemann. Commissioner Seggos also named a High Peaks Strategic Planning Advisory Group to create a framework of policy recommendations to achieve the goals for the initiative, incorporate, expand, and/or modify the recommendations made to date to identify priorities, determine whether additional data is needed to inform the group, and identify actions for implementation. The group includes:

- Rocci Aguirre, Director of Conservation, Adirondack Council
- Sandi Allen, Retired DEC Counsel
- Pat Barnes, Region 1 Director, New York State Department of Transportation (DOT)
- Teresa Cheetham-Palen, Owner of Rock and River Guide Co.
- Shaun Gilliland, Chair, Essex County Board of Supervisors
- James McKenna, CEO, Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism (ROOST)
- Pete Nelson, Adirondack Wilderness Advocates
- Mike Pratt, President & CEO, Olympic Regional Development Authority
- Dr. Jill Weiss, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry
- Joe Pete Wilson, Supervisor, Town of Keene
- Charlie Wise, The Mountaineer outdoor specialty store
- Adirondack Park Agency representative (ad hoc)
- New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation representative (ad hoc)

DEC is already working with many local partners and other stakeholders to implement several actions, including long- and short-term improvements to promote sustainable use, particularly in the High Peaks. Examples include delineating parking on Route 73, working with DOT, New York State Police, and the towns, reducing congestion in areas around the High Peaks, highlighting the great, and underused [alternative hikes](#) and activities elsewhere in the park, and promoting sustainable use with partners through Leave No Trace to help visitors understand how their actions affect and protect the resource. The strategic planning process announced today will build on these actions to develop both short- and long-term actions to ensure sustainable use in the High Peaks that benefits users and protects the environment.

The High Peaks Strategic Planning Advisory Group will begin meeting this fall and include opportunities for broader public input. The group will be charged with finalizing and submitting a strategic planning framework to DEC Commissioner Seggos in 2020. Upon completion of the framework, DEC will develop a draft Strategic Plan for Managing Public Use in the High Peaks Region of the Adirondack Park that will be made available for public review and comment.

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Appendix B

High Peaks Strategic Planning Advisory Group (HPAG)

GOALS

HPAG is advising the DEC on how to achieve:

Goals for Managing Public Use in the High Peaks Region

- Ensure public safety within communities, along roadways, at trailheads, and in interior areas
- Protect natural resources and recreation infrastructure
- Provide a quality recreation experience
- Supporting local economic vitality
- Make decisions based on science using the best available data

HPAG CHARGE from DEC

Undertake a collaborative process to provide a strategic framework to address public use in the High Peaks Region of the Adirondacks which will:

- Include short, medium and long-term recommendations (strategies, actions and tactics) to achieve the goals of the initiative
- Incorporate, expand, and/or modify recommendations made to date
- Identify additional data necessary to inform the HPAG recommendations
- Identify priorities for the implementation of recommendations

Appendix C

Recommendations for Managing Recreation-related Impacts in the Adirondack Park and Building a Culture of Wildlands Stewardship



Prepared by Ben Lawhon, MS | Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics | December 2019



Confidentiality Notice

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** Stewardship – the management necessary to preserve wilderness, natural resources, and access for current and future generations.*

Recommendations for Managing Recreation-related Impacts in the Adirondack Park and Building a Culture of Wildlands Stewardship*

A note about this document: This document is a DRAFT subset of a larger report that is currently being prepared by the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. The full assessment report will be completed by February 2020. Given that this is a draft, it is possible that some of the following information may be altered, updated, edited, or omitted in the final assessment report. Due to the fact that the recommendations included in this draft were requested by the Adirondack Council and the Adirondack Mountain Club prior to the completion of the final report, caution should be exercised when disseminating this document without the full context of the report and supporting materials.

I. Management & Planning Recommendations

- A. Need for comprehensive park planning – Due to its size and complexity, there is an inherent challenge in trying to have a parkwide comprehensive plan. However, such an effort would benefit the long-term stewardship and sustainability of the Park. In order to have a successful parkwide visitor education program, DEC managers and partners must have a solid implementation plan. To the extent possible, key stakeholders should be aligned and have a common goal to effectively reach park visitors with critical information. Given national trends in recreation participation growth, increased recreational use of the Park is highly likely in the future, and a comprehensive Park plan (including an outreach and education plan) is imperative.
- B. Utilize an established planning framework – Adirondack Park managers and partners could greatly benefit from working through a formal visitor use management planning process for the Park. This would allow for a better understanding of the carrying capacity of the Park as well as help to define complementary visitor experience opportunities and desired future resource conditions. There are numerous planning frameworks that could be utilized, and include:
 - *Visitor Use Management Framework* (the most contemporary and robust):
<http://visitorusemanagement.nps.gov/>
 - *Limits of Acceptable Change*:
<http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/dbnf/home/?cid=stelprdb5346360>
 - *Visitor Experience and Resource Protection*:
<http://winapps.umn.edu/winapps/media2/leopold/pubs/320F.pdf>

*Stewardship – the management necessary to preserve wilderness, natural resources, and access for current and future generations.

The use of any one of these (or similar) planning frameworks would greatly aid Park managers and partners in determining and attaining a specific desired future condition for the Park, and would be valuable for long-range strategic planning efforts.

- C. Build Leave No Trace into management plans – Consider building Leave No Trace into the Adirondack Park master planning documents, and Park project plans. Many federal and state land management agencies have built Leave No Trace (and stewardship concepts) into their long-range plans. See: https://www.nps.gov/acad/learn/management/upload/schoodic_gmpa.pdf Some municipal land management agencies have done this as well, including the City of Boulder, Colorado – Open Space and Mountain Parks Department and Travis County Parks (Texas). See https://www-static.bouldercolorado.gov/docs/osmpmp-final-1-201910221147.pdf?_ga=2.225274716.794717831.1574112296-111660396.1574112296; and https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/tnr/Docs/parks/2_parks_master_plan.pdf
- D. Codify Leave No Trace as guiding management principles – Consider drafting a formal resolution for the Adirondack Park pertaining to Leave No Trace. Some municipalities around the country have undertaken this kind of initiative with success. One example is the San Juan Islands in Washington State (mix of county, state, and federal lands). The municipality passed such a Leave No Trace resolution, which is leading to greater awareness and adoption of Leave No Trace, and ultimately a reduction in recreation-related impacts. See appendix I
- E. Ensure adequate staffing for Park management agencies – A perennial challenge for park and protected areas is adequate staffing. Local, state, and federal agencies all face this issue. When agencies are understaffed, parks and protected areas often suffer from avoidable impacts, many of which may be directly related to recreation and use. Though volunteers can fill the roles of some agency personnel, a well-funded and adequately staffed agency will generally be better suited to meet the growing demands on public outdoor spaces such as the Adirondack Park. Clearly there is a fiscal implication to adding staff which must be sorted out to ensure the necessary staffing resources are in place.
- F. Permit system for high use areas – Though not an appropriate option for every location, permit systems, when well thought out, well designed, and soundly implemented, can serve an important function in parks and protected areas. Depending on the nature of the resource in question, permitting use can benefit the natural resources and the visitor experience. Additionally, a permit system allows for an educational touch point with visitors before they depart on their trip. Many parks and protected areas have existing permit systems in place such as Great Smoky Mountains National Park. According to the National Park Service, visitors benefit from the system in several ways: *“Through a combination of education and enforcement, park rangers assigned exclusively to the backcountry are expected to lead to better compliance with regulations and Leave No Trace ethics. Increased*

compliance with regulations and Leave No Trace also helps protect and preserve resources, such as wildlife, that most visitors highly value. All backcountry users stand to benefit from the changes [to the permit system in the park]. In addition, by making all sites reservation-only, the new reservation system will have the capability to notify permit holders of site closures, safety issues and other emergency conditions via email and text messaging prior to beginning their trip.” See:

