
FOREST PRESERVE DETAILED PROJECT WORK PLAN

Fiscal Year 2024
Project # CO-WP-315

<u>Region</u>	<u>Project Title</u>
5	Prospect Mountain Overlook Maintenance

<u>Project Type</u>	<u>Town(s)</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Management Unit</u>
Modification of Existing Structure/Improvement	Lake George	Warren	Prospect Mountain Veterans Memorial Highway Day Use Area

Description of Desired Condition(s) for Project

Located just minutes from the Village of Lake George, New York, the Prospect Mountain Day Use Area includes several notable features, including the Prospect Mountain Veterans Memorial Highway, multiple scenic viewpoints, and a variety of opportunities for people with disabilities. Combined, these attributes provide an opportunity for the public to experience the typically remote and rugged Forest Preserve and adjacent lands of the Adirondack Park in a unique and positive way.

The desired condition for this project is to continue to provide visitors clear scenic views from the summit and the three paved overlooks strategically located along the highway. The 5½ mile two-lane paved scenic highway winds and climbs its way from NYS Route 9 to the summit. Along the way there are three designated scenic overlooks that previously afforded beautiful views of the Adirondacks of New York State and the Green Mountains in the State of Vermont. The three outlooks, The Narrows, Lake George, and The Eagle's Eye, were designed to offer visitors picturesque views of Lake George and its surroundings.

Prospect Mountain has served several unique purposes since the late 1800s. The summit was once the site of both a hotel and a sanatorium and an incline cable railway offered a unique form of transportation for the public to reach the scenic view. It became state property in the 1920s with the intention of being used for recreation and park purposes. Legislative efforts began in 1954 to designate and build a scenic parkway to the summit. Finally, in 1969, a 5.5-mile road was built that allowed people to drive to the summit and in 1974 it was designated as the Prosect Mountain Veteran's Memorial Highway in honor of our veterans. The purpose remains the same to this day.

The current conditions at the project sites reflect several years of tree growth resulting from a lack of ordinary maintenance that began during the pandemic as the facility was closed during the 2020 and 2021 operating seasons. Consequently, the scenic views intended as instrumental to the purpose of the Veterans Memorial Highway have become obstructed by tree growth. The proposed maintenance is vital to continue to fulfill the legislative purpose of this facility as the scenic highway in the area offering distinct views of Lake George and the surrounding mountains for people of all abilities.

To restore the historic desired condition of the scenic overlooks, a large quantity of trees must be cut as these areas have grown in over time. The Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP) characterizes Prospect Mountain as a scenic special management area. However, the APSLMP also notes that "...scenic vistas from these travel corridors are relatively rare and their protection and enhancement are important" regarding scenic vistas in travel corridors.

Description of Project Specifications

Overall, this project aims to cut 13,393 trees including 284 trees that are 3 inches or greater diameter at breast height (DBH), and 13,109 trees that are between 1 and 3 inches DBH. The attached documents indicate tree tallies and species counts for each overlook including the two at the summit. The attached maps provide an overview of the project limits where tree removal will occur. All removal will occur within the limited footprint of the historic cutting.

Description of Measures Taken to Avoid, Mitigate and Minimize Impacts to Natural Resources

Due to the legislative mandate for the location and purpose of the Prospect Mountain Veterans Memorial Highway, it is not possible to completely avoid such impacts. However, this work plan takes great care to limit the cutting to those areas necessary to restore the intended views at the three scenic pull-offs and the summit. Additionally, tree cutting will be kept within the project limits outlined on the attached maps. The project limits were determined from the evidence of historical cutting at these areas. Using these historical limits will mitigate this project's impact to the surrounding natural resources, especially the significant natural community noted below, by closely monitoring tree removal to ensure work is completed only within the prescribed areas. All trees will be chipped and dispersed on-site or piled and reduced to a height of less than 3 feet from the ground to naturally blend with the environment. Trees over 3 inches DBH within these areas were marked with an orange paint spot. There will be no earthwork nor any impact to streams, waterbodies or wetlands associated with this project.

Additionally, there are no rare, threatened, or endangered plant or animal species located within ¼ miles of the project area. However, there is one significant natural community located within ¼ miles of the project area noted by the New York Natural Heritage Program (NYNHP):

Pitch Pine-Oak-Heath Rocky Summit – NYNHP describes the significance of this community as a "high quality occurrence of uncommon community type".

- State Protection Status - Not Listed
- State Conservation Status Rank – S3S4 (Vulnerable or Apparently Secure to Vulnerable)

Description: A community that occurs on warm, dry, rocky ridgetops and summits where the bedrock is non-calcareous (such as quartzite, sandstone, or schist), and the soils are more or less acidic. The vegetation may be sparse or patchy, with numerous rocky outcrops. This community is broadly defined and includes examples that may lack pines and instead are dominated by scrub oak or heath shrubs; this variation is apparently related to fire regime. Pitch pine-oak-heath rocky summit communities are often surrounded by chestnut oak forest.

