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DEC ISSUES EAST BRANCH OF FISH CREEK DRAFT RECREATION  
MANAGEMENT  
PLAN

Public Meetings Scheduled for Thursday, July 26 in Lowville, Lewis  
County and Camden, Oneida County

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Pete Grannis today announced the release of the East Branch of Fish Creek (EBFC) Draft Recreation Management Plan. The EBFC Plan includes the newly acquired 1,400-acre EBFC State Forest and two "working" forest conservation easements of approximately 44,000 acres across two ownerships as well as East Osceola State Forest and several detached forest preserve parcels in the Lewis County towns of Lewis, Martinsburg, Montague, Osceola, and West Turin. The easements were acquired by the State of New York from the GMO Forestry Fund 3, L.P. (GMO) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC).

"The East Branch of Fish Creek area provides outstanding examples of the multiple sustainable uses of our forest resources. The streams that originate within it are important water sources for nearby communities. EBFC timber is valued by the forest industry; and hunters, anglers, snowmobilers and others utilize the many recreational opportunities afforded by the same forests and streams," Commissioner Grannis said. "This plan represents the best efforts of many parties, including the EBFC Working Group, watershed/supply interests, hunting and fishing clubs, recreationists, the DEC, TNC, and the New York State Tug Hill Commission."

Two public meetings will be held on Thursday, July 26, 2007. These meetings will provide information to the public and provide an opportunity to comment on the Draft Recreation Plan. The first meeting will begin at 2:00 p.m. at the Lowville Firehall on North State Street in the Village of Lowville. Use the entrance on Parkway Drive. The evening meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m. at the Camden High School Cafeteria on the corner of State Route 13 and Florence Hill Road in the Village of Camden. Each meeting will begin with an opportunity to speak one-on-one with DEC staff regarding the management proposals in the EBFC Plan, followed by a formal presentation about the Draft Plan and a chance to offer formal comment in front of the group. Both locations are universally accessible.

This plan has come as a result of the acquisition by DEC of the

East Branch of Fish Creek State Forest and Easements in the core of Tug Hill, the relatively undeveloped forested area east of Lake Ontario and west of the Adirondacks and the Black River Valley. The DEC completed this acquisition, the largest project ever in the Tug Hill Region, in February of 2006. Known originally as the EBFC Project in the New York State Open Space Plan (1998), the People of the State of New York acting through DEC protected approximately 45,000 acres of lands through conservation easements and fee title acquisition on the Tug Hill Plateau.

The Draft Recreation Plan includes an analysis of the natural features of the area and the ability of the land to accommodate public use. The EBFC Plan will direct management activities within the EBFC Area for 10 years following its final adoption by the Department. The planning process is designed to cover all environmental considerations for the project area and forms the basis for proposed recreation management activities.

The DRMP proposes to:

- Maintain and rehabilitate existing facilities (including snowmobile trails, roads and bridges);
- Designate two motor vehicle roads as open for disabled access;
- Install informational, safety and boundary line signage;
- Construct three new trails for non-motorized use;
- Construct three new informational kiosks;
- Construct five parking lots;
- Repair 11.5 miles of access roads; and
- Construct and maintain gates to control public motorized use from occurring on areas where public rights don't exist, or on sections of roads that are not proposed to be open to public use at this time.

The Draft Recreation Plan is available for public review at the DEC headquarters in Albany and DEC Regional Division of Lands and Forests sub-office in Lowville. Paper copies of the Draft Recreation Plan, or a digital copy on CD, are available by writing to the address below or calling (315) 376-3521. A copy of the document is available on the DEC website at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/36158.html> website.

Comments will be accepted until Friday, August 31, 2007 and may be sent to: Fred Munk, Supervising Forester at NYSDEC, Division of Lands and Forests, 7327 State Route 812, Lowville, NY 13367.