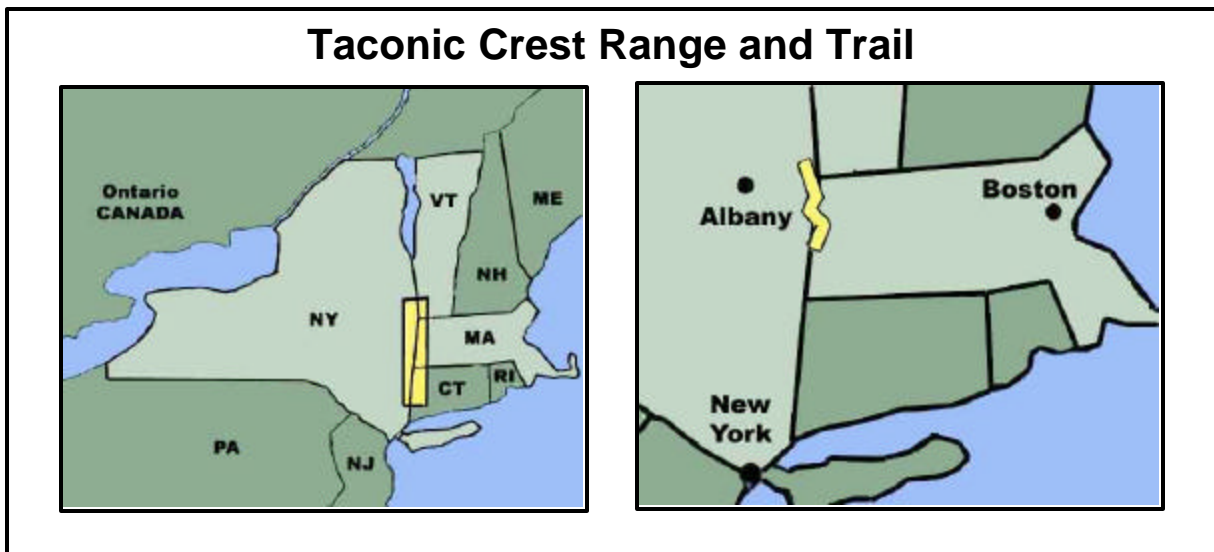


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Introduction

The Taconic Crest Trail is a 35-mile trail with sections in New York, Vermont, and Massachusetts. The trail follows a relatively small section of the ridge on the Taconic Mountain Range, which stretches from Vermont south to Connecticut. The trail and surrounding lands are owned and managed by a number of different public agencies, private organizations, and individuals. Although independent management efforts have improved in recent years, maintenance, education, regulation, and protection along the trail remain inconsistent.



We aim to look objectively at the present and historical uses of the Taconic Crest Trail and bordering lands. In light of these multiple interests, we will strive to determine what sort of management changes, if any, would best serve the region's lands and people in the future.

Background

Site Description

Any considerations for future management of the Taconic Crest Trail should be preceded by an understanding of the natural and human factors in the region. Following the ridge of the Taconics, the Taconic Crest Trail passes through a number of small towns along the state borders. Currently, the trail only touches the corner of Pownal, Vermont, although it has previously been routed further into the state. It begins in Petersburg, New York, and also passes through Berlin and Stephentown; in Massachusetts, the trail



continues through Williamstown and ends in Hancock.

A number of small accesses and side trails lead up to the Taconic Crest, adding more than 70 additional miles to the extended Taconic Trail system.

Accesses are plentiful in Williamstown MA (at the Hopkins Forest, Bee Hill Road, and Oblong Road), and in Hancock, MA (Rt. 20, Pittsfield State Forest, Potter Mt. Rd, and Rt. 43).

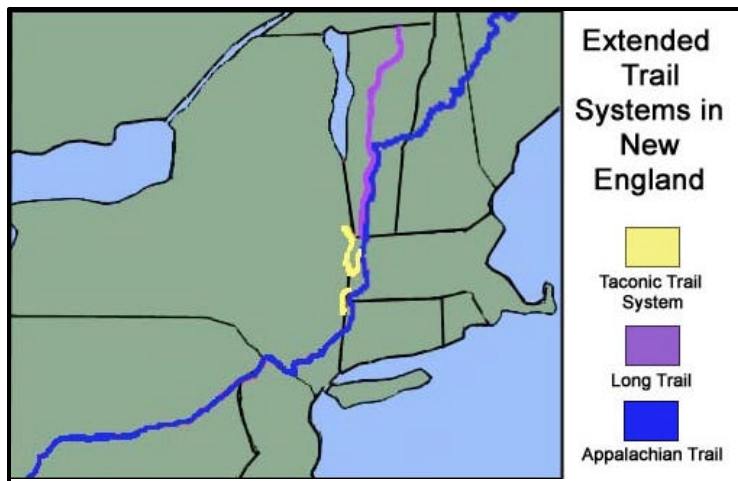
Access on the NY side of the trail is not as abundant, although still adequate.

The Taconics are significantly smaller than mountain ranges such as the Rockies, or even the Adirondacks or White Mountains closer to home. Still, the area is more

rugged than most other small mountain ranges in New England. The highest point on the Taconic Crest is the 2817-foot Mt. Berlin, while the lowest point drops to 300 feet at the northern terminus. Hiking from south to north over the 35-mile length of the trail, the cumulative elevation gain approaches 6700 feet.¹

The Taconic Crest Trail is located near a number of other lands and trails supporting outdoor recreation. Included in these areas are 24 state parks and forests in western MA, 33 state parks and forests in the Rensselaer-Taconic region of NY, and an additional nine parks and forests in southern Vermont. In New York and New England, there are also three extended trail systems and three national forests and parks.

