



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

DEBAR LODGE DAY USE AREA

Draft Unit Management Plan

NYS DEC, REGION 5, DIVISION OF LANDS AND FORESTS

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Debar Lodge, south side

Purpose

The Department proposes to establish a new intensive use area, the Debar Lodge Day Use Area (DLDDUA), consisting of Forest Preserve lands within the Debar Mountain Wild Forest (DMWF) at Debar Pond. The purpose of establishing this intensive use area is to recognize the importance of this location from a historic and community perspective and to serve as a hub for recreational access to proposed facilities in the DMWF.

Historic Background

Situated on the northern shoreline of Debar Pond, the Debar Lodge complex occupies an area which has seen a broad spectrum of private infrastructure development that has culminated with the structures and improvements that are present today.

Debar Pond was first visited by its namesake, John DeBar, during a fishing trip in 1817, Debar Pond is approximately 1 mile long by ½ mile wide with its southern skyline framed by the peaks of Baldface, Debar, and Loon Lake Mountains.

The moment that defined the future development of the lands around Debar Pond

came in 1880 with a visit by Robert Schroeder, the son of a wealthy German brewer. Charged by his father with visiting the region to acquire hops for the family brewery, Schroeder took a fishing trip to Debar Pond with local business associate Patrick Cook. According to local legend, Schroeder was so taken with the pond and the surrounding country that he struck a deal to purchase the parcel on the spot, closing the deal before the sun set that day. Considered by many as an eccentric with a flair for an extravagant lifestyle, Schroeder wasted no time in planning and erecting an opulent estate near the site of the present day Debar Lodge. Using laborers transported from New York City and sparing no expense on materials and amenities, Schroeder's "cottage" on Debar Pond was complete by the end of the year. With his new estate complete, Schroeder took residence and immediately began to impart his own personal style on the home. Widely known for its extravagant night long parties, Schroeder's estate at Debar hosted a variety of well to do guests until its destruction by fire in 1882. Undeterred by the destruction of the estate, Schroeder almost immediately went forward with plans to replace the former structure with what has become known today as "The Castle." Significantly larger than its predecessor, the Castle was a marvel of modern engineering at the time, boasting a wood frame structure to house guests and an abutted stone structure as Schroeder's quarters. Separating the two sections of the 60-room structure was a 30-foot firewall which was ten feet thick at its base and three feet thick at the top. In concert with the construction of the Castle, Schroeder also arranged the purchase of approximately 2,100 acres in the immediate area of the Debar complex, 300 of which was planted in hops- making the property the largest hop plantation in the world at the time. While the estate prospered for a short period, by the turn of the century, Schroeder's lavish lifestyle and poor business acumen had brought him to the brink of financial ruin. By 1910, Schroeder had the estate liquidated, selling his beloved horses and the Castle's expensive furniture at auction. Devastated by the suicide of his wife that year, Schroeder lived out his remaining days in very modest accommodations relative to his former station, eventually taking his own life three years later.

By 1918, the abandoned Castle and associated lands were acquired by Malone businessmen Herbert Reynolds and Clarence Briggs for the purpose of establishing a clubhouse or sanitarium. Despite their original plans, little was done with the dilapidated complex until the 1920's when Briggs and Reynolds aligned with Howard Taylor of Malone and set about constructing a silver fox farm on the property. Highly valued for their furs, the farming of these animals was very popular at that time and presented the investors with a very lucrative business.

Briggs, Reynolds and Taylor continued using the property throughout the twenties, opting to sell in 1939 to Arthur Wheeler of Palm Beach, Florida. When Wheeler assumed ownership, the Castle had been long neglected. With most of the mansion

looted or vandalized, Wheeler employed local contractor Henry Wood in the demolition of the structure. Following the completion of the Castle's demolition, Wheeler contracted with Wood to construct a new estate house, approximately 20 yards from the former location of the Castle. The lodge was completed in 1940. This eighteen-room, two-story lodge is a wood frame structure constructed in the Adirondack "rustic style" and is sided with quarter sawn cedar log siding. The lodge structure includes ten bedrooms, six and a half bathrooms, a dining room, kitchen, two offices, two screened porches, a den, a jacuzzi room, a playroom, and a great room with a two-story cathedral ceiling and ceiling high stone fireplace. Wheeler oversaw the construction of several other buildings on the site, including: a boathouse, guide house / garage, barn, large shed / generator house, greenhouse, a small shed, and a chicken coop.

