ADIRONDACK PARK ▸ HIGH PEAKS
VISITOR USE MANAGEMENT

High Peaks Visitor Use Management Project Online Public Meeting #2 Synthesis
June 27, 2024

Background

On June 27, 2024, an online public meeting was convened under the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Visitor Use Management (VUM) Project to address the following purposes:

1. Provide participants an overview of the High Peaks Visitor Use Management Study currently underway, including its purpose, expected study outcomes, and how NYSDEC will use the outcomes.
2. Inform participants about the draft desired conditions and indicators developed by the project team through its data collection and analysis, public input, High Peaks Stakeholder Working Group input and feedback, and NYSDEC direction.
3. Provide a conceptual overview to participants of how thresholds and capacities will be developed.
4. Hear from participants about potential management strategies and actions that could potentially close the gap between existing and desired conditions.

The public meeting was structured into three distinct parts. First, Part 1 consisted of a welcome address and project overview presentation followed by a question-and-answer session. Next, part 2 consisted of a presentation on key project components, specifically desired conditions, indicators, thresholds, and capacities, followed by a question-and-answer session. Finally, Part 3 consisted of facilitated group discussions to share ideas for potential management strategies and actions. See Appendix A for the meeting agenda, Appendix B for the meeting slide deck, and Appendix C for the discussion group materials. Meeting participants were automatically assigned to one of three groups for facilitated discussion during Part 3 of the public meeting. The public meeting closed with an overview of next steps for the NYSDEC VUM Project. 292 individuals registered for the meeting in advance, and 102 individuals attended the online meeting. Representatives from Ross Strategic, DJ&A, and NYSDEC facilitated the meeting presentations and group discussions.

Visit the project website (www.highpeaksvum.com) to view a recording of the presentation portions of the online public meeting.

Part 1: Welcome and Overview

The meeting began with a welcome and meeting overview provided by lead facilitator Susan Hayman (Ross Strategic).[1] Next, Josh Clague (NYSDEC) and Abbie Larkin (DJ&A)[2] provided background information and an overview of the NYSDEC VUM project for the High Peaks project area. Part 1

[1] Ross Strategic is part of the broader project team, which includes Otak who holds the project contract.
[2] DJ&A is part of the broader project team, which includes Otak who holds the project contract.

concluded with an open question and answer session facilitated by Susan Hayman. The following questions were presented by participants in the open question and answer session:

- **What is the composition of the project team?** Otak holds the consultation contract. DJ&A is the technical subcontractor and part of the project team. Ross Strategic provides facilitation and is also part of the project team.
- **Have there been other public meetings?** This project includes two rounds of public meetings. The first public meeting was held in-person in Saranac Lake. The team received feedback that this meeting format likely excluded interests and people from other areas/regions. The project team decided to host the second meeting virtually to expand the opportunity for inclusion.
- **What is the VUM project budget amount?** The NYSDEC VUM project budget is approximately $600,000, which covers both the High Peaks VUM project and the Kaaterskill Clove VUM project.

Part 2: Key Components

During Part 2, Abbie Larkin (DJ&A) delivered a presentation on key project components. The presentation included information about the development of draft desired conditions and potential indicators, and a conceptual overview of thresholds and capacities. Part 2 concluded with an open question and answer session facilitated by Susan Hayman. The following questions were presented by participants in the open question and answer session:

- **Is the list of potential indicators comprehensive of the desired conditions themes?** Indicators do not have a 1-1 relationship with desired condition themes, but in fact can serve as a measurable proxy of multiple themes at once. That way, a limited list of key indicators can be developed to address desired conditions.
- **How will you examine the relationship of visitor use levels, resource degradation, and impacts to visitors' experiences?** The desired conditions do reference natural resources conditions, however this project is focused on visitors' experiences and public safety. NYSDEC is leading other projects focused on natural resource conditions.
- **Why do the desired conditions themes appear redundant?** The themes represent more detailed desired conditions statements which cover different but related aspects of the landscape, and of visitors' experiences and public safety in the project area.
- **Why is *opportunities for solitude* included as a component of desired conditions and linked to conditions on Mt. Marcy summit?** *Opportunities for solitude* is a component of the legal definition of designated Wilderness and is consistent with the legal mandate for management of the project area, including Mt. Marcy summit. The desired conditions include *opportunities for solitude* in order to reflect this legal definition. The project team recognizes that *solitude* is not a requirement for all times/locations, and may not be a current visitor expectation or condition across the project area. Nevertheless, *opportunities for solitude* is an important condition to include in desired conditions and to address with the VUM framework. The project team is also assessing levels of visitor use that results in conditions of crowding separately from *opportunities for solitude*.
- **What was included in the summer 2023 onsite data collection effort?** The project team designed an onsite data collection study that included trail and traffic counters, people-per-viewscape counts, GPS tracking of visitor use patterns, parking counts. One or more of these

types of data were collected at the Adirondack Loj, the Garden, and Cascade during peak visitor use periods in August. Data collection was designed to strategically leverage project resources and to focus on primary visitor access points and during peak use periods. The draft VUM report will contain detailed information about the onsite data collection effort.

- **How is the VUM project related to NYSDEC's existing unit management plan (UMP) process?** This VUM project was a recommendation in the 2018 UMP amendment and is happening outside of the UMP process. Depending on the VUM project recommendations, a UMP amendment may be needed. For the future, the UMP process may include a VUM project, or VUM may continue to occur outside of the UMP process.
- **How will thresholds be informed and established?** NYSDEC is primarily responsible for establishing thresholds. The project team will leverage the 2023 data collection results, input from the High Peaks Stakeholder Working Group, and literature reviews of previous studies and management plans for other similar locations to help inform NYSDEC. Depending on management strategies and monitoring results, thresholds can be revisited and adapted over time as part of the adaptive VUM framework.
- **Will there be an opportunity to review and comment on draft desired condition statements?** Draft desired condition statements will be part of the draft plan that will go out for public review and comment in the fall. The project team will review and respond to comments and produce a final report later this year.
- **Where is project information publicly accessible?** Documents from the May 2023 public meeting and from the High Peaks Stakeholder Working Group meetings are posted on the website. Background information is also available on the project website. The draft report will synthesize and present project findings and recommendations and will be provided for public review and comment later this fall prior to finalizing.

Following Part 2, the online meeting was paused for a 10-minute break. The online meeting resumed with Part 3 following the break.