<https://guides.nynhp.org/pitch-pine-oak-heath-rocky-summit/>

Analysis of Project Location and Design Alternatives

In 1964, the legislature appropriated the funds to the Adirondack Mountain Authority as authorized by Chapter 267 of the laws of 1954 for the Whiteface Mountain Authority, “To construct a state parkway in Warren County...to the top of Prospect Mountain” and “To construct, operate and maintain facilities and appurtenances along Prospect Mountain State Parkway and on Prospect Mountain for the public not inconsistent with state park and parkway purposes but deemed essential to the development of Prospect Mountain for scenic and recreational purposes...” The statutory responsibility for the care, custody and control of the highway and its facilities now rests with the Department pursuant to Environmental Conservation Law 9-0903(1).

As a result of the above, the location of the highway, scenic vistas and the summit are existing facilities which must be maintained to continue to fulfil the statutory mandate. There are no alternative project locations at which these trees can be cut due to the scenic orientation of the outlooks. The scenic views would still be obscured if cutting were to occur in alternative locations. Therefore, the historical cutting limits present the only option for continued management. This management option also limits the impacts to the surrounding environment by avoiding disturbing previously undisturbed areas beyond the original footprints.

It is important to note that in the nearly seventy-five years since the plan to honor veterans by this scenic highway was initiated, the facility receives significant use. Prospect Mountain has experienced an average of 68,588 annual visitors since 2016 (not including 2020/2021) with a significant increase in visitors from 2016 to 2019 (shown in Table 1 below). In 2022, Prospect Mountain experienced a decrease in visitor attendance from its previous totals following a two-year closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it appears that visitor attendance has been trending upwards ever since.

Table 1
Prospect Mountain Visitor Attendance Records (2016-2023)

Year	Number of Visitors
2016	77,259
2017	65,575
2018	68,787
2019	92,378
2020	0 – Closed due to COVID 19 pandemic
2021	0 – Closed due to COVID 19 pandemic
2022	48,261
2023	59,269

Description of Use of Motorized Equipment and/or Motor Vehicles (if any)

Chainsaws will be used to cut the trees & a woodchipper will be used for processing. A mechanized Hydro-Ax will be used where the trees and vegetative growth overhang the paved surface of the overlook pull-offs and roadsides.

Description of Applicable Standards for Accessibility by People with Disabilities

There are currently several accessible features at this facility including accessible pull-offs, viewing areas, a viewing scope, vault toilets, parking spaces and a path that serves as an accessible route.

The three pull-off areas for each overlook consist of a firm, stable, and slip resistant surface that allows users to maneuver to a place where they can view the surrounding areas. Viewing areas are located at the summit as well as each of the three overlooks. The first overlook, named 'The Narrows', features an accessible viewing scope which is an addition made in recent years. As you drive even further up the memorial highway, there is a large parking area that has accessible vault toilets for use. Arriving at the summit, there are two to three accessible parking spaces which connect to an accessible path that leads users to an expansive viewing area. This accessible path was recently repaved to improve its function.

Other Relevant Considerations

None

Prepared by (Name & Title): Mitchell Krah - EPS 1
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Date: 8/28/2024

REGULATORY CLEARANCE CHECKLIST – STATE LANDS and CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROJECTS					
PROGRAM	PERMIT	REQUIRED		SECURED BY	COMMENTS
		YES	NO	(NAME)	
Air Resources	Restricted Burning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mineral Resources	Mining	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Materials Management	Solid Waste Mgt. Fac.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Water	Dam Safety Review	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Const. in Flood Hazard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Public Water Supply	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	SPDES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Spills Management	Petro. Bulk Storage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Lands and Forests	Unit Management Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Tree Cutting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mitchell Krah	Pending approval through this work plan
	Protected Native Plants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Historic Preservation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Fish and Wildlife	Freshwater Wetlands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Wild Scenic & Rec. River	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Compliance Services	Other Protection of Waters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	EAF	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Negative Declaration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Env. Impact Statement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Water Quality Cert.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
DEC (other)	CP-17	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Commissioner (aircraft,motorized equipment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Flight Request	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Contract Clearance Sh.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	DOB Exemption	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Other Agencies	APA MOU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	APA Wetlands Permit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Corps. of Engineers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Building Permits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Local Permits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Easements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Highway Enter DOT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Wastewater Disposal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