The Taconic Crest Trail is part of the 70-mile Taconic Trails System. The system also includes the 22-mile Taconic Skyline Trail, running north from Route 20 in Hancock, MA towards



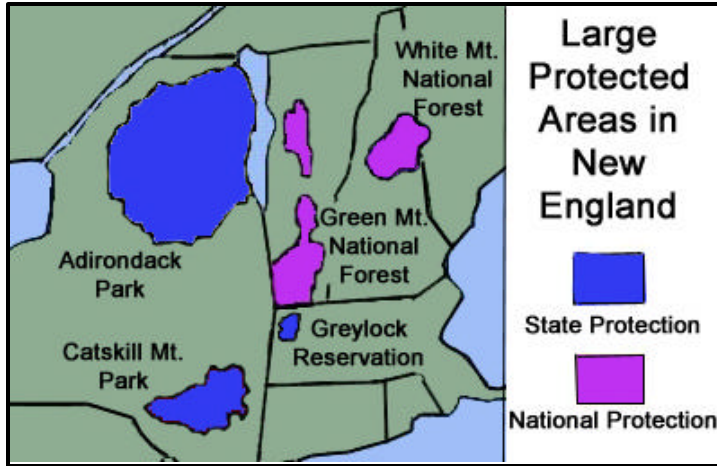
Route 43, and the 15.6-mile South Taconic Trail, running from southern Massachusetts across the border into Connecticut. Larger recreational trails in the area include the 2167-mile Appalachian Trail, which passes just to the east of the Taconic Crest Trail, and the 265-mile Long Trail, which runs north into Vermont.

Several large pieces of land in the area are protected on the state level and are available for recreation, including the Mt. Greylock State Reservation (12,000 acres) in

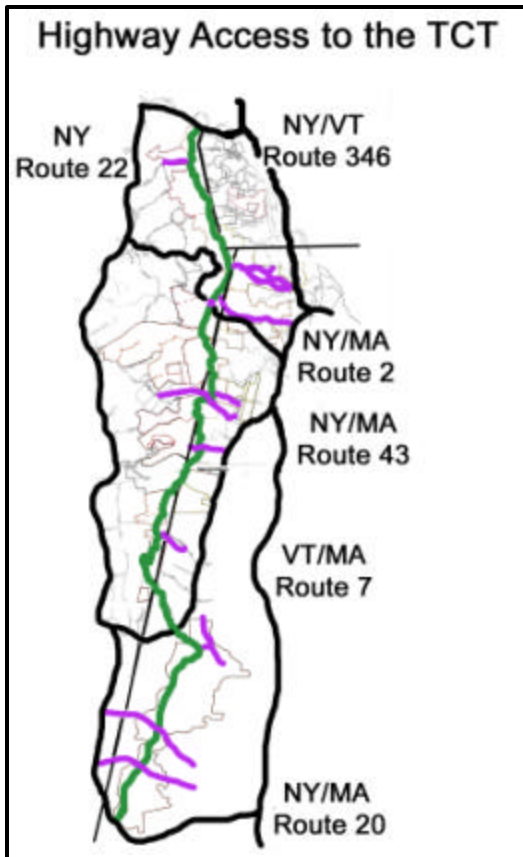
¹ Dennis Regan, *Key Recommendations of the Taconic Trails System Management and Protection Plan*, 1994, 5.

Massachusetts, the Catskill Mountain State Park (300,000 acres), and the Adirondack Park (6,100,000 acres) in New York. Smaller areas more suited to day use are also abundant in the region, including the Hopkins Memorial Forest, Clarksburg State Forest, Pittsfield State Forest, Taconic State Park, and Grafton State Park.

New England is also home to three nationally-protected resources: the Green Mountain National



Forest (353,000 acres) in Vermont, the White Mountain National Forest (777,000 acres)



in New Hampshire, and the much-smaller Acadia National Park on the coast of Maine.

While recreation areas in New England and New York are plentiful, the Taconic Crest Trail and surrounding lands are unique in that they are especially accessible to a large number of potential users. The trail is located within sixty miles of approximately 1 million people, including large populations in towns such as Troy, NY, Bennington, VT, North Adams, MA, and Pittsfield, MA. Furthermore, populations in urban areas such

as Albany, NY, Boston, MA, and New York City are all reasonably close to the Taconics. Altogether, there are approximately 26 million people within a three-hour drive of the trail. For residents of the Albany area in particular, the Taconic Crest is the closest recreation area. The Taconic Range and the trail itself are all easily accessible by major highways: Interstate Route 2 crosses the trail at Petersburg Pass, MA Route 43 crosses the trail in Hancock, and NY Route 22 and VT/MA Route 7 run north/south along the Taconic Crest for the length of the trail.

Natural History

While the land surrounding the Taconic Crest Trail is primarily undeveloped today, the area was once mostly cleared for farming and railroads. Although uses have changed significantly, the Taconic Crest is still characterized by a patchwork of various interests and owners. The Taconic Crest has been and continues to be influenced by a number of natural and human factors: unusual plant communities, abundant wildlife, numerous property owners, significant resource harvesting, and diverse public uses.

