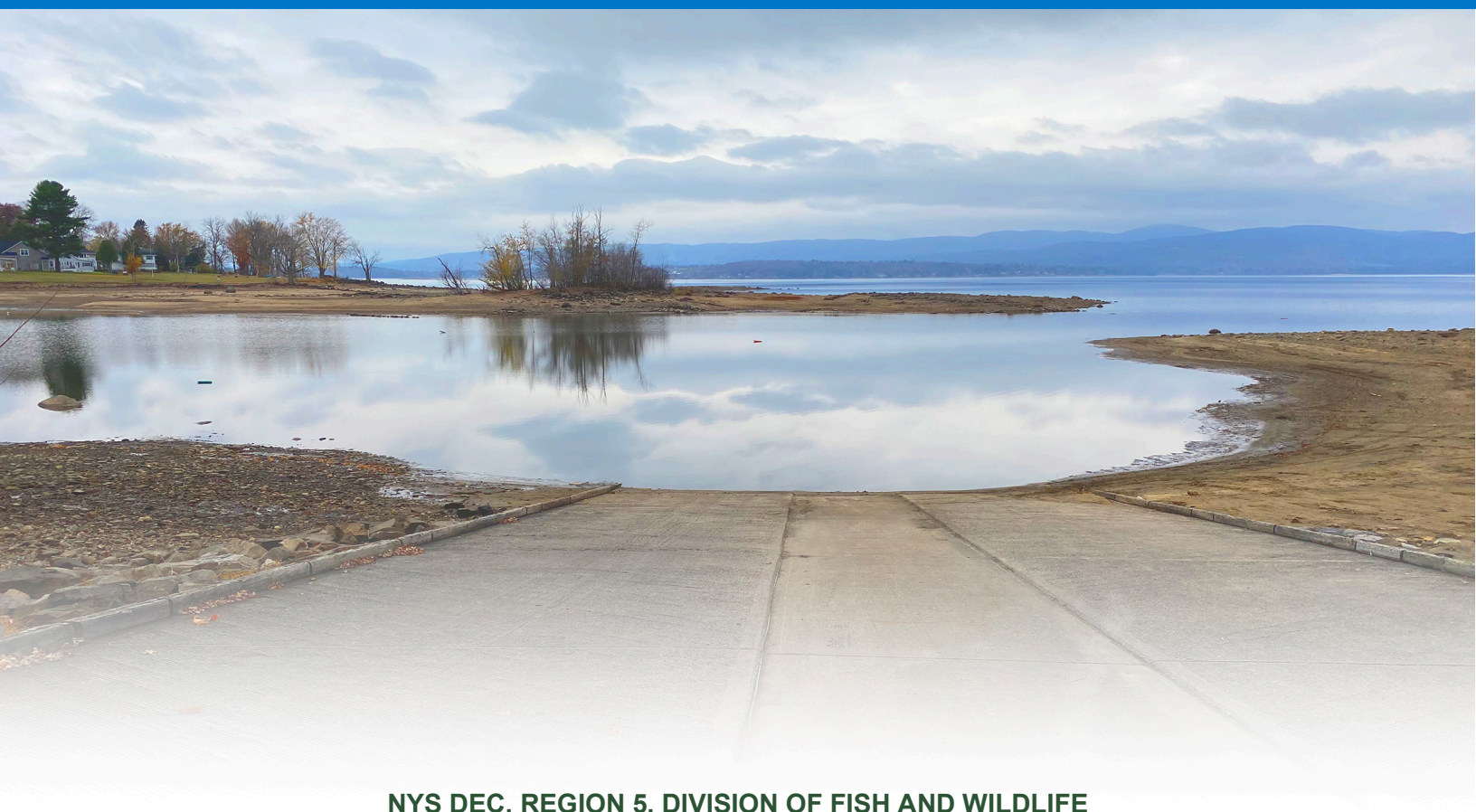




Department of
Environmental
Conservation

BROADALBIN BOAT LAUNCH

Draft Unit Management Plan



NYS DEC, REGION 5, DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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Introduction

The Broadalbin Boat Launch is located on Forest Preserve lands along Lakeview Road in the Town of Broadalbin, Fulton County, New York (Figure 1). The launch is managed by the Department of Environmental Conservation (the Department) Bureau of Fisheries and provides access to the water at the southeastern end of Great Sacandaga Lake just north of the Village of Broadalbin. The launch is the only major public boat ramp on the southern portion of the lake.