Part 3: Facilitated Group Discussion for Potential Management Strategies and Actions

Part 3 consisted of facilitated group discussions to share ideas for potential management strategies and actions that could potentially close the gap between existing and desired conditions. Participants were automatically assigned to one of three groups for facilitated discussion. Each group used a designated section on a Mural board to collect participants' input on the following topics:

1. What potential management solutions do you think are needed for high quality visitor experiences?
2. What potential management solutions do you think are needed for public safety?

Each group's designated section of the Mural board contained a project area map, a series of text boxes to the left of the map, and a separate series of text boxes with corresponding numbers to the right of the map (see Appendix C). Participants were instructed to use the text boxes to the left of the map to provide input on overall management strategies and actions, and to use the text boxes with corresponding numbers to the right of the map to provide input on location-specific management strategies and actions. For location-specific management strategies and actions, participants were instructed to move the corresponding number to indicate the appropriate location for the specific

management strategy or action on the map. Participants were also able to add reactions (e.g., "thumbs up") to affirm input provided by others on the Mural board. Susan Hayman described the exercise to all participants, and group facilitators reinforced the exercise directions after participants were assigned to a group. Following the facilitated group discussion, each facilitator provided a report-out of key themes. Susan Hayman facilitated a brief discussion following the report-out. The following themes emerged during the facilitated group discussions and related report-out:

- **Increased education and outreach:** Take as a first step and focus on instilling desired conditions, LNT, hiker preparedness and etiquette, and setting visitor expectations for peak hours, parking conditions, and trail conditions. Mechanisms could include "reminder" signs near trailheads and other onsite infrastructure, onsite personnel, low-cost safety courses, social media and other online messaging, coordination with local businesses, and partnerships with DEC. Specific suggestions include:
    - Messaging that:
        - Target first time visitors.
        - Report travel times at I-87 Exit 30.
        - Explain conservation easements and identify if you are recreating on private or public lands.
    - Trip planning tools using AI to predict best times to visit destinations.
    - Dashboard that reports trailhead congestion and redirects use to non-High Peaks units.
    - Annual use permit that requires a safety course and provides funds for trail maintenance and rangers.
    - Charging a fee for rescues that result from lack of preparedness.
    - Ongoing support for the Adirondack Mountain Club's Summit Stewards Program.
    - Support for Cascade Welcome Center, High Peaks Information Center, and other staffed visitor information centers at high traffic access points along Route 73 and elsewhere.
    - Development of an indicator that directly addresses education and outreach.
- **Sustainable trail maintenance and design:** Repair and upgrade existing trails using modern tools and standards, focusing resources on trails identified as "high use" or where current conditions negatively impact visitors' experiences. Fund a professional trail crew and leverage partnerships. Consider legal aspects of trail construction, and that trail difficulty can be an important limiting factor for some hikers. Specific suggestions include:
    - Focus resources on repairing trunk trails.
    - Consider fencing to protect sensitive alpine vegetation.
    - Crowdsource locations that need maintenance.
    - Develop new trailheads and trails to disperse visitors, like in the White Mountains, NH.
    - Develop new and better trail connections (Marshall-Iroquois example).
    - Specific trail suggestions include:
        - Harden old Cascade Trail instead of building a new trail.
        - Great Range trail (Armstrong ladder, Basin shoulder to Saddleback).
- **Add/improve infrastructure:** In parking lots, at trailheads, and at trail junctions. Specific suggestions include:
    - Toilets and other long-term strategies for managing human waste in all seasons.
    - Garbage bins.
    - Clearer trail markers.

- **Increased support for administrative personnel**: Including Forest Rangers, stewardship staff, and volunteers, specifically at parking areas and for rescues.
- **Parking and transportation improvements:** Some participants suggested aligning parking and transportation infrastructure with recreation demand, including expanding parking, developing a reliable and effective shuttle network, and implementing related transportation actions. Others suggested leveraging parking and transportation systems as limiting factors, including lowering driving speeds overall or during peak periods to promote safety, and limiting use based on available parking capacity. Specific suggestions included:
    - Expand parking at the following locations:
        - Along Loj Rd (others suggested limiting parking here).
        - Chapel Pond Pass.
        - Beer Walls along Route 73.
        - Jewels and Gems climbing area.
        - Round Pond Trailhead.
        - DEC-controlled parking opportunities along Route 73.
    - Develop shuttle options, such as:
        - Elk Lake to Round Pond traverse.
        - ADK Loj to Roostercomb for Great Range traverse.
        - Giant to Rocky Peak Ridge traverse.
        - Lake Placid to ADK Loj.
        - Connect to AMR/Roaring Brook.
        - 24-hour route options.
        - Routes that connect to alternative access points and hotels.
        - Requiring educational resources on shuttles.
        - Secure DEC funding/support for Keene Shuttle.
        - Identify private shuttle service partnerships.
    - Implement transportation actions, such as:
        - Reduce travel speed on Route 73 near AMR.
        - Remove roadside barriers on Route 73 near AMR.
        - Tickets/enforcement for illegal parking.
        - Install traffic cameras at safety bottlenecks on Route 73.
- **Visitor use limits:** Participants shared mixed support for limiting visitor use in the High Peaks. Many shared experiences with and perspectives on the Adirondack Mountain Reserve (AMR) hiker parking reservation system managed through the Ausable Club. Some expressed concern for a lack of equity and flexibility in the AMR system and visitor use limits in general, emphasizing that access to public lands should not be restricted. Others advocated for a local or park-resident exemption to any visitor use limits. Still others supported visitor use limits and recognizing the need for limits to protect the environment. Specific suggestions included:
    - Implementing an AMR-like permit system at the Garden and the ADK Loj but with first-come-first-serve opportunities for equity.
    - Developing visitor use limits that include flexibility, such as same day cancellation and reservation opportunities and walk-in and bike-in opportunities.
    - Limiting future reservation opportunities for users that repeatedly do not show up for their reservation.

    - Connecting visitor use limits with opportunities for education and outreach.
- **Ongoing monitoring and data collection:** Using surveys and other social science research methods to ensure that public perspectives are representative, inclusive, and input is balanced.
- **Opportunities for solitude:** Participants shared mixed reactions to the idea of managing for opportunities for solitude in the High Peaks. Some stated that opportunities for solitude is not a realistic goal for the landscape, particularly for 46er trails and summits. Others were concerned that managing for opportunities for solitude would limit access for others. Still others recognized that the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan calls for *opportunities for solitude* in Wilderness areas and that Article XIV could be interpreted as requiring opportunities for solitude as part of the area's *forever wild* mandate.

