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DEC releases temporary access plan for Boreas Ponds

<http://www.adirondackdailyenterprise.com/page/content.detail/id/565247/DEC-releases-temporary-access-plan-for-Boreas-Ponds.html?nav=5008>

By JUSTIN A. LEVINE

Technically, the 20,700-acre Boreas Ponds tract has been open to the public since the state bought it in May, but there was no state guidance on how to use the land until Wednesday afternoon, when the Department of Environmental Conservation released a temporary access plan.

The plan calls for access for paddlers, hikers, bikers and horseback riders, and will be implemented until a permanent plan can be constructed. The DEC said in a press release that the temporary plan will have no impact on future use and access decisions.

The plan calls for about 25 miles of existing roads to be open to horse riders and horse-drawn wagons. The road to Boreas Dam will be open from the Blue Ridge Road to bicyclists and hikers, and 3.2 miles of Gulf Brook Road will be open to motor vehicle access.

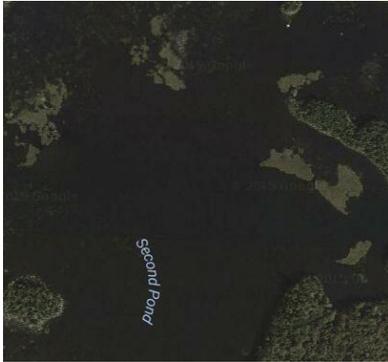


Boreas Ponds, nestled against the Adirondack High Peaks, is seen from the air in September 2008. (Enterprise photo — Mike Lynch)

The DEC noted that the entirety of the land is currently open to hikers, hunters, trappers, snowshoers and cross-country skiers, except for 1-acre parcels around leased hunting camps. Those camps have leases that extend until 2018.

No official camping sites have been established, but camping is allowed on all lands, provided the site is at least 150 feet from any road or waterbody.

Paddlers will need to complete a 2.5-mile carry to access waterways that lead to Boreas Pond.



Boreas Ponds
North Hudson, NY 12855

Eight parking areas have been established by the DEC and the town of North Hudson. Sand Pond Road, Gulf Brook Road and Ragged Mountain Road all have parking areas for vehicles and horse trailers. Two other parking areas have been established along Elk Lake Road, and three seasonal parking areas are along Gulf Brook Road. The Gulf Brook parking areas will be closed during winter and mud season.

Parking will also be allowed anywhere along Blue Ridge Road and Elk Lake Road as long as the vehicle doesn't block a road or gate.

Current lease holders are still allowed to use motor vehicles to access their camps.

While the land is now open to the public since the state completed the purchase of the property from the Adirondack Chapter of the Nature Conservancy in May, the Conservancy still has administrative rights and obligations to the DEC.

The Conservancy will remove all the hunting camps after the leases run out and relinquish responsibility for the lands in 2020.

In the beginning of August, the Conservancy hired a contractor to remove the 3,300-square-foot lodge that was on the shore of Boreas Pond. The structure had been touted as a potential ranger outpost or business opportunity, but Rob Davies, director of DEC's Division of Lands and Forests, told the Adirondack Almanack at the time of the removal that the state saw the cost of upkeep and its designation as a non-conforming structure as reasons to take it down.