The Taconic Mountain Range has been softened and eroded for hundreds of millions of years; the mountains we see today have changed significantly since their birth and continue to change today. Approximately six hundred million years ago the Taconics did not exist; instead, a shallow ocean covered New England and the ground where they would eventually form. Four hundred and forty million years ago, the rocks that would become the Taconics were created on the ocean floor. Mostly composed of phyllite, these unusual rocks are now visible as outcrops along the crest. The Appalachian Mountains, Green Mountains, and Taconics all began to form through a series of thrust

faults and uplifts in a period known as the Taconic Orogeny. The Taconics ran roughly northeast to southwest and, in elevation, resembled the modern Alps more closely than the modern Taconics.

Another significant geologic era began two million years ago when the glacial periods began and ice sheets stretched down from Canada to cover New England. The glaciers crept forward and retracted numerous times until the last ice sheet retreated from the region fifteen thousand years ago. These glacial periods significantly changed the appearance of the Taconics and the surrounding landscape. The ice rolled and scraped over the tops of the large mountains, eroding and rounding them to their current, softer shapes and depositing the crumbled rock in the valleys as glacial till. Erosion has continued with the forces of wind and rain; the highest point on the Taconic Crest today does not reach 3000 feet.

The retreating glaciers also left behind other signs of their presence. Long scratches, or glacial striations, are visible on the bedrock of some New England mountains, marking places where glaciers scraped and eroded the existing rocks. The glaciers also picked up large rocks and boulders along their way, only to deposit them later. These rocks, known as glacial erratics, are visible today throughout New England fields and valleys where they were dropped with the melting of the glaciers. Finally, certain plant species that flourish today may have been transported by glaciers from native locations much farther north and dropped as seeds in this region.

Vegetation did not begin to return to New England until twelve thousand years ago when the ice retreated and soil began to form from the sandy till. The first species to return were mosses and lichens, which decayed and added organic matter, creating soil

that would be suitable for hardy sedges and grasses and, finally, larger shrubs and trees. The climax community at that point would have included most of the species visible today, including a number of deciduous trees and a greater percentage of spruce and fir.

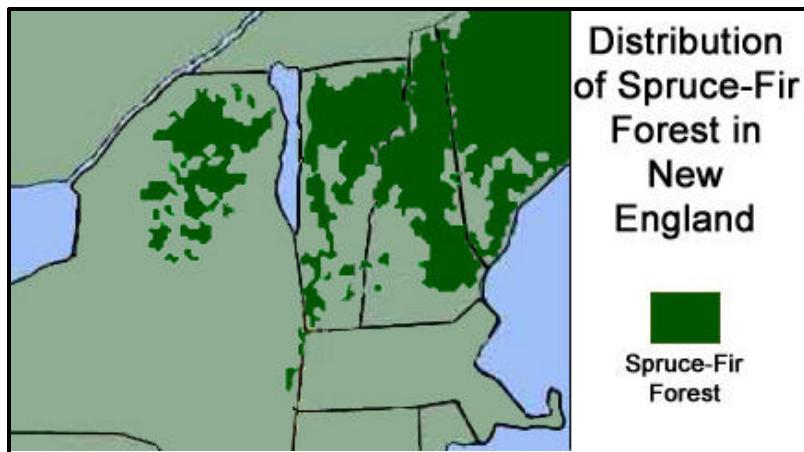
Reforestation and succession progressed for thousands of years until English and Dutch colonists began to clear most of the Taconic Range for farming in the 1700's. Clearing and farming continued until the early 1900's, at which point most of the farms were abandoned. Although the forests began to grow back and quickly filled in the fields, signs of early agriculture remain along the crest. Apple (*Malus sp.*), hawthorn (*Crataegus sp.*), lilac (*Syringa sp.*), and other domestic species grow up in the middle of the forest; stone walls and foundations mark old boundaries and homesteads; flat areas and plow lines mark off areas that were once heavily farmed.

Although portions of the land have again been cleared and developed, northern hardwood forest currently dominates most of the Taconic Crest. This forest type is characterized by species such as sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), yellow birch (*Betula allegheniensis*), and American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*). North-facing and south-facing slopes tend to have different species compositions; low shrubs and herbs fill the understory along the crest. A significant group of wildflowers called spring ephemerals appear in the northern hardwood forest in early spring between snowmelt and the emergence of canopy leaves.

Several isolated areas near the northern end of the Taconic Crest have unique spruce-fir forests in addition to the northern hardwood communities. These forests tend to be very different from the deciduous areas: black spruce (*Picea mariana*) and balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*) dominate the canopy, decreasing shade below and adding acidity to

the soils. Spruce-fir forests have generally not been cut or cleared in recent times and are much older-growth than the hardwood communities along the Taconic Crest. Species such as bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*) are rare at these latitudes but may be found among the understory in spruce-fir forests. Although they are plentiful to the north, spruce-fir forests are not common in this area; the Taconics are one of the only areas in this region to contain them.

The Taconic forests serve as an important habitat for animal species as well as the plants that define them. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) predicted the presence of approximately 46 species of mammals, 74 species of birds, and 31 species of reptiles and amphibians found on the Taconic Crest near



Petersburg Pass.² The unique communities along the crest are likely to contain even more species, including some that are rare in this area. The Taconic Crest Trail

serves as a critical wildlife corridor, providing a continuous stretch of protected habitat from southern Vermont to the middle of Massachusetts.

