



**Olympic Regional  
Development Authority**

# APA Presentation:

*Proposed 2021 Amendment of the  
Whiteface Mountain Unit Management Plan*

March 10, 2022

# Today's Presenters

## **New York State Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA)**

Mike Pratt, President/CEO

Michelle Crew, General Counsel

Emma Lamy, Sustainability and Environmental Compliance Officer

Aaron Kellett, General Manager, Whiteface Mountain





# Four Season Outdoor Recreation at Whiteface Mountain



# State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA)

Action	Date
Presentation #1 to APA	10/14/2022
Published to Environmental Notice Bulletin	10/27/2022
Welcomed Public Comments for 42 Days	Comments Accepted Through 12/8/2022





# Summit Steward Program and Environmental Education



June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Annual Summit Steward Training  
on summit of Whiteface Mountain



Interpretive Signage at  
Whiteface Summit

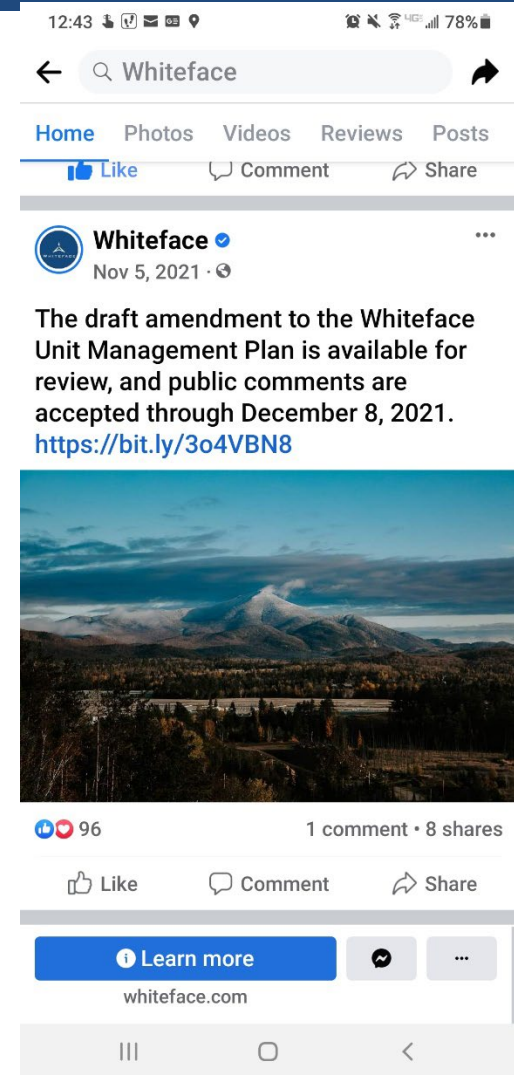
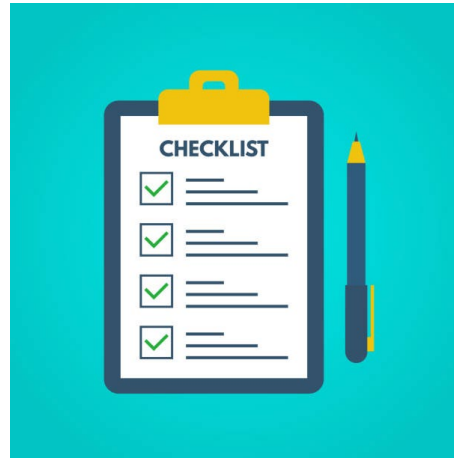


# State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA)

ORDA distributed a press release and used websites and social media to further messaging and public outreach about the Amendment plans.

ORDA assured participation from interested parties by engaging through email outreach regarding the UMPA and the SEQRA timeline, as well as held personal discussions with stakeholders.

ORDA provided three (3) physical copies of the UMPA for public review at the Olympic Center, Whiteface Mountain, and the Town of Wilmington Town Hall.