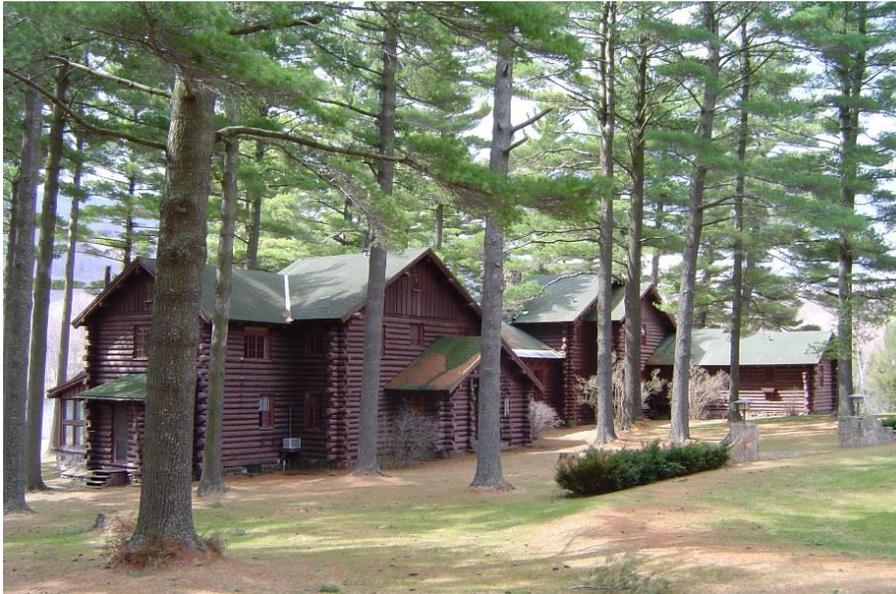
Wheeler sold the property to Farwell Perry in 1959. Perry, a World War II fighter pilot, brought the modern age to Debar Pond, often traveling to and from the lodge in a seaplane which he landed either on the pond, or on the landing strip which he had constructed east of the present-day lodge. Perry retained the property until 1979, when he sold the lodge complex property and more than 1,300 adjacent acres to the State of New York. Perry's former holdings were made part of the Debar Mountain Wild Forest. A stipulation of the sale was that 25 acres encompassing Debar Lodge was retained exclusively for private use until August 4, 2004. At the time of the acquisition, DEC staff stated their intent to demolish the remaining structures following the expiration of the exclusive use reservation.

In order to improve public access during the interim period between the time of purchase and the expiration of the reservation, DEC developed a parking area and public fishing access trail to Debar Pond in 1984. This parking area is located immediately north of the lodge complex. Opening of the canoe carry provided public recreational opportunities on and around this productive trout fishery which had been in private hands for over 100 years. When the exclusive use reservation expired in 2004, the DEC assumed administrative responsibility for the 25 developed acres and attendant structures. Public access through the compound to Debar Pond was allowed. The canoe carry thus fell into disuse and was reclaimed by nature.

The relative ease of access to Debar Pond and the adjoining Forest Preserve lands led to a noticeable increase in public interest in, and use of, the parcel beginning in the late 1980s. Public access to a pristine Adirondack brook trout pond surrounded by wild forest lands, when combined with the glamour and mystique of Debar Lodge left an impression on thousands of outdoor recreationists, particularly residents of the local area. Beginning as early as the late 1990s, north country residents began to draw attention to the approaching termination of the use reservation and the subsequent planned demolition of the structures by DEC. By the early fall of 2002, residents and

members of town government from Duane began an effort to convince DEC to delay the demolition of the structures and give further scrutiny to the historical and cultural resources of the complex. A resource evaluation of the structures comprising the Debar Lodge Complex was conducted by staff from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). As a result of the resource evaluation, OPRHP staff determined that the building complex was “*associated with events that have made significant contributions to the broad patterns of our history.*” In 2014, the Debar Lodge complex was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It was determined that the lodge is architecturally and historically significant at a local level of significance. In light of the support of local residents and government, along with the positive determination of historical significance by OPRHP, regional and central office DEC staff elected to postpone demolition of the structures in order to receive further public comments and consider alternative uses for the structures.

Present Conditions



Debar Lodge, north side

The buildings of the Debar Lodge complex have changed little since the 1979 acquisition. In addition to the lodge, five other structures from the Wheeler era remain standing in the complex, all in varying states of repair. A horse barn located northeast of the lodge, and a woodshed/storage building located at the entrance to the complex, were constructed by the lessee during his term on the property. No standing structures from the Schroeder tenancy on the property remain. The remnants of a carriage road system are obvious on some of the lands around Debar Lodge. The air strip built by

Parry is going through forest succession, with many white pine saplings growing on the site. For almost a decade after the State took over the complex, the lodge was used as official housing for a DEC staff member. This facilitated the maintenance of the buildings and the grounds. The lodge has now been vacant over the last several years, with more vandalism occurring to the structures.