Although the Taconic Crest represents the top of a mountain range, the elevation and climate are such that the crest remains completely forested unless kept open by humans. Furthermore, the ecological communities do not usually differ significantly from those in the valleys. Still, the fact that it is a ridge does have important ecological

implications, most notably in the lack of water along the ridge. For the most part, wetlands communities are absent from the Taconic Crest, although the area does serve as an important part of the Housatonic, Hoosic and Hudson River watersheds. Any water present along the top of the crest is generally in the form of primary, intermittent streams that form along the side of the ridge and continue down through the forests. Near the southern end of the Taconic Crest Trail, however, there are several small ponds and lakes that contain a number of wetlands plants and animals not found elsewhere on the crest.

Land Use History

The history of humans along the Taconic Crest begins hundreds of years ago when Native Americans crossed the continent and colonized most of New England. Mahicans, related to the Algonquin Tribe in New York, inhabited the area but did not make much use of the crest itself. Their main travel and trade route ran north of the Taconics, following the course of the Hoosic River. They used the Taconic mountains primarily as a summer hunting ground.

King George delineated state borders in the New England Patent of 1620 as settlers began to move west, but the boundaries were not well-marked and would cause major disputes between Massachusetts and New York colonists in the coming years. Petersburg Pass was transferred to the Dutch Van Rensselaer family in 1629 but the Taconic Crest was still a major barrier at this time and there was no route over the top. English settlers first began to move into the Taconic region from the south and the east in the late 1600's and early 1700's, while Dutch settlers came to the western side of the crest from lower New York state.

² NYSDEC, *Petersburg Pass Scenic Area Unit Management Plan*, 1992, 16.

The first colonists began to mark out town and property lines and began the long process of clearing the hills for farms. The middle of the 18th century was marked by frequent battles between colonists and Native Americans and between colonists on the two sides of the crest. Migrations to the area continued, however, as did efforts to reach and settle the tops of the mountain ranges. The first road that crossed the Taconic Crest was the Berlin Turnpike, built in 1799 to connect with the Williamstown Turnpike and Boston. Other routes soon followed, primarily tracing the paths of hollows or streambeds up and over the crest.

Subsistence farming was the primary occupation of most people in the region, and approximately 75% of the forests around the Taconics had been cleared for farming by the mid-1800's. The Troy and Boston Railroad began to replace the Berlin Turnpike as the primary east/west route at this time; the growing railroad industry, as well as logging and coal mining industries, also accounted for significant economic developments and clearing of the area. Farming in the region began to decline as early as 1825 when the Erie Canal was opened and people looked to the west for new job opportunities and more fertile soils. As farms were gradually abandoned throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, forests began the long process of regrowth.

Between 1925 and 1927, the states of New York and Massachusetts developed the old Turnpike into Route 2, a major highway crossing the crest at Petersburg Pass. Local entrepreneurs took advantage of the increased traffic and began to build tourist attractions at the top of the Crest, including a gift shop and restaurant constructed by a North Adams businessman. By the 1960's, residents of Williamstown replaced these attractions with a ski area at Petersburg Pass. Although the facility was one of the first and best in the

region, it did not last long. It was revived temporarily when Marc Raimer purchased the ski area, also changing the name of a nearby peak to Mt. Raimer.

Although none of the tourist attractions at Petersburg Pass lasted very long, recreation did take over towards the end of the 20th century as the primary use of the public areas along the Taconic Crest. Even though another round of logging in the 1980's made use of the natural resources in the area, land purchases from then on tended to reflect interests in recreation, preservation, or development.

Protection & Management History

State protection of the southern Taconics began in 1920 with the purchase of lands intended to become a tri-state park system. Apparently the idea of park management across state boundaries, which seems appealing and perhaps necessary today, was first considered eighty years ago. Despite these early intentions, protection and management of the Taconics over the past eighty years has not been driven by interstate collaboration. Rather, protection and management of this region has been an ad hoc amalgamation of private organization and public state efforts.

In 1929, Edward T. Heald wrote *Taconic Trails*, in which he “called for the formation of a Taconic Mountain Club to promote state preservation of trails in the Taconics.”³ Perhaps this call was effective; the Taconic Hiking Club was founded in 1932. Preservation of the region was furthered two years later when the Hopkins Memorial Forest was deeded to Williams College for recreational and educational purposes, effectively placing it under an informal easement. The Taconic Hiking Club

³ Regan, 3.

began to develop the continuous Taconic Crest Trail in 1948. Although the trail ran through both public and private parcels of land, it was managed predominantly by the club throughout the next few decades. The club served both to maintain the trail and to sponsor hiking events for the community such as annual one-day “End-to-End” hikes instituted in 1966.

Over the years, nonprofit organizations and state agencies began to acquire lands on and adjacent to the trail from private landowners. Interestingly, many of the major public land acquisitions along the Taconic Crest Trail have been facilitated by cooperation between these organizations and agencies. Nonprofit organizations have tended to initiate acquisition interests and to negotiate purchases and then to deed or transfer the lands to the state agencies. The Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation has been the most involved local nonprofit in recent years.

For example, a cooperative venture in 1987 between the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation, The Trustees of Reservations, and owners of Field Farm in South Williamstown negotiated the purchase of the 110-acre Wylde Property along the trail and Bee Hill Road. The property was then resold to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (MA DEM) which owns the adjoining 558-acre Taconic State Park. In the same year, the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation entered into another cooperative venture with Open Space Institute, a nonprofit organization in New York. Together, they were able to protect 630 acres at Petersburg Pass, securing a key link in the Taconic Crest Trail.⁴

Lands along the trail have not only been protected by local nonprofit

⁴ Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation, Spring 1998 newsletter.

organizations but have also been given national attention. The Trust for Public Land, a national nonprofit founded in 1972, began protecting lands along the trail in 1988 and has since secured over 4,300 acres for the public.⁵ The attention of this national nonprofit indicates that they perceive the region to be important as an ecosystem and for the people living in nearby communities.