# Summary of Proposed Management Actions

## Race Trail Widening

Facilitate a growing number of national and international events, and athlete training

Meeting International Ski Federation (FIS) standards for certification on two trails

Improved separation of racers from recreational enthusiasts, so both groups have a better experience





# Summary of Proposed Management Actions

## Widening of Existing Trails and 3 New Connector Downhill Trails

Keeps lower-level skiers in areas more appropriate to their ability



Wider trails facilitate improved traffic flows, snowmaking, and grooming





# Summary of Proposed Management Actions

## Lift from Bear Den to Legacy Lodge

Enhances Learning Experience

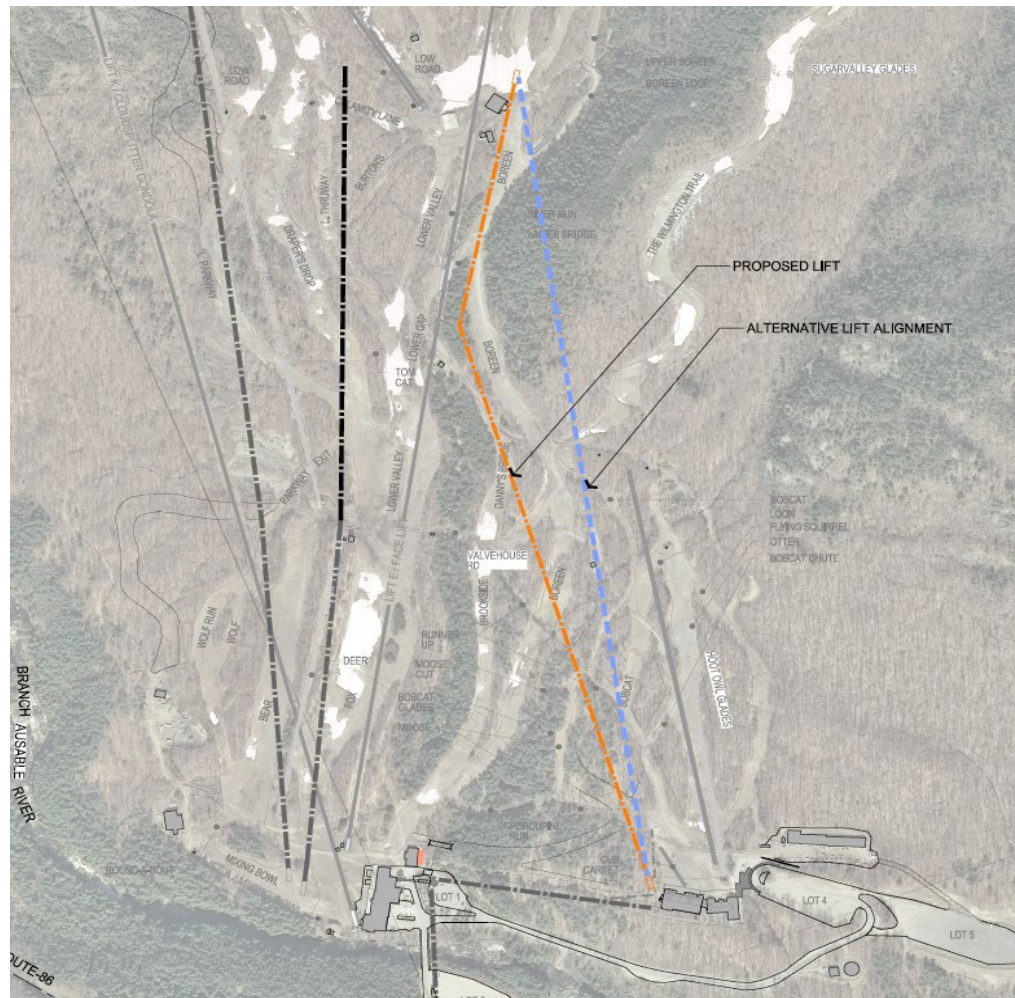
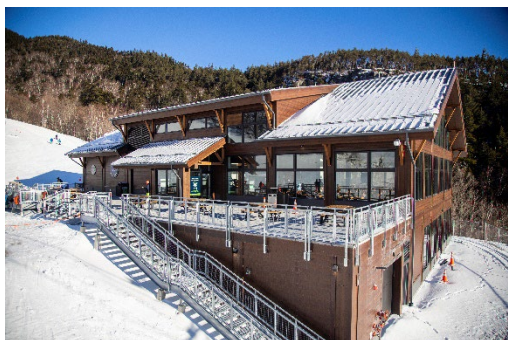
Increases Operational Reliability