Table: Structures at the Debar Lodge complex

Building	Approximate size (square feet)
Debar Lodge Main Building	3264
Boat House	240
Greenhouse	512
Horse Barn	1340
Garage	320
Woodshed w/ attached storage	1426
Chicken Coop	288
Caretaker’s Cottage	864
Impoundment/Dam	~150 feet long

Public Use

Debar Lodge is located at the end of a one mile long, single lane, dirt access road. The access road is off County Route 26 and is a short drive from New York Route 30. Debar Pond is in a portion of the Adirondack Park that generally receives lower levels of visitor use than other areas. Debar Pond offers the rare combination of easy accessibility from a public highway and a remote wild character. visitors and the local community cherish it for those traits.

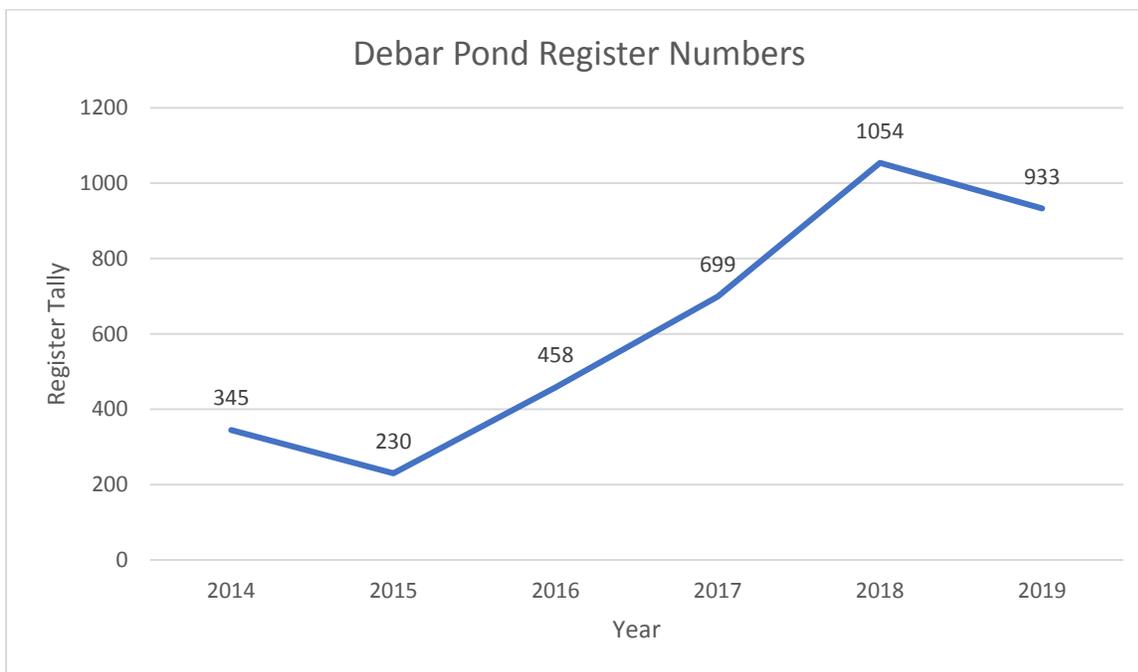
Types of public use known to occur at the proposed DLDUA and on the adjoining wild forest lands include fishing, camping, walking, canoeing / kayaking, picnicking, swimming, wildlife viewing, sightseeing, and hunting. Observations indicate that the number of visitors is greater than indicated by the register tallies. In 2019, there were 933 visitors recorded in the register sheets. Many of the visitors are residents of the

Appendix H – Debar Lodge Day Use Area Draft Unit Management Plan

surrounding towns and with a significant number coming from further away, such places as Plattsburgh, Potsdam, and Saranac Lake.

Debar Pond boasts an outstanding cold-water fishery which supports the reproduction of native brook trout as well as the annual stocking of other desirable sport fish such as splake and landlocked Atlantic salmon. Fishing is largely done from small boats carried to the pond. The distance from the parking area to the pond limits access to those boats that are easily carried. At the present time no size or type regulations govern motorized use of Debar Pond. Regulations prohibiting the use of baitfish by anglers are currently in place to protect the long-term health and viability of native species populations present in the pond today.

Public use at Debar Pond has significantly increased over the years. This increase coincides with Debar Lodge ceasing to be used as a residence. It is expected that use levels will continue to increase as knowledge of this as a scenic destination continues to spread.