Management of the Taconic Crest Trail took a turn circa 1990 when the State of New York, through the DEC, expressed an interest in securing management of the trail from the Taconic Hiking Club. Although members of the club were not especially interested in giving up maintenance responsibilities, they recognized that the state agency possessed superior resources and therefore agreed to diminish their role in the management of the trail. Despite this increased state management of the trail, many people still perceived the level of management to be inadequate. In order to address these concerns, an informal group of representatives from local nonprofit organizations, state agencies, and special interest groups was formed: the Taconic Trails Council.

A key commitment to management of the trail was made in 1993 when Thomas Jorling, Commissioner of the DEC, and Trudy Coxe, Secretary of the MA Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, signed a compact in which they declared “mutual commitment to the protection of the Taconic Mountains and the Taconic Crest Trail, for the benefit of our states, today and for future generations.”⁶ Another monumental step was taken in 1994 when Denis Regan and the Taconic Trails Council compiled *Key Recommendations of the Taconic Trails System Management and Protection Plan* with input from public agencies, trail organizations, and nonprofit

⁵<http://www.tpl.org>, 12 December 2000.

⁶ Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation, Summer 1993 newsletter.

cooperators. Although the compact and the master plan together provided both a conceptual commitment to management and practical steps with which to facilitate it, the creation of these documents resulted in little change. Interstate communication continued to be inconsistent, and the master plan was never implemented.

Throughout the past decade, efforts have been focused toward acquiring and protecting lands more than toward increasing management measures. These efforts have primarily taken the form of major public land acquisitions and easements. In 1988, The Trust for Public Land initiated protection of a 105-acre mountaintop property in Stephentown and a 266-acre property in Petersburg to be managed by the DEC. In 1996, the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation purchased the 47-acre Sabot parcel. The following year, the parcel was transferred to the DEM in order to facilitate corridor protection and the completion of the Phelps Trail. In 1997, the NYS Environmental Protection Fund purchased conservation easements for permanent public recreational uses on 1,553 acres of forest land in Petersburg and an adjacent 160-acre trail corridor. These lands included three miles of the Taconic Crest Trail and were to be managed by the DEC.

As these purchases demonstrate, management and ownership of the Taconic Crest Trail and surrounding lands has been moving progressively from private to public. It should be noted that many of the public land acquisitions would not have been possible without the aid of nonprofit organizations. Although little has been done to implement a master plan, public and private groups have been collaborating to acquire lands, to encourage easements, and to contemplate increased management.

Current Status of the Taconic Crest Trail

Multiple Uses

Currently, a large amount of land along the Taconic Crest is privately owned. Organizations and companies such as Williams College, W.J. Cowee Company, Inc., the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation, and the Forbush Wildlife Sanctuary own most of the land in large parcels. These areas tend to be undeveloped and support diverse uses such as scientific research, timber harvesting, or conservation efforts; most of this land is open to the public for recreational use. Other large sections of private land are parts of the remaining farms and small woodlots on the Taconic Crest, mostly south of Petersburg Pass.

The rest of the privately owned land along the Taconic Crest Trail is divided up into smaller lots, primarily for residential use. Residential development of the Taconic Crest is becoming increasingly common as timber companies and farmers decide to sell large, undeveloped tracts of land. While some of the homes and lots are moderately sized, many wealthy landowners are building isolated houses on large properties, eliminating that land from public use.

The majority of the land along the Taconic Crest Trail, however, is now publicly owned and managed. In New York State, lands are owned by the Department of Environmental Conservation; in Massachusetts, they are owned by the Department of Environmental Management. Although some buildings and roads may be in place for support services and maintenance, these lands are mostly undeveloped. They are protected from development by the state but allow for a variety of public uses on certain

sections, including non-motorized recreation (and motorized, in places), hunting and fishing, and logging.

In New York, a relatively small (1000-acre) parcel is managed as the Petersburg Pass Scenic Area, adjacent to Route 2 as it crosses over the Taconic Crest and the trail. This section includes a large parking lot, several trail accesses, and an information kiosk, catering to the large numbers of tourists who pass over the crest via Route 2. Although there is no logging on this section, the rest of the DEC lands are managed as state forest and are logged sustainably.

In Massachusetts, a significant portion of state lands are included in the Pittsfield State Forest on the southern end of the trail, managed similarly to New York's forest lands. On the northern end of the trail, Massachusetts state lands are considered to be part of the "Taconic Trail State Park," which is currently undeveloped and not advertised to the public. Although the land has not yet been developed as a park, it is still open for public recreational uses and contains a significant amount of the protected land on the northern end of the trail.

Recreation is encouraged and allowed as a standard use on most properties, but there are several cases where allowed uses are not consistent along the trail. All-terrain and other motorized vehicles, for example, are not officially allowed on any state lands or in the Hopkins Forest. Nonetheless, ATV trails are common along the Taconic Crest Trail, and users often disobey regulations even if they are aware of them. Mountain bikes are allowed on state trails and on most private property but are not allowed on the 1.5 miles of trail in the Hopkins Memorial Forest. In general, the Pittsfield State Forest tends to allow more uses than other state lands, and state lands tend to allow more than private

lands. Regulations and uses, furthermore, are not clearly marked at any location and may differ between sections of the trail.

