MINOR PROJECT PERMIT APPLICATION HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook is designed to assist you in completing the Application for a Minor Project Permit (the “Application”) in the Adirondack Park. It explains why certain information is required, and will help you to efficiently provide the information that the Adirondack Park Agency (the “Agency”) needs in order to review your application and to make a decision on whether it should be approved.

A Minor Project Permit is required from the Agency for certain regulated activities within the boundaries of the Adirondack Park, depending on the location of the proposed project. A Minor Project is:

a) the division of land into two lots, parcels or sites, usually for the purposes of sale, lease or gift;
b) the construction of a single family dwelling on an existing or new lot; and
c) the installation of a mobile home on an existing or new lot.

If you do not know whether your Minor Project needs an Agency permit, you may call, write, or visit the Agency’s Jurisdictional Inquiry Office in Ray Brook, NY before completing the Application and staff will assist you. You can also obtain a written determination on whether a permit is needed for your project by completing a Jurisdictional Inquiry Form (“JIF”) and submitting it to the Agency. JIFs may be downloaded from the Agency’s website at www.apa.ny.gov, or will be sent to you upon request. They may also be found in many town or village offices.

Additional resources are available from the Agency’s website at www.apa.ny.gov including:

- Adirondack Park Agency Act
- Adirondack Park Agency Rules and Regulations
- Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan
- Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan Map and State Land Map
- A Citizen’s Guide to Adirondack Park Agency Land Use Regulations

As a cautionary note, you may not lawfully undertake a project which requires an Agency permit before that permit is issued and recorded. Undertaking a project includes such activities as constructing a driveway, clearing trees for a building or wastewater treatment system location, drilling a well, and other similar site-preparation activities. However, property surveys, soils testing, and activities necessary to prepare your application are allowed without a permit.
Thank you for taking the time to carefully complete your application. The more complete
the information that you provide, the quicker the Agency will be able to act on your
application. We encourage you to work closely with the assigned Agency staff person
and to provide necessary information to support your application. Please call if you have
any questions. We also welcome any comments that you have on the Application, this
handbook, or the permit process, so that we can continue to improve our service.

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

The Agency’s commitment to you as the applicant is to make a decision on all permit
applications as quickly as possible. The Agency’s Regulatory Programs Division staff is
dedicated to being responsive to your application and to working with you to review and
process your application efficiently.

You can contribute to a timely decision on your application by carefully and accurately
providing the applicable information and attachments required by the application, and by
providing any additional information needed for the Agency’s review of your application.
While it is not necessary for you to do so, it may shorten the review process if you obtain
professional assistance to conduct any required site analyses and tests (e.g., wetland
boundary flagging, and soils and slopes tests for wastewater treatment systems).

The design of your project may also make a difference in how long the application
review process will take. Careful selection of the areas on your property that are most
suitable for proposed development is an important factor. In general, residential building
sites that are relatively flat, are not located in or near wetlands or floodplains, have well-
drained deep soils, are easily accessible from private or public roads, and have existing
vegetation that can screen proposed development, will require less information and
analysis than proposals involving difficult site conditions.

When an application is received by the Agency, it is assigned to a staff person in the
Regulatory Programs Division. You will receive a Project Notice Form notifying you of the
name of the assigned staff person and the date on which the application was received by
the Agency.

After receipt of your application, the Agency has 15 days to determine if it is “complete.”
An application is considered to be “complete” when all the application questions have
been fully and accurately answered, all the applicable attachments have been
completed and submitted, and no other information is needed in order for the Agency to
make a decision on the proposed project. In some cases, the Agency may request
additional information beyond what the application requires. This generally occurs when
the scope of the proposed project is unclear, the project site has difficult conditions or
sensitive resources, or the history of the site is unclear.

If the application is considered “incomplete,” a Notice of Incomplete Permit Application (NIPA)
is mailed to the applicant that includes a concise list of the information needed to complete
the application. When the Agency receives the information requested in the NIPA, a new 15-
day period begins for the Agency to determine whether the application is “complete.” If the
application remains “incomplete,” a second NIPA will be sent to the applicant.
During the review process, the assigned staff person may contact you to seek clarification of information contained in the application. The staff person will also schedule a site visit with you to review conditions on the project site. Site visits help staff to better understand the proposed project and often provide an opportunity for applicants to improve the design of the proposed project in order to avoid or reduce environmental impacts.