<https://www.nps.gov/grsm/learn/management/bc-reservation-permit-faq.htm> For more information on the implementation and use of permit systems, see: https://visitorusemanagement.nps.gov/Content/documents/highres_VUM%20Framework_Edition%201_IVUMC.pdf

- G. Revise group use permitting system – Though there is a current system in place for the issuance of group use permits, it could be enhanced to be more efficient, provide a robust educational opportunity for the group prior to their visit, and could yield valuable group use data for DEC and its partners. Understanding and managing group use should be a priority for the Park as groups seeking permits offer many benefits including: educational and regulatory touch points with specific groups that use the Park; ability to collect reliable data on group use; and an opportunity to monitor resource conditions at sites used by groups.
- H. When providing alternatives to the High Peaks, ensure such areas are capable of handling the increased visitation – A well-utilized strategy by land managers is to direct visitors to other areas of a park or protected area that offer similar visitor experiences, challenges, or natural environments. One of the difficult issues with this strategy is ensuring such alternative areas are capable of handling the increased impacts associated with recreation. In the case of the Adirondack Park, some current suggested alternatives appear to be under resourced to accommodate the additional influx of visitors. Lack of parking spaces, limited availability of toilet facilities, trails not designed for heavy use, and a significant lack of visitor education are a sampling of the current problems faced by many of the suggested alternatives. Other parks have successfully used this strategy by conducting assessments of potential alternatives to ensure they can in fact cope with additional recreational use prior to offering them to the public. Consider cataloging existing recommended alternatives to determine if infrastructure or educational programming are lacking. Identified gaps should be remedied and addressed to the extent possible. Areas being considered as new alternatives should be assessed for overall suitability before locations go public.
- I. Build on successful management efforts – The DEC and its partners have demonstrated success with several efforts in the Park to minimize recreation-related impacts, e.g. implementation of the bear canister regulations for the High Peaks, check stations designed to minimize the spread of invasive species through the movement of firewood and boats, etc. Such efforts could be further enhanced and built upon for continued success in order to effectively minimize and mitigate visitor impacts in the Park. This is particularly salient now as reinvention of the

wheel is time consuming, resource intensive, and often impractical, whereas building on existing successful efforts can be far more efficient, effective, and timely.

II. Research & Monitoring Recommendations

- A. Baseline and ongoing monitoring data is essential for park management – Adirondack Park managers and partners would benefit from obtaining baseline data on current resource conditions in the Park. There are numerous methodologies, from simple to complex, for gathering baseline data. Baseline data could be collected by relatively simple photo documentation, GPS data, or other means. However, there are more complex methods for gathering robust baseline data if desired. Regardless, such data is extremely useful for monitoring change in conditions over time, and can serve as an effective metric for guiding management efforts. See: [https://visitorusemanagement.nps.gov/Content/documents/highres_trifold Monitoring Guidebook Primer Edition One IVUMC.pdf](https://visitorusemanagement.nps.gov/Content/documents/highres_trifold_Monitoring_Guidebook_Primer_Edition_One_IVUMC.pdf)
- B. Collect data on visitor numbers – Implementation of a system for capturing baseline Park visitation on an annual basis would greatly benefit overall management efforts. An understanding of visitation numbers, patterns, seasonal variation, and visitor type would augment educational outreach efforts by allowing for a targeted approach. Additionally, having information on annual visitation, including peak visitation, would allow for better management of the inevitable spikes in visitor use throughout the year. There are numerous visitor count methodologies, which can be tailored to a particular park system, or an individual park. See: http://agrifecdn.tamu.edu/cromptonrpts/files/2011/06/3_2_5.pdf and http://www.fs.fed.us/ne/newtown_square/publications/technical_reports/pdfs/2004/317papers/kaczynski317.pdf
- C. Gain an empirical understanding of visitor perceptions – As recreation in the Park is promoted, and correspondingly increases over time due to a variety of factors (marketing, social media, promotion, etc.), it would be useful for the managers and partners to determine what visitor perceptions are with regard to the level of impact found in the Park. Do visitors feel that the Park is “being loved to death?” Or do they feel the Park provides high-quality recreational experiences? An understanding of baseline visitor perceptions of the Park allows for the implementation of appropriate management and educational strategies, which can help ensure the predetermined future condition of the Park. See: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/287234314_Studies_in_Outdoor_Recreation_Search_and_Research_for_Satisfaction
- D. Use citizen science to gather current impact data throughout the Park – Data collected via citizen scientists could be used to generate visual representations of impacts such as heat maps (for information on heat maps see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heat_map) of impact to allow for a more strategic approach to improving education for specific impact issues. This could facilitate a fundamental shift from being reactive to being proactive. Such an effort could be yet

another ‘challenge’ event to gather meaningful data for the Park. The program could offer recognition similar to other Park challenges. Alternatively, this kind of program could be initially administered by a graduate student to assess the efficacy and viability of such an effort.

- E. Consider reinvigorating Adirondack All-Taxa Biodiversity Inventory or other ‘bio blitz’ events to engage citizen scientists and gather valuable data in a central repository – Both public and private entities have been successfully utilizing bio blitzes for a number of years to engage the public in the protection of parks and protected areas. From National Geographic, “A *BioBlitz* is an event that focuses on finding and identifying as many species as possible in a specific area over a short period of time. At a BioBlitz, scientists, families, students, teachers, and other community members work together to get a snapshot of an area’s biodiversity. These events can happen in most any geography—urban, rural, or suburban—in areas as small as a backyard or as large as a country. Smartphone technologies and apps such as *iNaturalist* make collecting photographs and biological information about living things easy as part of a BioBlitz. High quality data uploaded to *iNaturalist* become part of the *Global Biodiversity Information Facility*, an open source database used by scientists and policy makers around the world.” The National Park Service has also been utilizing these events with great success. See: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/biodiversity/national-parks-bioblitz.htm> <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/citscitoolkit/projects/cfab/adirondackatbi/>
- F. Map all locations where there are currently stewards in the Park – Such a mapping exercise will allow for the accurate identification of where on-the-ground stewards are located, and therefore where gaps exist. Identification of caretakers and stewards at summits, visitor centers, trailheads, etc. will provide a more meaningful picture of current ‘boots on the ground,’ and will allow for real-time programmatic enhancements, better deployment of existing resources, and identification of areas not currently served by on-the-ground stewards. Should new areas in need of an on-site steward be identified, this information could be leveraged to engage new individuals or groups interested in stewardship of the Park.

