



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Hinckley Reservoir Day Use Area

Proposed Final Unit Management Plan (UMP) and Final
Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement
(SGEIS)

February 11, 2021

Hinckley Reservoir Day Use Area



Hinckley Day Use Area Location Overview

Hinckley Day Use Area

Exhibit # 1 - Location Map



Hinckley Reservoir Day Use Area

- Town of Russia, Herkimer County
- 521 Acres
- 20 Developed acres
- Day Use Area Capacity 1,350
- Beach Access on Hinckley Reservoir
- 3 Pavilions
- Volleyball and basketball courts

Hinckley Reservoir Day Use Area

Recent History

- 1964 - Funds from a NYS Park and Recreation Land Acquisition Bond Act were used to acquire 475 acres intended to be developed into the Hinckley Public Campground, Day Use Area and Boat Launch Site
- 1967 - Construction of the facility began. Some portions of the camping area were completed including one loop of 12 sites with one 8-unit comfort station and associated electric and water systems. A second adjacent loop of 13 sites was roughed out along with approximately 2 miles of campground road.
- 1971 - The NYS Department of Transportation issued a permit to DEC for the use of an additional 46 acres of property lying within the shoreline and the reservoir right of way line for the purpose of developing and maintaining Hinckley Reservoir Campsite.
- Additional funding for the campground and boat launch were delayed and completion was never realized. The remaining funds were used to complete the day-use area.
- 1973 – The day use area was opened to the public.

