

## **Twin Sheds Unit Management Plan Public Meeting Comment Summary**

### **Purpose**

This document briefly summarizes the initial public comments received prior to the development of the Twin Sheds Unit Management Plan. It is being sent to people and groups that have participated in the initial public participation process and DEC Adopt-A-Natural Resource volunteers. The DEC greatly appreciates the time and talents that people donate and bring to the planning process.

### **Background**

In January of 2010 the DEC Division of Lands and Forests in Cortland, New York began seeking public participation in order to develop the draft Twin Sheds Unit Management Plan. Located in New York's Central-Southern Tier, the Twin Sheds Unit includes both the Hammond and Yellow Barn State Forests. Together, both State Forests cover about 5,000 acres of public open space (nearly 8 square miles). Because of their size and close proximity to the communities of Cortland, Dryden and Ithaca, Cornell University, Ithaca College and Tompkins-Cortland Community College, the unit's forests are highly valued for open space and recreational services they provide to the public. Public participation is an important part of the planning process. DEC manages, conserves, enhances and protects State Forests for many recreational and ecosystem based values, products and services such as diverse wildlife habitat, soil and water conservation, recreation and carbon sequestration.

Public participation was sought through press releases, public information notices, email and direct mailing to about 500 potentially affected stakeholders such as nearby residents, town officials, recreational groups, DEC Adopt-A-Natural Resource volunteers and advocacy groups. On February 11, 2010 a public information meeting was held at Tompkins-Cortland Community College. The goal of the meeting was to introduce the unit management planning process and develop effective dialogue between stakeholders and DEC's State Forest land managers. To gather public comments, a public comment card and 8 dialogue/comment gathering stations with large paper pads were provided. As the large paper pads were filled with comments, they were placed on the wall for all to see. The meeting was successful as 87 people attended and 118 comments were received during the 30 day comment period that followed. Table 1 shows the distribution of how comments were received. Ninety percent of the comments were received during the public information meeting on an index card or easel/paper pad. The comments are highly valued by state forest managers and are used to help guide the development of the unit management plan and have been placed in a Microsoft Access database for future reference. It should be noted that the names and contact information associated with each comment card, email or letter are not publicly shared without the comment author's permission in order to protect individual privacy.

Comment Format Type	Number	Percentage
Public Comment Index Card	62	53
Easel/Paper Pad	44	37
Emails	7	6
Emails with Letters Attached	5	4
Total	118	100