Next Steps

The following summarizes next steps for the NYSDEC VUM Project:

- A recording of the presentation portions of this meeting will be posted to the project website;
- Public meeting notes will be synthesized and shared via the project website;
- Public meeting feedback and synthesis will be incorporated into future internal planning workshops;
- Public comments can be submitted on an ongoing basis via email (vum-facilitators@rossstrategic.com) and the project website.
- A draft report and monitoring plan will be shared for public review and comment. Following the standard NYSDEC public comment process, responses will be provided to comments received and related revisions will be incorporated into a final report.

Please visit the project website for future updates on the project: www.highpeaksvum.com

Appendix A: Meeting Agenda

High Peaks Visitor Use Management Project
Online Public Meeting
Thursday, June 27, 2024; 5:00-8:00pm Eastern
Registration Required--REGISTER HERE

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Meeting Purpose:

1. Provide participants an overview of the High Peaks Visitor Use Management Study currently underway, including its purpose, expected study outcomes, and how the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) will use the outcomes.
2. Inform participants about the draft desired conditions and indicators developed by the project team through its data collection and analysis, public input, High Peaks. Stakeholder Working Group input and feedback, and NYSDEC direction.
3. Provide a conceptual overview to participants of how thresholds and capacities will be developed.
4. Hear from participants about potential management strategies and actions that could potentially close the gap between existing and desired conditions.

Time	Topic/Speakers
5:00 p.m.	Gathering—Susan Hayman, Facilitator; Josh Clague, NYSDEC • Welcome and purpose for the meeting • Meeting overview, introductions
5:15 p.m.	Visitor Use Management Project—John Clague; Abbie Larkin, Consultant Team • Purpose, expected outcomes, how the study outcomes will be used • Q&A
5:30 p.m.	Desired Conditions, Indicators, Thresholds, and Capacities—Abbie Larkin • Presentation and Clarifying Q&A
6:10 p.m.	Break
6:20 p.m.	Management Strategies—Discussion Groups
7:45 p.m.	Next Steps, Closing—Susan Hayman, Josh Clague
8:00 p.m.	Adjourn

Thank you for attending tonight's meeting!
Questions about the public process? Please email vum-facilitators@rossstrategic.com
or visit the project website at https://www.highpeaksvum.com/

Appendix B: Meeting Slide Deck

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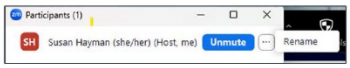
Zoom Reminders

- Rename yourself in the participant list and include your affiliation.



- Turn your video on

(if able) when speaking to better engage with the group.
- Mute your microphone

to reduce background noise for others.
- Use the

feature or

to ask questions.
- Use the

feature to message the Host if you have Zoom-related questions.

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Welcome and Meeting Overview

Josh Clague, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Susan Hayman, Ross Strategic (Consulting Team)

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Meeting Purpose

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Meeting Overview

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5:30 pm	Desired Conditions, Indicators, Thresholds, and Capacities • Presentation and Clarifying Q&A
6:10 pm	Break
6:20 pm	Management Strategies—Discussion Groups
7:45 pm	Next Steps, Closing—Susan, Josh
8:00 pm	Adjourn

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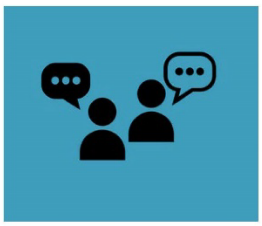
Guidelines for Tonight

1. Assume good intent from others
2. Be respectful and kind when speaking
3. Actively participate and share your perspectives
4. Actively listen -- make space for others to be heard
5. Follow guidance from the facilitator



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Visitor Use Management Project

Josh Clague, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Abbie Larkin, DJ&A (Consulting Team)

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Project Purpose

Implement the Visitor Use Management Framework (VUMF) and conduct a visitor use management planning process, with a focus on experiential, social, and public safety elements of visitor use management and visitor capacities, to promote sustainable visitor use.

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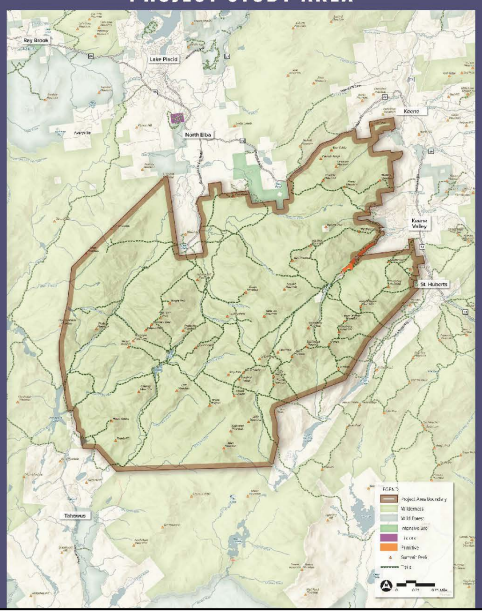
PROJECT STUDY AREA



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Key Visitor Use Issues

Summer peak season

- Traffic and parking demand
- Visitor safety along roadways
- Visitor crowding and congestion
- Visitor-behavior related impacts to natural resources
- Lack of visitor education and preparedness

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Visitor Use Management Framework (VUMF)

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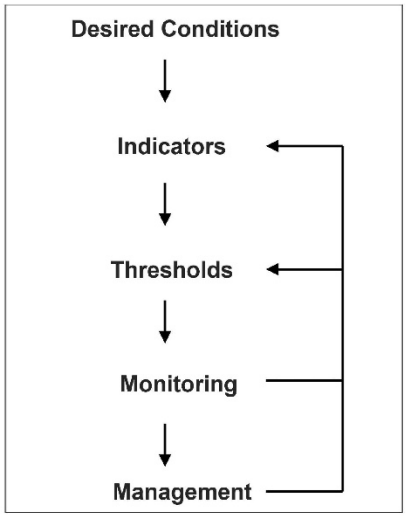
INTERAGENCY VISITOR USE MANAGEMENT COUNCIL