Once the application is deemed to be “complete,” the Agency has 45 days to either issue a permit or to decide to hold a public hearing on the application because of issues that may lead to Agency disapproval of the proposed project. The Agency cannot deny an application without holding a public hearing. This is to provide the applicant with an opportunity to demonstrate that the proposed project meets applicable standards. Hearings on Minor Project Permit Applications are extremely rare, as issues are almost always resolved through the review process, including the site visit.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

These instructions are intended to assist applicants in filling out the Application. The text describes what information is needed and why the Agency requests this information. *The Section numbers refer to the corresponding section on the permit application.*

Section 1. **Project Applicant(s):**

The project applicant(s) is the person or persons who submit an application for Agency approval. Agency regulations require the project applicant(s) to have a legal interest in the property. A legal interest means that you must currently own the property, have an option to buy the property (such as a signed purchase agreement), or have a signed lease to use and develop the property. The project applicant is often the landowner, but may also be the person who has contracted to buy or lease the property. Please provide the name, address, daytime telephone numbers, and FAX number/e-mail address (if available) for each project applicant.

Section 2. **Current Landowner(s):**

Identification of the legal owner(s) of the project site is required for a complete application. Please provide all of the names that appear on the current deed of record to the subject property. Even if the current landowner(s) are not project applicant(s), they must sign the application and will be co-applicants for the proposed project. If a person on the deed is deceased, this should be indicated.

Please attach, as “ATTACHMENT A,” a complete copy of the current recorded deed for the project site, with date, book, and page of recordation with the County Clerk. If you are not the current landowner, please also attach, as part of ATTACHMENT A, relevant portions of an executed purchase contract or agreement to purchase or lease the property in order to establish your legal interest in the project site. You may black out sensitive information such as the purchase or lease price.
Section 3. **Project Site:**

The project site includes all adjoining lands owned by the current landowner(s), including the area of those lands where the project is proposed to occur, without regard to lot lines, public roads, rights of way, or streams. The location of these lands must be provided, as well as the applicable Tax Map Designation number(s), for all applicable municipalities.

The Tax Map Designation number can be found on your Real Property Tax Bill for town and school taxes. It is a three-part, hyphenated number that looks like this example: 40.16-3-09. The number and a copy of the tax map can also be obtained by contacting your local tax assessor’s office or your county’s real property office.

If the project site has shoreline, please provide the name of the waterbody. This information is required because the Agency also administers shoreline restrictions that could affect what approvals are needed for your proposed project and may require a different application.

Section 4. **Project Description:**

The Application for a Minor Project Permit may only be used for proposed projects involving the construction of a single family dwelling or the placement of a mobile home on the project site, and/or a subdivision of the project site to create two lots or sites. If a two-lot subdivision is proposed, the proposal may include the construction of a single family dwelling and/or mobile home on one or both lots. By carefully completing this Section, you can make sure that you are using the right permit application. Please contact the Agency if you think you may need a different application.

Section 5. **Site Plan Map or Subdivision Map:**

The Site Plan Map or Subdivision Map ("ATTACHMENT B") is one of the most important components of your application. It can be a useful tool for locating lot lines and suitable building sites and for describing the proposed project. The goal of the map is to show the location of existing and proposed development in relationship to existing property lines, proposed lot lines, and existing natural features on the property. If your proposed project is approved, the map will become part of the permit that you must follow. This means, for example, that development will be required to be located as shown on the map and lots must be created as they are drawn on the map.

You can draw your map yourself or have it done by a professional, such as a surveyor, architect, landscape architect, or engineer. If project site constraints (e.g., shoreline, wetlands, steep slopes, poor soils) limit the suitability of the land for development or subdivision, Agency staff may request that your map be drawn professionally.

In drawing the map, it is important that you show all of the applicable items listed in the Application. Drawing the map to an appropriate scale will ensure its accuracy. The Site Plan Flyer enclosed with this handbook provides useful guidance for the preparation of your map and an example of a site plan map.