Prospect Mountain Overlooks



0 1,000 2,000 4,000 Feet

NV3 ITS GIS Program Office

2018 Orthoimagery

Map Created 12/9/21 by Ben Thomas

Prospect Overlook Statistics:

Overlook 1 (boundaries determined primarily from evidence of past cutting, marked with flagging)

- 58,881 square feet
- 1.35 acres
- Trees over 3" = 102
- Trees 1"-3" = 4,160

Overlook 2 (boundaries determined primarily from evidence of past cutting, marked with flagging)

- 25,748 square feet
- .59 acres
- Trees over 3" = 73
- Trees 1"-3" = 1,367

Overlook 3 (boundaries determined primarily from evidence of past cutting, marked with flagging)

- 47,651 square feet
- 1.09 acres
- Trees over 3" = 84
- Trees 1"-3" = 2,740

Summit Overlook facing south

- 20,237 square feet
- .46 acres
- Trees over 3" = 5
- Trees 1"-3" = 2,686

Summit Overlook facing north (boundaries determined primarily from evidence of past cutting, marked with flagging)

- 16,808 square feet
- .39 acres
- Trees over 3" = 20
- Trees 1"-3" = 2,156

All trees over 3" within these areas were marked with an orange paint spot.

Prospect Mountain Overlook #1



NYS ITS GIS Program Office



0 50 100 200 Feet

2018 Orthoimagery

Map Created 12/9/21 by Ben Thomas





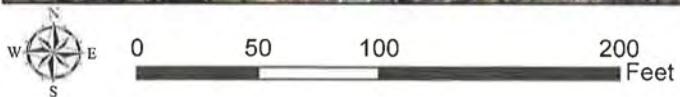
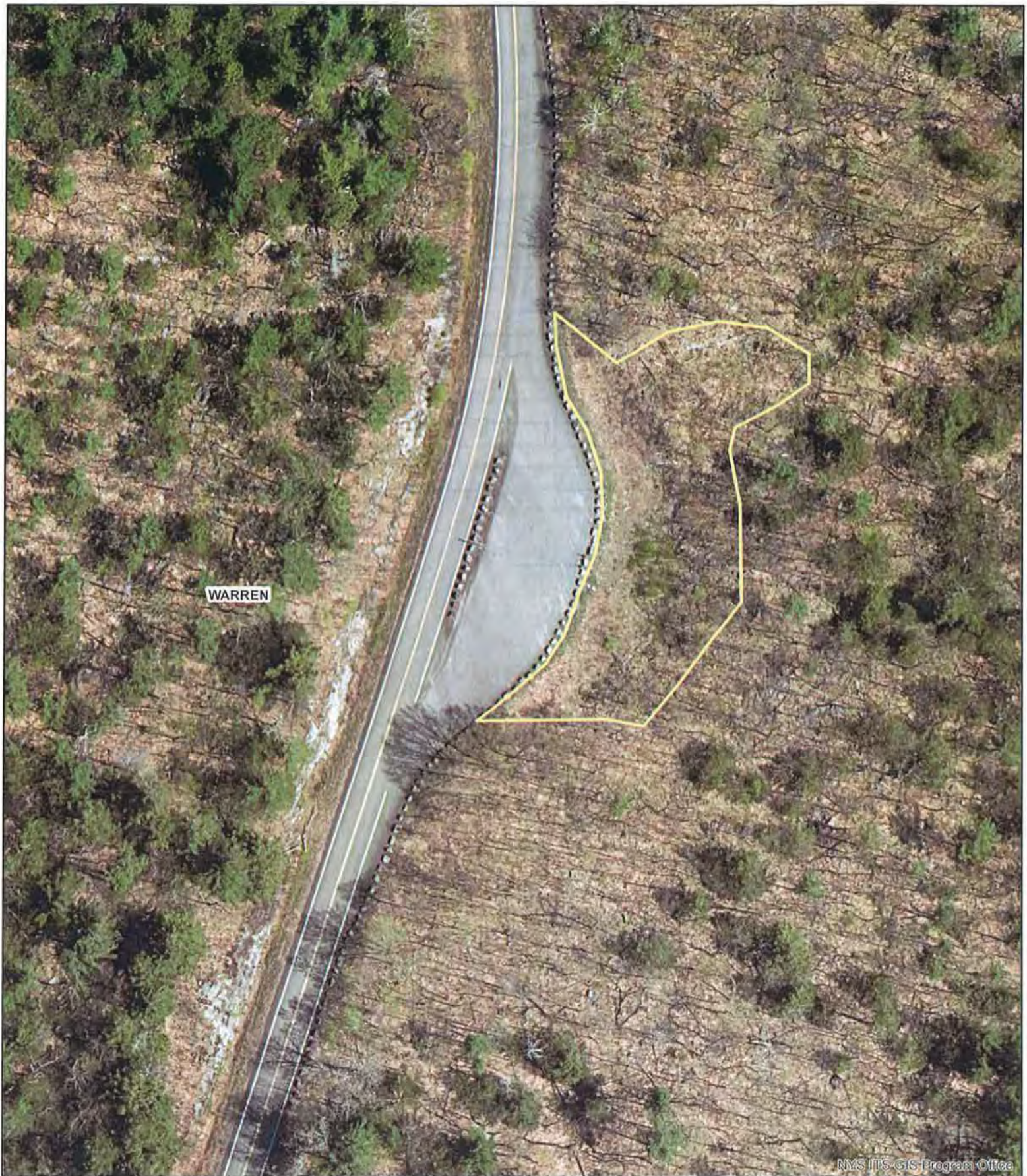
State Land Tree Tally