III. Tourism & Marketing Recommendations

- A. Establish partnership with I Love NY, ROOST, and other tourism entities – Research has shown that most outdoor enthusiasts first encounter Leave No Trace information in a park or protected area (from various sources: rangers, signage, etc.). While there are benefits to people being reached on-site in parks, there is also the issue that the information may be coming too late in the 5-step process of a recreational experience to actually make a difference (at least for that visit). The 5-steps of recreational experiences include: 1) *anticipation* – this involves trip planning and preparation; 2) *travel to* – the physical act of traveling to a park or protected area whether it’s just across town or across the country; 3) *on-site* – individuals are actually in a park, engaged in various forms of recreation; 4) *travel back* – the physical act of traveling back home; and 5) *reflection* – taking stock of the

experience, posting photos to social feeds, blogging, sharing the adventure with family or friends. Given this 5-step process, the ideal time to reach outdoor enthusiast with Leave No Trace information is in the *anticipation* phase as they're planning their outing. When people are reached earlier in the planning process there is a greater likelihood that they will be better prepared for their outing, which generally means they will also create less impact. Tourism entities have significant influence on public lands visitation throughout the US, and the Adirondack Park is a prime example of a park that could greatly benefit from having strong partnerships with the tourism industry. When potential visitors are reached via tourism partners in the trip anticipation phase, they are likely to be better informed and prepared for a visit to the Park. Colorado was the first state in the US to create a specific, focused partnership between the Colorado Tourism Office (CTO) and the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. For information on this partnership see the following:

- <https://www.colorado.com/articles/leave-no-trace-care-colorado>
- https://www.colorado.com/sites/default/files/CO_LNTBrochure_8.pdf
- <https://www.colorado.com/videos/care-colorado>
- <https://industry.colorado.com/care-colorado-principles-toolkit#>
- https://industry.colorado.com/sites/default/files/BB_Stewardship.pdf
- <https://www.colorado.com/news/colorado-tourism-office-and-leave-no-trace-center-outdoor-ethics-join-ground-breaking>

- B. Leverage the unique nature of the Park to drive stewardship – The Adirondack Park is incredibly unique in the world of parks and protected areas, e.g. size, management, large Wilderness areas, Forever Wild protection, patchwork of public/private land, open to many uses (consumptive, non-consumptive, motorized, non-motorized, etc.), incredible history, etc. As such, these individual attributes or the unique nature of the Park as a whole should be utilized as a leverage point for not only encouraging but actively driving stewardship efforts in the Park. Many units of the National Park Service utilize a similar strategy when working to encourage stewardship. See examples from Yellowstone National Park (the world's first national park): <https://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/index.htm> In this NPS-created video, the Park Service specifically notes the attributes of the Park that set it apart from all others, and explicitly address the notion that park visitors should not only enjoy the park but learn about it and do something to care for it. The Adirondack Park should employ a similar strategy given that the Park is truly one-of-a-kind.
- C. Develop and widely advertise an Adirondack Stewardship Pledge – Stewardship pledges have become more common over the past several years. They're being

utilized for not only parks and protected areas but also for special destinations. The use of pledges is a type of social marketing that is intended to influence behavior. The Adirondack Park could likely benefit from a park-specific pledge. Such an initiative could have numerous benefits: engage the public, provide information on responsible enjoyment of the park, encourage and foster on-the-ground stewardship, promote and educate visitors about Leave No Trace, and could generate a larger following on social media channels. See examples of existing pledges that could be replicated:

- <https://palaupledge.com>
- <https://www.inspiredbyiceland.com/icelandicpledge>
- <https://www.aspenchamber.org/pledge>
- <https://www.pledgewild.com> – this is an excellent example of a group of mountain towns in the western US coming together to promote responsible tourism.
- <https://www.nps.gov/zion/planyourvisit/zion-pledge.htm>
- <https://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/yellowstonepledge.htm>
- <https://www.nps.gov/romo/planyourvisit/rockypledge.htm>
- <https://www.nps.gov/grca/getinvolved/grand-canyon-pledge.htm>
- <https://www.wmf.org/sustainable-tourism-pledge>

See also recent articles on the use of pledges:

- <https://www.adventuretravelnews.com/success-of-responsible-tourism-pledges-falls-on-destinations-not-travelers>
- <https://www.fastcompany.com/90379126/6-american-cities-ask-for-responsible-tourism-pledge>

- D. Assess current cross-border marketing and advertising aimed at Canadians – Given the significant number of Canadian visitors to the High Peaks region it would be advised to consider both exploring current cross-border marketing efforts and developing (or enhancing) a plan for better reaching these visitors before they come to the Park. Determining the current information sources these visitors use to plan their visits would be useful and could be accomplished via internet research or on-site visitor surveys. Having an understanding of the various options for reaching this

community of Park visitors would allow for more effective and timely communication and marketing regarding responsible enjoyment of the Adirondacks.

- E. Continue to work with opinion leaders in the region – A strategy that has been effective in shedding light on recreation-related impacts for many municipal, state, and national parks and protected areas is the engagement and enlistment of local or regional “opinion leaders” to help bring attention and action to a problem. If DEC or its partners can identify a suite of opinion leaders, e.g. the leader of a well-known hiking group or club, leading members of popular Adirondack Challenges, or corporate or governmental entities including such influential figures/entities, this can help generate broad support and awareness for the Park.

IV. Social Media Recommendations

- A. Establish and follow a comprehensive social media strategy for the Park – It is clear that social media plays a role in driving visitation to public lands. Additionally, social media has the power to influence behavior of outdoor enthusiasts. When harnessed, social media can be an excellent tool for engaging tens of thousands or even millions of people. However, in the absence of coordinated social media effort, effectiveness is likely limited. There are numerous advantages to having a social media strategy, which include: a) a strategy for social media provides clear direction for efforts, especially for such a large park; b) a strategy will allow for assessing the metrics of social media efforts and will also allow for better reporting and improvements over time; c) a strategy allows for greater efficiency in utilizing and managing social media; d) a strategy can ensure ongoing, continuous, and consistent activity on various social platforms to keep content fresh, relevant, and coordinated; e) a strategy can allow for loftier and more effective campaigns or specific activations; and, lastly; f) a strategy will keep social media on track as it should contain information and procedures for posting, replying to the audience, dealing with questions, addressing adulation or negative comments, and responding to complaints. Such a strategy for the Park must be broad in scope, and should be as inclusive as possible to engage many partners to participate thereby providing a level of consistent social media throughout the Park.
- B. Partner with social media influencers – Social media is only as good as the follower base of any particular user (agency, NGO, club, individual, etc.). *Social influencer marketing* is a tactic that is heavily used today by many, and is simply “leveraging the follower base of influencers” for specific purposes – sales, donations, support, volunteerism, etc. The use of marketing through social media influencers has many benefits: it is considered a light-handed approach that doesn’t feel aggressive to the end user like some traditional marketing efforts; influencers meticulously build and curate their follower base so often social influencers are viewed as a credible source; social influencer marketing can, over time, lift Search Engine Optimization (SEO); lastly, social influencer marketing can foster meaningful online exchanges that can engage many in a topic of specific interest. Identifying and collaborating with social influencers in New York and the broader Adirondack region to champion

Leave No Trace and/or stewardship efforts in the Park could be an effectual strategy for building a stronger sustainability culture for the Adirondacks.