Capacity to Withstand Use

Public use has had minimal impacts on natural resources at Debar Pond, however, there are obvious signs of public use. The most noticeable impacts are where people are accessing the pond next to the boathouse. Here there has been some minor impacts to shoreline vegetation and soils. The lodge complex, due to its developed

nature, offers a hardened site that could sustain types of public use and levels of usage that would not usually be associated with a wild forest classification. However, the opening of the Debar Lodge complex to new public use and/or higher levels of public use will still have the potential to impact the natural resources of the DLDUA, the surrounding lands, and Debar Pond's fishery. Management actions must be designed to address health and safety concerns, resource protection issues, and provide appropriate levels of public access. Proposed changes in the levels and type of access need to consider the potential to cause detrimental effect on the fishery. Wildlands monitoring will be critical at the DLDUA and on the surrounding Wild Forest lands.

Condition Monitoring

Monitoring of the impacts associated with the DLDUA will need to occur within the developed area and on the surrounding wild forest lands, particularly around Debar Pond. The variables to be monitored within the DLDUA could include: occurrences of trash, invasive species, parking outside the designated area, and traffic congestion; condition of restrooms, picnic tables, pavilions, fireplaces, and the water access site; tracking of vegetation loss, impacted area changes, and live tree damage; and visitors' experience. The variables to be monitored on the surrounding area include level of noise heard, visual impacts, perceptions of crowding, and the overall condition of Debar Pond, including the health of the fishery. Photo points, condition reports, and visitor surveys will be useful tools to help illustrate potential changes over time.

Proposed Management

This proposal is for the creation of the DLDUA to serve as: a hub for recreation access to adjacent lands, a connection to the history of the site, and a recreation destination for the community. The intent is to strike a balance by honoring the history of the site and retaining the natural character of the site while replacing the buildings with a picnic area which will incorporate elements of the main lodge.

The Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP) requires proposals for the creation of new intensive use areas to be accompanied by a draft unit management plan which illustrates how the area will be managed. Most intensive use areas are managed as a unit entirely separate from the surrounding land unit, and therefore individual management plans are prepared for campgrounds and day use areas. This is partly due to these areas being managed by the Department's Division of Operations, while the surrounding forest preserve lands are managed by the Division of Lands and Forests. This proposed intensive use area, unlike many others, will remain under the management of the Division of Lands and Forests. The closely related management goals and objectives for resource protection and recreational use

of both units, along with the common physical and biological resources make managing the two areas collectively a more appropriate approach than separating them. The DMWFC Draft UMP contains all the information on the area regarding inventories, use, capacity to withstand use, management and policy as well as proposed management actions.

Management Actions

- Debar Lodge and the other buildings at the complex will be removed.
- Day use facilities will be built at the lodge complex site. These facilities will include up to two picnic pavilions, picnic tables, benches, grills, fireplaces, restrooms, parking area, and a water access site. If feasible, to retain a sense of the historical character of area, the fireplace from the lodge will be retained near the pavilion. The facilities will be built to accommodate persons with disabilities. Accessible recreational routes will be built to connect all these facilities. The construction of the facilities will be built in phases to allow for monitoring of public use levels and impacts. The progression of phases will be dependent upon successful management of these use levels and impacts. Phase 1 will include the construction of one pavilion; water access; accessible routes; restroom; parking to half capacity; and half the total picnic tables, benches, and grills. Phase 2 would see the build out of the remaining structures.
- Desired conditions for the DLDUA will include firm and stable surfaces in the developed areas, parking only occurring within the designed footprint of the parking area, maintained and clean restrooms, grounds free of litter, picnic tables and grill clean and serviceable, interpretive signage is readable, invasive species not present, landscaping being maintained, disturbances at the shoreline not expanding, and only minimal detracting from the experience of visitors to the surrounding wild forest.
- The access road will be improved and widened to handle more vehicle traffic.
- Interpretive displays with information about the history of the Debar Lodge site will be installed. See site design maps at the end of this plan.
- Protection of the mature trees in the DLDUA will be a priority. Grassy areas around the picnic area will continue to be mowed. White pine trees will be planted to help the area maintain its wooded character into the future. Areas of the DLDUA not being actively used will be allowed to grow naturally.
- Protect and manage the shoreline vegetation in the DLDUA. Water access points will be designated and designed to channel public use to a few locations so that most of the shoreline will not be trampled by public use.
- Develop a landscape inventory and management plan. This plan will address tree protection during and after construction, invasive species control, shoreline

protection, the areas adjacent to the development, and landscape maintenance. The goal will be to promote desirable vegetation and control undesirable species.

