

State of Vermont**Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation**

100 Mineral Street, Suite 304 [cell] 802-777-0388
Springfield, VT 05156-3168 [fax] 802-885-8890
fpr.vermont.gov [email] ethan.phelps@vermont.gov
www.vtstateparks.com

Lowell Lake State Park Master Planning Update
June 25, 2019

Springfield – Master Planning work is progressing at Lowell Lake State Park in Londonderry.

Lowell Lake State Park was established in 1977 when the former Lowell Lake Lodge property was acquired by the State for access to Lowell Lake. Additional property (the White parcel) was acquired in 1996 with the assistance of the Vermont Land Trust after a private home development on the western shore of the lake received Act 250 permitting but failed to be constructed. Following this acquisition, a two-year long-range planning process was undertaken to complete a General Management Plan, which was adopted in 1999 and included 14 public meetings. Lowell Lake State Park presently encompasses 356 acres and provides opportunities for fishing, picnicking, hiking, swimming and nature observation. Master Planning is underway now to investigate options to make improvements for visitor safety, visitor experience, resource protection, and to explore alternatives for reutilization of cabins that came with the 1996 acquisition.

In recent weeks, discussion has continued with the Town of Londonderry about 2009 Zoning Bylaws. This has helped add clarity as draft concept plans are being developed.

Other notable recent advancements include the listing of the Lowell Lake Camps Historic District on the State Register of Historic Places by the Vermont Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. This provides FPR and its consultants clearer direction on the historic nature of the cabins as planning moves forward.

An archaeological resource assessment is currently underway and is anticipated to be complete soon.

FPR will be holding a public open house on Thursday, July 25 at the Londonderry Town Hall to debut concept plans and to begin the public comment period for this phase of planning work. More information on the open house will follow as details are finalized. In preparation for the open house, draft concept plans are being developed. Other planning documents are available at the Maps and Documents section of the park's web page at <https://www.vtstateparks.com/lowell.html>.

In addition to planning work, routine park maintenance and operational tasks are underway for the summer. The roadway into the park was recently graded, hazard tree removal is underway and an additional portable toilet will be added in the near future. More specific parking information is now available via the park's website and Twitter account. Park staff has been working with the Vermont Center for EcoStudies and Fish and Wildlife Department on improving information about loons using the lake. Park operations staff are also working with the Londonderry Cemetery Commission to assist with access for some projects at the Lowell Lake Cemetery.

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Contact: Ethan Phelps, CPRP, Parks Regional Manager

Lowell Lake State Park Master Planning Update

April 24, 2019

Springfield – Master Planning work is progressing at Lowell Lake State Park in Londonderry.

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In the last three weeks, recently received draft planning work has been presented and reviewed by the ANR Springfield District Stewardship Team, regulatory experts from the Department of Environmental Conservation, the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation and the Vermont Land Trust (VLT). Reviews of recent planning work include:

- Wildlife habitat
- Fisheries resources
- Watershed management
- Lakes and Ponds permitting
- Act 250
- Wetlands
- Historic Preservation
- VLT easement compliance.

These reviews are in addition to already completed assessment work on natural resources, historic preservation, structural integrity of existing buildings and regulatory compliance with environmental permitting laws.

Planning work is focusing around reconfiguring parking and traffic circulation to move roads and parking farther away from Lowell Lake, adding green stormwater infrastructure, improving accessibility with ADA-compliant pervious trails, revegetating portions of shoreline, focusing water access to specific areas and adding composting toilet facilities. Draft plans for potential reuse of existing overnight cabins with a net decrease in the number of buildings and occupancy have also been presented and reviewed by the Stewardship Team. The reviews conducted so far demonstrate these concepts could be permissible under existing environmental regulations. Potential re-use of existing structures for recreation is within the limitations of the

conservation easement held on a portion of the property by VLT. It has been determined that the scope of any potential changes under consideration would not fall under Act 250 jurisdiction due to the limited impact of the footprint.

Meetings and conversations with town officials have also taken place about the applicability of town zoning ordinances, which the Town is researching; town roads and traffic; and work at the Lowell Lake Cemetery and access to it. A meeting has taken place with the Student Conservation Association about partnering for potential future ecological restoration work.

Additional ongoing review and analyses includes a market analysis for overnight use, an archaeological resource assessment, and presentation to the Historic Resources Advisory Council for determination of eligibility as a historic district to the State Register of Historic Sites. If eligible, a nomination for inclusion to the Registry will follow.

The information collected during these reviews and analyses are to help fine-tune draft planning and the development of several Concept Plans that will be presented at a public open house in the early summer and in an interactive online format. Final decisions on which concepts to include in a final master plan will be made after a lengthy public feedback period.

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Contact: Ethan Phelps, CPRP, Parks Regional Manager

Lowell Lake State Park Master Planning Update
April 1, 2019

Springfield – The Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation (FPR) has developed a Communication Plan for Master Planning work happening at Lowell Lake State Park. FPR will be providing regular updates on planning work underway to improve timeliness and consistency in information releases, improve accuracy and make planning work clearer.

Lowell Lake State Park was established in 1977 when the former Lowell Lake Lodge property was acquired by the State for access to Lowell Lake. Additional property (the White parcel) was acquired in 1996 with the assistance of the Vermont Land Trust after a private home development on the western shore of the lake received Act 250 permitting but failed to be constructed. Following this acquisition, a two-year long-range planning process was undertaken to complete a General Management Plan, which was adopted in 1999 and included 14 public meetings. Lowell Lake State Park presently encompasses 356 acres and provides opportunities for fishing, picnicking, hiking, swimming and nature observation.

FPR updated the Lowell Lake State Park Long Range Management Plan in 2018 after a two-year process to re-evaluate goals of the original plan and add additional detail. This work included more natural resource inventory, analysis and management actions; and it examined the potential for improvements to infrastructure. As a result of comments received in the long-range planning process, FPR reduced the scope of timber management and engaged in a Master Planning process for the developed area of the park to more thoroughly investigate the feasibility and impacts of day and potential overnight uses. Master planning goals are to thoroughly study current levels of recreational use and existing infrastructure conditions while identifying economically responsible and environmentally sustainable changes and improvements.

FPR contracted with the SE Group of Burlington, Vermont, to conduct the Master Plan beginning in October, 2018. The first in a series of planned public meetings was held in December, 2018 to outline the Master Planning process. Investigative work such as more comprehensive structural and architectural analyses; boater carrying capacity; examination of current day use levels; reviews of the Londonderry Town Plan and zoning ordinance; and life safety and accessibility code, have all been completed. Market analysis for overnight use, life cycle cost analysis and other work is underway. Drafts of working concept plans are in development and will be reviewed soon by the Agency of Natural Resources' (ANR) Springfield Stewardship Team (a group of natural resource professionals from the Departments of FPR, Fish & Wildlife and Environmental Conservation that manage ANR lands) along with members of the DEC Lakes & Ponds program, DEC Wetlands program, Natural Resources Board (Act 250), and additional Fish and Wildlife biologists. The review will be a chance for staff from across ANR and NRB to evaluate concepts for programmatic cohesion and concern which will then be used to finalize the concepts before presenting them to the public.

FPR will present concept plans at a public meeting to be scheduled in early summer. Following the meeting, a lengthy public feedback process will commence using online tools to capture feedback from local, regional and statewide stakeholders, residents and visitors. Three public meetings and a focus group session have been conducted since 2016 on long range and master planning efforts.