- C. Consider the use of social media as a monitoring tool – Some land managers are now monitoring social media feeds and platforms daily to draw real-time data from social posts. Often the recreating public is aware of issues before the land manager, and social media has become an important tool for managers. Examples of issues that managers are being made aware of via social channels include human-wildlife conflict, dangerous wildlife, dangerous trail conditions, user conflict, accidents, and wildfire.

V. Partnerships & Coordination Recommendations

- A. Create (or reinvigorate) an Adirondack Park Wildlands Stewardship Committee – The creation of an Adirondack Park Wildlands Stewardship Committee would greatly benefit Leave No Trace efforts in the Park. A committee that has park-wide representation, not just the High Peaks or hikers, would be an effective way to better coordinate marketing, social media, outreach, education, and training for the Park. Such a committee should include non-motorized users such as hikers, climbers, paddlers, anglers, mountain bikers, trail runners, skiers, etc. as well as motorized users (e.g. snowmobilers, boaters, ATV riders, etc.) and others such as hunters that utilize the public and private lands of the Park. Furthermore, a committee of this kind would be well served by having NGO representation, agency representation, and representatives from the municipalities within the Park. Consider a subcommittee structure – education, social media, citizen science, research, training, etc. The overarching purpose of such a committee would be to drive stewardship efforts in the Park in a coordinated and organized fashion, and would allow for the identification of specific success metrics as visitation to the Park continues to increase.
- B. Examine existing DEC partnerships to enhance stewardship efforts – The DEC currently has many partnership agreements with myriad entities in the Park. Some of these existing partnerships involve the use and dissemination of Leave No Trace to Park visitors. However, there are likely opportunities that have yet to be identified by DEC and all of its partners for better promoting responsible enjoyment of the Park. To the extent possible, the DEC should review current partnerships and identify opportunities for providing minimum impact information to the populations the various partners respectively serve. The more existing partnerships can be leveraged in a mutually beneficial way to promote a consistent stewardship message, the more people that can be reached over time.
- C. Work more closely with the NY Governor's Office to promote responsible recreation in the Park – Given the NY Governor's interest in the Adirondack Park, his office should be engaged to help promote responsible enjoyment of the Park. Every message coming from the Governor's Office about the Park should include a message about wildlands stewardship and Leave No Trace. As the chief executive of

the state, the Governor has a tremendous opportunity to reach millions of people in order to help protect the Adirondacks. Consideration should be given to inviting the Governor to the Park for a tour of areas where recreation-related impact is most significant so he and his staff can see firsthand the challenges faced by DEC and its partners in the Park. Greater awareness of the issues faced by the Park could be the spark that leads to increased funding, attention, and resources for the Park. Given the significance of the Park as an economic driver for the state, this should be a high priority if the Park is to be enjoyed in perpetuity.

VI. Group Use & Adirondack ‘Challenges’ Recommendations

- A. Require (or strongly recommend) inclusion of Leave No Trace in every Park challenge – All challenges (46ers, Cranberry Lake 50, Fire Tower Challenge, Saranac Lake 6er, etc.) that currently take place in the Park should be required to include Leave No Trace information for challenge participants. Web-based information as well as the specific inclusion of Leave No Trace into such challenges should be strongly recommended and/or required. These challenges are operating on public lands and have a responsibility to minimize the impact of participation. Furthermore, many challenge participants may be drawn to the Park for other types of recreation and educating all participants across all challenges could further the Leave No Trace ethic in the Park. In a review of more than ten Adirondack challenge websites, it was found that virtually no Leave No Trace information exists on the websites. Each of these challenges has a significant opportunity to reach thousands if not millions of Park visitors over time. As such, this represents an immediate opportunity for visitor education.
- B. Create Leave No Trace guidelines for challenges – The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics routinely works with partners to create tailored Leave No Trace messaging and curriculum. Such an effort could be easily undertaken to ensure that all challenges in the Park have the necessary information to promote responsible enjoyment of the Park. The information could be featured on each challenges’ website, and could even be made part of the challenge itself.
- C. All “Challenge” events/programs in the Park should actively promote Leave No Trace – Not only should challenges be required (or strongly recommended) to include Leave No Trace on their websites but they should actively be promoting Leave No Trace as part of their public outreach and marketing. As it currently exists in the Park, this is a significant missed opportunity to reach many people.
- D. Conduct a survey of challenge takers – Challenge takers would have to participate in a short survey before they could receive their recognition (e.g. patch, certificate, etc.) to gather data on why they’re taking the challenge, what their motivation is, if they are specifically goal-focused, etc. With this data, specific messaging could be developed to better resonate with challenge participants regarding their role in taking care of the Park.

- E. Implement a group notification system – Consider the implementation of a group notification system such as the one utilized by the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) in the White Mountains and the Mahoosuc Range. The AMC implemented this system to better manage the high overnight use of sites. From the AMC, *“To better manage these public wildlands so that all hikers continue to experience an uncivilized forest, we must receive pre-notification from large groups concerning which sites they plan to use. Proper use of the Group Notification System helps to prevent multiple groups from converging at a campsite on a given night and exceeding site capacity. This simple action helps us work together to lessen impacts on these beautiful areas, minimize overcrowding, and increase everyone’s enjoyment of the backcountry. However, this notification is not a formal reservation. All sites are managed on a first-come, first-served basis. We hope that use of the Group Notification System will prevent the need for a more formalized reservation system, which would mean more regulations and fees. Your compliance helps us protect the resources we all value!”* For more information on this system, see: <https://www.outdoors.org/lodging-camping/lodging-camping-campsites/campsites-notification> Such a system in the Adirondack Park could be a very effective way to manage group use without having to move to a formal reservation system. Furthermore, the data collected through this type of system could be valuable for predicting trends in group use, tracking group use, monitoring impacts, and addressing issues resulting from group use in the Park.

VII. Outreach & Education Recommendations

- A. Create a consistent, cohesive educational plan for the Park – Compared to other lands used by the public for recreation, the Adirondack Park currently appears to be receiving a similar amount of recreation-related resource and social impact. Level of existing impact is important because timing is key to implementing successful visitor education programs. The sooner a program is implemented, the better off the Park will be in the future, i.e. when possible, having an education program in place prior to (or concurrent with) the opening of the new trails (e.g. new Mt. Van Hoevenberg trail) or other recreational amenities (e.g. Frontier Town) will help ensure effectiveness of outreach and educational efforts. It is often easier to deal with problems in a nascent stage rather than trying to address deeply-rooted resource or social impacts. As such, the Center strongly recommends the immediate implementation of comprehensive Leave No Trace educational efforts Parkwide to begin minimizing and mitigating existing and future impacts.
- B. Catalog existing rules, regulations, and educational messages in the Park – Currently, the lists of rules and regulations are not readily visible or consistent on kiosks throughout the Park, and Leave No Trace-type information is essentially non-existent in much Park-related literature. This is a relatively easy fix, but something that should be remedied over time in order to consistently promote responsible and sustainable enjoyment of the Park. One way to address this would be for an intern or graduate student to document existing messages (regulatory and educational)

being used in the Park to better understand the gaps in overall messaging. From there a plan could be created to foster consistency across the Park.