Project: Prospect Mountain Highway Overlooks – **Overlook 1**
 State Land Unit: Prospect Mountain Intensive Use Area
 County and Town: Warren County / Lake George
 Date Talled: 11/19/2021
 Talled by: Ben Thomas

	DIAMETER														TOTAL
	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28		
beech, Amer.	2														2
birch, paper	5														5
birch, yellow	14														14
hemlock	1														1
maple, red	2														2
oak, red	65	1													66
pine, white	8	1	1												10
hophornbeam	2														2
															0
															0
TOTAL	99	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	102

Number of Trees 1" - 3" dbh = 4,160

Prospect Mountain Overlook #2



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2018 Orthoimagery

Map Created 12/9/21 by Ben Thomas









State Land Tree Tally

Project: Prospect Mountain Highway Overlooks – **Overlook 2**
 State Land Unit: Prospect Mountain Intensive Use Area
 County and Town: Warren County / Lake George
 Date Tallied: 11/19/2021
 Tallied by: Ben Thomas

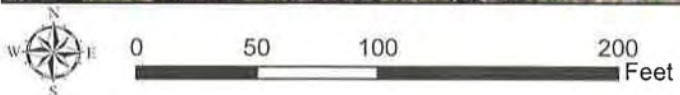
	DIAMETER														TOTAL
	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28		
ash, white	2														2
maple, red	4														4
oak, red	19	8													27
striped maple	2														2
hickory	3	2													5
hophornbeam	27	4													31
birch, black	1		1												2
TOTAL	58	14	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	73

Number of Trees 1" - 3" dbh = 1,367

Prospect Mountain Overlook #3



NYS ITS GIS Program Office



2018 Orthoimagery

Map Created 12/9/21 by Ben Thomas







State Land Tree Tally

Project: Prospect Mountain Highway Overlooks – **Overlook 3**
 State Land Unit: Prospect Mountain Intensive Use Area
 County and Town: Warren County / Lake George
 Date Talled: 11/19/2021
 Talled by: Ben Thomas

	DIAMETER														TOTAL
	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28		
birch, paper	3														3
birch, black	17														17
maple, red	10														10
maple, striped	5														5
oak, red	40														40
oak, white	7														7
maple, sugar	1														1
serviceberry	1														1
															0
TOTAL	84	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	84

Number of Trees 1"- 3" dbh = 2,740

Prospect Mountain Summit north and south facing overlooks



0 50 100 200 Feet

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2018 Orthoimagery

Map Created 12/9/21 by Ben Thomas











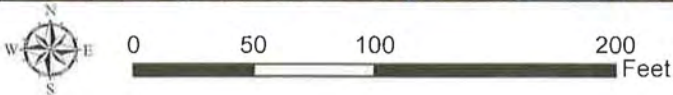
State Land Tree Tally

Project: Prospect Mountain Highway Overlooks – **Summit South**
 State Land Unit: Prospect Mountain Intensive Use Area
 County and Town: Warren County / Lake George
 Date Talled: 11/19/2021
 Talled by: Ben Thomas

	DIAMETER														TOTAL
	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28		
birch, paper	2														2
oak, red	3														3
															0
TOTAL	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5

Number of Trees 1"- 3" dbh = 2,686

Prospect Mountain Summit north and south facing overlooks











State Land Tree Tally

Project: Prospect Mountain Highway Overlooks – **Summit North**
 State Land Unit: Prospect Mountain Intensive Use Area
 County and Town: Warren County / Lake George
 Date Talled: 11/19/2021
 Talled by: Ben Thomas

	DIAMETER														TOTAL
	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28		
birch, paper	1														1
birch, black	2														2
maple, red	2														2
maple, sugar	2														2
maple, striped	9														9
hophornbeam	1	1													2
spruce, red	1	1													2
															0
TOTAL	18	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20

Number of Trees 1"- 3" dbh = 2,156