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VUM Process Inputs

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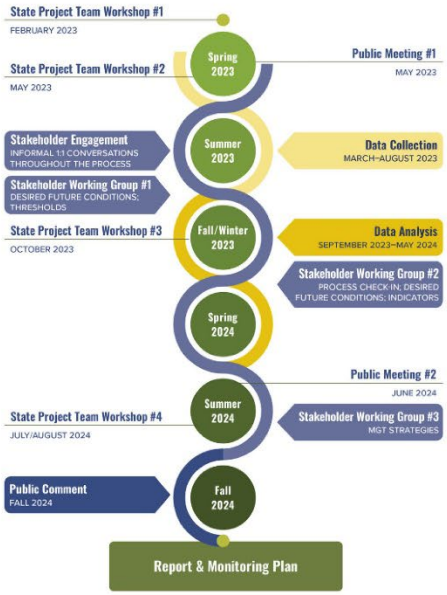

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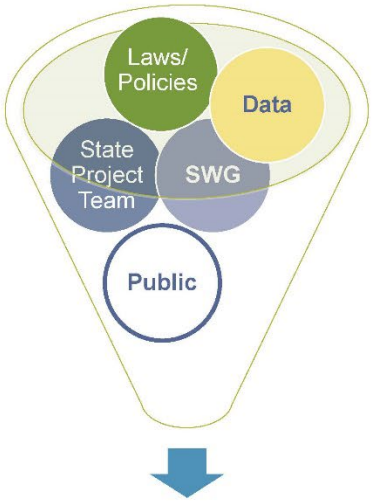
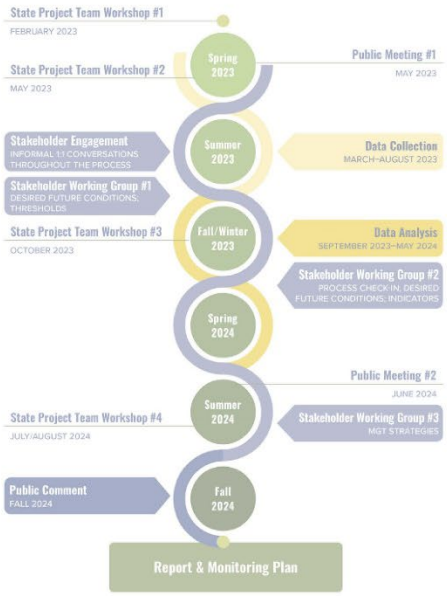
VUM Process Inputs



High Peaks VUM



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Questions?

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Key Components:

Desired Conditions, Indicators, Thresholds & Capacities

Abbie Larkin, DJ&A (Consulting Team)

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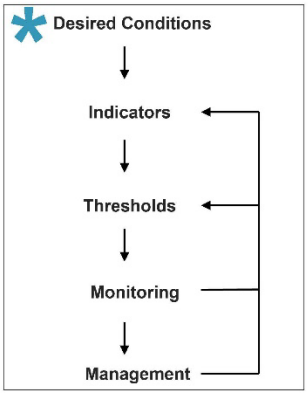
Desired Conditions

- Aspirational, narrative statements
- Legislation, policies, management direction
- State project team input
- Stakeholder working group input
- Public meeting #1 input
- Public website
- Onsite visitor use survey



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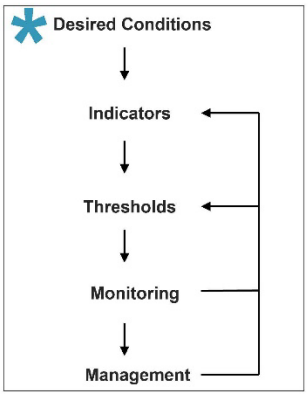
Desired Conditions – Key Themes

- Predominance of nature and Wilderness
- Opportunities for solitude
- Spectrum of recreation opportunities
- Visitors do not feel crowded
- Promotion of representation, inclusion, access
- Parking is safe and convenient
- Traffic does not result in congestion and does not impact local residents
- Information and education
- Engagement with partner organizations and local communities



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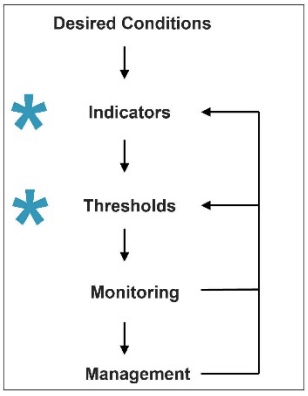
Indicators and Thresholds

- Measurable proxies of desired conditions
- Articulate minimally acceptable conditions
- Informed by data collection
- Must be feasible and practical



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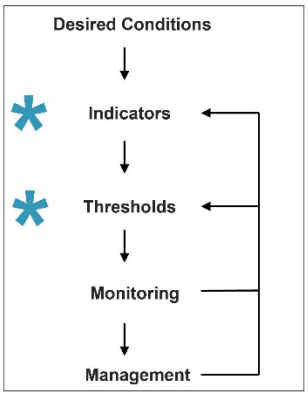
Potential Indicators

- People-per-viewscape on mountain summits
- Intergroup encounters on trails
- Parking congestion in select parking areas



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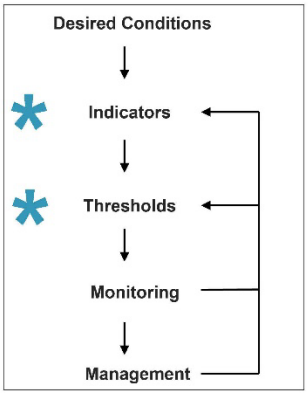
Visitor Capacities (where needed)

- Level of use that can be accommodated without exceeding thresholds
- Data-driven statistical relationships



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Key Components Examples

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DESIRED CONDITIONS

- Predominance of nature and Wilderness
- Opportunities for solitude

→

INDICATORS AND THRESHOLDS

- X People-per-viewscape on mountain summits

→

CAPACITIES

- Up to YYYY people per day at the access points

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Questions?

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We will resume at 6:25 p.m.

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Discussion Groups

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Potential Management Actions and Strategies

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"HOW"

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Discussion Group Process

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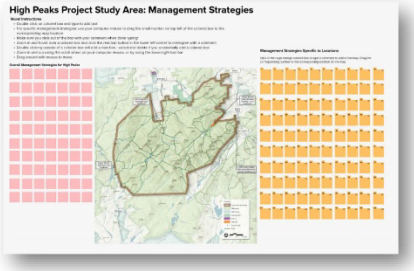
1. Automatically be moved into one of three discussion groups.
2. Each discussion group will discuss the same topic and use the same map
   - What potential management solutions do you think are needed for high quality visitor experiences?
   - What potential management solutions do you think are needed for public safety?
3. Discussion group facilitator will screen share a virtual whiteboard (Mural) for collecting participants' input.
4. Everyone returns to the full group for the report-out.