- C. Ensure consistency of signage – Some of the more important signage currently found in the Park should be made more prominent and consistent across the Park. When signage does not have an official look or feel, it can lead to non-compliance. Make all signage as permanent as possible. Generally speaking, more permanent signage has a more authentic, authoritative, and legitimate feel. For more information on visitor perceptions of signs, see:
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Yu_Fai_Leung/publication/260165571_Frontcountry_visitor_informationeducation_programs_Are_there_lessons_for_wilderness_links/0a85e5367ce676a965000000.pdf
- D. Identify and capitalize on missed opportunities to reach Park visitors – While there are active visitor education efforts in many parts of the Park, there are also many more opportunities that have yet to be capitalized on. From agencies, to locations such as the VIC (Paul Smith's College), to the various Challenges in the park, as well as locations like the I-87 exit 17 rest stop, and information on shuttle vehicles, there are many potential opportunities to better educate Park visitors on enjoying the Adirondacks responsibly. Furthermore, there are numerous publications that should be engaged in this effort as they reach many visitors of all types in the Park. A cursory review of possibilities includes:
- NY State Camping Guide
 - Town of Webb Trail System map
 - I Love NY Roadmap
 - Frontier Town literature, e.g. "Equestrian Opportunities Near Frontier Town"
 - Old Forge Summer Fun Guide
 - Adirondack Sports
 - All Adirondack-focused I Love NY Guides – Capital Saratoga Region, Season to Season visitor guide, I Love NY Travel Guide, I Love NY New York State Travel Highlights, etc.
 - VIC Summer Programs Guide
 - Adirondacks Fishing Guide
 - Adirondacks Paddling Guide
 - DEC – Your NYS Camping Adventure (good information but call it "Leave No Trace")
 - Old Forge Snowmobile Trail Map
 - All DEC day use and campground maps, e.g. Limekiln Lake, Alger Island, Nicks Lake, Fish Creek Pond, etc.
 - www.ReserveAmerica.com for campground reservations

An intern at one of the colleges or universities in or near the Park, an agency or NGO intern, or even a dedicated volunteer could undertake such a project. Knowing what opportunities exists, that are not currently being capitalized on, will allow for a

targeted and strategic effort to maximize and utilize all available outreach opportunities.

- E. PSAR education efforts – According to the DEC there are accurate statistics on the number of search and rescue operations (SAR) that occur in the Park. Given the increase in SAR in the past few years there appears to be a need (and an opportunity) to develop a Preventative Search and Rescue (PSAR) educational effort and/or program with the goal of reaching park visitors about being prepared and staying safe *before* they venture into the backcountry of the Park. Such a program would need to be coordinated across the Park, and could involve a wide variety of partners that could all promote a single PSAR message. See example of successful PSAR efforts at Grand Canyon National Park:

- https://www.nps.gov/articles/parkscience33-1_99-107_malcolm_heinrich_3864.htm
- https://www.nps.gov/grca/learn/photosmultimedia/hike_smart-01.htm

For research on the topic, see:

Malcolm, C., Hannah, H., & Pearce, E. (2014). Effectiveness of preventative search and rescue: illness and injury prevention and fiscal impact. *Wilderness & Environmental Medicine*, 25(3), 355-356.

Collins, Ethan G. and Pettengill, Peter R. (2019). Analysis of Search and Rescue Incidents in the Adirondack State Park from 2015-2016. *Adirondack Journal of Environmental Studies*, 23, 49-59

- F. Replicate successful existing outreach efforts – There are numerous existing outreach efforts in the Park (e.g. HPIC at ADK, summer invasive species/boat inspection stewards, fire tower stewards, etc.) that could be replicated over time. Given the documented effectiveness of these kinds of efforts, it would be beneficial and more efficient to enhance and expand on proven outreach models rather than to create new ones out of whole cloth. Furthermore, it may initially be easier to raise the necessary funds to replicate efforts that have generate desired outcomes rather than fund untested education and outreach mechanisms.
- G. Tailor DEC website to what visitors are searching for most – While there are good resources on the DEC's current website, a review utilizing Google Analytics or a third-party auditor of the most visited pages would allow for the agency to better tailor the website to current Park visitors. Once the DEC has a better understanding of what website pages visitors are searching for or viewing, that information can then be located (or relocated) to more accessible locations on the website. Making the most searched for information better available and more easily located would

greatly benefit visitors to the DEC website when searching for information on responsible and sustainable enjoyment of the Park.

- H. Search Engine Optimization – When searching the internet for information on the Adirondack Park, the most prominent websites are largely tourism-focused websites (this is a significant marketing/outreach opportunity) and the DEC website isn't found until the second page of a Google search. As such, the DEC should work with search engine optimization (SEO) experts to enhance the searchability of the DEC's website given the agency's role in the management and protection of the Park. Based on a cursory review of some of the Park-related websites that are found via Google, very few provide information on responsible enjoyment (i.e. Leave No Trace) of the Park, and none were found that detailed the rules and regulations for the Park. Search engine optimization could help remedy this situation and make the DEC's website a prominent and easily-accessed source of information for the Park.
- I. Create a singular website for the High Peaks – Because of the intense and growing use of the High Peaks, DEC and its partners in the High Peaks should consider a single website for the area that could serve as the comprehensive and definitive information source for those wishing to visit. Such a site could be in both English and French to accommodate visitors from both the US and Canada. There are currently numerous websites that provide information about the High Peaks which creates inconsistencies from one site to the next. A quick search on www.networksolutions.com reveals that potential URLs such as www.adkpeaks.org (or .net), www.nyhighpeaks.org (or .net) and www.adkhhighpeaks.org (or .net) are all currently available. Having one website dedicated to this special region of the Park would be an excellent way to help ensure that visitors to the High Peaks could have access to accurate and timely information to the area.
- J. Publicize existing shuttle services – There are some shuttle services in the Park that have been implemented to remedy the myriad parking issues managers and partners are currently dealing with in the Adirondacks. While well intentioned, such services are virtually useless unless Park visitors know about the services. The DEC and its partners should catalog all existing shuttle services and widely promote them and the benefits they provide. All visitors should be encouraged to use these services to benefit the Park and the experience it is intended to provide. For research on shuttle services in parks and protected areas, see:
- <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0966692313000525>
 - <https://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=684539079697772;res=IELBUS>
 - <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00267-006-0061-9>

- K. Catalog the top 50 (or 100) educational opportunities in the Park – Consider utilizing an intern or student (undergraduate or graduate) to identify and catalog the top 50–100 educational opportunities in the Park that are *not* currently being utilized. From outfitter and guide services to retailers to hotel and lodging to restaurants and bars, there are many potential opportunities for reaching visitors that have yet to be taken advantage of. However, without a better understanding of the opportunities that exist it will be challenging to create a plan for ensuring the dissemination of consistent Leave No Trace or other park information through such outlets.
- L. Ensure Leave No Trace is part of relevant college orientation programs, courses, and outing programs – There are numerous colleges and universities that provide a variety of programming in the Park offering meaningful opportunities to reach students (and staff) with Leave No Trace information for the Park. DEC and its partners should reach out to all known colleges and universities that operate in the Park in some capacity to ensure they are providing Leave No Trace to their participants before and during any visit.