- Proposed recreation facilities in the DMWF that could be accessed from the DLDUA could include two lean-tos and one primitive tent site on Debar Pond, 3 miles of trails on old carriage roads, a 3-mile loop trail around Debar Pond, a trail connection to Debar Meadows, and a trail to Baldface Mountain. The construction of these facilities will be done in phases to allow for an assessment of use levels and impacts before proceeding to the next phase. The lean-tos and primitive tent site to be built on the shore of Debar Pond will each be built in separate phases. See the Proposed Facilities Map at the end of Section III of the Debar Complex UMP.
- The design layout, landscaping, and use of phasing should mitigate some of the impacts from the DLDUA onto the surrounding wild forest area. If the wild forest character of the surrounding lands is compromised to an unacceptable level from the development of the DLDUA additional mitigation measures may be taken including increasing vegetation screening, limiting use numbers, and removal of some facilities.
- A regulation will be adopted that will prohibit the use of motorboats on Debar Pond, except for those using electric motors.

Location and boundaries

The proposed DLDUA will be the area around the Debar Lodge compound. This area will include the access road, the powerline, and the dam. This will cover about 41 acres. The boundary of the area to be reclassified will be 50 feet beyond the western edge of the dam, the eastern edge of the wetlands along Debar Brook, 100 feet on either side of the access road, the eastern edge of the powerline, and follow the fence line that marked the northern and eastern boundaries of the former leased area. This area will encompass the southern portion of the old airstrip. Lands within the intensive use area not being used for the purposes of the day use area will be managed similarly to the adjacent wild forest area.

Projected Use

The proposals to build a picnic area and to provide easier access to Debar Pond will certainly lead to an increase in use, but it is difficult to predict how large the increase will be. Anecdotal information indicates that the types of visitors who are likely to visit are: those interested in picnicking at a scenic location, those who want easy access to a remote pond, people looking for easy hikes, and anglers. The nearest population center is the Village of Malone (population: 5,900), it is about a 30-minute drive from

the DLDUA. The combined population of the towns of Duane and Malone is 14,719. State highways in the area mean that Plattsburgh, Potsdam, Massena, Saranac Lake, and Canada are within about an hour drive of the DLDUA.

Administration

The Division of Lands and Forests will have overall management responsibility for the DLDUA. As with all Department lands, Forest Rangers will be responsible for regular patrols of the area. The Division of Operations will be responsible for maintenance and upkeep work. Visitors will be expected to clean up after themselves. It may be necessary for the Department to hire staff specifically to manage the DLDUA. The Department may enter into a Volunteer Stewardship Agreement or a Temporary Revocable Permit with a local organization to help with the oversight and management of the area. This assistance would be particularly important given the distance of the DLDUA from other Department facilities. The Department will need to monitor use levels and impacts from use. If impacts become an issue the Department could institute a variety of controls. Examples of the controls that could be used include: only allowing persons with disabilities to park near the picnic area and moving the public parking area farther away from the picnic area, requiring reservations for the use of a picnic pavilion, charging a fee, increasing the presence of management staff, limiting hours of access, and limiting the number of people who could enter. The Division of Operations may assume more responsibility for management of the site if some of these controls are enacted.

Recreational Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities

The infrastructure and site hardening which accompanied the development and maintenance of the site makes the lodge complex a location which lends itself well to the development of recreational facilities using accessible design criteria. As much as practical, facilities in the DLDUA will be designed to meet standards for use by persons with disabilities. Accessible parking will be provided near the picnic area, even if the general public parking is relocated further away to address overuse concerns.

Environmental Impacts of Proposal

As required by the State Environmental Quality Review Act, a Full Environmental Assessment Form was completed for the proposed actions involving the DLDUA. The assessment indicates that the greatest impact will be on historic resources. This will be a large impact because the preferred alternative will remove Debar Lodge and the all the accessory buildings. Actions to mitigate the impacts from the buildings' removal will be agreed to by OPRHP, APA, and the Department. Other environmental resources may see a small impact or are unlikely to be impacted. The construction of the

proposed facilities will result in a change to the land, but given that the area is already developed, this will be a small impact. There is a possibility for a small impact on surface water from sediment entering Debar Pond from the construction of the facilities, but by following best management practices this impact can be avoided or mitigated. Most of the recreational facilities will be set back from the pond to reduce possible impacts from public use. The use of the water access site and the shoreline along the pond will need to be monitored for potential impacts. There will be impacts on plants and animals as human presence on the site increases. Animal species which generally avoid human activity will probably decrease in the area. If food waste is not properly disposed of, then certain animal species may frequent the area, with the potential for conflicts with humans. Shoreline vegetation in front of the picnic area could be at risk from the proposal. A small amount of this vegetation may need to be removed for construction of designated water access. Shoreline vegetation may also be damaged from trampling by people accessing the pond at unimproved locations. Barriers could be installed to steer people away from accessing the pond where access is not intended. Fires and the gathering of firewood will cause additional impacts to plants and animals. These impacts may be mitigated by installing an appropriate number of picnic grills and by making firewood available for purchase. There will be minor noise impacts during the construction of the facilities and when the facilities are being used by the public.