Although most private landowners along the Taconics use their land primarily for recreational or aesthetic purposes, the natural resources of the Taconics have always represented an important sector of the local economy. The eastern side of the Taconics is very steep and has not been utilized for development or industry as much as the western side. With its softer slopes, this side has been a significant area for farming and logging. A number of large logging and forestry companies once held land along the Taconic Crest; several remain, including Kelly Hardwood Company and W.J. Cowee Company, Inc. Additional logging occurs on New York State Forest lands.

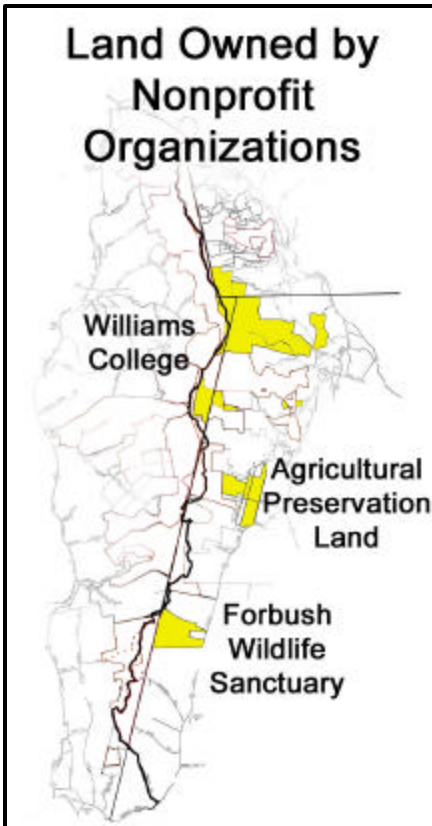
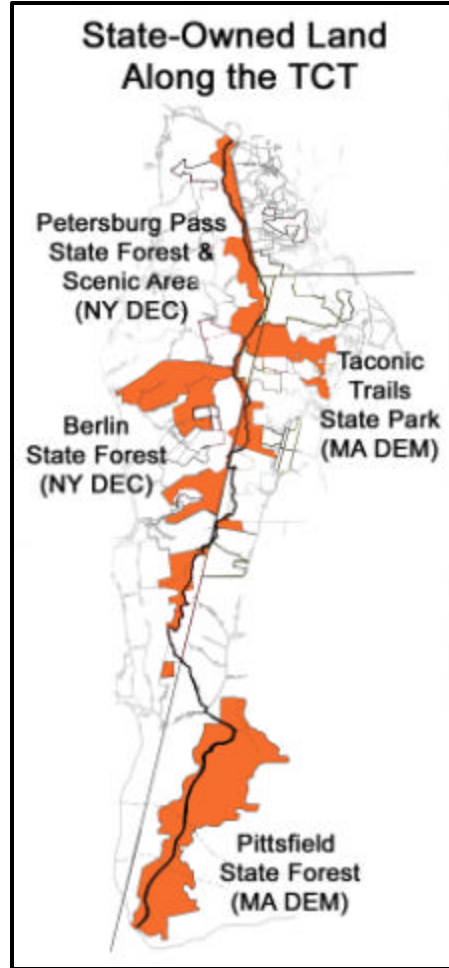
Several other uses of natural resources occur in the area, although they tend to be more dispersed both in time and space. The public land along both sides of the trail is open to hunting in season and is very popular among local residents. In addition to other agricultural activities on cleared lands, small farms and organizations still manage smaller woodlots and maple sugaring operations in the winter. Finally, there are several popular berrying spots along the trail, well utilized by the public in the summer months.

Protection & Management

Degrees and types of protection and management vary on the Taconic Crest from section to section, depending on ownership of the trail and surrounding lands. Some parcels are owned by private citizens, some by nonprofit agencies, and some by New York State and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Most of these have some level of

protection, whether afforded by ownership, conservation easement, or informal agreement.

State agencies are the largest landowners along the crest today, managing and maintaining thousands of acres of public land. New York State protects many large parcels of land near or adjoining the Taconic Crest Trail, including sections that are considered part of New York's Berlin State Forest, Petersburg Pass State Forest, and Petersburg Pass Scenic Area. On the eastern side of the range, Massachusetts manages some large areas as well, including the Pittsfield State