VIII. Training Recommendations

- A. Specific training for DEC staff and rangers – Consider sending DEC Forest Ranger, ECOs, and Lands and Forests staff to targeted training on proper use of the *Authority of the Resource Technique*, a proven method for effectively interacting with Park visitors about Leave No Trace and similar stewardship concepts. This training is often coupled with *Effective Communication* training, which is designed for staff and volunteers who routinely interface with Park visitors. This particular training module is generally a 4-hour training but can be tailored to a particular audience for maximum effectiveness. Contact the Center for additional details. For information on the Authority of the Resource technique, see: https://lnt.org/sites/default/files/ART_Wallace_Original.pdf
- B. Entities operating under a Volunteer Service Agreement (VSA) should be trained in Leave No Trace – Any entity operating on state lands as a volunteer with DEC has the opportunity to provide Leave No Trace education, whether it is explicitly in their mission (such as Front Country Stewards) or not (such as volunteer trail crews). Organizers could be required to have Leave No Trace Awareness training (a 1-day or shorter formal Leave No Trace training) at a minimum. The Leave No Trace Center offers a FREE online Leave No Trace Awareness Course that participants could take. Upon successful completion, participants receive a certificate of completion, which could be submitted as part of the VSA application or renewal application.
- C. Summer camp staff should be trained in Leave No Trace – There are countless summer camps (both day and resident) in the Adirondack Park. Camps represent a tremendous opportunity to reach both camp staff and youth with Leave No Trace in an outdoor context. The Leave No Trace Center has a robust suite of camp-focused

educational curriculum and programs that are effective at increasing Leave No Trace knowledge in camp participants as well as influencing youth behavior to better align with Leave No Trace in the outdoors. For more information, see:

- <https://lnt.org/our-work/youth-education/>
- <https://lnt.org/our-work/youth-education/accreditation/>
- <https://lnt.org/our-work/youth-education/youth-educator-library/>
- <https://lnt.org/our-work/youth-education/things-to-do/>

- D. Make Leave No Trace a required component of NY Guide Licensure – Currently there are approximately 2,500 licensed guides in New York, which represents a tremendous opportunity to educate a professional community about Leave No Trace that has a significant reach in the Adirondack Park. Outfitter and guide services often cater to beginners or novices who are interested in learning new outdoor activities. As such, guides are teaching specific skills and Leave No Trace should be one of those skills that is imparted to every individual or group that is served by a NY DEC Licensed Guide. Furthermore, all NY Guides should be required to have Leave No Trace Awareness training (a 1-day or shorter formal Leave No Trace training) at a minimum. The Leave No Trace Center offers a FREE online Leave No Trace Awareness Course that all guides could take. Upon successful completion, participant receive a certificate. That certificate of completion could be submitted as part of the guide license application or the renewal application. Lastly, the NY Guide exam could easily incorporate Leave No Trace to ensure that all licensed guides are aware of how to minimize the impact of their guiding service and pass along the information to their clients. See: <https://lnt.org/get-involved/training-courses/online-awareness-course/>

IX. Dept. of Environmental Conservation Recommendations

- A. DEC work with media/outdoor industry media – DEC has a tremendous opportunity to expand its outreach and engagement with outdoor industry media entities that are promoting the Adirondack Park. These kinds of influencers can play a key role in promoting responsible enjoyment of the Park. An internet search reveals numerous media outlets that are heavily promoting the Park yet provide little to no information on responsible enjoyment of the areas they're promoting. A few examples include: www.lonelyplanet.com; www.visittheusa.com; www.tripadvisor.com; www.alltrails.com; www.outside.com; www.backpacker.com; www.wikipedia.com; www.adirondackexplorer.com; www.outdoorproject.com, as well as many others.
- B. Include Leave No Trace in the DEC Ranger Academy – The DEC's Environmental Conservation Police Officer and Forest Ranger Basic Training academy should

include a robust Leave No Trace component. Given the role of ECOs and Forest Rangers in the protection of the Park, interaction with the public is a key part of the scope of work for these crucial staff. Ensuring that ECOs and Rangers are equipped with Leave No Trace will allow them to pass along critical information to outdoor enthusiasts they interface with throughout the course of their duties. Research has shown that visitors to public lands often first learn about Leave No Trace from a ranger. As such, it is imperative that DEC field staff are well-versed in Leave No Trace skills and ethics.

- C. Create a DEC Junior Ranger Program – Consider the development of an Adirondack Park Junior Ranger Program that contains a Leave No Trace component. Such programs are widely utilized by the federal land management agencies, and by some state agencies as well. Generally, these programs are structured to engage youth ages 5 – 15 but some encourage participation of adults of any age as well. The majority of these kinds of programs include Leave No Trace activities and associated educational opportunities. The National Park Service has an excellent Jr. Ranger program that has been very successful in America’s national parks: <https://www.nps.gov/kids/junior-rangers.htm> Two other examples, one from Texas State Parks: https://tpwd.texas.gov/spdest/programs/jr_ranger/ and the other from California State Parks: http://kids.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=22783 These kinds of programs are easy to replicate, do an excellent job of engaging youth, and have added benefits such as parental involvement (and subsequent learning). This type of program could be rolled out Parkwide in the Adirondacks, and could help foster the next generation of Park stewards.
- D. Enforcement of existing regulations – DEC managers should explore options for greater enforcement of rules and regulations in the Park. If the applicable rules and regulations cannot be enforced adequately, managers will have to rely solely on voluntary compliance, which has been shown to be low for some issues. Additionally, DEC could consider developing a matrix for organizing those impacts in the Park that are best suited to law enforcement and those that could effectively be addressed through educational efforts. Such a matrix would allow DEC staff to be judicious with its resources, and foster a more targeted approach to managing, mitigating, and minimizing impacts in the Park through both education and law enforcement.

X. Infrastructure Recommendations

- A. Technological/infrastructure solutions – DEC and its partners will need to further explore which kind of infrastructure and facilities are, or will be, necessary to provide the intended visitor experience. This infrastructure can be used as an effective management tool, e.g. parking areas can be designed to limit visitation based on number of parking spaces, high-traffic areas can be hardened to minimize trampling effects, campsites can be built to contain and minimize impacts, etc. Though education is effective, technical solutions such as infrastructure, are

necessary and appropriate at times to manage high visitor use and recreation-related impacts. See:

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jeffrey_Marion/publication/242240482_Managing_Visitor_Impacts_in_Parks_A_Multi-Method_Study_of_the_Effectiveness_of_Alternative_Management_Practices/links/02e7e53a037ba53d93000000/Managing-Visitor-Impacts-in-Parks-A-Multi-Method-Study-of-the-Effectiveness-of-Alternative-Management-Practices.pdf

- B. Consider establishing actual visitor center(s) for the Park – Though a few “visitor centers” exist in the Park, there is not a formal visitor center (or suite of visitor centers) that offers a one-stop-shop for Park visitors. Federal and state land managers routinely utilize visitor centers to interact with visitors, provide education, interpretation, guest services, and resources (books, maps, equipment, etc.). DEC and its partners should evaluate the need for a single visitor center (or perhaps multiple) for the Park. NYSDOT data shows that the majority of visitors access the Park through a few key entry points, which makes the idea of formal visitor centers potentially more feasible. Given that there is no single entry point for the Park, coupled with the fact that the Park has a porous boundary, an assessment should determine the feasibility of truly utilizing such facilities for education and outreach purposes among other things.

