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Parts Of Boreas Ponds Tract Opened To Motor Vehicles, Bicycles

<http://www.adirondackalmanack.com/2016/08/dec-opens-vehicles-part-road-boreas-ponds.html>

by [Phil Brown](#)



Map provided by DEC shows which roads will be open to vehicles, bikes, and horses.

In a long-awaited interim-access plan for the Boreas Ponds Tract, the state has opened to motor vehicles part of a former logging road leading to Boreas Ponds and opened all of the road to bicycles.

The future of the dirt thoroughfare, known as Gulf Brook Road, has been the subject of [several articles](#) and much debate on *Adirondack Almanack* and in the *Adirondack Explorer* newsmagazine.

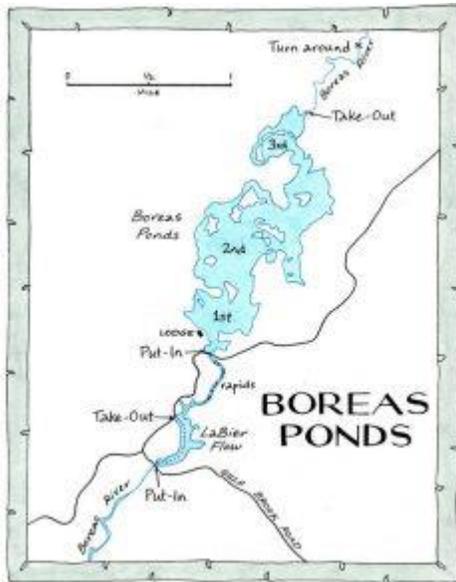
Gulf Brook Road starts at County Route 2 (also known as the Boreas Road or Blue Ridge Road) and leads in 6.7 miles to the dam at Boreas Ponds. On Wednesday afternoon, state Department of Environmental Conservation announced that the first 3.2 miles will be open to motor vehicles and that mountain bikers will be able to pedal all the way to the dam.

In addition, about 25 miles of former logging roads on the 20,758-acre tract will be open to equestrians and horse-drawn wagons. (Click on the map above to see which roads are open to which uses.)

DEC could change the degree and type of access allowed on the tract when it develops a final management plan for the property, which the state acquired from the Nature Conservancy this spring.

Many people see Boreas Ponds, with its gorgeous view of the High Peaks, as an attractive paddling destination. Much of the debate over the road has focused on how close to the ponds paddlers should be able to drive with their canoes and kayaks.

Under the interim plan, paddlers will have to carry or wheel their vessels 2.5 miles from a gate on Gulf Brook Road to LaBier Flow, an impoundment on the Boreas River. They then could paddle across most of the flow before taking out and carrying another half-mile to the dam at Boreas Ponds. (This trip is described in [an Explorer article](#) posted on the *Almanack* and is shown in the map below.)



Map, by Nancy Bernstein, shows how paddlers can get from LaBier Flow to Boreas Ponds.

Environmental groups and local officials advocate allowing paddlers (and the rest of the public) to drive all the way to LaBier Flow. This could still happen under the final management plan. Recently, a new group calling itself [Adirondack Wilderness Advocates](#) formed to push the state into keeping the whole road closed.

Local officials also favor allowing mountain bikes on Gulf Brook Road and some logging roads around the ponds. Under the environmentalists' plan, bikes would be allowed on Gulf Brook Road but not on the roads around the ponds.

The final management plan will reflect decisions made by the Adirondack Park Agency on the classification of the Boreas Ponds Tract. The environmental groups want most of the tract classified as Wilderness, a designation that would not allow bikes in the vicinity of the ponds. The local towns agree that most of the tract should be Wilderness, but they want to see the area around the ponds classified as Wild Forest, a designation that allows bikes.

Click here to read [DEC's news release](#) on the interim-access plan.