Hinckley Day Use Area

Exhibit #3 - Orthoimagery Map



Adirondack
Park

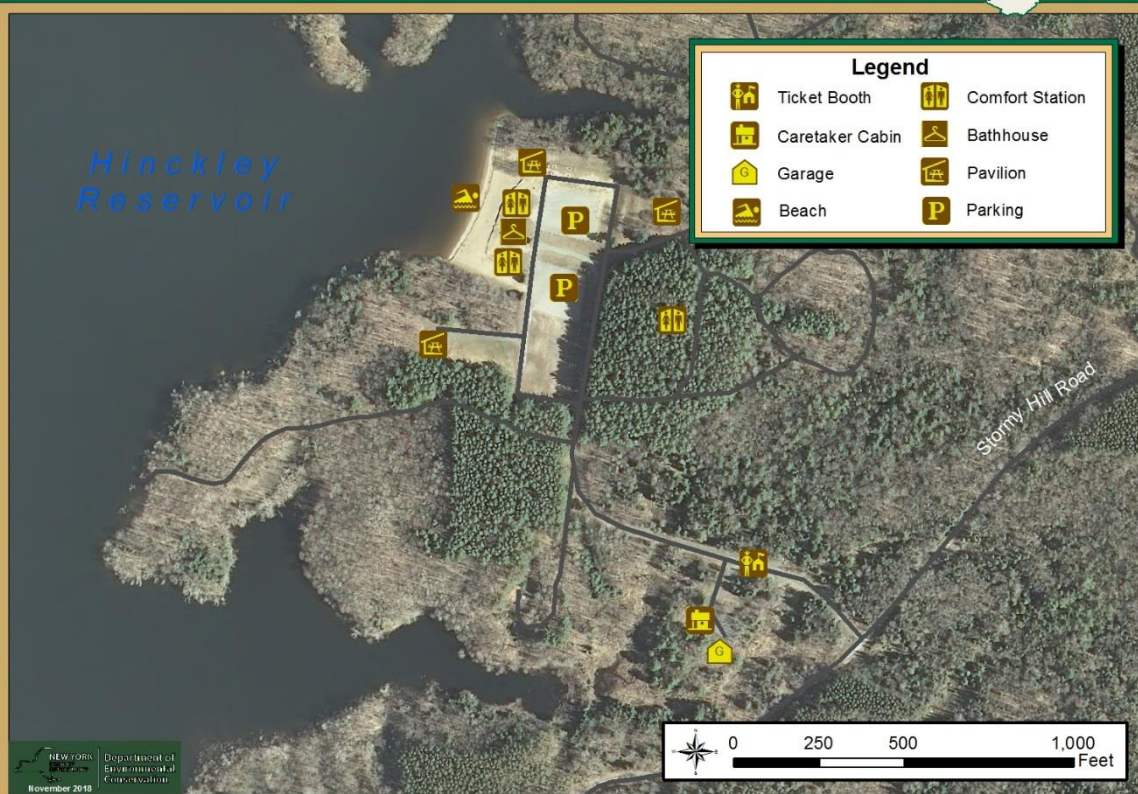


Hinckley Day Use Area

Exhibit #4a - Facility Map



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Park

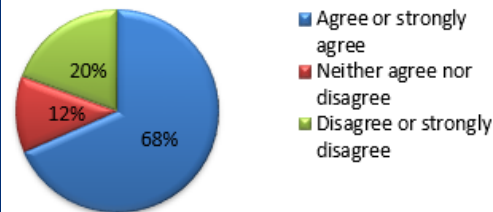


Survey and Scoping meeting Draft UMP

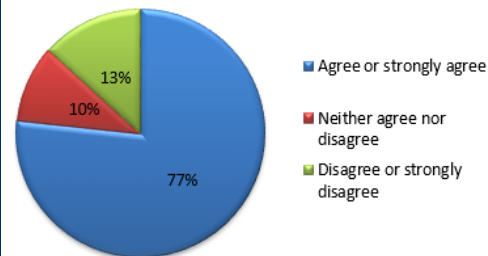
Conducted fall 2018

- 152 Survey responses
- 24 Attended the scoping meeting
- Outreach to local business, government and community organizations also showed support for concept.
- *"The Town of Russia town board, plus the residents of our town, is 100% behind this development"* - Frances Donley, Town Supervisor 6/20
- Members of Citizens for Hinckley Lake, Mohawk Valley Bicycling Club and Utica Bike Rescue.
- Local municipal and emergency services including Kuyahoora Valley Ambulance

Should the campground include tent platforms?



Should the facility include a playground?





UMP Proposed Mgt. Actions

Proposed Management Actions			
	Management Actions	Cost Estimate	
1.	Construct 2.8 miles of roads	\$2,000,000	
2.	Construct 150 campsites	\$325,000	
3.	Construct 4 comfort stations	\$2,400,000	
4.	Construct a trailer dump station	\$150,000	
5.	Construct a solid waste and recyclable collection building	\$50,000	
6.	Construct a second staff housing building	\$250,000	
7.	Construct a hand-carry boat launch facility	\$100,000	
8.	Extend potable water system	\$220,000	
9.	Extend electric system	\$350,000	
10.	Construct multi-use trail system	\$20,000	
11.	Construct firewood storage building	\$30,000	
12.	Replace bathhouse and beach comfort stations	\$650,000	
13.	Replace ticket booth	\$50,000	
14.	Replace supervisor's cabin	\$250,000	
15.	Replace garage	\$50,000	
16.	Construct a pavilion at Price's Point	\$50,000	
17.	Construct playground in day-use area	\$15,000	