Social Impacts from Proposal

There will be social impacts from the proposal, but these are likely to be minor. The increase of use may cause those who are looking for solitude, to change the timing of a visit or visit the area with changed expectations. Different groups using the picnic area at the same time may impact the each other's experience. The picnic area will be set away from the shore of the pond, but it will be partially visible from the pond. It is also possible that social impacts will extend across the pond if those picnicking become too boisterous.

Economic Impacts from Proposal

The proposed actions for the DLDUA will require the expenditure of State funds to implement and there will be a requirement for ongoing expenditures for the upkeep and maintenance of the facilities. The Department may implement a fee system to defray some of the operating expenses. There is a possibility for some positive economic impacts in the surrounding community in the form of monies spent by visitors.

Description of Site Plans

The drawn plans of the proposal show the potential full buildout of the DLDUA, which will be built in phases based on the Department's ability to properly manage the facility. The proposal shows two picnic pavilions, a lean-to (for day-use purposes only), nine picnic tables, seven grilling fireplaces, and three fire pits. Accessible surfaces connect these features and accessible routes head to the waterfront area. To the greatest extent practicable, for the purpose of retaining the historical sense of place, the main pavilion will outline the footprint of the Debar Lodge and will also incorporate elements of the main lodge, including salvaging the main trusses of the lodge and retention of the main fireplace which will be incorporated into the design. Additionally, this design demonstrates how much of the proposed development of the DLDUA will occur within the footprint of the existing building (see maps at the end of this plan).

The current overhead electric service line to the site is shown being relocated to the roadway and buried. Solar panels could be installed to supplement the primary power source and there is the potential for the DLDUA to be operated using only on-site generated solar power. The solar arrays depicted on the design can be scaled up as needed. If there is a requirement for significant power usage during the winter months, then solar power alone is not likely to meet that demand.

Potable water will be supplied by a new well and pump house. The water will probably need to be chlorinated to meet Department of Health requirements. The drawings show two comfort stations (restrooms) each with four individual stalls. One comfort station will be located near the main parking area, the other will be located near the picnic pavilions. Wastewater will be routed to two inline septic tanks and a leach field.

The access road will be improved to handle two-way traffic. There will be parking for 40 vehicles and three buses at the primary public parking area. There will also be six parking spaces for persons with disabilities located near the picnic pavilions. The current parking area will be improved and may serve as a parking for trail users. A vehicle access lane is shown to provide a loading and unloading location near Debar Pond for those who would have difficulty carrying their boat to the pond from the parking area.

Alternatives

The New York State Historic Preservation Act (SHPA - PRHPL Article 14) defines adverse impacts to include but are not limited to (a) destruction or alteration of all or part of a property; (b) isolation or alteration of its surrounding environment; (c) introduction of visual, audible, or atmospheric elements that are out of character with the property or alter its setting; or (d) neglect of property resulting in its deterioration or

destruction. SHPA requires that state agencies fully explore all feasible and prudent alternatives and give due consideration to feasible and prudent plans which avoid or mitigate adverse impacts on properties listed in or found eligible for listing in the State or National Registers of Historic Places.

Historic resources are also defined as being part of the environment in SEQRA. Consideration of impacts to historic properties is required in the evaluation of impacts required by SEQRA. In addition to the consideration of measures to avoid or mitigate impacts, SEQRA also requires that the “no action” alternative be considered. In addition to compliance with SEQRA and SHPA the Department’s management and actions on forest preserve lands must be consistent with the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan and other state laws providing for the management of state lands under DEC jurisdiction.

Over the past seventeen years the Department undertook consideration and evaluation of a broad range of alternatives to address the buildings of the Debar Lodge complex. Public comments pertaining to Debar Lodge were received during the development of the Debar Mountain Complex UMP, which included public meetings held in 2003 and 2017. The process of considering alternatives included meetings with groups who had an interest in the property. Several of these groups provided proposals for the use of the property. In evaluating the alternatives, the Department took into consideration applicable laws and policies, the impact to natural and historic resources, the public benefit, and the resources required to implement.

