Visitor-Use Management of Adirondack Forest Preserve
Introduction and Background

Today's Updates:

1. ADK VUM Guidance
2. VUM Contract for High Peaks and Catskills
3. Desired Conditions and Standards
4. Monitoring Protocols
5. Project Spotlight: Ecological Scorecard
Visitor-Use Management of Adirondack Forest Preserve
Guidance Team Members:

Karyn Richards, DEC
Josh Clague, DEC
Rick Weber, APA
Walt Linck, APA
Kevin Prickett, APA
Background

“...an assessment of the physical, biological, and social carrying capacity...with particular attention to portions (of land) ...threatened by overuse in light of its resource limitations and its classification under the master plan.”

- APSLMP, 1972-present
History of the Issue

- "Carrying capacity" and "limits of acceptable change" have taken time to develop.
- 2015 - Boreas Ponds tract acquisition concluded multi-phased Finch-Pruyn deal
- 2018 - classification of tract, followed by UMP Amendments
- Interagency Visitor Use Management Council
History of the Issue - continued

• Unprecedented use in the High Peaks over last 5 years
• Parallel effort at Federal level has led to a Visitor Use Management Framework ("VUM") for Federal lands
• 2018 - APA/DEC staff team assigned to formalize concepts from UMP into a guidance document.
NYS DEC Visitor-Use Management Workbook
Next Steps

This field season…

• Hardware (tablet) and software development and deployment
• Pilot projects
• Improving workbook based on lessons learned (both broad and specific)
• Further developing monitoring protocols, including field testing process and equipment

Next winter to check in again…
Next Steps

Seeking input…

- DEC and APA Staff welcome comments from the public to improve the guidance.
- This is not a formal public comment period with time limits.
- Comments should be directed to:
  SLMP_Comments@apa.ny.gov
Public Comments

1. Process
2. Holistic Planning
3. Stakeholder Involvement
4. Engage Outside Expertise
5. Waterbody Carrying Capacity
6. Ongoing Monitoring
Project Planning
Name: Adirondack Visitor Use Management (AVUM)

Timeline: October 2021 – October 2024

Goal: To develop a system to assist with visitor use management on the Adirondack Forest Preserve as part of sustaining resources and ensuring quality visitor experiences.

Why:

• APSLMP

• Increase in impacts to resources and experiences

• Visitor Use Management Framework (VUMF) developed by the Interagency Visitor Use Management Council
Opportunities:

• Team approach
• Framework on managing visitor use
• Monitoring software
• Desired conditions
Out of Scope:

- Non-Forest Preserve visitor use problems
- Amendments to the APSLMP
- Purchasing equipment
- Hiring new staff
- Organizational culture change
Deliverables (key elements needed to be success in achieving the project goals):

• Visitor use management plan for the High Peaks Wilderness utilizing Federal VUM
• Adirondack framework for managing visitor use
• Monitoring protocols and software
• Desired conditions, including indicators and thresholds
Backers: Rob Davies, Megan Phillips

Project Manager: Kevin Prickett

Sub Team 1: High Peaks Wilderness IVUM Team (5-7)
Leader: Josh Clague
1. Rob Daley
2. Other Region 5 staff Pending RFP
3. Matt McNamara

Sub Team 2: Adirondack VUM
Leader: Josh Clague
1. Kirsten Seleen
2. Matt Nowak
3. Matt McNamara

Sub Team 3: Desired Conditions (standards)
Leader: Josh Clague
1. Peter Frank
2. Matt McNamara
3. Eric Kasza
4. McCrea Burnham
5. Molly Breslin
6. McCrea Burnham

Sub Team 4: Monitoring
Leader: John Schmid
1. Kirstin Seleen
2. Matt Nowak
3. Steve Guglielmi
4. Travis Acuna
5. Josh Clague
6. Rob Daley

Appendix Development
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2022</td>
<td>January</td>
<td>January 18 - Pre-meeting with Josh and Kevin</td>
<td>January 25 - Agree on outline, chart and work plan (Josh, Kevin and backers)</td>
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<td>January</td>
<td>January 19 - Send agenda for meeting on January 25 (Kevin)</td>
<td>January 28 - Meeting follow-up (Josh and Kevin) and outline next steps</td>
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<td></td>
<td>January 19 - Pre-meeting with respective supervisors about Friday, January 28 meeting (Josh and Kevin)</td>
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VUM Contract

AKA:
"Professional Visitor Use Management (VUM) Planning Services for Highly-Visited Forest Preserve Regions"
VUM Contract

High Peaks Project Location
VUM Contract

Catskills Project Location
VUM Contract – Important Dates

- Optional pre-proposal web conference: July 27, 2022, at 10:00 AM
- Deadline for questions: July 29, 2022
- DEC responses to questions will be provided by: August 2, 2022
- Deadline for bids: August 15, 2022, at 11:00 AM
VUM Contract – Contact Information