Specific Recommended Methods and Tactics for Educating Adirondack Park Visitors About Leave No Trace and Responsible Enjoyment of the Park

- Brochures – Distribute at visitor centers and natural areas or individual pilot sites – tailored Leave No Trace educational information that could be distributed at trailheads, manager and partner offices, or other recreation sites, the Chambers of Commerce or tourism partners in the Park and surrounding communities, other governmental offices, local outdoor retail shops, through NGO partners, the Adirondack Mountain Club, the Adirondack Council, other key partners and stakeholders, and at other venues throughout the Park.
- Trailhead/Park Signage – When done correctly, signage can be an effective tool for disseminating information to Park users. The information contained on signs would need to be consistent with other outreach methods, and would provide locally relevant information. Placement of signage and kiosk can be an important factor (the Center can provide more information on this depending on local variables, constraints, and impacts). Given the vast and dispersed nature of the Park, and potential staff limitations, signs can be an effective management strategy for providing Leave No Trace information as well as rules, regulations, and other area-specific information. One key is the need to have *consistent* signage throughout the Park in order to best reach visitors repeatedly with stewardship messages.
- Information on Park Maps – Locally tailored to cover the entire Park or even specific parts of the Park. Information could be further tailored to a specific activity or user group.
- Website – Consistent information across the manager/partner spectrum, possibly including a link to the Leave No Trace website so visitors can get even more information if they so desire, can be a critical educational tool. Web-based information should be the most up-to-date given the ease and relative low cost of updating. Consider having a specific Leave No Trace section of agency and partner websites similar to what most national parks, many state parks, and numerous municipalities have:

<https://www.nps.gov/olym/planyourvisit/wilderness-leave-no-trace.htm>;

<https://austintexas.gov/leavenotrace>;

<https://dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/Lnt.aspx>; and

<http://stateparks.mt.gov/protect-and-respect/leaveNoTrace.html>

- Continue to coordinate public Service Announcements – A new topic each week/month/season/year – “Tips for Leaving No Trace in the Adirondack Park.” PSAs could be distributed through a variety of outlets – agency and partner websites, local print and digital media, regional media, NGOs, social media, etc.

- Staff Training – Provide training for appropriate agency and partner staff – from the 1-hour Leave No Trace Awareness Workshop to the 2-day Leave No Trace Trainer Course, to the 5-day Leave No Trace Master Educator Course (the Adirondack Mountain Club is an approved Master Educator Course Provider). Allow staff and key partners the opportunity to learn more about Leave No Trace, the science behind it, and how to effectively teach it. Such training could be a critical component of the overall Leave No Trace efforts in the Park.
- Training for key partners, volunteers, or interested individuals – Leave No Trace Training could be provided by agency/partner staff or other appropriate volunteers for the general public, volunteer groups, school groups, etc. This kind of training could engage existing Park supporters, and further build stronger stewardship efforts for the Park.
- Interpretive Walks/Presentations/Ranger Talks – These could be offered by DEC or partners on a weekly or monthly basis to teach locals, Park users, and tourists about the unique resources found in the Park at key locations, such as campgrounds and other DEC facilities. These educational methods offer turnkey opportunities for disseminating information about ways to minimize recreational impacts. These educational sessions help build a sense of “ownership” and foster stewardship in Park visitors and supporters. Consider building Leave No Trace into existing programs of this kind already being offered by DEC and other partners.
- Volunteer Programs – Programs such as *Adopt-a-Park* or *Friends of the High Peaks* could be very useful in this effort (assuming similar programs exist or can be created). Training (both Leave No Trace and Authority of the Resource) for volunteers is key so that they can effectively interact with park users regarding Leave No Trace at parking areas, trailheads, and at destinations. Currently, training requirements are mostly left to the organization holding the VSA (Volunteer Service Agreement). DEC could require all organizations holding VSAs to provide Leave No Trace training, either in person or via the FREE online Awareness Workshop.

Volunteer programs could be a very effective way to help manage visitor use, and provide meaningful public outreach and education. Research and best practice has demonstrated that volunteers can often make very worthwhile and lasting public contacts, given that their personal attachment to a particular park or natural area is on display when interacting with the recreating public rather than uniformed agency personnel. There is a great deal of strategy to ensuring that volunteers can be effectively utilized in parks and protected areas without compromising their personal safety. Additionally, volunteers must be deployed in areas that are more likely to benefit from such a presence, i.e. areas with recreation-related impacts such as pet waste, off-trail travel, wildlife feeding, etc. rather than those where illegal activities comprise the greatest management concerns.

- Interpretive Signage – Signage could be placed at strategic locations in and around the Park to educate users about the areas they are recreating in, the ecosystem function, and ways to protect such areas by using Leave No Trace skills and techniques, e.g. signage in riparian areas, historical features, critical wildlife habitat, sensitive plant habitat, etc. Research has shown that visitors are often more apt to protect what they understand. Such interpretive signage, when deployed in the right circumstance, can accomplish both raising awareness and imparting an effective stewardship message.
- Supplementary Outreach Methods:
 - ❖ An Adirondack Park-specific ethics reference card could be produced and distributed to Park visitors. These cards generally contain approximately 500 words of text, highlighting the key issues in an area, and specific techniques for minimizing impact in the area. The Center has utilized such cards for over 20 years with great success. They are relatively inexpensive (~\$0.20 per card), visitors generally like the cards, and they are often kept as either a keepsake/memento or an educational tool. The NYS DEC has previously had a standard language, but specifically Forest Ranger branded ethics card, which it distributed to the public. See appendix II
 - ❖ An Adirondack Park app for smart phone users could be created that would give pertinent Park information as well as relevant Leave No Trace information tailored to the Park.
 - ❖ Information could be posted on the back of restroom stall doors – captive audience.

Appendix I

RESOLUTION NO. 45 -2014

RESOLUTION DESIGNATING SAN JUAN COUNTY AS A VOLUNTARY "LEAVE NO TRACE" AREA AND ADOPTING THE "LEAVE NO TRACE" GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND ETHIC TO SUPPORT STEWARDSHIP OF THE SAN JUAN ISLANDS

- A. A defining characteristic of San Juan County is the natural environment, both terrestrial and marine; and
- B. Protecting the natural environment is beneficial for all people, whether residing in or visiting San Juan County; and
- C. Outdoor recreation and leisure activities provide substantial economic value to the community and will benefit from conservation efforts; and
- D. Preserving habitats, scenic beauty, and biological diversity contributes to a high quality of life for islanders, wildlife, and visitors; and
- E. Impacts to wildlife and the natural environment from outdoor activities and recreational use can degrade the natural values important to the community; and
- F. Integrating an ethic of stewardship through education and business practices is important to reduce human impacts to the natural environment; and
- G. The *Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics*, a not-for-profit organization, has partnered with San Juan County and other state and federal agencies to provide information and programs supporting stewardship of the San Juan Islands natural environment; and
- H. The seven principles of "*Leave No Trace*" are:
 - 1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
 - 2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
 - 3. Dispose of Waste Properly
 - 4. Leave What You Find
 - 5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
 - 6. Respect Wildlife
 - 7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors

The member-driven *Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics* teaches people how to enjoy the outdoors responsibly. This copyrighted information has been reprinted with permission from the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics: www.LNT.org; and

- I. San Juan County has established a history of supporting stewardship to bring about natural and economic benefits, as expressed in the adoption of Resolution No. 8-2004 Designating San Juan County as a Voluntary Marine Stewardship Area

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the County Council hereby designates San Juan County, State of Washington, as a Voluntary Leave No Trace Area to facilitate the protection and preservation of our natural environment for all people, current and future generations;


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County Council adopts the "Leave No Trace" guiding principles and ethic to further the intention of this resolution to establish a culture of stewardship in all people residing in and visiting San Juan County.