Management Action Minimizes Tree Cutting Through Chosen Alignment

Improves Skier Distribution by Ability Level

Increased Utilization of Bear Den and Legacy Lodges

Allows for Base Area lift to terminate at the Legacy Lodge Area



# Hiking and Mountain Biking

Developed 5-Phase Implementation Plan to establish a sustainable trail system at Whiteface Mountain Intensive Use Area (IUA) that:

- Expands and improves the existing hiking and mountain biking trails in the IUA;
- Fosters interconnections with regional trail networks such as Wilmington Wild Forest and Flume Trails;
- Utilizes existing infrastructure, and;
- Provides a frontcountry solution to the growing issues in the backcountry





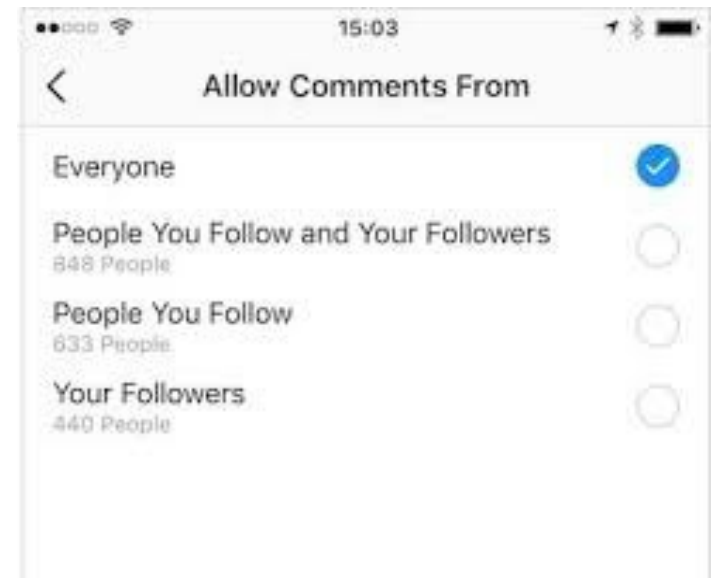
# Public Comments

Total Comments Received: 49

42 Electronic Submissions and 7 Letters

42-Day Public Comment Period

Topics: Operations, Uphill Program,  
Bicknell's Thrush, Compliance with Article  
XIV, Tree Cutting, and Hiking and  
Mountain Biking





# Public Comments: Operations

Comment Topic	Item
Lifts	Approved Freeway Lift Extension and Replacement
Camping	Car-Camping in Parking Lots
Snowmaking	Increase Potential
Blasting	Impacts to Wildlife and Audible Impacts to Surrounding Communities
Erosion and Sediment Control	Impacts to the West Branch Ausable River
Implementation	Phasing & Timeline

# Public Comments: Uphill Program

Uphill Program	Item
Existing Uphill Program operates in the early morning hours before downhill operations begin.	Comments expressed the desire for an expanded uphill program with more accommodations for uphill skiers.

ORDA promotes multi-use occupancy, but uphill skiing goes against the flow of alpine skiing which can result in conflicts between both skiers and operational grooming equipment.