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Report-out and Discussion

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Next Steps

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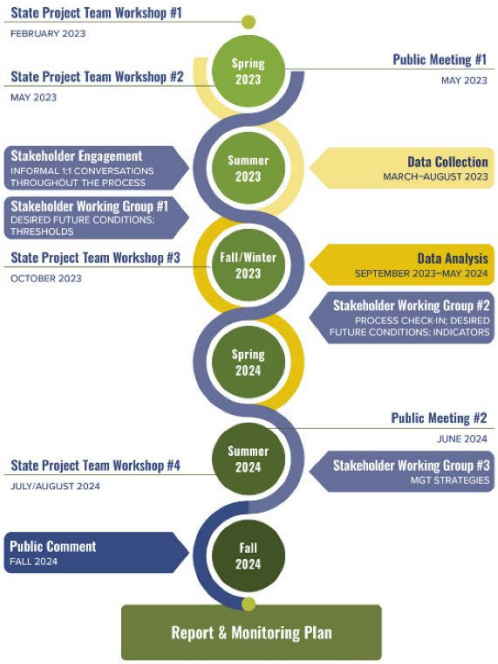

Next Steps

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- Meeting synthesis
- Website updates as information becomes available
- Public comment: Draft report and monitoring plan

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More Thoughts to Share?

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Comments are welcome throughout the process and may be submitted in the following ways:

1. By email to: vum-facilitators@rossstrategic.com
2. Through the project website at: https://www.highpeaksvum.com/
3. No access to internet to submit comments? Send written comments to:

   Josh Clague
   625 Broadway, 5th Floor
   Albany, NY 12233-4254

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Closing Remarks

Josh Clague, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

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Thank you for participating!

For more information, visit our project website: https://www.highpeaksvum.com/

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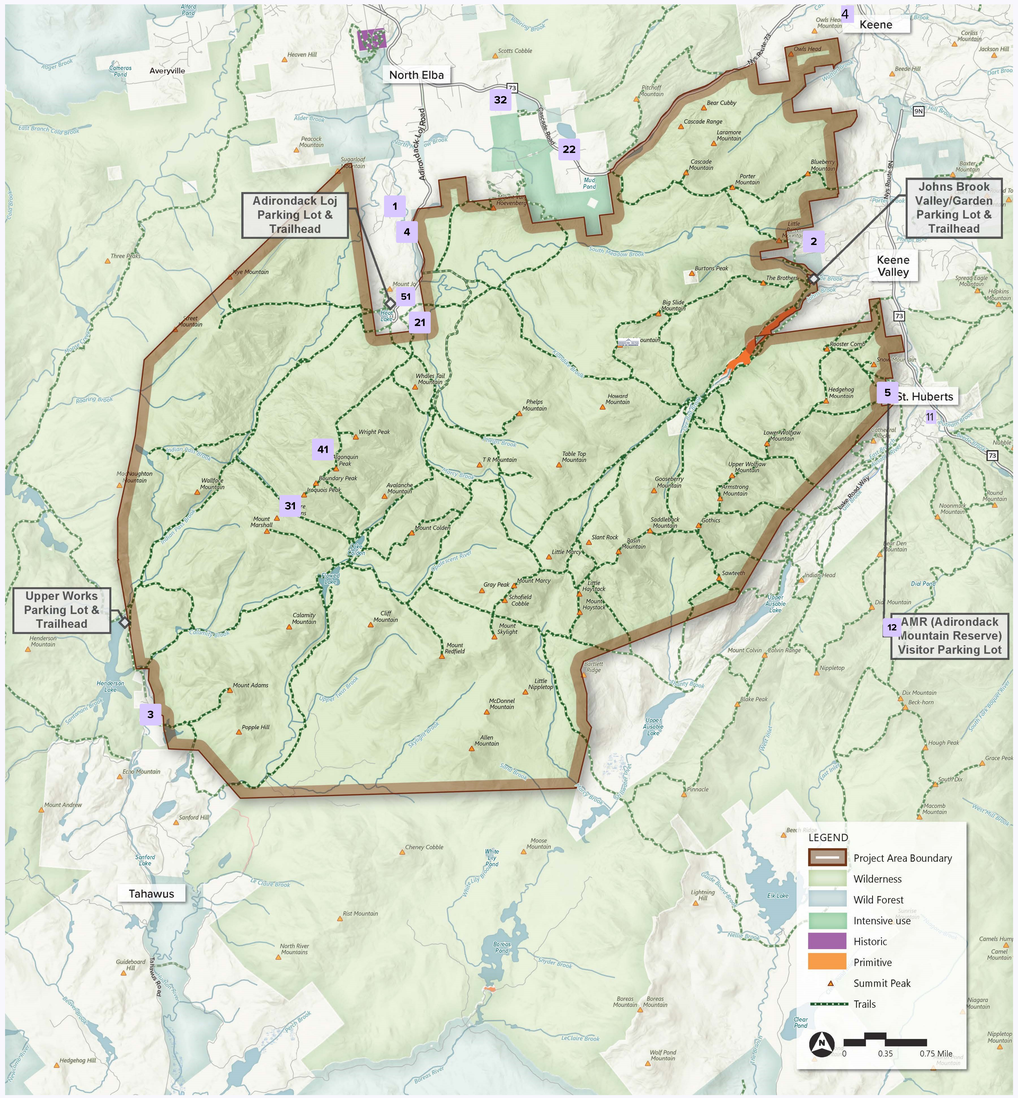
Appendix C: Discussion Groups 1-3 Mural Board Screen Shots (zoom in to view)

Appendix C: Group 1—Discussion Group Mural Board Screen Shots (zoom in to view)