Two adjacent waterfront parcels totaling 14.09 acres, including what is now the boat launching site, beach area, and their associated parking lots, were transferred from the Hudson Black River Regulating District (HRBRD) to the Department via an executive order in 1989. The boat launch site that exists today was constructed in 1998 for the purpose of improving boat access to the 26,880-acre reservoir in an area where public access had otherwise been limited. Presently, the boating access site is maintained via Wallop-Breaux “Motorboat Access Funds” federal aid. The sandy beach area and its associated parking lot are located adjacent to the boat launch and predate its construction. This area of the site was originally developed to provide “cartop” boat access, particularly for windsurfing, which was a popular activity at the time.

Historically, the beach portion of the site was operated pursuant to a use and occupancy agreement with the Town. In the Fall of 2020, the Town communicated that due to budget shortfalls they would likely no longer be operating the beach and the site would remain unsupervised. At their monthly meeting on June 9, 2022, the Town Board made the formal decision to no longer operate the beach.

The juxtaposition of the boat launch site and the public beach has led to problems, as both sites are very popular, particularly during the summer months when the first-come, first-serve parking on each side fills to capacity and then extends onto the town road. Namely, beachgoers resort to parking in designated boat launch “vehicle with trailer only” sites (prohibited by 6 NYCRR Part 59.1) as well as on nearby public and private roadways. Additional concerns related to the beach include overcrowding, excessive littering, illegal parking, and drug and underage alcohol use.

The boat launch and beach are located in an area that is not readily viewed from the main road and presents challenges for regular patrolling and enforcement. Following notification from the Town of Broadalbin that the Town would no longer operate the beach, the Department considered several options for the site to facilitate recreational access to Great Sacandaga

Lake. However, in addition to safety concerns, allowing the beach to remain in its current form without supervision would likely exacerbate the user conflicts noted above. The Bureau of Fisheries maintains that a public bathing beach is incompatible within the same facility as a motorboat launch. As a result, the Department will repurpose the beach portion of the site by providing an ADA-compliant cartop boat access and dock, resurfacing the beach area with stone and native plants, and designating the current parking area for cartop users.

Description of Facility

The 14.09-acre Intensive Use parcel currently includes a boat ramp and parking lot for up to 60 vehicles with trailers. Included in the boat launch parking lot are three vehicle-with-trailer and one single vehicle or cartop space designated as ADA accessible parking. An 80' wide concrete boat ramp provides access to the lake. A portable dock system is installed in the water at the center of the ramp annually, creating two launching lanes on either side of the dock. The northern, or "beach" portion of the property contains a two-lane entrance road, beach, and small parking area for cartop boaters (Figures 2 & 3).

In addition to parking and launch ramps, there are several additional existing features for public or administrative use at the boat launch, including: an entrance sign, invasive species drop box, information kiosk, and portable ADA-compliant restrooms. The facility is maintained by the Department's Division of Operations staff out of the Northville office. Annual maintenance including mowing, dock installation and removal, and restroom provision is conducted by the Department.

Setting

Great Sacandaga Lake is the largest reservoir in New York State at approximately 26,880 acres and over 25 miles long. The reservoir is located entirely within the Adirondack Park blue line and was originally created in the 1930s as a flood control impoundment. The Department operates four boat launch sites on the lake that provide access, including three standalone boat launches in Northville, Broadalbin, and the Town of Day and one boat launch within the Northampton campground. HRBRRD is responsible for managing the water level of the reservoir as well as issuing access permits for use of the New York State lands that encompass the waterbody. The water level of the reservoir fluctuates throughout the course of the year depending on precipitation patterns within the watershed. The lake level is drawn down each winter in anticipation of spring snowmelt and rains by approximately 18 feet.

Recreational Use and Demand

Great Sacandaga Lake is a popular lake for recreational boaters and anglers. In 2020, the Adirondack Watershed Institute invasive species stewardship program inspected 5,674 boats using the Broadalbin Boat launch over the course of 102 days between the dates of May 23 and September 7. Of those vessels, 73% were motorized boats and 24% were personal watercraft. The remainder of the boats were comprised of non-motorized vessels such as canoes, kayaks, and sail boats (Paul Smith's College Adirondack Watershed Institute, 2020).

The lake supports naturally sustaining populations of gamefish including walleye, smallmouth bass, yellow perch, and northern pike. The reservoir is stocked annually with trout and walleye to supplement these fisheries. Fishing is a popular activity on the lake during both the open water and ice fishing seasons. Multiple black bass and ice fishing tournaments are held on the lake annually.