The following discussion of alternatives is organized by the what the site would be reclassified as. For any of the alternatives that call for the removal of Debar Lodge the Department would consider the divestiture of state interest in the buildings through the surplus process to allow the relocation of the buildings to lands not owned by the State of New York. The size and scale of the principal buildings on the site would necessitate that they be substantially dismantled in order to permit their removal and relocation. Actions undertaken to relocate the buildings would need to be conducted in a way that avoids significant physical impacts to the site, including tree removal. If the Debar Lodge is moved to a new location it may no longer be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

- **Reclassification to Intensive Use**

- Alternative IU1 (preferred alternate) - Removal of the structures followed by the creation of a day use area as described in the UMP.
- Alternative IU2 - Removal of the structures followed by the subsequent

construction of a Public Campground, to be administered by DEC, within the developed area of the Debar Lodge complex. The Division of Operations, Bureau of Recreation was asked to consider the possibility of developing a campground on the site. A key consideration in evaluating the need for such a facility is whether occupancy of nearby campgrounds justifies the creation of additional campsites. Two nearby DEC campgrounds, Meacham Lake (223 sites) and Buck Pond (116 sites) are rarely, if ever at full occupancy. In addition, the Fish Creek Ponds (355 sites) Rollins Pond (287 sites) are also not far away. Based on this information it was concluded that additional campground campsites are not justified.

- **Reclassification to Historic**

- Alternative H1- Retention of the structures on the land they currently occupy as an Historic Area as defined in the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan for the use and benefit of the public. There are currently five areas classified as Historic under the APSLMP. These are Crown Point, John Brown's Farm and Grave, Camp Santanoni, the Hurricane Mountain Fire Tower, and the St. Regis Mountain Fire Tower. Like the Debar Lodge complex, all of these properties are listed in the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The first three properties are also designated by the Secretary of the Interior as National Historic Landmarks (NHL). The Hurricane and St. Regis Mountain Fire Towers, while not NHLs are situated in, and historically connected to, the Adirondack Forest Preserve, which is an NHL. National Historic Landmark designation is made pursuant to the National Historic Sites Act of 1935 and are required to be of national significance. This is by definition intended to be a relatively select list of properties. The National Register of Historic Places was created by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The New York State Register of Historic Places was created by the New York State Historic Preservation Act of 1980. The criteria for entry into both lists are identical. Both registers are intended to be expansive listings of resources that illustrate the depth and breadth of the history of National or State history. Resources are listed in either, or both registers, as possessing national, state, or local significance. The National Register of Historic Places documentation form for the Debar Lodge complex indicates that it is of local significance, which is a lower level of significance than if it had been listed as representing state or national significance. While the APSLMP makes no distinction among the levels of significance, it is notable that all of the areas classified

as Historic are of national significance. The Department believes that it would be difficult to justify an Historic classification for a property that is not of state or national significance.

- Alternative H2 - Retention of all or some of the structures in a mothballed but unutilized state. While listed as a reclassification to a historic area, this alternative could be considered with other reclassifications. Mothballed structures require regular monitoring and a commitment to a regular maintenance regimen. Mothballing an historic building involves a series of steps. Including documentation, stabilization and securing a structure against the elements, vandalism and deterioration (Park, 1993). Weathertightness, ventilation and protection against broad swings in temperature and humidity also need to be addressed. This may necessitate the operation of the heating system at some minimal level (45 degrees is usually recommended) and the retention of electric service to facilitate humidity control. Climate control would likely be necessary for the Lodge and the Caretaker's Residence. Less extensive measures would be needed for the other (unheated) structures. The cost of mothballing the Debar Lodge Complex has not been calculated but would not be inconsiderable. Staff time and resources would need to be secured and allocated to undertake maintenance and repairs on an annual basis.
 - Year-round security for the buildings would likely be problematic and the building may become an attractive nuisance. DEC Campgrounds are seasonal facilities and are not staff year-round. Day use facilities are also seasonal. Vandalism or other damage would be significant risk for much of the year, especially if the site becomes popular with the public.
 - The Department has encountered similar situations before. Coykendall Lodge was a State and National Register listed property that became a part of the (Catskill) Forest Preserve Balsam Lake Mountain Wild Forest. The Department spent several years looking for a compatible use that would allow for preservation of the building. Meanwhile the building, located at a busy trailhead area was damaged by vandalism on a number of occasions.
- **Reclassification to Administrative**
 - Alternative A1- Retention of the building complex at its current location and converting the structures into an Eco-Tourism Educational Facility for the benefit of the Town of Duane. Discussions in this regard took place with

representatives of the Town of Duane from 2003 to 2005. The proposal that came forward from these discussions was for adaptive reuse of the building complex as a lodging and support facility for equestrian users of the forest preserve. This proposal required the participation of a commercial enterprise to redevelop and operate the facility. It would also require that the buildings meet building code and other legal requirements for public accommodation. As state law prohibits commercial use of state lands under the jurisdiction of DEC, and it is unlikely that such use would be consistent with the APSLMP it was not further considered.

