

Planning Division 2019 Annual Report

State Lands

State land staff administer the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP) as their primary responsibility. Unit management plans (UMP's) prepared by DEC staff for various areas of the Park must be reviewed to ensure their conformance with the APSLMP's management guidelines and criteria, as do many individual State-land project proposals submitted to APA by DEC. In addition, APA staff provide general guidance and interpretation to both DEC staff and the Agency's Board concerning the APSLMP, they undertake long-range planning efforts for State lands in consultation with DEC, and they develop proposals for substantive revisions of the APSLMP – including the classification and reclassification of State lands in the Park – also in consultation with DEC.

Unit Management Plan Review

UMP's reviewed this year by State land staff and determined by the Agency Board to be consistent with the APSLMP include UMP's for Saranac Lakes Wild Forest, Hammond Pond Wild Forest and Sentinel Range Wilderness. An amendment to the 1995 Blue Mountain Wild Forest UMP was also reviewed and ultimately approved, as was the Generic Travel Corridor UMP developed not by DEC, but by the NYS Department of Transportation – a Plan that is broadly applicable to all State highways across the Park. Individual UMP's for these highways may now be developed in accordance with the Generic UMP.

In work of this type that will continue into 2020, State land staff consulted extensively with DEC staff in the Department's ongoing development of other new UMP's and UMP amendments, namely those for the Crown Point Historic Area, Hinkley Reservoir and Fish Creek Public Campground Intensive Use Areas, Blue Ridge Wilderness, and Lake George and Chazy Highlands Wild Forest Areas. As part of this work, staff participated in a number of public information meetings concerning these draft plans, as well as in a few public meetings held for the newly revised amendment to the 1996 UMP for the Remsen – Lake Placid Travel Corridor.

State Land Planning

Pursuant to commitments made in UMP amendments for the High Peaks Wilderness and Vanderwhacker Mt. Wild Forest, State land staff began work with DEC staff early in the year to develop detailed guidance on an approach to "Wildlands Monitoring" on State lands in the Adirondacks. With assistance from Board member Dr. Chad Dawson, this guidance has been developed in a draft form within the broader framework of a "visitor use management" document – one modeled after the recently published results of a similar effort at the federal level. Staff of our two agencies intend for the work to be completed in 2020. The guidance should provide practical direction to DEC staff in planning and undertaking management actions that address the various impacts of recreational use in the Park in ways that adequately reflect the APSLMP's "carrying capacity" guidelines. In addition to these visitor use management projects, Agency staff

had the opportunity join a High Peaks work group focused on consistently integrating Leave No Trace principles and messaging into public information materials across multiple platforms in the High Peaks region.

Two other draft, interagency guidance documents were advanced with an objective to have them – following Board review for APSLMP compliance – become appendices to the State Land MOU between the Agency and the Department. These address the siting, construction and maintenance of primitive tent sites and cross-country ski trails on Forest Preserve lands in the Adirondack Park. The guidance document regarding primitive tent sites was adopted after the Board’s determination of APSLMP compliance in September. The guidance document regarding cross-country ski trails remains under review. Pursuant to commitments made in UMP amendments for the High Peaks Wilderness Area, Agency and Department staff visited popular rock and ice climbing sites in Keene Valley to assess impacts from climbing and discuss the next steps for developing guidance related to climbing access and the use of fixed anchors.

Staff completed review of twenty-eight project proposals submitted to the Agency for projects across the State lands of the Park in 2019. These consultations are to determine APSLMP compliance and whether or not a wetland permit is needed. Projects ranged in nature from new foot trail construction and re-routing of existing trails, to snowmobile trail bridge replacement and road maintenance activities such as improving drainage.

Regulatory Review

State land staff consulted with Regulatory Program and RASS staff on various State land and DEC conservation easement land projects involving wetlands resulting in the issuance of six wetland permits being.

In August of 2019, staff prepared for publication a new edition of the APSLMP including new definitions and revised management guidelines and criteria for the Travel Corridor section.