Group 1

Overall Management Strategies for High Peaks

- Create dashboard that shows how congested different trailheads are to dredriect use.
- Providing more education to the public: on overall trial /hiking/ camping/ /outdoor etiquette
- employ more rangers!
- If a permit system is implied, there should be some consideration for those whom live within the blue line, should be able to get a low fee for a season and it is unfair if we are not able to use our own backyard due to visitors
- Q: Why was this existing shuttle abandoned? Does this make a future shuttle option less likely?
- Identify private shuttle service partnerships.
- what happens for those whom already pay fees for hunting / fishing licenses which use the high peaks for those recreational opportunities?
- Re point above - ideally tie this to an opportunity to redirect use to non-High Peaks units.
- Hire more professional trail crew with different focuses. Some with long term projects. Some with Short Term projects (think of like fixing potholes)
- condition of trails has a direct connection to visitor experience and safety. invest in sustainable trail repair and development
- Reduce overall use - limit numbers to protect the environment or save what is left
- Focus on HP trail maintenance/ conditions - people want HPs, not to be dispersed elsewhere. Leave the rest wilder
- Conduct education and outreach campaign prior ahead and prepare. Promotion the coordination of messaging and promotion of products and goals (in setting a plan), including LNT messaging, preparedness, conditions, availability, trail conditions, regulations
- Create indicators for education and information. These could be behavior based that impact visitor experience and safety
- develop a culture of strong positive communication between DEC and operational partners and municipalities
- Address trunk trail degradation. Set an agenda for trunk trail maintenance and rebuilding. Pair with the communication program to inform and educate users and the general public
- Any permit system must set aside at least 50% of spaces for first-come first served. Many people prefer winging out of the woods that day with the family or pick situation that allows them to reserve ahead of time.
- Chapel Pond Pass needs more parking
- Beer walls along Rt 73 needs more parking
- Jewels and Gems climbing area parking area needs to be expanded.
- Not everyone has same desires (e.g. solitude)
- Continue to Fund and support stewardship programs for the High Peaks region
- Cascade Mountain has a solution already in process to handle traffic and safety
- Research and implement a long-term strategy for managing human waste in the High Peaks Wilderness
- The Ausable Mountain Club reservation system failed. People made reservations and never showed.
- Create a robust system of volunteer trail maintainers like they have in the Whites so that rainfall doesn't ruin the trails.
- increase backcountry presence of stewards and Forest Rangers
- people should be charged a fee if they need to be rescued due to not being prepared for their hike.
- Need more understanding of what solitude will mean for people
- Increase support for LNT and preparedness education and outreach
- Shuttle that runs from Elk Lake to Round Pond to people can traverse w/o needing two cars
- Shuttle that runs from Loj to Roosterconb so people can do the GRT with one car (and only taking one parking space)
- 24 hour shuttle that people will actually use (not a 12 hour one that nobody wants)
- Recognize that the difficulty of the trails help reduce number of hikers over time
- Education/information/ parking hubs need to be developed in the HPs. Locations should have infrastructure in place to support this operation (e restroom, charging stations, parking spaces, a real-time communication system).
- We need to be able to manage numbers somehow.
- legal aspect of how many trails when thinking about rebuilding trails
- Reclessly HPs as Wild Forest so we don't have to listen to "opportunites for solitute" from the locals that just want to keep people out
- New trailheads and/or new trails to disperse visitors. The Whites have multiple trails to each summit. The ADK usually has one or at most two. Expand Adirondack Loj and Upper Pond Parking and trail systems
- add staffed visitor information centers on high traffic access points. Use the Loj as a hub to provide touch points for education and redirection as needed
- Add sufficient parking at Round Pond Trailhead (Dix Range)
- Limiting #rs is done in many places in the world and works to protect resources -ok not hiking anything whenever want
- Some locations have more expectations for solitude than others (e.g. Mashall but probably not Marcy)
- Direct users to places outside of the High Peaks!
- Establish a local economy based upon building and maintaining infrastructure along trails, hiring of forest rangers, assistant forest rangers, stewards and support and education initiative.
- Why can't parking spots be used to manage users. limit the parking in locations like the Cascade corridor. tickets for violators
- Work on stabilizing the degraded steep sections on the Cascade corridor. Ski season is approaching Armstrong Ladder, More recently descending Boom Shoulder to Saddleback rather than Cascade. Cannot go without any attention
- Crowd souce areas needed for trail maintenance through use of an app that would ID by photo and include GPS location.
- I know it's wilderness but maybe it's really time to put some fencing in to protect the most sensitive trailside alpine vegitation that's at risk.



Management Strategies Specific to Locations

Click in the large purple-colored box to type a comment to add to the map. Drag the corresponding number to the corresponding location on the map