Hinckley Day Use Area

Exhibit #15 - Proposed Facilities Map



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Legend

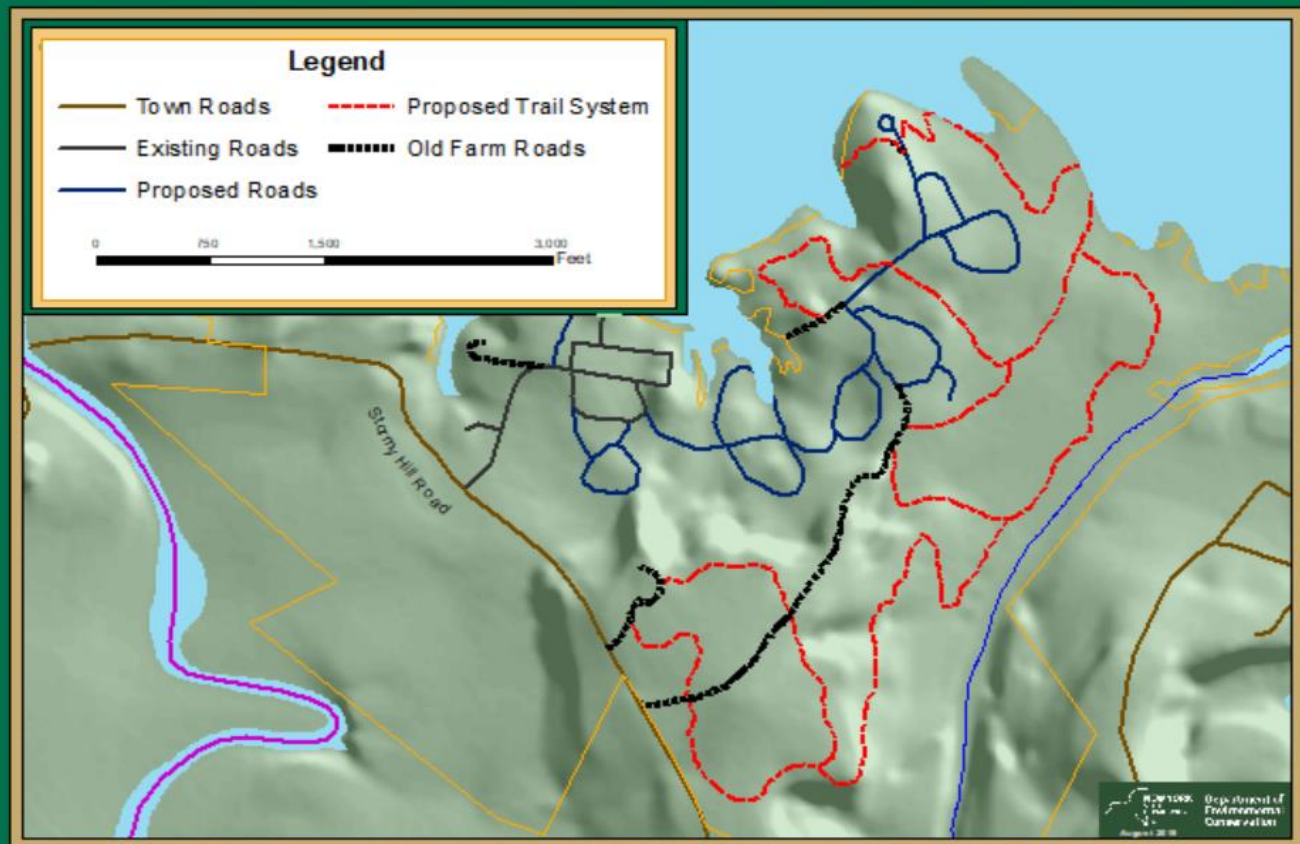
- | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|--|----------------------|--|------------------|
| | Comfort Station | | Staff Housing | | Proposed Roads |
| | Recycle Center | | Trailer Dump Station | | Existing Roads |
| | Picnic Shelter | | Parking | | Firewood Storage |
| | Hand Launch | | Ticket Booth | | |