Forest on the southern end of the trail and

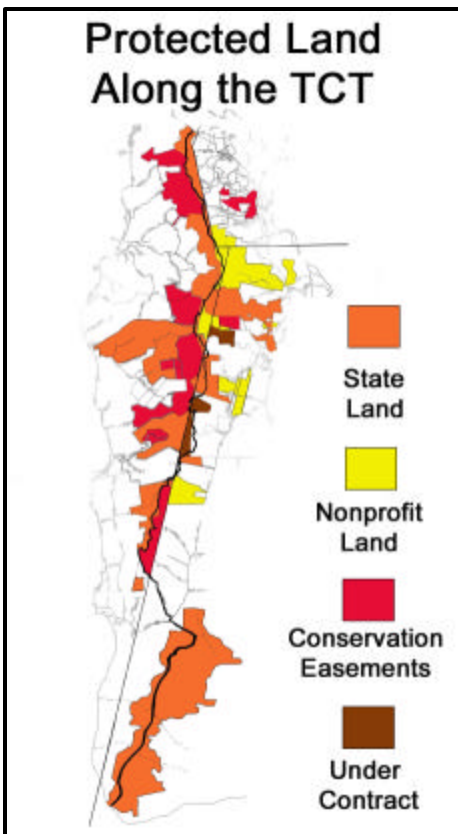
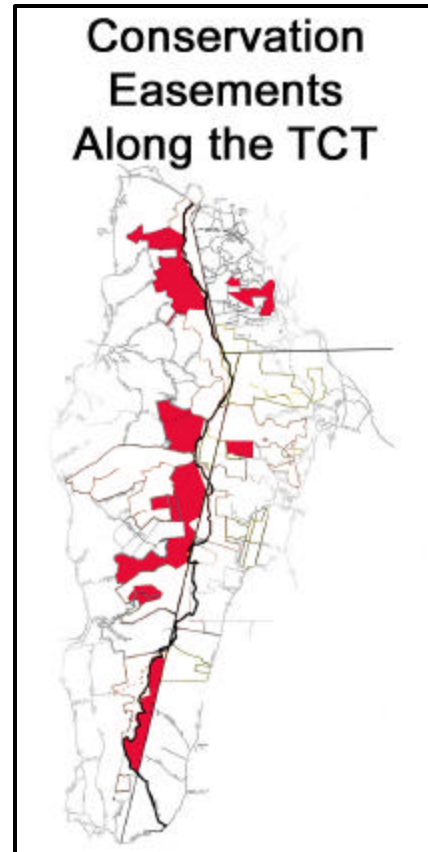
land within the undeveloped Taconic Trails State Park on the northern end.

In Massachusetts, a significant amount of land is also owned by nonprofit agencies. Large nonprofits in the area include Williams College, the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation, and the Forbush Wildlife Sanctuary. These organizations all have different interests in the land they hold; the

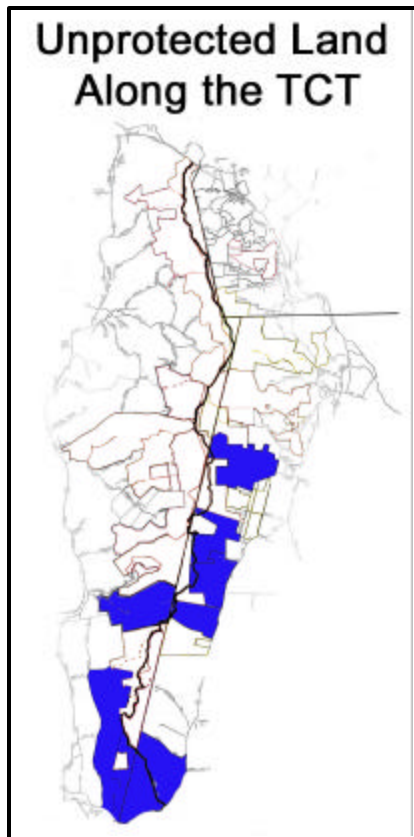
Wildlife Sanctuary and the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation are particularly interested in conservation and preservation of land while Williams College uses the Hopkins Memorial Forest for research and recreation. Land protection does not necessarily follow from the educational mission of Williams College, however, and on College lands outside of the Hopkins Forest, protection may not be permanent.

The remaining land along the trail is privately owned; a significant amount of it is protected informally by the landowners or formally through conservation easements. Conservation easements provide a long-term means of protecting land, separating development rights

from ownership rights and selling them to a party interested in protection of the land. Many large parcels along the Taconic Crest have been protected recently by easement; the New York State DEC and local land trusts have been particularly active in buying the development rights for these parcels. The terms of the agreements vary with the two parties involved in the agreement but often maintain a landowner's right to harvest natural resources and use the property.



As shown in the maps of protected parcels, huge steps have been taken by the state agencies and land trusts to protect land adjoining the Taconic Crest Trail. Indeed, almost all sections of the trail itself are now protected, along with much of the land immediately abutting it. A large amount of land remains unprotected on the sides of the Taconic Crest. Although these lands do not abut the trail itself, they may be visible from



certain sections of the trail and are important for ecological reasons.

Outright purchase of land or purchase of development rights is the most direct way to protect land and is the method that has been used most often to protect the Taconic Crest Trail. Land can also be protected through laws and regulations, however, and both state and local regulations may apply to lands along the Taconic Crest Trail.

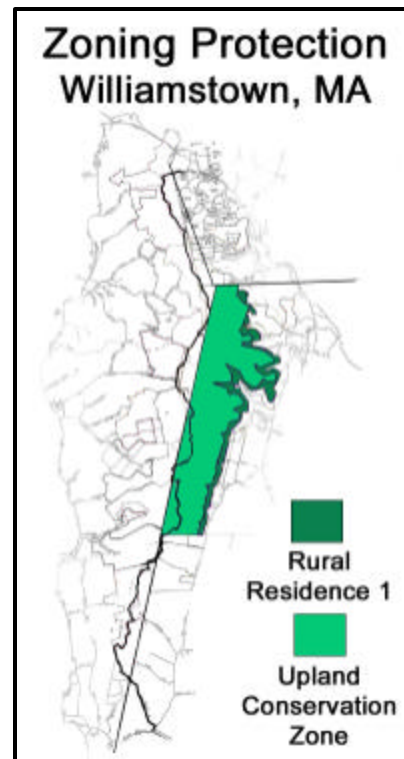
On a state level, the Wetlands and Rivers Protection Acts are two of the most stringent controls, preventing or limiting development within a buffer zone of streams, rivers, lakes, ponds, or other wetlands as defined in the state code. Laws may vary slightly between states, but the general requirements and protections are consistent. If a development project must affect wetlands, a special permit is usually required, and the developer may be forced to re-create the wetlands elsewhere. These laws might affect certain parts of the Taconics, but they are not capable of protecting the

entire trail and surrounding lands since there are not many wet areas on the top of the crest.