Park Policy and Planning

Map Amendments

The Agency approved an amendment to the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan (APLUDP) map that expanded the hamlet of Westport by approximately 32 acres. The Agency worked with the Town of Warrensburg to explore several possible map changes in the Town. Agency staff presented a series of land use and resource limitation maps to the Town to assist with a discussion of potential map amendments. Staff also provided planning assistance to the Town of St Armand. The Agency consulted with the Town of Lake Luzerne and received a request by the Town for an amendment to reclassify approximately 105 acres from Rural Use to Moderate Intensity Use. The Agency will be reviewing and taking action on the request in 2020.

Historic Resource Review

Staff completed required historic resource reviews for various projects throughout the Adirondack Park. These were undertaken in thirteen different Towns, including Minerva, Elizabethtown, Saranac, North Elba, Fort Ann, Lyonsdale, Jay, Dresdan, Thurman, Ticonderoga, Harrietstown, St. Armand, and Johnsburg.

Geographic Information Analysis

Lookup System:

The Agency has been maintaining and improving our “Lookup System” web application. Agency staff has also started research and development on the next generation of the “Lookup System” and will began migrating to *ESRI’s ArcGIS JavaScript* API. The look-up system is a critical tool used by Agency staff for day-to-day research and analysis.

Hardware and Software Improvements:

The Agency has a new GIS server that has been under configuration and modification throughout 2019. Staff have updated and installed all ESRI software versions and other GIS programs as well as continuing the migration of data and the setup of our “Lookup System” on the new server. Agency staff also preformed major software updates to the RASS Division’s 3D Stereo Analyst workstation.

State Land Classification

Staff produced mapping products for State Land Reclassification action involving Gore Mountain Ski Center.

Major Data Improvements:

The Agency depends on high quality GIS data produced internally and received from external sources. Major GIS data updates in 2019 included the addition of 2018 aerial imagery, 2018 tax parcel, Natural Heritage Program, Agency field photo points, Telecommunication data, Agency transactions, and detailed soils data.

Map Production:

Staff update the Agency’s map tracking the permits issued for telecommunications projects in the Park. The map was published on our website and used at r Local Government Day, and as a deliverable for interested consultants.

Website Development:

Staff continued to make updates to the Documents and Publications pages, and Resource Analysis and Scientific Services pages of the Agency’s webpage.

2019 GIS/Web Tasks Summary:

Task	Year to Date
GIS Agency Program Administration	47
GIS Map Production	132
LUA Boundary/Blue Line Inquiry	115
Map Amendments Review	14
State Land Classification/Reclassification Review	8
Web Administration/Content Management	39
Administrative Tasks	13

Local Government Services Program

The Local Government Services Program administers Sections 807 and 808 of the Adirondack Park Agency Act and its implementing regulations. Two program staff provide oversight of the eighteen Agency-approved Local Land Use Programs and review approximately 100 variance referrals and 30-50 zoning amendments annually from the participating program municipalities. Additionally, staff respond to numerous informational requests from local officials within the Park. The workload is driven by strict statutory deadlines for responses to variance referrals and the need to provide timely responses to inquiries from elected and appointed officials.

A summary of Local Government Services accomplishments and reportable items in 2019 is provided in the table below. The information is compiled from LGS Committee monthly reports. The data highlights the number of Adirondack communities and officials that staff consulted with and provided assistance to during the course of 2019. The table also includes the number of intra-Agency consultations with Agency staff and coordination and planning initiatives with other state agencies and regional and state organizations.

Local Government Services Summary of Program Accomplishments and Reportable Items	2019 Totals
Land use regulations consulted/reviewed	35 ⁱ
ALLUP amendments approved	6
ALLUP variances reviewed/reversed	86/1
Comprehensive Plans reviewed	0
Meetings with town officials	11
Responded to land use planning inquiries	152

Training & Workshops provided	2
Intra-Agency local planning assistance	37
<i>“ALLUP” denotes “APA-approved local land use program”</i>	

¹ Includes some amendments that required multiple reviews.