0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet



Hinckley Day Use Area

Exhibit #15i Proposed Trail System Map



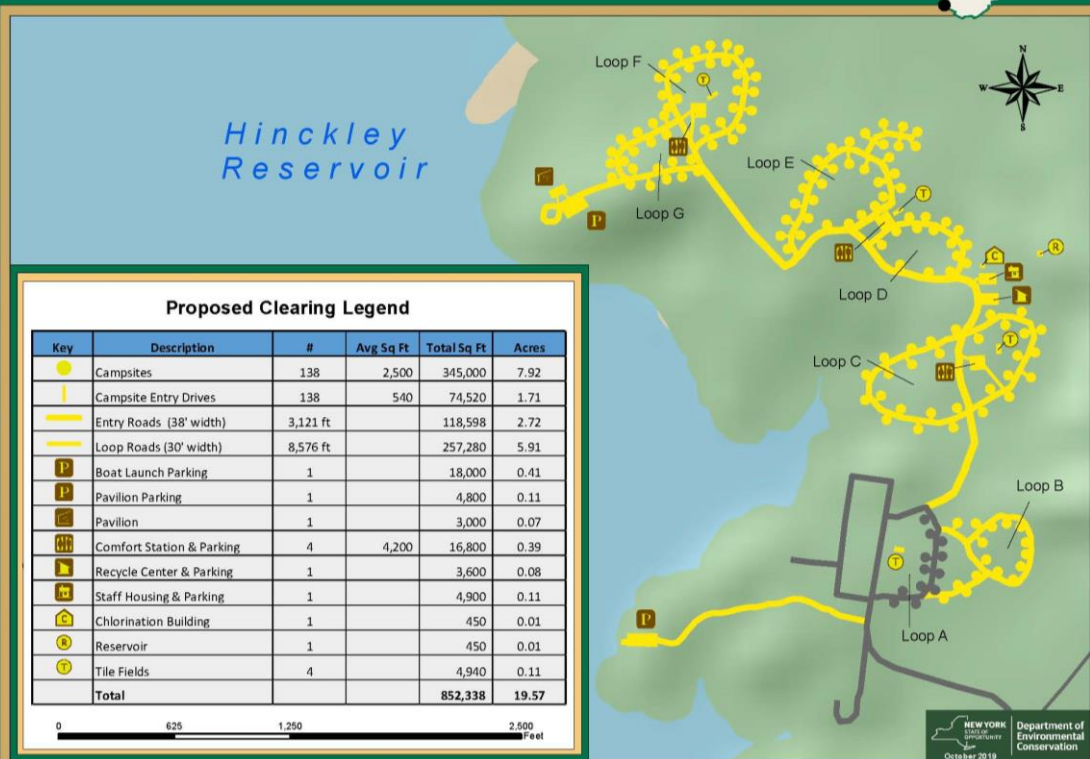


Hinckley Day Use Area

Exhibit # 15j - Proposed Tree Clearing Map



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Typical Designs



Entrance Booth



Playground



Pavilion



Bathhouse Comfort Station

Typical Designs



Shower and Toilet Building (Small)



Staff Housing



Shower and Toilet Building (Large)

Campground Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) Overview (1990)

Generic UMP/GEIS is broken into three volumes.

Volume I- Generic EIS, contains overview, environmental setting, goals, policy and mgt. criteria universally common to all IUAs

Volume II- Site specific document containing biological, physical, and built infrastructure inventories along with site specific mgt. objectives for each IUA. (UMP)

Volume III- Contains reference material and support data to Volumes I & II



Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (SGEIS) overview.

Combined supplemental generic environmental impact statement (SGEIS) and Unit Management Plan to supplement the 1990 Generic Environmental Impact Statement for DEC Campgrounds and Day-Use Areas (1990 GEIS).

Purpose of the supplement is to address potentially significant impacts not adequately addressed in the 1990 GEIS for the proposed development of a campground, associated infrastructure, and related appurtenances at Hinckley Reservoir Day-Use Area (Hinckley DUA).



SGEIS Outline

- Description of Proposed Action
 - Public Need and Benefits, Project Background, Project Summary, Existing Environmental Setting
- Potential Impacts and Mitigation
 - Geology, Water Resources, Air Resources, Terrestrial and Aquatic Ecology, Noise, Land Use and Zoning, Community Services, Transportation, Cultural Resources
- Potential Benefits of the Proposed Action
- Potential Impacts Not Considered Significant
- Alternatives
 - No Action alternative, the original design for Hinckley Reservoir Campground, Half-scale alternative, a larger scale alternative, or the Proposed Action.