The lake is also a popular destination for kayakers, sail boaters and snowmobilers, and serves as an important resource and economic influence for nearby towns and communities.

Management Objectives

The management objectives for the Broadalbin Boat Launch Site are the following:

1. Provide waterway access for motorized and non-motorized boaters and anglers including those with disabilities.
2. Establish and maintain site conditions that reduce illegal activities and liability to the State and require minimal law enforcement oversight.
3. Ensure facility compliance with the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP).
4. Protect the shoreline and aquatic habitat of Great Sacandaga Lake

Management Actions

The Department will repurpose the beach portion of the site to provide additional boating access to the lake while simultaneously reducing the prevalence of illegal activities and alleviating the need for additional law enforcement and site management resources.

A new pathway will be installed between the parking area and the existing beach area. A dock will also be installed at the terminus of the pathway at summer pool elevation. These features will be designed to provide the greatest level of access for people with disabilities as possible given the constraints of the site. Since the primary purpose of the reservoir is flood mitigation,

fluctuating water levels impact the ability to provide year-round access to the water. The sand beach will be resurfaced with stone and a mix of native plants to deter swimming and limit erosion of the shoreline. Alterations to the existing beach parking area will be made to provide cartop parking, including ADA-compliant spaces (Figure 5).

Conformance with the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan

After the development of a construction work plan, DEC will consult with APA to ensure the final project design complies with wetland regulations and the APSLMP.

The proposals in this UMP conform with the following relevant APSLMP criteria:

Location in an Intensive Use Area

The proposed site modifications will not result in a major change of usage at the site. In fact, repurposing the beach portion of the site into a cartop boat access will likely reduce overall use and visitation.

Location on a lake or waterway exceeding 1000 acres in area

According to the APSLMP, boat launch sites should be located on large lakes, or smaller lakes connected by navigable waterways where the aggregate acreage of the lake chain exceeds 1,000 acres. At 26,880 acres, Great Sacandaga Lake is listed in the APSLMP as a waterbody which exceeds 1,000 acres and is eligible for a developed boat ramp site. The lake has four other Department operated boat launch sites, however at 26,880 acres this is warranted, and the large water can sustainably support this amount of use.

Physical, biological, and social carrying capacity

The proposed changes to the management of the site will not result in a change in recreational boat traffic or angling pressure on the lake. No modifications are being proposed to increase the user or boater parking capacity of the site. Swimming activity and associated impacts (e.g., littering, shoreline erosion, open fires, etc.) will be greatly reduced in this area because of the site modifications. DEC staff will monitor the restored shoreline over time to ensure plantings are successful and erosion is minimized.

The boat launching site or attendant water uses will be compatible with the state or private land use classifications and attendant management guidelines as land use controls surrounding the water body

The boat launch site is adjacent to private lands classified as low intensity and moderate intensity as well as lands regulated by the Hudson River-Black River Regulating District. The boat launch already exists as an intensive use area, proposed site modifications will not impact adjacent properties or their classifications and will likely even result in less potential for beach user overflow onto adjacent lands.

The boat launching site is located in a manner to avoid adverse impact on adjacent or nearby state and private lands

The site is already currently managed as a boat launching and retrieval facility. No additional parking will be provided as a result of the new site management strategies and no adverse impacts will occur to nearby state or private lands as a result of the proposed site modifications.

Motor size limitations appropriate to the carrying capacity of the lake are provided

There is currently no motor size limitation on Great Sacandaga Lake. The launch is adequate for launching most boats. The lake's large size and diversity of morphometric features allows users to segregate themselves without overuse or resource degradation becoming an issue. The current proposal is not expected to increase usage from current levels but merely provide cartop users an alternate avenue to access the water in addition to the existing boat ramp.

Alternatives

The following alternatives were considered for the reconstruction of the Broadalbin Boat Launch as described in this UMP:

No Action

The boat launch, sand beach and related infrastructure remain in place; however, this alternative will not meet the objective for reducing illegal activity, liabilities, or the need for law enforcement presence.

Increase Signage & Parking Enforcement

Additional signage and parking enforcement be deployed in an effort to reduce illegal parking activity. The site already has ample signage and law enforcement resources are limited. It is unlikely that this action will result in a long-term decline of illegal activity at the site.