In addition to showing proposed boundary lines and development, please show existing vegetative, wetland and shoreline resources on your map. Please also show existing property boundaries and development on your land, including existing driveways, roads,
parking areas, on-site wastewater treatment systems (OSWTS), water supplies, and public utilities (overhead and underground). Also depict on your map existing structures including, but not limited to, single family dwellings, mobile homes, sheds, signs, fences, docks, decks, and boathouses.

If your project site has shoreline and you propose construction of any kind within 200 feet of the shoreline, you may be asked to have the mean high water mark (MHWM) established (and shown on your map) in order for your application to be considered complete. At your request, Agency staff will determine the MHWM at the project site or you can have the determination made by a NYS-licensed surveyor. If you are unsure of whether the waterbody is considered “navigable,” please contact Agency staff.

One key part of most proposed projects is finding suitable locations for OSWTS(s). Deep-hole soil test pit (DHTP) analysis is used to identify suitable locations. Please show the DHTPs on your map when you are proposing a new or replacement OSWTS. If you are proposing to use an existing system, a 100% replacement area needs to be identified on the map in case of failure of the existing system. Even if you are proposing a vacant lot, in most cases you need to show that there is at least one suitable location for an OSWTS. Where new or replacement systems are proposed, please depict all components on your map, along with a 100% replacement area.

Identifying existing conditions, including the location of DHTPs, early in the design of your project may help you to minimize or avoid impacts and make your proposed project more likely to be approved. For example, incorporating existing development, such as driveways, into your proposed project can usually limit new impacts. Maintaining vegetation between proposed development and public roads or shoreline can limit the visual impact of your project. Avoiding wetlands and maintaining a buffer of vegetation around them will limit the impact of a proposed project on that resource. Finding good soils for OSWTS(s) will likely affect your options for locating a new single family dwelling or mobile home.

Section 6. Proposed Structures:

Please provide, as “ATTACHMENT C,” drawings (Plan view and Elevation view) and a written description of each new structure that you propose to build as part of the proposed project. This includes any single family dwelling, mobile home, guest cottage, garage, shed, boathouse, boardwalk, dock, etc., and all proposed decks, porches and walkways. Each proposed structure should correspond to one drawn on your Site Plan Map or Subdivision Map. From this information, Agency staff can assess whether you need any additional approvals because of, for example, the height of a proposed structure or its proximity to shoreline. It is also useful information in staff’s evaluation of any impacts from the proposed project. For example, the number of proposed bedrooms in a single family dwelling is used to calculate the necessary size of the OSWTS to serve the dwelling.

If no specific building plans are yet proposed (but a vacant lot is being created), then at minimum provide information stating what would be the maximum footprint size, maximum number of bedrooms and maximum height of a prospective single family dwelling on each vacant lot. (The height of the proposed dwelling is measured from the highest point on the structure to the lowest point of existing grade or finished grade.)
Section 7. **Shoreline (Lakes, Ponds, Navigable Rivers and Streams):**

If the project site has shoreline, answer all questions in this section. If there is no shoreline, answer "No" to the first question and go to Section 8 of the Application.

“Shoreline” means that line at which land adjoins the navigable (by boat or canoe) waters of lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams at the mean high water mark (MHWM). The Agency administers shoreline restrictions that impose minimum lot widths, minimum setbacks for principal buildings and accessory structures from the shoreline, limitations on the amount of vegetation that can be removed from shoreline areas, and setbacks for OSWTS(s).

For OSWTS(s), these restrictions also apply to streams that may not be navigable or may not flow year-round. All leaching components of OSWTS(s) must be located at least 100 feet away from the MHWM of all lakes, ponds, rivers and streams in order to comply with the shoreline restrictions.

The minimum structure setback restrictions are intended to protect the scenic, natural appearance of the shoreline by limiting the removal of trees and shrubs and by restricting the placement of structures and vegetation clearing so new development is not highly visible from the adjacent waterbody. The restrictions also help to protect water quality and the shorelines from erosion and pollution. The minimum structure setbacks are measured horizontally from the closest point of the shoreline to any structure greater than 100 square feet in area, including attached decks. There are exceptions for docks and boathouses only.

If the project site is subject to flooding or occurs within a federally designated floodplain, you will be required to determine the floodplain elevation and meet flood-proofing requirements for a complete application.