SGEIS Alternatives

No Action alternative-

- Sanitation issues, including litter, human waste, and garbage;
- Aging infrastructure in need of modernization to current needs, design standards, accessibility, and health code regulations;
- Overuse of waterfront areas. Unauthorized camping and use are concentrated around the beach area and Price's Point bluffs, resulting in loss of shoreline screening and vegetation, soil compaction, and soil erosion;
- Tree cutting for firewood;
- Use of trails and open areas by ATVs and motor bikes;
- Vandalism of the vacant buildings and trees.

SGEIS Alternatives

Original Design (1967)-

- The 1967 plan would result in the loss of an increased area of wetland and emergent marsh.
- The original layout of the campground loops required a higher number of comfort stations, leach fields, and associated site clearing for camper use, whereas the current proposed plan seeks to minimize user and environmental impact.
- Larger topographic alterations and site grading would result if road and campsites were located as described in the original plan

SGEIS Alternatives

Half Scale Design (75 campsites)

- Not practical from a natural resource disturbance, economic feasibility, or capital investment perspective.
- Would still require the expansion of potable water, wastewater treatment, and utility systems in addition to staff housing, a dumping station, and a recycling center regardless of the number of sites
- Costs associated with staffing, maintenance, and required infrastructure cannot be covered by facility revenue under current operating conditions.

SGEIS Alternatives

Larger Scale (300+ campsites)

- The acreage available at Hinckley DUA could allow for a much larger scale campground. The most profitable campgrounds operated by DEC average 300 campsites. These facilities maximize economies of scale and have revenues that support their operating costs.
- While revenue generated would support the Division of Operations, Bureau of Recreation program goals, a campground this size and its associated increase in environmental impacts and user density would not be preferred.

Pubic Comment Period/Summary

- September 1st -October 2, 2020. During that time, 18 written comments and 77 survey responses were received. Respondents were overwhelmingly local. 22% from Russia NY alone. (~1/2 scoping respondents)
- Public was not limited to one form of comment or from submitting multiple responses. Comments were submitted on behalf of organizations or user groups representing many members.
- Responses grouped by theme:
 - Public comments regarding water level, quality and potential facility impacts
 - Public comments regarding the boat launch
 - Public comments regarding cost, timing and appropriateness of UMP management actions
 - Public comments regarding habitat impacts and Remus Brook
 - Public comments regarding trash, pollution, illegal use and public nuisances
 - Public comments regarding impacts to private property
 - Public comments regarding Boater's/Prices Beach



Public comments regarding water level fluctuations, quality and potential facility impacts

Dept Response Summary

- Water levels are not controlled by the Dept but the Dept has similar concerns.
- Engineer waterfront amenities for all potential water level conditions.
- Diversification of proposed recreational activities not dependent on water level (camping, multi-use trails and a playground)
- Hand launch should not significantly impact boating traffic or water level. Patrons must follow invasive species regulations
- Facility groundwater withdrawal will not impact water levels. Artificially regulated
- On-site wastewater treatment facilities are required to meet design, permitting and reporting requirements and will not impact reservoir water quality or quantity

Public comments regarding the boat launch

Competing interests for additional public access, limiting impacts to local resident and carrying capacities of a dynamic waterbody were all voiced.

Dept Response Summary

- Engineer the car-top launch to be operable for all water level conditions to maintain access.
- Proposed Car-top launch vs trailer boat launch will balance additional use pressure, enjoyment of private property and potential environmental/waterbody degradation.
- The Department is aware of the lack of access provided by the existing public trailered launch site and efforts to improve that situation. While it does not manage that site, it would be willing to enter discussions with other jurisdictional authorities to see if a balance of all user's needs can be achieved if the situation continues.