The reportable items in the table above include the following activities in each category:

- In-Park Town and Village Interactions - Of 101 Adirondack Park towns and villages, staff met with or had interactions with 45 of those communities. Interactions include town meetings, training and Local Government Day.
- Land Use Regulations Consulted/Reviewed - Staff are regularly asked to review and comment on local land use laws. Most of the local laws are from municipalities with ALLUPs where the Agency has a statutory requirement to review. Non-ALLUP communities also request review of their local laws to determine compliance with or to avoid conflicts with APA regulations. Staff try to comply with those requests on a case-by-case basis as time permits. In 2019 staff reviewed land use laws from 12 communities in the Park.
- ALLUP Amendments - In 2017 the Agency amended the Delegation Resolution to allow for approval of certain ALLUP amendments under the authority of the Executive Director. This change allowed certain amendments to local land use controls to be approved in-house at the Agency without Agency Board approval. The Agency approved 6 amendments to ALLUPs in 2019. Three amendments were approved pursuant to the Del Res and 2 were by action of the Agency Board.

The Town of Chester, which received original approval in 2005, received Agency Board approval for a rewrite of their zoning code in September of 2019. This was a complete repeal and replacement of their zoning code.

The Town of Indian Lake, which received original approval in 1977, received Agency Board approval for a rewrite of their zoning code in December of 2019. This was a complete repeal and replacement of their zoning code.

The Town of Queensbury, which received original approval in 1981, received Agency approval pursuant to the Del Res for an amendment to its shoreline cutting provisions

The Town of Hague, which received original approval in 1978, received approval pursuant to the Del Res for the adoption of regulations regarding solar installations.

The Town of Lake George, which received original approval in 1978, received Agency approval pursuant to the Del Res for amendments to its zoning code regarding tourist accommodations and short-term rentals.

The Town of Westport, which received original approval in 1996, received Agency approval pursuant to the Del Res for the rezoning of the area subject to Agency Map Amendment 2018-2. The zoning change aligned the Town's zoning district with the Agency's recent reclassification to Hamlet.

- ALLUP Variances - Towns with an ALLUP are required to refer all locally approved variances (outside of Hamlet land use areas) to the Agency. The Agency has 30-days for review in which time it may reverse the local determination if it was not based upon the appropriate statutory basis. In 2019 staff reviewed 86 locally granted variances from ALLUPs with one of the local grants reversed by the Agency. Beginning in 2017, Planning Division staff have worked on adding historic variance data to the Agency's Look-up System. All possible historic variances have now been mapped with 106 records that remain unable to be mapped. Staff has added a notation to the Agency's database to note which variances are not mapped in the system.
- Meetings with Town Officials - Staff regularly meet with elected and appointed officials to discuss Agency and local issues. These meetings occur with individual town representatives or with town boards in public meeting sessions. In 2019 staff conducted 11 meetings with town officials.
- Responding to Land Use Planning Inquiries - Local Government Services staff routinely answer phone calls and respond to emails from local officials to offer both formal advisories and informal guidance. In 2019 staff responded to 152 inquiries from local officials.
- Training & Workshops Provided - Working cooperatively with other state agencies, Agency staff, and local officials, the local planning staff provides training for municipal officials. The largest outreach program is the Adirondack Park Local Government Day Conference. More than 320 people representing 40 Adirondack towns and villages, and 79 other organizations attended the 2019 event. In addition, staff provided a three hour training for real estate professionals. The training covered the Agency and its regulations and was attended by 65 realtors from throughout the Adirondack Park.
- Intra-Agency Local Planning Assistance - Local Government Services staff regularly provide assistance to Agency staff working on projects in towns with an ALLUP and other towns where local laws or processes require clarification. In 2019 local government planning staff provided assistance to other Agency staff on 37 issues involving local zoning matters.

- Agency Board Presentations - The local government services staff presented two items to the Agency Board. Staff presented the towns of Chester and Indian Lake program amendments to the Board for its consideration. Staff also provided the Board with a recap of the program amendments approved pursuant to the Del Res since 2017.

The attached map provides a indicates the towns and villages LGS staff were involved with in the past year and includes such activities as Local Government Day, town meetings, review of local controls, and the Agency's economic program.

2019 APA Local Government Services Staff Interactions

