



President
Larry Koch
518.891.2835
koch.larry@gmail.com

Vice-President
David Powalyk
518.369.4878
dpowalyk@nycap.rr.com

Secretary
Lynn Harrison
973-219-9457
Lah2127@aol.com

Treasurer
Jay Kapolka
518.359.7298
mjkcpa@comcast.net

September 13, 2023

Josh Houghton
NYS DEC Bureau of Recreation
625 Broadway
Albany, New York 12233-5253

Dear Mr. Houghton,

This letter represents the Upper Saranac Lake Association's comments relevant to the UMP for the Rollins Pond campgrounds in the town of Santa Clara. Rollins Pond campground has provided wonderful camping experiences for almost 70 years. The DEC developed UMP for the facility provides a great framework for updating and enhancing the campers experience while visiting the pristine waters of the Upper Saranac Lake watershed.

The Upper Saranac Lake Association represents about 500 members, most of which own property on the shores on Upper Saranac Lake, Fish Creek ponds and several ponds in the Saranac Inn area. The purposes for which the USLA corporation is organized are: to preserve, enhance and protect the natural beauties and environmental purity of Upper Saranac Lake, its adjoining waters and the adjacent lands and forests; to encourage and assist in improving the recreational enjoyment of these waters and lands without thereby degrading or deteriorating the natural environmental quality thereof and generally to conserve and protect the interests of owners and tenants of the area embraced within the Upper Saranac Lake watershed.

The UMP contains many suggested improvements to the Rollins Pond campgrounds. We agree with the replacement of obsolete comfort stations and associated septic systems, replacement of the water systems, replacement of the paved surfaces and movement of the boat launch, developing a playground, along with shoreline stabilization/restoration efforts including tree/shrub plantings. All of these improvements will enhance camper experiences while revitalizing the environmental beauty of the facility.

What concerns us is what is missing from the UMP: an in-depth discussion on management of pond water quality and control of invasive species. This Association, the Upper Saranac Foundation and NY State have invested a lot of resources to remove and control milfoil in Fish Creek ponds and by extension, Upper Saranac Lake.



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The Foundation continues that effort up stream while maintaining already cleaned-up areas. Milfoil removal is a continuous process; any progress is lost with even short term neglect. Every new boat entering the Rolling Pond represents a possible new hazard. To maintain progress in this area we recommend the following suggestions as part of the UMP:

- Require every boat that enters the campground be inspected for invasive species at the main gate by Watershed personnel.
- Provide a hot water, high pressure boat decontamination station at the boat launch ramp site for Watershed personnel use.
- Allow use of the boat launch ramp during hours when it can be staffed by Watershed personnel
- Conduct training of campground DEC employees on the importance of maintaining water quality and invasive species mitigation so they can become part of the overall effort in their daily work.

Lastly, while the UMP states the number of campsites will not increase, the enhanced quality of the campground will inherently increase demand, hence usage. The UMP should include a study of both campground and pond capacity to handle the camper/boat load. An overloaded facility increases sound, light and groundwater pollution along with additional traffic and garbage. The negative impact of overloading on the environmental will slowly degrade the overall experience for both campers and the local population.

The campground allows for a large number of people to enjoy the beautiful Upper Saranac watershed and the greater Adirondack Park. In general, we welcome the suggested upgrades to the facility but ask that the DEC also recognize the substantial investment in maintaining the watershed environment for all users made by campground neighbors. We ask that they work with all stakeholders to enhance and maintain the pristine waters for future generations.

Regards,

Larry Koch
President

Dave Powalyk
Vice President

cc: Tom Swayne, USL Foundation