Public comments regarding cost, timing and appropriateness of UMP management actions

Dept Response Summary

- Campground development proposed since 1964 acquisition.
- Facility development halted several times because need for approved UMP. UMP approval does not mean immediate funding or construction.
- Overall site topographical characteristics, hydrology, geographic location and regional demand for recreational opportunities all contribute to this site's continued appropriateness for development into a campground.
- Analysis shows that DEC facilities with 150 campsites or more maximize the cost-benefit ratio.
- In addition, a purely economic cost-benefit analysis of construction costs and investment payback, fails to acknowledge the intrinsic benefits DEC campgrounds and all public lands provide users.

Public comments regarding habitat impacts and Remus Brook

Dept Response Summary

- The diverse wildlife habitat occurring at Hinckley DUA will be maintained. No rare, threatened, or endangered species or unique natural communities have been documented to exist within Hinckley Day-Use Area.
- Sensitive wildlife will naturally disperse during the camping season to the immediate peripheral and surrounding areas, including the 127,000-acre Black River Wild Forest
- Remus Brook area- no campground infrastructure or amenities will be located within or across the Remus Brook. The non-motorized use trails will be confined to the south of Remus Brook
- In the planning and layout of the facilities, DEC's major priority was avoiding disturbance to existing wetlands including the Remus Brook corridor. DEC and the APA inventory, map, and protect wetlands under Article 24 of the Environmental Conservation Law.



Public comments regarding trash, pollution, illegal use and public nuisances

Dept Response Summary

- Impacts as a result of littering, pollution, illegal ATV/UTV/ORV use and public nuisances are taken seriously by the Department. The Boater's/Prices Beach area has been particularly problematic.
- The Department will continue to patrol the area, remove litter, clean up waste and respond to complaints regardless of if the facility is open for the season or not.
- These issues should decrease when the campground is constructed and operational.
 - Increased staff presence and access to discourage illegal/improper use.
 - New facilities will provide patrons a place to dispose of garbage properly.
 - Comfort stations & dump station will allow for the safe treatment of human waste.
 - Public use will be in accordance with programmatic quiet hours and in areas designated for appropriate type of use.

Public comments regarding impacts to private property.

Dept Response Summary

- New campground infrastructure will be at least ~1,100' from the nearest property line, ~1,500' from the nearest private structure and will be designed so that noise and smoke will not become a nuisance to neighboring private property.
- No campground infrastructure/amenities will be located within or across Remus Brook.
- The multi-use trail system will prohibit motorized use and will use the natural barrier of Remus Brook and surrounding wetlands to prevent inadvertent private land trespass.
- In consultation with DOT and local officials, the potential increase in vehicles on surrounding roads will not create a safety nor a capacity issue. Patron parking will only be allowed in designated lots and areas within the facility.
- As is the case in all DEC campgrounds, patrons will be required to follow all applicable rules and regulations when it comes to noise, garbage and waste.

Public comments regarding Boater's/Price's Beach (continued private access and camper impacts)

Dept Response Summary

- Seasonal and non-seasonal use of the facility does and will continue to follow the same regulations as other campgrounds and day-use areas classified as intensive use. No regulations will be changed by this UMP or its management actions.
- Facility users would be required to be a registered camper or pay the day-use fee for use of areas above the mean high-water mark.
- If patrons of the Day-use area or future campground facility wish to utilize areas below the mean high-water mark, they have the same rights to do so as any other member of the public. These areas are not within this UMP scope.
- The Department has the right to manage to the shoreline for the health and safety of all users.

Thank You

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APSLMP Conformance Opportunity for Comment

AGENCY CONTACT FOR INFORMATION OR WRITTEN COMMENTS:

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The Agency will be accepting Public Comment until March 19, 2021
The Proposed Final UMP Amendment is available at the Agency website:
www.apa.ny.gov

Email: SLMP_Comments@apa.ny.gov



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