Section 8. **Wetlands:**

“Wetlands” means any land annually subject to periodic or continual inundation by water (commonly referred to as a bog, swamp, or marsh) and which is either 1 acre or more in size or is located adjacent to a permanent body of water with which there is a free interchange of water, in which case there is no size limit. The Agency protects wetlands because they perform many important functions such as: helping to prevent flood damage and providing stormwater control; providing habitat for fish and wildlife; protecting water resources and watersheds; and providing recreational and educational opportunities.

If there are no wetlands on the project site, answer "No" to the first question and go to Section 9. If the project site has wetlands, answer all questions in this section. If you do not know if there are wetlands, you should consult the official Agency wetlands maps at Agency headquarters in Ray Brook, NY or at appropriate county offices before submitting your application.

If a project site has wetlands and the new land use or development is proposed in or within 200 feet of them, the wetland boundaries will need to be located at the site and shown on the site plan for your application to be considered complete. At the request of the project applicant, Agency staff will confirm the presence of any wetlands at the
project site and determine the boundaries of those wetlands. Agency staff can also offer you suggestions on how your project might be modified to avoid or limit wetland impacts.

If any of the activities listed in Section 8.b. will occur as part of the proposed project in close proximity to or within wetlands, provide a written explanation as "ATTACHMENT D" of the steps that you have taken (1) to avoid wetlands in your project design and (2) to minimize wetland impacts to the maximum extent practicable. Staff may require you to submit a mitigation plan that compensates for impacts to wetlands that will become part of ATTACHMENT D. The plan will be reviewed in accordance with the Agency’s "Compensatory Wetland Mitigation Guidelines" (available from the Agency or the APA website at www.apa.ny.gov).

Section 9. On-site Wastewater Treatment System (OSWTS):

If a new or replacement OSWTS will be part of your proposed project, this section requires the information you will need to provide as part of your application in order to meet applicable standards for such systems. If you think that your proposed system will be located within 200 feet (measured horizontally) from the shoreline of a lake, pond, river or stream, or within 100 feet (measured horizontally) from a wetland, please contact the Agency for additional guidance to save you both time and expense before submitting your application.

The first step in planning for a proposed new or replacement OSWTS is to find suitable soils on the project site to support the proposed system(s) (See Question 9.c.). It is also necessary for each vacant lot that you propose to create, even if you do not propose an OSWTS as part of your project. This is accomplished by your having a DHTP analysis done for each proposed system by a soil evaluator (e.g., a soil scientist, professional engineer, registered architect, certified geologist, or exempt licensed land surveyor), or Agency staff. The analysis should take into account the slope of the existing grade and depth of soils to seasonal high groundwater (from a soil profile description of the DHTP) and bedrock. Agency guidelines specify a minimum soil depth of 24 inches to seasonal high groundwater and 48 inches to bedrock for suitable soils. The report of this analysis must be provided for each proposed system as “ATTACHMENT E” to your application.

Please be aware that all submitted soils data is subject to verification by Agency staff. Agency staff will perform the soils analysis, upon request, for subdivisions involving less than five lots. However, the applicant must provide for a back-hoe and operator to dig the test pit at the time of the scheduled site visit. If you would like for Agency staff to perform the soil examination, then the site visit may be scheduled after the application form has been submitted to the Agency and an Environmental Program Specialist has been assigned to review the application. Please note, however, that the application will not be determined complete until the soil analysis is done and Attachment E is prepared.

Once suitable soils are found, the proposed OSWTS must be designed and provided to the Agency as “ATTACHMENT F” to your application (See Question 9.d.). The plans for the system should include:

a. DHTP location and data;

b. percolation data;

c. details on the design of the system (application rate and number of bedrooms – if the number of bedrooms is unknown, assume four);
d. size and type of septic tank;

e. details on any pumping station, if one is necessary;

f. details on the distribution box; and

g. details on the soil absorption system.

If the minimum soil depth is at least 48 inches to seasonal high groundwater and 72 inches to bedrock, detailed plans for the system(s) may be prepared by a qualified contractor. Otherwise, detailed plans for the system(s) must be prepared by a New York State licensed professional engineer or architect.