- 1: Infrastucture tha will support parking and shuttle service from Lake Placid to the Loj
- 2: Infrastructure to provide parking and shuttle service to Garden trailhead, AMR, Giant trailhead and Dix Round Pond
- 3: All season toilet. One that's there gets snowed in
- 4: billboards with 4-5 keys points for hiker best practices (or requirements) - like hiking boots, ankle supporting footwear; headlights
- 5: (Hubert st SE) leavin, 30% of spots for day of, and limiting sign up if a user repeatedly no shows, also good location for visitor education
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- 11: Run a special shuttle corresponding to the RPR Giant Traverse
- 12: Get rid of reservation system at AMR or improve it to include same day cancelation and reservation. Allow walk ins/bike-ins
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- 21: continue support for the High Peaks Information center
- 22: continue educational outreach along rt 73
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- 31: Better trail design and connections; but there are limits; Marshall-Iroquois example
- 32: continue support for cascade welcome center
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- 41: continue and increase support for summit stewards
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- 51: Limit parking on Loj Road.
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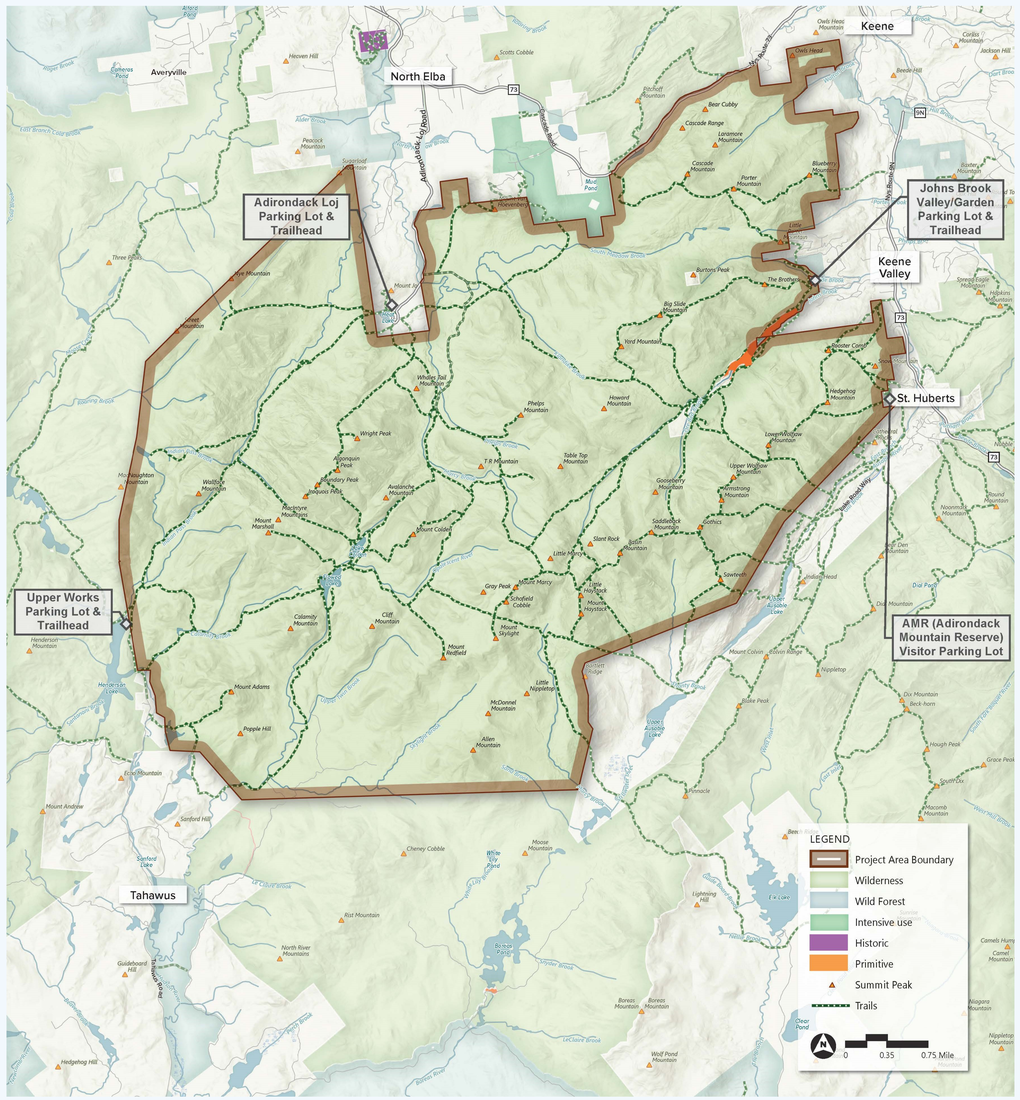
Appendix C: Group 2—Discussion Group Mural Board Screen Shots (zoom in to view)

Group 2

Overall Management Strategies for High Peaks

- If limiting visitors is the goal, why not just limit parking at trailheads and strictly enforce no parking on the side of roads rules? As opposed to a permitting system?
- Increase shuttle capacity to reduce dangerous parking on roads
- NYS Constitution Forever Wild Clause requires it be kept as "wild forever" and this language has been interpreted to apply to the forest, waters, fish and game, trees and could be interpreted to include "quiet" as well. The State constitution requires people get to experience a "wild" experience. That includes solitude
- Leverage Cascade Welcome Center to advise visitors of currently capacities at popular locations.
- SLMP says: has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive experience in a place of recreation. How will VUM balance both values?
- Provide education at popular trailheads to increase hiker safety and reduce burden on DEC responders
- Enable trip planning tools that use IA to help predict "best time to go" to a given location.
- Reinforce trails so hikers can enjoy for decades to come (Cascade is a great example)
- Enable variable speed limits on Rt. 73 during peak times to promote safety.
- Local residents (per town on NY State ID) exempt from permit limitations
- Create additional DEC parking areas not reliant on partnering orgs (ex. Rt. 73). The two largest parking areas are privately controlled by the AMR and ADK Mtn Club.
- Add trailhead infrastructure/ personnel to educate hikers to prevent misuse of the resource (which is often conflated with overuse).
- Align infrastucture with demand.
- Targeted messaging for first time visitors that promotes desired



Management Strategies Specific to Locations

Click in the large blue-colored box to type a comment to add to the map. Drag the corresponding number to the corresponding location on the map.

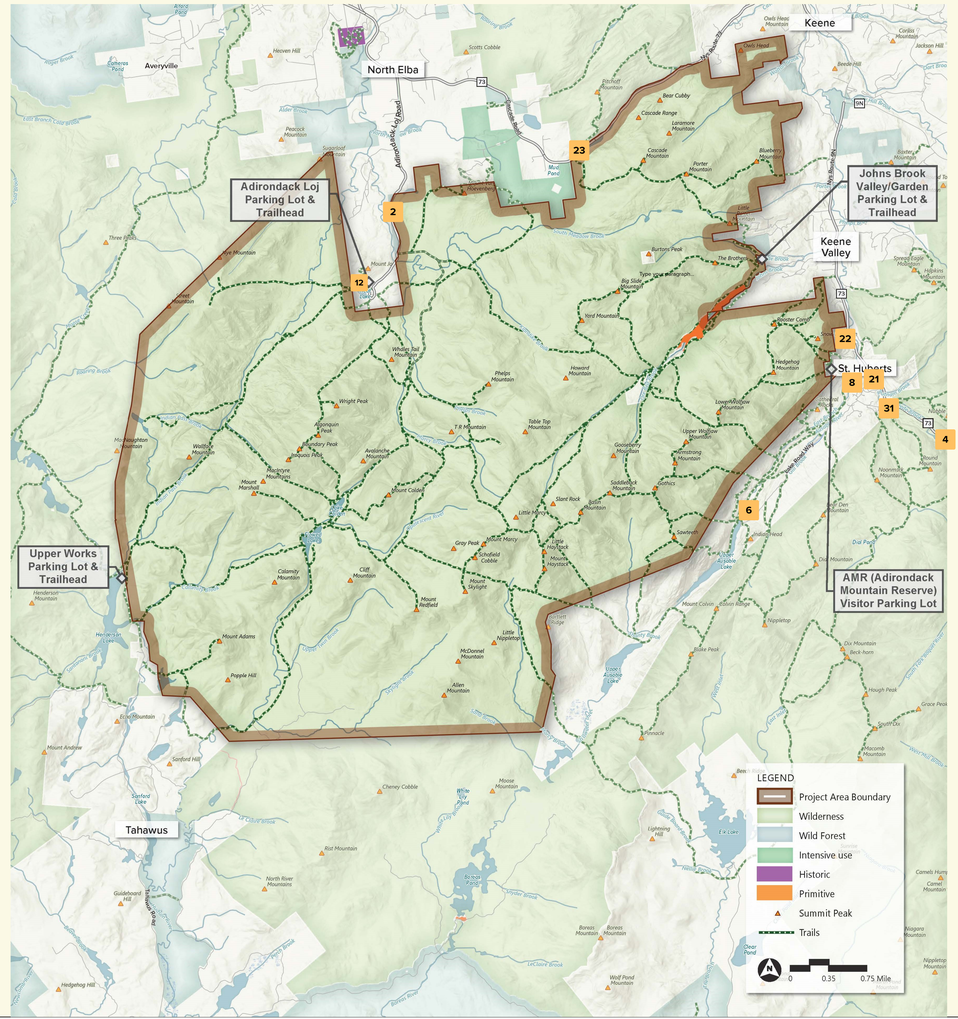
- 1 ...ail trails to 46 high peaks should be excluded from this management plan based on solitude, viewscapes etc.