Remove Parking Area Near Beach

The parking area near the beach could be removed to deter illegal and/or noncompatible usage; however, it is likely that beach use would continue and with less parking available, illegal parking at vehicle with trailer only designated spots would almost certainly increase, along with illegal parking along Lake Road.

Remove Beach and Associated Parking Area

Repurpose the beach by removing the sand and replacing with stone and remove the associated parking. This would alleviate issues related to illegal activities and parking and non-compatible use; however, this would result in a net loss of boater and angler access to the lake.

Preferred Alternative-Repurpose Beach and Associated Parking Area

Repurpose the beach into a cartop boat access site for fishing and launching cartop vessels. Placement of large rocks and planting of native vegetation on the beach would deter swimmers and beachgoers from using the site while minimizing future erosion and protecting water quality. This option would alleviate the need for frequent law enforcement oversight and would discourage the noncompatible use of swimming adjacent to a busy boat launch, while maintaining the intended use of the site as a waterway access site.

Literature Cited

Paul Smith's College Adirondack Watershed Institute. 2020. Stewardship Program Location Use Summaries 2020. 27p.

Appendix 1 – Maps and Figures

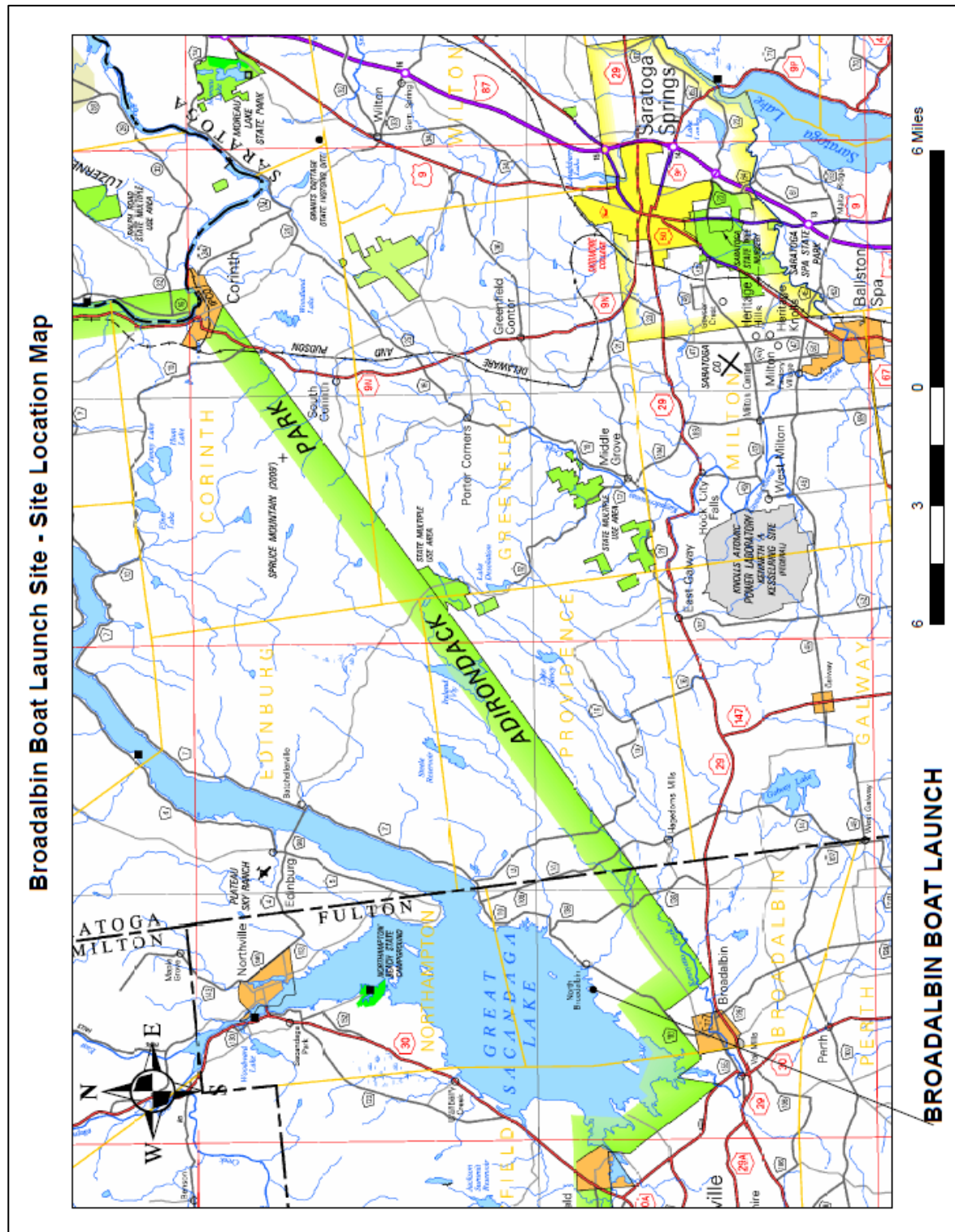


Figure 1. General location map of the Broadalbin Boat Launch Site.

Broadalbin Boat Launch Site

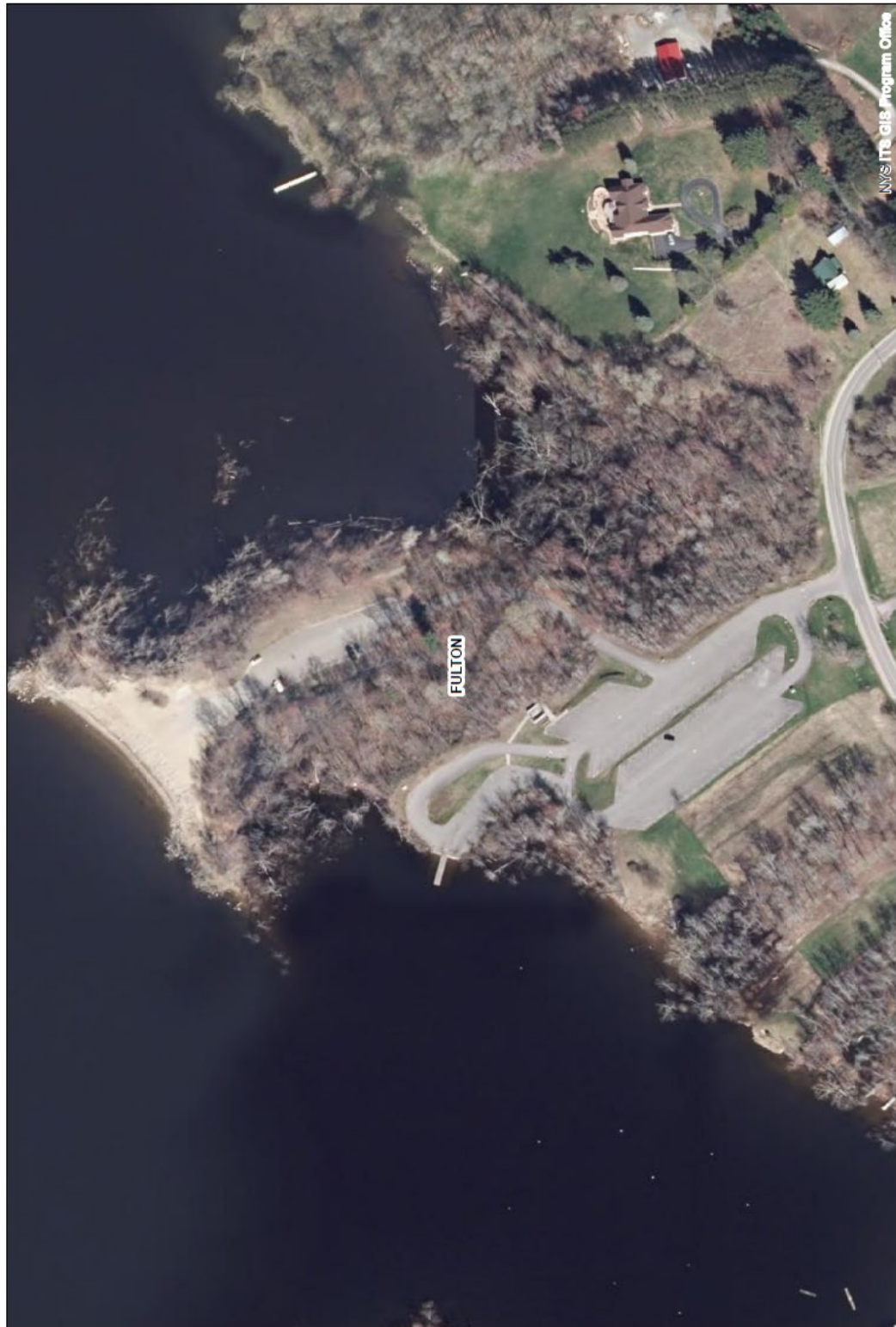


Figure 2. Aerial photo of Broadalbin Boat Launch Site.