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Section Leader, Forest Preserve Policy and Planning  
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation  
625 Broadway, 5th Floor, Albany, NY 12233-4254  
(518) 408-5508  
josh.clague@dec.ny.gov
Desired Conditions and Standards
# Desired Conditions and Standards

### Sub Team 1: High Peaks Wilderness IVUM Team (5-7)
- Leader: Josh Clague
- 1. Rob Daley
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Monitoring Protocols
Monitoring Protocols

- Primitive Tent Site Conditions
- Trail Conditions
- Visitor Use Estimation
- Visitor Experience
- Ecological Health
Monitoring Protocols

- Primitive Tent Site Conditions
- Trail Conditions
- Visitor Use Estimation
- Visitor Experience
- Ecological Health

- Physical
- Social
- Biological
Management of visitors

• building a foundation;
• defining management direction (i.e. desired conditions, appropriate visitor activities, facilities and services; and indicators and thresholds);
• identifying management strategies (i.e. documenting the differences between existing and desired conditions, identifying strategies to achieve desired conditions and developing monitoring), and
• implementing, monitoring, evaluating and adjusting.
Managing Carrying Capacity

Indicators and standards of quality
Monitoring and management
What is Monitoring?

(1) selection of indicators, along with establishment of thresholds or objectives, and any needed triggers;

(2) routine, systematic observations or data collection of the indicators over time; and

(3) documentation and analysis of the observations or data in relation to the thresholds, triggers, or objectives.
Indicators
Thresholds
Indicator: Percentage of vegetation cover
Standard: 50% vegetation cover
MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE

SITING, CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF PRIMITIVE TENT SITES IN WILDERNESS, PRIMITIVE, CANOE AND WILD FOREST AREAS ON FOREST PRESERVE LANDS IN THE ADIRONDACK PARK
Primitive Tent Site Location

Primitive Tent Site locations are chosen for the enjoyment of the visitor and protection of natural resources.

Primitive Tent Sites shall be out of sight and sound and generally ¼ mile from any other Primitive Tent Site or lean-to. Where severe constraints prevent attainment of the guideline for separation of generally ¼ mile lesser separation may be considered through the UMP process on site by site basis.
**Primitive Tent Site Size Limits**

Camping at Primitive Tent Sites may have social and ecological impacts. With respect to ecological impacts, trees can be compromised through root exposure, cutting limbs and maiming of trunks. Vegetation may be decreased, and species composition could be changed. Compacted soils might limit the health and vigor of plants and prevent them from growing. Camping also can have aesthetic impacts, including decreasing screening between sites and shade, and diminishing the wild and undeveloped character of the area.

With respect to the size limit for a designated Primitive Tent Site, they will provide space for not more than three tents and will not exceed 1,200 square feet in size for each site. 1,200 square feet is a measurement of the ground surface area exhibiting impacts from visitor use of the campsite as measured with the Primitive Tent Site monitoring methodology.
Primitive Tent Site Monitoring Manual

Planning

Inventories can be conducted in a single field season or can be done over several seasons.

Primitive tent site monitoring must be completed when green leafy vegetation on non-woody plants is present (e.g. ferns, herbaceous plants). Recommended dates for primitive tent site assessments are after June 1 and before October 1. The assessment can be completed in any kind of weather; however, data entry using a touch pad in rainy conditions is difficult.

The time to complete each assessment depends on several different factors, including: experience, organization and staff. An experienced person or a pair of a people who have completed numerous assessments can complete an assessment within 10-15 minutes. If you have limited experience with assessing tent sites, it is best to utilize two people to work through the assessment steps together.

Day Before Field Visit

Preparation

Identify the locations of the campsites that require an assessment and develop a plan to visit these sites, for example: put together driving directions, print a map of the area, and check the weather conditions for the date of the site visit. In addition, organize the field visit logistics, for example: sign out a vehicle, put together a backpack of personal equipment (e.g. rain gear) needed to be in the field, and identify which trailhead you will park at or which trail will you use.

Hardware preparation

Prior to the beginning of field work, obtain the following:

- Smart phone or tablet - The following are a few preferred alternatives: Samsung Galaxy Tab A 10.1, Samsung Galaxy S6 or a Samsung Galaxy Tab S2.
- Range Finder - The following are a few preferred alternatives: TruPulse 200 or TruPulse 360.
- Range Finder User’s Manual
Recording Distance of Flagged Boundaries

- Once the boundaries are flagged, record the distances from the reference cone to the tent site boundary into Survey123 using the following process:
  - Person 1 stands at the cone.
  - Person 2 stands at the zero flag with shoulder facing person 1. Person 2’s shoulder should be on the same plane as the flag.
  - Person 1 uses the range finder to measure the distance. If you are using the range finder to determine distance, use the HD mode (horizontal distance mode).
  - Person 1 should target person 2 standing at the flagged boundary. Use the cross hairs in the range finder and target person 2’s shoulder. It is not a good idea to shoot the range finder into a person’s eyes.
  - Using Survey123, person 2 records the distance to the campsite boundary at zero degrees as identified by person 1.
  - Work in a clockwise fashion measuring and recording the campsite boundary distances into Survey123. Round distances to the nearest half foot increments (e.g. enter 12.5 for a length of 12 feet 4 inches or 13 for a length of 13 foot 2 inches).
  - If a large feature such as a tree or boulder prevents you from using one of the provided azimuths, adjust the azimuth so that the distance from the reference point to the campsite boundary is uninterrupted. Note the change in azimuth in the notes section at the end of the survey.
### Tent Site Condition Monitoring