Appendix C: Group 3—Discussion Group Mural Board Screen Shots (zoom in to view)

Group 3

Overall Management Strategies for High Peaks

- Parking needs to improved, not limited. Why not lower speeds in roadside parking areas to improve safety.
- Work with state legislature and DEC to allow trail rehabilitation and reconstruction to modern standards using power tools
- Conduct regular surveys to ensure that visitor use is not heavily biased to any particular socioeconomic or regional group (i.e., representation, inclusion access)
- Use already existing data and ongoing research
- install 'reminder' signs shortly after trailheads to remind hikers to turn back if they forgot their headlamp, phone, gps, etc. – to cut down on unnecessary rescues
- Seek additional funding for the hiker shuttle – the main barrier to use is its unreliability (on a day-to-day and headway basis)
- Launch a hiker shuttle to alternative access points (e.g., AMR, Elk Lake, Etc.) from the rest stop on I-87
- Public input and knowledge sharing sessions could be a regular occurrence rather than an event
- Use good social science methods to balance input from stakeholder groups, ensuring (1) a representative sample of the population; (2) ensure the loudest are not the most heard
- The High Peaks are the Crown Jewels of the park, expectations of solitude are just not realistic. There are many other areas in the park where those who desire solitude can go.
- High peak shuttle service to the hotels, which would reduce vehicle traffic
- Increase numbers of Forest Rangers - more resources for education at parking areas, and more manpower when rescues are needed.
- Conduct greater outreach with the broader user community – current stakeholder outreach has been dramatically limited to local stakeholders
- Large professional and funded trail crew to do some real hardening of heavily used trails.
- More toilets and bins at the trailheads to help to keep the trails clean
- There is a need for more Forest Rangers
- Do not define "no traffic jams" as a central criteria for a singular natural resource
- Work with local businesses to provide a simplified "starter list" for new hikers (like the 10 essentials)
- Better signage /Education to help improve visitor safety
- Definitely more rangers
- Enhance funding for, and partnerships, with other groups for trail maineneance and visitor education.
- Education on available GPS tools/maps like AllTrails Pro, Garmin inReach
- Offer Free or low cost Wilderness Public Safety courses that include LNT principles, wilderness first aid, "what to pack", etc.
- Beyond signage, and better trails, "safety" should be up to individual users.
- Designate certain trails as "high-use trails" (e.g., Van Hoevenberg) and provide improved signs, trail markers, and demarcation/cairns where appropriate
- Connect trail maintenance (including maintenance of trail markers) to DEC rescue efforts, when you have to rescue someone evaluate how they got lost and try to remediate it
- Leverage social media to provide information in real-time/easy to educate on peak visitor times, parking information, trail conditions, etc. Many people are asking a lot of repetitive posts in facebook groups asking the same questions on parking, trail conditions
- 4 Items to Fix 90% of the problems in the HP - better parking, better bathrooms, a place to put trash, and harden the trails.
- More messaging about what "solitude" can mean in some studies, the – perceived crowding and the – sight sighting can be different studies and perceived crowding can lessen the wilderness experience in through of no sightings of other people. Research may report that there was no, or few, sightings of people, but the "Hiker Thought" - not necessarily to quantitative research - "I felt like I having those "positive" feelings or – why busy parts can lack
- Better trail markers on herd paths, warnings at trailheads if there are significant water crossings
- REAL bathroom (think concrete vault toilets like out West) at every major trail intersection - this will really reduce inappropriate waste habits in the High Peaks.
- Safety - Fix existing bridges/water crossings that have failed infrastructure or washed away completely
- May be unpopular opinion - low-cost annual "permit" to help fund more seasonal rangers by those using the trails. We safety course with mandatory quiz, and a limited – monitor number of visitors – Hard to physically "enforce" but could be a great video series posted to open video sites
- education - perhaps online hiker education to supplement on-site efforts. we need to do something – the current situation is pooring prepared hikers. We need to reduce need for rescues
- Permit/Reservation systems are not fair to anyone - locals or visitors, and should not be considered.
- I'd support funding of a shuttle - any shuttle with edu resources. Unfortunately this can create a grouping experience for users
- Those insisting on solictude or reducing traffic is limiting access to others.
- The Adirondacks is unlike other parks where these issues have been dealt with. Everyone loves this park and access to our public lands should not be restricted.



Management Strategies Specific to Locations

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Click in the large orange-colored box to type a comment to add to the map. Drag the corresponding number to the corresponding location on the map

- 1 Add text
- 2 Add expanded Newcomb parking on Loj Rd
- 4 Provide signage at Exit 30 on I-87 indicating travel time to Keene/Placid instead of general "seek other trailheads" message
- 5 Permit system at the Garden
- 6 Eminent domain to purchase the AMR - private ownership has no role in the heart of the EHPWA
- 8 Work with NYSDOT to change the speed limit to remoce unnecessary and constructive barriers to use of the AMR
- 11 research suggests that folks don't necessarily understand how conservation easements work and/or weither or not they are recreating on public or private land
- 12 Can you please add this in relation to the ADK Loj parking lot: try implementing a reservation system similar to the one at the AMR, with some spots also available for frisb come, first parked.
- 14 Provide DEC support/funding for Keene Shuttle and extend to AMR/ Roaring Brook
- 21 Install traffic cameras on key safety bottlenecks on 73 instead of limiting user access to trailheads
- 22 Evaluate a history of actual road safety on 73 to respond to unsubstantiated claims of safety barriers
- 23 Harden the existing Cascade Trail instead of closing it
- 24 7
- 31
- 51 5 1