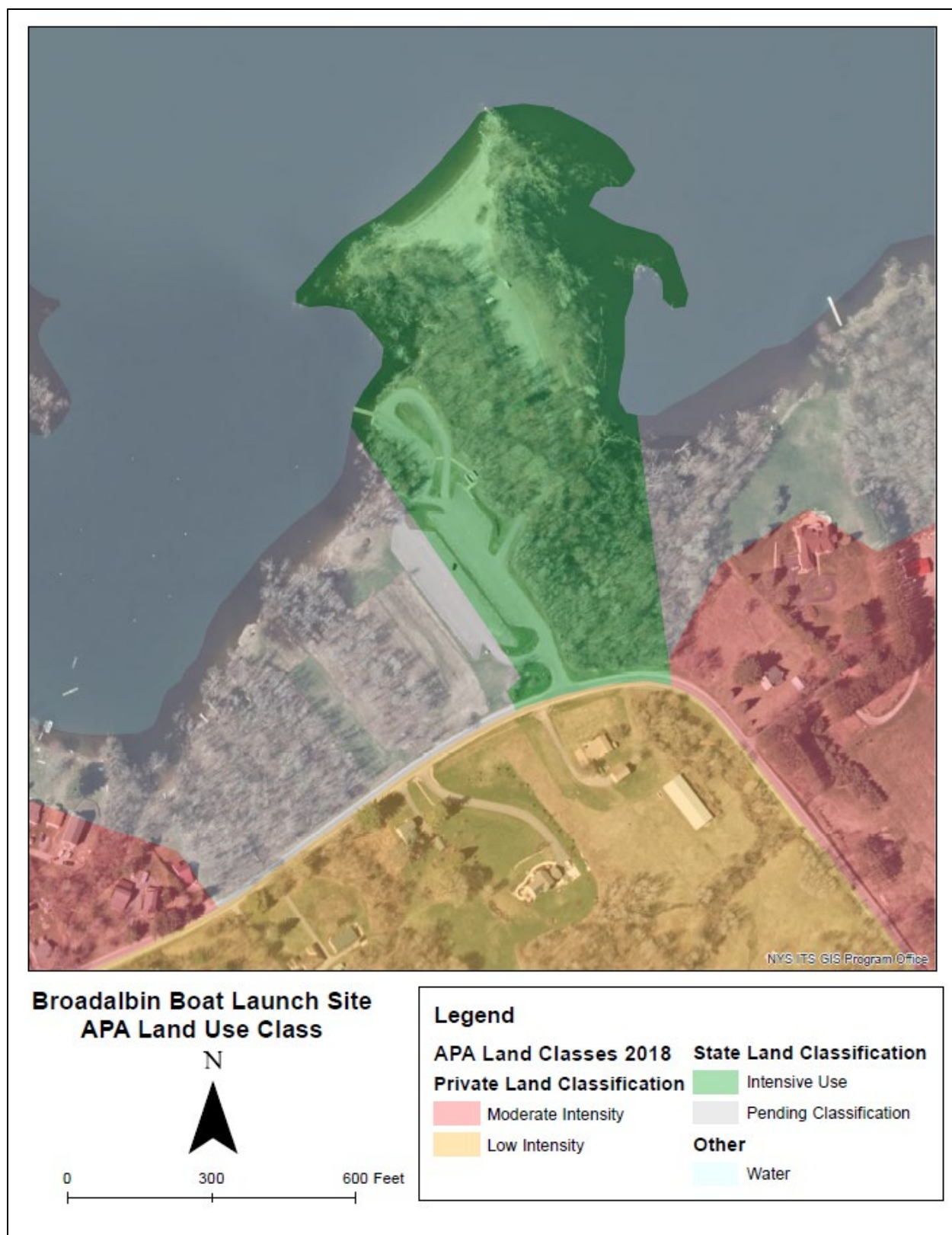


Figure 4. APA land classification



Figure 5. Proposed site plan and modifications.



Figure 6. Wetland map.



Figure 8. Photo of existing beach parking area.



Figure 9. Photo of existing beach area.



Figure 10. Photo of existing accessible boat launch parking and privy area (background).



Figure 11. Photo of existing trailered boat launch.