For additional information, please refer to the Agency’s *Minimum Requirements for Engineering Plans for On-site Wastewater Treatment Systems*, dated March 2003, available on the Agency’s website at [www.apa.ny.gov](http://www.apa.ny.gov) (look under Documents, and then Guidelines).

If you plan to continue to use an existing OSWTS as part of your proposed project, then Question 9.e. of this section requires you to describe the existing system and its functional condition. The existing system must be adequate to serve any proposed new or expanded use on the project site. You must also identify an area on the project site for a 100% replacement system, and may need to show that there are suitable soils through a DHTP analysis.

If the project site is located in Clinton County, the information required by this section of the application can generally be satisfied by submitting a copy of the application made to and permit issued by the Clinton County Health Department for any OSWTS(s).

**Section 10. Property History:**

Please provide, as “ATTACHMENT G,” all recorded deeds involving the project site from May 22, 1973 (the enactment date of the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan) to the present. This information is needed in order to calculate the building density requirements that apply to the project site. It is also used to determine the full scope of the Agency’s permitting jurisdiction over the proposed project.

Copies of property deeds can be obtained by contacting the county clerk's office in the county where the project site is located and may be attached to a property abstract. The property deeds describe the property boundaries, the property owners, and the date of conveyances. Make a notation on the bottom of each deed indicating what current tax map designation number(s) correspond to each deed.

**Section 11. Historic Preservation Resources:**

If the project site has any major buildings (e.g., houses, barns, commercial buildings) that are more than 50 years old, please attach and label, as “ATTACHMENT H,” separate sheets of 8-1/2” X 11” paper with labeled photographs of each such building. The photos need to have been taken within the last two years and should show all sides of the building(s) and the setting around the building(s). Indicate where the photos were taken on your site plan map. If any of these structures will be removed, re-located, re-constructed, or significantly altered as part of this project, please provide detailed plans.

The Agency requests this information because buildings that are more than 50 years old may be eligible for inclusion on the State or National Register of Historic Places. The
Agency is required to contact the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) regarding any such buildings that may be destroyed, relocated, or significantly altered as part of the proposed project. While there is no prohibition against the removal, re-location, or re-construction of historic buildings, they must be taken into account in the Agency's review of your application.

In addition, your project site may have significant archaeological or landscape resources which have already been surveyed or OPRHP may require that you have an archaeological site survey conducted on your property. The Agency consults with OPRHP in assessing potential impacts on these archaeological and landscape resources.

Section 12. Prior Agency Contact:

Please complete this section if you, your representative, or a previous owner have had any prior contact with the Agency concerning the project site, whether related or unrelated to this proposed project. List any Agency permits, pre-applications, jurisdictional determinations, enforcement cases, or wetland boundary flagging.

Notice of prior Agency contacts and actions relating to this project site or any related project will help Agency staff review your project. Past Agency permits may have allocated building rights or may contain conditions that affect development on the project site. Additionally, the Agency may have information in its files that will help clarify the property history and past development activities on the project site. In some instances, a new permit may not be needed if a previously issued permit for the site can be amended.

Section 13. Deed Restrictions and Easements:

Please provide “ATTACHMENT I” if there are any existing deed restrictions, easements, or rights-of-way associated with the project site.

Please provide “ATTACHMENT J” only if you are proposing to include language in a deed that would create easements over the project site or would impose development restrictions on a lot or lots being conveyed. This often addresses the use of common property such as roads, beaches, docks, or water systems. If a parcel is to be conveyed as a non-building lot, provide a draft deed with appropriate covenants against building and, if relevant, require a merger of lots.

Proposed deed restrictions, easements, and rights-of-way need to be consistent with the Adirondack Park Agency Act. They may also affect how the Agency applies the overall intensity guidelines and shoreline restrictions to the property being conveyed or to the property with which the conveyed land may be merged.

Section 14. Other Governmental Reviews:

Section 14 of the Application requires information to confirm that local government officials in the municipality where the project site is located are aware of the proposed project. This is important because the Agency cannot approve a project which has been denied a local permit or which is a prohibited use under local zoning requirements and other local laws or ordinances.
Before you submit your application to the Agency, please contact the appropriate town, village, and county officials to find out whether any local approvals are required for any part of your proposed project. Please also submit, as “ATTACHMENT K,” the Local Government Notice Form that is enclosed with the Application. This form must be filled out and signed by an appropriate official (e.g., Zoning Administrator, Building Inspector, Planning Board Chairman) from the municipality in which your project is located. The local government officials should be supplied with the same project plans that are provided to the Agency.