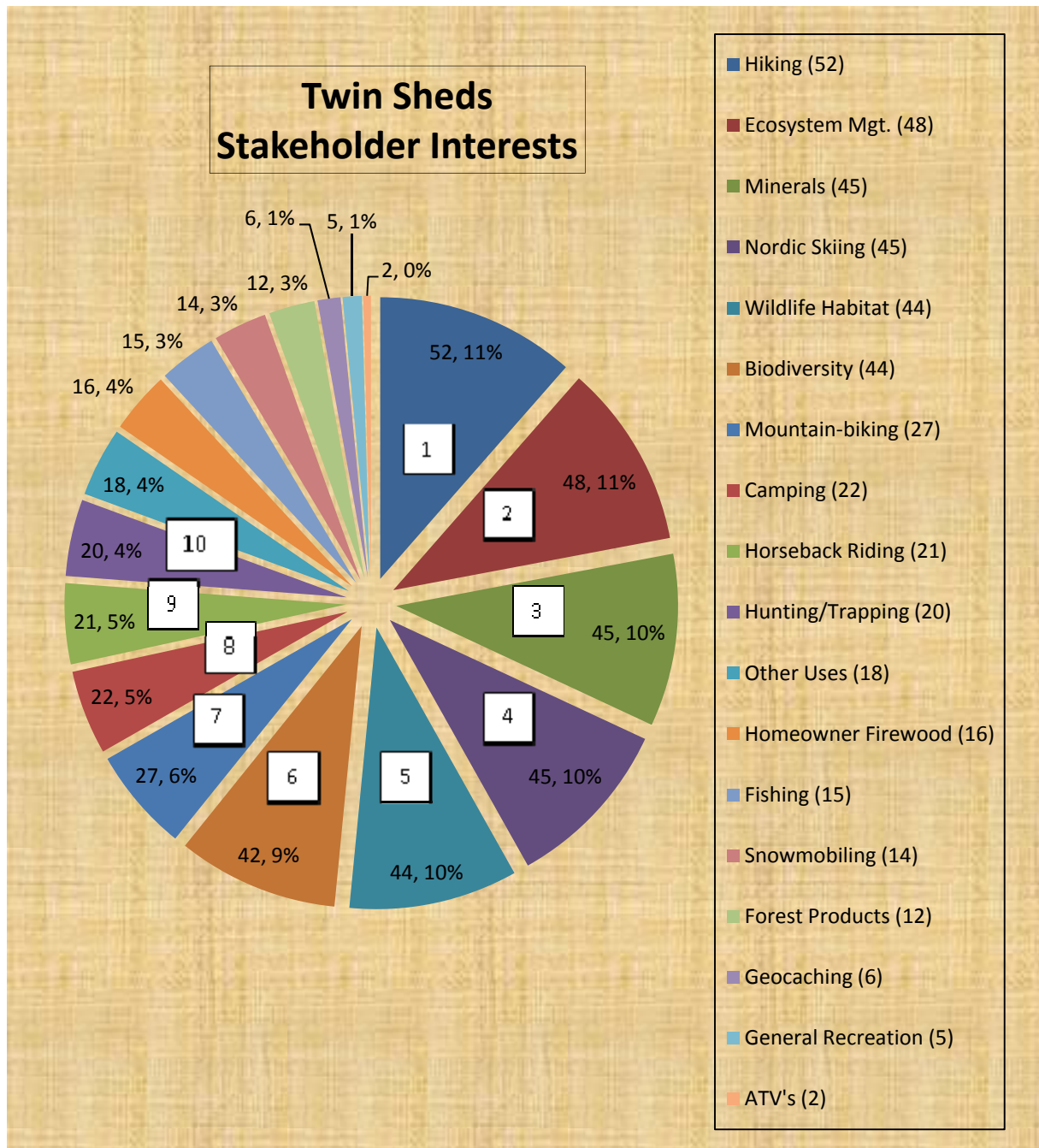


Figure 1 - Interests provided to the DEC during the initial public participation process. The number in parenthesis represents the number of responses in each interest category.

Figure 1 shows interests based on stakeholder comments reported to the DEC through the first part of the public participation process. Stakeholders often selected several interests, so the total number of responses greatly exceeds the number of respondents. The top ten interests based on stakeholder interest responses gathered through the public participation process are: hiking (11%), ecosystem management (11%), minerals (10%), Nordic skiing (10%), wildlife habitat (10%), biodiversity (9%), mountain-biking (6%), camping (5%), horseback riding (5%) and hunting/trapping (4%). Together, the top ten interests account for 81% of all responses. The diversity of responses point out how highly valued these working forests are to a wide variety of stakeholders. It should be noted that the results

reported here must be carefully interpreted and used only as a guide, because not every potentially affected stakeholder choose (or had the time or other resources) to attend the meeting, write an email or send correspondence. Additionally, it is impossible to identify and reach every potentially affected stakeholder through the public participation process. Fortunately, many people are interested in the Twin Sheds unit and the level of participation was high when compared to planning units located further away from population centers.

Table 2 lists the comments which were written by stakeholders on the various easels pads and placed along the walls for viewing during the public information meeting held on February 11 at Tompkins-Cortland Community College. Identical comments are listed only once. A complete list of all of the written comments received (without the name or address of the author) is available from the DEC upon request.

<b>Table 2 - Comments from Public Information Meeting Easel Pads</b>
Maintain no ATV policy.
Keep ATV's and motorcycles out.
The return of black bear, bobcat and fisher are proof of a healthy ecosystem.
Use even-aged treatments to regenerate early successional forest communities; this is essential if we are to stop/reverse declines in wildlife populations that require young forest.
Promote early successional (habitat) on forests.
Do not disturb Lady Slipper growth areas.
Protect orchid habitats with no harvest zones.
Create jobs in the rural areas by harvesting timber.
Manage the forest for wood products and timber.
Focus tree harvest(s) on non- native tree plantations.
Allow natural forest regeneration/planting of native tree species.
State Forests should be managed based on science.
Keep the forests healthy by planning ahead for insect infestations and using control methods to minimize mortality and recover value.
Protect the water!
Maintain hiking trails, particularly regarding disruption from gas drilling.
Keep the Finger Lakes Trail (for) high quality hiking.
Keep trails open to horses.
Increase deer hunting limits to reduce deer population that is decimating tree re-growth.
Manage deer population to reduce impacts to native vegetation.
Deer are the #1 threat to native flora - population needs to be reduced.
No gas leases - too important for recreation and for protecting water (much of which drains to Cayuga Lake which is drinking water source for much of Tompkins County.
No natural gas drilling in Hammond Hill SF. Too disruptive to unique ecosystems and recreation.
No drilling in State Forests, no destruction or fragmentation of habitat, no pollution of streams.
Do not nominate Hammond Hill or Yellow Barn for oil and gas leasing, the long term costs far outweigh any short term profits.
Keep the trails uncomplicated by gas drilling infrastructure and pipelines.

<b>Table 2 - Comments from Public Information Meeting Easel Pads</b>
Ban hydro-fracking on these State Lands.
Eliminate gas drilling in any forest land or any adjacent lands.
Share the trails lovingly.
Keep trail registers more up to date.
Hammond Hill parking gets very full, especially on week ends (10-12 trailers max).
New maps of Hammond Hill are useless, go back to the old maps.
Keep existing snowmobile trails open.
Have option to expand snowmobile trail.

### **Next Steps**

DEC is starting to write the draft Twin Sheds Unit Management Plan. Once the draft is completed, additional mailings and a public meeting will be held to gather comments on the draft plan.

*Thank you* to everyone that participated.

### **On Behalf of the Twin Sheds Unit Management Plan Team:**

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*March 2010*