# Public Comments: Bicknell's Thrush

Letter of Support from Northern  
New York Audubon

Reiteration in 2021 UMPA of  
Mitigation measures  
implemented defined in the 2006  
UMPA

Restricted cutting above 2,800  
feet from May 15- August 1  
(Breeding Season)





# Public Comments: Letters of Support



NEW YORK SKI EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION



# Public Comments: Article XIV Compliance

## 2021 Trail and Glade Mileage Summary

<i>Summary of Totals</i>	<i>(In Miles)</i>
Total Existing Trails	19.95
Total Approved/Not Constructed Trails	2.79
<b><i>Total Existing and Approved Trails</i></b>	<b>22.74</b>
Total Proposed Trails	0.25
Total Previously Approved, No Longer Proposed Trails	-0.32
<b><i>Total Existing/Approved and Proposed Trails</i></b>	<b>22.67</b>
Constitutional Trail Mileage Limit	25.00
<b><i>Total Allowable Trail Mileage Remaining</i></b>	<b>2.33</b>
Total Existing/Approved and Proposed Trails	22.67
Total Existing Glades	2.14
<b><i>Total Existing/Approved and Proposed Trails and Glades</i></b>	<b>24.81</b>
Conceptual Trails and Glades from Previous UMP's	1.14

# Public Comments: Tree Cutting

Tree Cutting for Alpine Ski Trails and FIS Homologation Standards

Tree Cutting in Bicknell's Thrush territory (above 2,800 feet)

Tree Cutting for Hiking and Mountain Biking Trails





# New York State Constitution Article 14 § 1

Article 14 has been amended twice to authorize the construction and operation of ski trails on Whiteface Mountain, and the appurtenances necessary to operate a ski area.



Constitutional Limit on Ski Trail Width and Mileage:

- 25 miles, 30'-200' wide
- 5 miles, > 120' wide

Total Existing, and Currently Approved Not Yet Constructed Trails: **22.74 miles**



# Summary of Proposed Management Actions

## Ski Trails

- Construct 3 new downhill trails – adds .25 miles of trail length
- Abandon 2 previously approved trails – reduces trail mileage by .32 miles
- Widen 8 existing trails
  - Previous total length of trails up to 200' wide – 1.75 miles
  - New length – 2.33 miles
- No impact to glades mileage reflected in 2018 UMPA



## Hiking Trails

- Improve approximately 5 miles of existing hiking trails
- Construct approximately 4 miles of new hiking trails

## Mountain Biking Trails

- Improve approximately 10 miles of existing mountain biking trails - 4 miles on existing ski trails
- Construct approximately 9 miles of new of mountain biking trails
  - Singletrack; Easier (6 miles), More Difficult (10 miles), Most Difficult (3 miles)



# Article 14 & Proposed Management Actions

The majority of proposed tree cutting is for Constitutionally-authorized construction and improvement of alpine ski trails

Utilizing mountain infrastructure to access the mountain –for sightseeing, hiking, or mountain biking – is not prohibited by Article 14

Consistent with DEC “pause”, tree cutting for hiking or biking trails will not occur until after DEC has issued a revised tree cutting policy and any other applicable trail construction policies, and each proposed trail is sited, designed, and approved through the DEC Work Plan process





# Final Proposed UMPA: New Management Actions Based on Public Comment Responses

## Timing/Finish Building Restrooms

Pre-fabricated restroom building adjacent to the timing building to replace existing outhouse.

Two toilets served by non-potable water and on-site wastewater treatment



# Final Proposed UMPA: New Management Actions Based On Public Comment Responses

## Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS)

Encourage electric vehicle owners to enjoy Whiteface Mountain with the installation of charging stations.

