

# APA fast-tracks proposals for High Peaks

**by Phil Brown, Editor**  
Adirondack Explorer

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*The state acquired Boreas Ponds in 2016. Photo by Phil Brown.*

The Adirondack Park Agency board voted Thursday to fast-track a number of proposals for the High Peaks Wilderness and Vanderhacker Wild Forest, including tens of thousands of acres of newly acquired state lands.

Some environmental groups contend the agency is moving too fast.

Among other things, the proposals call for parking lots that would allow easy access to Boreas Ponds; new hiking, biking, ski, and equestrian trails; new campsites, canoe launches, and kiosks; and relocating the trailhead for Cascade Mountain.

The APA and Department of Environmental Conservation will hold two public hearings on May 23:

- 10 a.m. at DEC headquarters, 625 Broadway, Albany.
- 6 p.m. at Newcomb Central School, Route 28N, Newcomb.

The APA and DEC will receive written comments through June 27.

The proposals, written by DEC, are contained in draft amendments to the unit management plans (UMPs) for the High Peaks Wilderness and Vanderwhacker Wild Forest. The APA's role is ascertain whether the proposals conform to the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan.

Ordinarily, DEC and APA hold separate comment periods when a Forest Preserve management plan is drafted or amended. DEC will solicit comments on management proposals and alter them if warranted. Afterward, the APA will seek public input on whether the proposals conform to the master plan.

In this case, the agencies are soliciting comments simultaneously with the aim of obtaining final approval in early July. This would enable DEC to start work on projects this summer.

Karen Feldman, chairwoman of the State Land Committee, said if the two agencies held separate comment periods, the APA couldn't approve the management proposals until September at the earliest—meaning DEC would lose most of the construction season.

Sherman Craig, chairman of the APA board, acknowledged that holding concurrent comment periods is a new approach. "I believe this can work, but let's see," he remarked. "If it doesn't work, it won't become policy."

But the Adirondack Council and Adirondack Wild both objected to the accelerated schedule, saying the public needs more time to evaluate the many proposals.

"The length and complexity of both these UMP amendments affecting public access and use of some of the most controversial public lands in the Park, including approaches to and management of additions to its largest Wilderness, place these amendments on a scale equal to many complete draft Unit Management Plans across the Park. Therefore, they deserve separate DEC and APA review and public comment periods," Adirondack Wild said in a letter to the APA.

We've written several stories regarding the UMP amendments in the past week. Click the links below for details on:

[Proposals for Boreas Ponds region.](#)

[Relocating the Cascade trailhead.](#)

[Building new parking areas along Route 73.](#)

[Creating canoe put-ins along the upper Hudson River.](#)

[Rerouting the Wright Peak Ski Trail.](#)

Comments on the management proposals themselves should be submitted to DEC: Robert Ripp, forester, NYSDEC, 232 Golf Road, Warrensburg, NY 12885. They also can be emailed to [info.r5@dec.ny.gov](mailto:info.r5@dec.ny.gov).

Comments on whether the proposals comply with the State Land Master Plan can be sent to APA: Kathy Regan, deputy director, Adirondack Park Agency, P.O. Box 99, Ray Brook, NY 12977. They also can be emailed [info.r5@dec.ny.gov](mailto:info.r5@dec.ny.gov).

Kathy Regan, APA's deputy director, said the APA and DEC will work together to make sure the public comments are reviewed by the appropriate agency.

The draft amendments to the management plans can [downloaded here](#).