- Alternative A2- Retention of the structures at their present location for the future use as offices of the Adirondack Lake Survey Corporation. The Adirondack Lake Survey Corporation is a public benefit corporation that monitors water quality in Adirondack region lakes, primarily for air pollutants. It is a small organization that works closely with the Department and is housed in the Department's Regional Headquarters in Ray Brook. This alternative was evaluated but will not be further considered. The scale and capacity of the Debar Lodge complex are well beyond the needs of the staff members of ALSC. Based on this and the cost of adapting and operating the 17-room lodge, the Department concluded that this alternative would not be a prudent use of resources.
- Alternative A3- Retention of the structures at their present location for their conversion to use as an Environmental Education Camp to be administered by DEC's Division of Operations, Bureau of Education. The Department's then Division of Public Affairs and Education was asked to consider this possibility. Education Camp development would require the rehabilitation and renovation of the buildings to meet the building code and other legal requirements associated with youth camps. The Bureau of Education concluded that an additional Education Camp was not needed and that they did not have the staff or budget to undertake such an operation. The Department already operates two Education camps in the Adirondack Park, Camp Colby in Saranac Lake and Pack Forest near Warrensburg.
- Alternative A4- Retention of the structures for their conversion to use as a natural resource training and conference facility for DEC staff from various divisions. The size and scale of the Debar Lodge complex would limit the value of this location. It might be suitable for a group of 10-12 individuals it would not be adequate as a venue for a Law Enforcement Academy for the

training of several dozen Forest Rangers and Environmental Conservation Officers. The use of the buildings for this purpose might also make public access to Debar Pond difficult or impossible. Given these limitations and the anticipated cost this alternative would not be prudent to pursue.

- Retention of the structures for their conversion to a training base, housing, and support facility for the Student Conservation Association. The SCA Adirondack program is currently based at the Whitney Wilderness Headquarters and occupies space in buildings formerly used to house logging crews. While the main lodge at Debar might be adaptable to such use the Whitney facility already meets that need. The Whitney facility is located in the central area of the Adirondacks, while Debar Lodge is near the northern border, which would result in longer travel times to many of the crews' project sites. Whitney also provides established facilities for vehicle and equipment maintenance, repair and storage as well as a Forest Ranger office. These facilities would need to be developed at Debar. As with any other possible administrative uses, public access to Debar Pond might also be affected.
- **No Reclassification Action (site remains wild forest)**
 - Alternative WF1 (UMP “no action” alternative) - Continuation of the current situation with the buildings receiving little or no maintenance. Since the buildings are primarily frame structures in an environment with large swings in temperature and humidity, over time they will continue to deteriorate. The buildings would also become an attractive nuisance and potentially pose a threat to members of the public making use of the site. The “no action” alternative would entail neglect of the property which would be an impact as defined in SHPA. The failure to remove some of these structures would also violate the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan.
 - Alternative WF2 - Removal of the structures followed by reclamation of the formerly occupied sites. This alternative would allow public access to the site, but it would not include the development of amenities which would enhance public access or preserve any sense of the historic use of the area.
 - Alternative WF3 - Retention of the structures for use as a Ranger Station. The Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan includes the following definition: Ranger Stations or Ranger Cabins --enclosed buildings

constructed or maintained by the Department of Environmental Conservation, suitable for human habitation and manned seasonally or year -round by administrative personnel to facilitate administrative control of lands and public use thereof under the jurisdiction of the Department.

The APSLMP also provides the following guideline pertaining to ranger stations in wild forest areas: “*Existing ranger stations may be retained and new ranger stations constructed, but only where absolutely essential for administration of the area, no feasible alternative exists, and no deterioration of the wild forest character or natural resource quality of the area will result*”. Retaining Debar Lodge would not cause a deterioration of the current wild forest character of the area. It would, however, be difficult to make the case that stationing personnel at Debar Lodge is absolutely essential for the administration of State lands in the area. Even if that case could be made, the Debar Lodge is excessively large for that purpose. The costs to maintain the structure would likely exceed any administrative benefit of using it as a base for personnel.

Appendix H – Debar Lodge Day Use Area Draft Unit Management Plan



PROJECT DESCRIPTION DEBAR MOUNTAIN DAY USE AREA UMP WATER ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS	REVISIONS NO. DATE DESCRIPTION BY			DESIGNED BY CHECKED BY DRAWN BY	 Department of Environmental Conservation DIVISION OF OPERATIONS BUREAU OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
	AS BUILT				
FACILITY NAME DEBAR MOUNTAIN DAY USE AREA	PROJECT NO. 75017	FACILITY NO. XXXX	DATE OCT 2020	SCALE AS NOTED	DRAWING NO. 4