If local approval has been obtained for the proposed project, then provide documentation (e.g., permit, site plan approval, or final subdivision plat) to the Agency which confirms that the project has been approved pursuant to all applicable town and county laws, including any necessary approvals from local planning and zoning boards. Additionally, please provide a copy of the relevant minutes of all local meetings at which the proposed project was discussed. (This last request is continuous and therefore the information should be provided to the Agency as it becomes available).

Please also submit, as “ATTACHMENT L,” copies of all permits, approvals, or determinations that you have received from any other state or federal agency for any aspect of your proposed project.

You should be aware that application for and receipt of an Agency permit does not substitute for other required local, state, and federal permits. You should not assume that one agency will necessarily inform another agency about your project. The following agencies may become involved if your project will involve certain activities (this is a partial list intended for illustration and information):

The NYS Department of Health (Regional or County offices) - if you are proposing alternate systems to conventional wastewater treatment systems.

The NYS Department of Transportation (County Resident Engineer) - if you are proposing a new driveway entrance onto a state highway.

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (Region 5 or 6 offices) - if you are proposing to work in or disturb the bed or banks of streams, rivers, ponds or lakes or by clearing, grading, or grubbing more than 5 acres of land or applying pesticides.

The NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation - if buildings 50 years or older will be affected by the project or the property has the potential to contain important archeological sites.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Troy or Buffalo) - if you are proposing to affect wetlands or other surface water bodies by grading, filling, excavating, draining or constructing retaining walls.

The Lake George Park Commission - if you are proposing to construct roads, dwellings, docks, or boathouses within the Lake George Park or if you require a stormwater permit within the Lake George Park.
Section 15. **Authorization and Signatures:**

Signatures must be provided from each landowner named on the deed of record or the land purchase contract agreement. Signatures must also be provided from all the project applicants listed in Section 1 of the Application (if persons other than the landowner(s)).

**Review of the application cannot begin until all required signatures are provided.**

Section 16. **Authorized Representative:**

Complete this section only if you decide to have someone else act on your behalf before the Agency. Some people designate a surveyor, architect, real estate agent, or lawyer to act as their authorized representative. All contact regarding your application will then be directed to your designated Authorized Representative. It is not necessary to have an Authorized Representative and most project applicants for minor projects do not. If you elect to have an Authorized Representative, please have that person sign the Application in the space provided in Section 16.

Enclosure: Site Plan Flyer
TIPS ON DRAWING LOT LINES AND SITE PLANS

ABOUT LOT LINES

- When subdividing land for building lots, locating and drawing the final lot lines should be done only after locating good access and building locations on each lot, including appropriate areas for wastewater treatment and water supply systems. The final lot lines should accommodate the proposed development areas and meet minimum land use area requirements such as minimum lot size, shoreline restrictions, and highway setbacks.

- Agency staff can better understand and review your project if proposed lot lines and driveway, house, and wastewater treatment locations are marked with wooden stakes or flagging prior to the scheduled site visit.

TIPS ON MAKING A SITE PLAN MAP

- Use a copy of an existing survey map as a base map for your site plan if one is available, or use a tax map at a large enough scale to clearly show the proposed development locations and details as specified in the application form.

- Make the map as large as possible. Recommended scales are 1" = 20', 1" = 50' or 1" = 100'. If the project property is so large that a plan at these scales would be larger than 2 feet by 3 feet, provide two maps, one map showing the entire project property at a smaller scale (e.g., 1" = 400') and the other showing the development area(s) at a scale of 1" = 20' or 1" = 50'. It is important that all the development features are drawn to scale to help demonstrate whether there is adequate room on the site for the proposed development, including meeting required setbacks from shorelines, wetlands and highways.

- See the following sample site plan for a two lot subdivision. Lot 1 has an existing single family dwelling and Lot 2 will contain a new single family dwelling. A site plan for development of one lot would be similar.