**User**

**Inventoried By?**
- Guglielmi, Steve
- McNamara, Matt
- McGee, Corrie
- Prickett, Kevin
- Nowak, Matt
- Other

**Date and Time**

**Date**
- Wednesday, March 23, 2022

**Time**
- 9:53 AM

**Location Information**

**You are here**

The map will show your location automatically. Location information is displayed in WGS84 latitude and longitude.
Location Information

You are here *
The map will show your location automatically. Location information is displayed in WGS84 latitude and longitude.

44°23'N 73°49'W ± 32.3 m

Latitude *
44.37974144042678

Longitude *
-73.82351854004231

Horizontal Accuracy (hdop) *
32.31542304291337
Tent Site Boundaries-Disturbed Area
The disturbed area is a measurement of the total area disturbed by camping activities.

**Distance of Flagged Boundaries**

What is the distance (feet) to the tent site boundary at 0 degrees? *
Round distance to full or half feet (ie. 33.5 or 34.0).

What is the distance (feet) to the tent site boundary at 22.5 degrees? *
Round distance to full or half feet (ie. 33.5 or 34.0).

What is the distance (feet) to the tent site boundary at 45 degrees? *
Round distance to full or half feet (ie. 33.5 or 34.0).

What is the distance (feet) to the tent site boundary at 67.5 degrees? *
Round distance to full or half feet (ie. 33.5 or 34.0).
Tent Site Features

Shoreline

Is water nearby (e.g. lake, pond, stream or river)? *

- Yes
- No

What is the distance from the tent site center point to the water? *

- 0-25 Feet
- 26-50 Feet
- 51-75 Feet
- 76-100 Feet
- 101-125 Feet
- 126-150 Feet
- 151-175 Feet
- 176-200 Feet
- Greater than 200 Feet

Categorize the level of vegetative screening
Categorize the level of vegetative screening from the water as one of the following classes. From a boat in the water, if the tent site were occupied, would it be visible from the water?

- None - If occupied, campsite is completely visible from water
- Partial - If occupied, campsite is partially visible from water.
- Complete - If occupied, campsite is not visible from water.
- Not applicable - Site is not within two hundred feet of the shoreline.

Is there an access trail from the tent site to the water?

- Yes, there is an access trail from the water to the tent site.
- No, there is not an access trail from the water to the tent site.

Select the number of access trails from the water to the tent site.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
**Fire Ring or Fireplace**

Select the number of fire rings or fireplaces within the boundary of the tent sites and satellite sites.

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**Describe the condition of the fire ring or fireplace.**

Select the condition of the fire ring or fireplace.

- Good
- Some damage/no repair necessary
- Damage/repair necessary
- Replace

Does the fire ring or fireplace meet or exceed DEC’s accessible design standard? *

- Yes
Marcy Dam, High Peaks Wilderness
Marcy Dam, High Peaks Wilderness

Long Pond, St. Regis Canoe Area
Marcy Dam, High Peaks Wilderness
Marcy Dam, High Peaks Wilderness

Long Pond, St. Regis Canoe Area

Tent Site Condition Class

1: Ground vegetation flattened but not permanently injured. Minimal physical change except for possibly a simple rock fireplace
2: Ground vegetation work away around fireplace or center of activity
3: Ground vegetation lost on most of the site, but humus and litter still present in all but a few areas
4: Bare mineral soil widespread. Tree roots exposed on the surface.
5: Soil erosion obvious. Trees reduced in vigor and dead
Data Collection and Management

Hardware
Instructions and guidance
Software Development
Data Management
DEC Field Data Collection

- Ambition: from independent (office or individual) field data collection to an augmented centralized, standardized, and accessible GIS system
- DEC and Office of Information Technology Services (ITS) - New Hardware - iPads
- Developing mobile device field forms: parking lot surveys, informal trails, and trail conditions (and Kevin's primitive tent site form)
- Still developing a workflow: desktop and field forms to central database
- Large back-end database with customizable/queryable deliverables
Trail Condition Draft Field Form

- Monitoring is kind of step 2 - we need a baseline first
- Developed Draft Trail Condition Survey Form (Survey123)
- Collect a GPS point at a location along a trail with problem/issue/concerns
- Standards and desired conditions still in the works
- Intend to integrate VUM and other classification schema: spot locations, trail segments, and entire trails
Where is there a problem, concern, issue with the trail?

GPS point collected.
Someone pulled a tag off a mattress
Questions....So Far?