Three EVCS installed at the Bear Den Mountain Trailhead Parking Lot

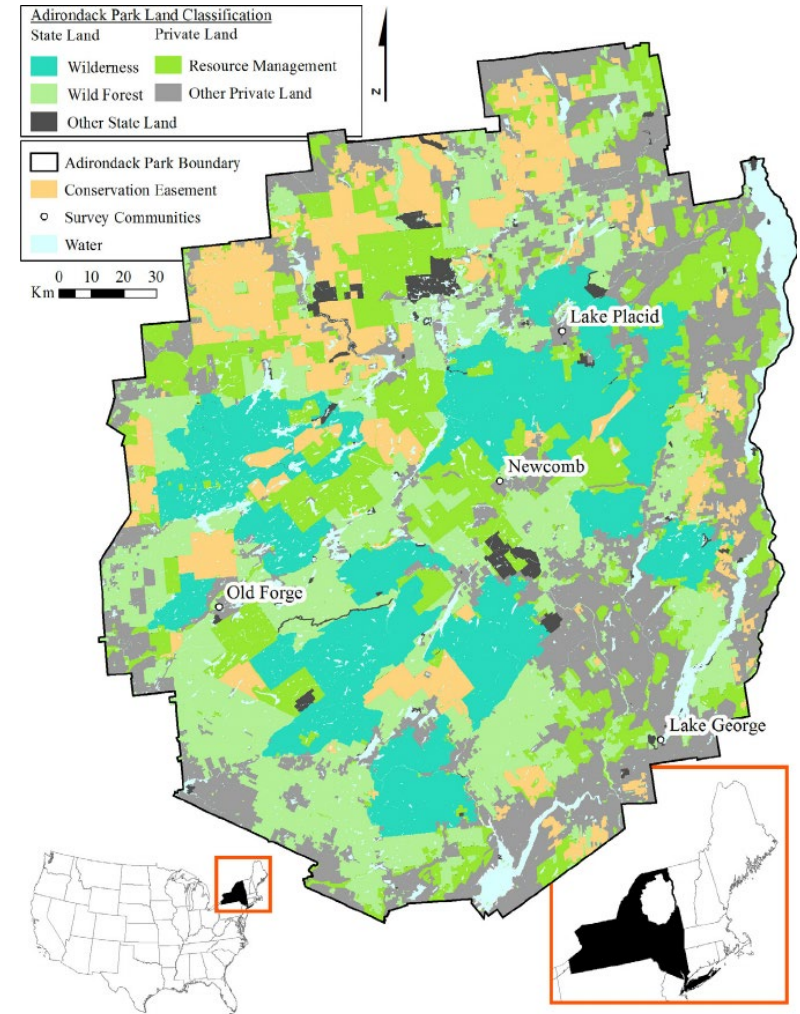
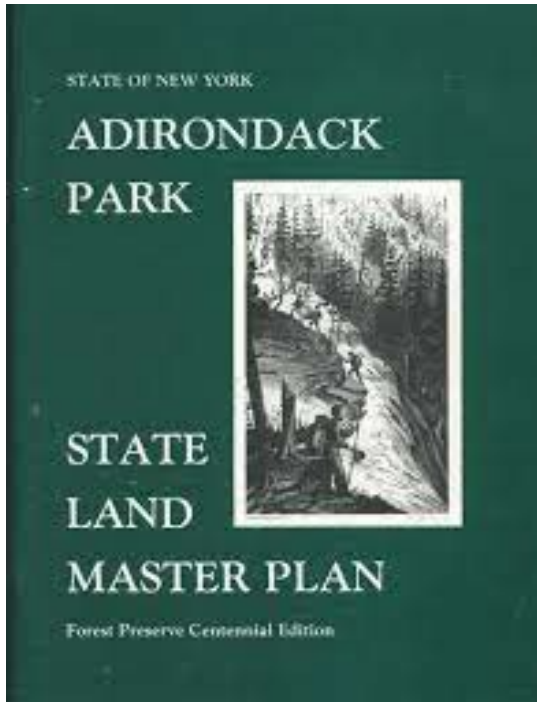




# SEQRA UMPA: Next Steps

Conformance with Adirondack State Land Master Plan (SLMP) & opening of APA Public Comment Period (30 days)

The Agency will be accepting public comments on SLMP conformance of the UMP amendment from March 11<sup>th</sup> to April 11<sup>th</sup>







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