ADOPTED this 7TH day of OCTOBER 2014.


ATTEST: Clerk of the Council


**COUNTY COUNCIL
SAN JUAN COUNTY, WASHINGTON**


Ingrid Gabriel, Clerk Date 10.7.2014


Rick Hughes, Chair
District 2


REVIEWED BY COUNTY MANAGER


Michael J. Thomas Date 10.7/14



Bob Jarman, Vice-Chair
District 1

RANDALL K. GAYLORD
APPROVED AS TO FORM ONLY

By: 
Date 10/6/14


Jamie Stephens, Member
District 3

Appendix II



leave no trace

LEAVE NO TRACE
Geocaching

PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

- Know and comply with the geocaching policies of the land owners or land management agencies where you wish to seek or place caches.
- Prepare for your trip with proper equipment and clothing for the weather, terrain and environmental conditions, and for emergencies.
- Be safe. Let someone know where you will be going and when you expect to return.
- Know how to use your GPS. Carry extra batteries and a map and compass as backup.

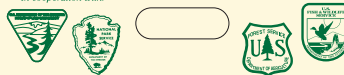
TRAVEL AND CACHE ON DURABLE SURFACES

- Travel on designated trails and roads. Comply with posted signs.
- If permitted and you must travel off-trail, choose durable surfaces such as rock, sand, gravel and dry grass, and spread out to avoid creating new paths.
- Use maps to find a route that will minimize impacts. Note waypoints during your journey to assist you on your return trip.
- After you've finished searching for a cache, the area should look as though you were never there.
- Do not place a cache in sensitive locations such as fragile vegetation or soils, critical wildlife habitat, wetlands, lakeshores, alpine areas or caves.
- Do not place a cache in special areas such as designated Wilderness Areas, Wild and Scenic River Corridors or near historic and cultural sites.
- If you notice a path has started to wear in the vicinity of a cache, notify the cache owner to move the cache.

DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

- Cache In Trash Out. Carry an extra trash bag for trash, leftover and dropped food, and litter left by others.
- Use established bathrooms when available. If not available, deposit solid human waste in catholes dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least 200 feet from water sources, campsites, trails and caches.
- Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products in a double plastic bag.

In cooperation with:



LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

- Preserve the past; observe, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts. Never use artifacts as cache items.
- Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects for others to enjoy.
- Practice the "lift, look, replace" technique – if you lift a rock to look under it, replace it exactly as you found it.

MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS

- If you plan to have a fire, know the fire regulations and current guidelines for the area you plan to visit.


RESPECT WILDLIFE


- Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.
- Never feed wild animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.
- Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely.
- Never leave food of any kind in a cache. Wildlife may find and destroy the cache and may be harmed by consuming food wrappers.
- Respect wildlife when traveling to and from cache locations. Avoid locations where there is significant traffic from wildlife, such as water sources.
- Keep pets on a leash for their safety and the safety of wild animals. Consider leaving pets at home.

BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS


- Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail.
- Take breaks on durable surfaces away from the trail.
- Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.
- Geocaching is one of many outdoor recreational activities. Respect the rights and experience of other visitors.
- When traveling to and from caches, take notice of private property signs and don't trespass.
- The future of geocaching lies in the hands of geocachers. Practice the principles of Leave No Trace.

For more information and materials:
1.800.332.4100 or www.LNT.org





Leave No Trace



LEAVE NO TRACE
Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness

PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

- Permits are required year-round in the BWCAW. Know which type you need.
- Group size is limited to 9 people/4 watercraft at any time or anywhere in the BWCAW.
- Know and adhere to regulations, closures and campfire bans.
- Bring maps covering your entire route, which show entry/exit points, portages and campsites.
- Prepare for weather, select and use proper gear and know what to do in an emergency.
- Always leave a trip itinerary with someone before departing.

TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES

- Camp only at designated campsites with steel fire grates and latrines.
- Travel on established portages, single file in the middle of the trail.
- Keep campsites small – stay in area where vegetation is absent and don't enlarge campsites.
- All members of a permit group must camp together at one site.

DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

- Disposable metal or glass containers are not allowed.
- Fuel, insect repellent, hygiene items and medicines may be kept in original containers.
- Pack out whatever you pack in, including food, containers, disposable items and live bait.
- Wash dishes and do personal washing 150-200 feet from any water source.
- Clean fish away from campsites, and dispose of remains well away from shorelines, campsites, trails and portages.
- Latrines are not garbage cans. Put only human waste and toilet paper in latrines. Pack out personal items like tampons, condoms, cigarettes, bandages, etc.
- If not near a latrine, dig a cat-hole 6 to 8 inches deep and 150-200 feet from a water source.
- When breaking camp, make sure campsite and fire grate are free of trash. Pack it out.

LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

- Leave archaeological, historical and rock painting sites undisturbed.
- Do not collect items found in nature such as antlers, driftwood, rocks, etc.
- Prevent introduction of non-native species by inspecting and cleaning watercraft, footwear and clothing.
- Do not transport plants or live bait.

MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS

- Consider alternatives to a fire such as a camp stove.
- Be aware of and abide by current fire restrictions.
- Fires are allowed only within USFS steel fire grates.
- Use only dead and downed wood gathered well away from campsites and lakeshores.
- Keep fires small.
- Burning trash is illegal in Minnesota.
- Drown and stir your campfire until it is cold to the touch. Never leave a campfire unattended.
- It is illegal to cut green or growing vegetation of any kind.

RESPECT WILDLIFE

- Enjoy wildlife at a distance.
- Never feed wildlife.
- Minimize noise for a better chance of experiencing wildlife.
- Avoid sensitive/easily damaged habitat.
- Be aware of sensitive wildlife species and seasonal stresses on wildlife.
- Separate kitchen, food storage and sleeping areas.
- Store food securely, minimize food odors and keep a clean camp.
- Pets must be kept under human control at all times on a 6-foot or shorter leash.
- Pack out or bury pet waste in a cathole.
- Practice catch and release even when you are within the allowable catch.
- State game and fishing laws apply in the BWCAW.

BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS

- Respect the solitude of other visitors and preserve the wilderness experience.
- Follow the nine-person rule by keeping your distance in the water while others are loading or unloading.
- Do not rush or crowd other groups. Take breaks in locations away from portage trails.
- Sound carries long distances over water. Avoid yelling, banging pots, dragging canoes over rocks, singing loudly, etc. especially in the morning, evening and while traveling.

For more information on the BWCAW, call 218.626.4300
or visit www.fs.usda.gov/superior
For more information on Leave No Trace visit www.LNT.org
or call 1.800.332.4100