Another state regulation that could apply to the region is the Endangered Species Act, which is also similar between states. Certain species may be listed as “endangered,” “threatened,” or “species of special concern” in a state and will then be protected from harm or “taking.” The protection generally entails limiting activities on land that constitutes habitat for the species, thereby providing greater protection than the small buffer zones of the Wetlands Protection Act. The Taconic Crest is not known to be habitat for a significant number of protected species, however, so this regulation is insufficient in protecting the trail and surrounding lands. Furthermore, even if the Endangered Species Act protects a habitat, the protection is removed if the protected species becomes extinct or becomes common enough for de-listing.

Legal land protection can also occur on the local level through zoning restrictions. In the town of Williamstown, the Zoning Bylaw restricts development and activity at high elevations. The Rural Residence 1 District includes all land with elevations of 1150-1300 feet and “is intended to provide for residential standards compatible with the rural and upland character of sensitive environmental areas at the higher elevations of the town.”

Uses in this district are limited to single family residences and agriculture.⁷



⁷ Williamstown Zoning Bylaw, §70-3.3.

Williamstown established an additional Upland Conservation District, including all land over 1300 feet in elevation; building and development are prohibited.

While this has effectively protected most land near the Taconic Crest in Williamstown, it is not a consistent level of protection between states or even between other towns. Hancock, MA, for example, has no zoning regulations at all, while zoning bylaws in New York towns do not specifically protect the higher elevations.

Potential for Improvement

Before making any recommendation to improve management on the Taconic Crest, we must first establish the need for such improvement. We have identified several existing conditions that could be improved by increased management of the Taconic Crest.

The first is that poor communication exists on a variety of levels. On one level, there is little communication between the two government agencies that own and manage the largest portions of the crest. Representatives from both New York and Massachusetts have identified the lack of interstate communication as an obstacle to successful and cohesive management of the trail. Although the Taconic Trails Council has ambitiously attempted to bring together the various groups with stakes in the trail during the past few years, communication has not seemed to increase outside of these meetings. Communication with trail users and landowners is also sporadic and unclear. Many users cited inadequate trail markers and trailhead signs indicating permissible uses as serious shortcomings of the trail.⁸

⁸ Public Use Survey, Appendix 1.

In addition to poor communication, the patterns of multiple ownership along the trail also inhibit successful and consistent management. Instead of being managed as one continuous habitat, management strategies for the Taconic Crest vary in degree and type. This mixed ownership also yields the constant threat of restricted public use; if one landowner decides to prohibit the public from crossing his land, the trail becomes discontinuous. Conservation easements ensure that development will not occur on some parcels, and formal and informal agreements secure at least short-term access to the trail on certain properties; however, there are still key parcels of land for which no such arrangements exist.

A third management problem is that no single established group has the Taconic Crest as its first priority. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management and the New York Department of Environmental Conservation both have administrative responsibilities for a number of other public lands and therefore do not necessarily have the resources to devote sufficient attention to the Taconic Crest. Although the Taconic Trails Council is focused solely on the Taconic region, the group is limited by two factors: it has no legal authority to effect change or enforce policy on the trail, and its members have other primary job responsibilities. Because of this, the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation has taken the initiative to facilitate considerations for protection and management of the Taconic Crest region in recent years. However, this land trust cannot and should not focus solely on this region in the long run.

These three areas of concern point to the need for improved management of the Taconic Crest Trail and surrounding lands. It should be noted that our concerns are not new; indeed, similar features have been identified in the past in the *Petersburg Pass*

Scenic Area Management Plan of 1992 and the *Key Recommendations of the Taconic Trails System Management and Protection Plan* of 1994. It seems that most of these improvements have not been made because there has not been a unified management body to implement such changes.

Future of the Taconic Crest Trail

Arguments for Preservation

Before elaborating on means by which to improve protection and management of the Taconic Crest Trail, it is crucial to outline why the trail deserves such attention. It could be argued that the Taconic Crest region is not spectacular and thus not worthy of measures to conserve it. After all, it is neither as striking as the Grand Teton nor as unique as Arches National Monument. Why should we bother contributing human resources, money, and opportunity costs to its preservation?

When considered economically, everything comes down to tradeoffs. Our world market would not function if we were to conserve all tracts of land that are somewhat “wild” and “natural” simply for the sake of their undeveloped status. We admittedly need to use some land for resource extraction and for development. It could be argued that, given a limited ability to preserve wild places, we should only choose to preserve those regions that are most beautiful and most unique.

Given this line of reasoning, there is little argument to preserve the Taconic Crest Trail and the surrounding lands. There is no one geological or ecological feature that makes this region especially unique. The mountains are not the tallest in the area. While the northern section contains spruce-fir forests that are rare at that latitude, there are not many threatened or endangered species along the trail. Compared to places like our national parks, there is nothing special enough about the Taconic Crest region to merit increased protection and management.

We purport that it is just this scenario that provides the underlying argument for conservation of the region in its quasi-natural state. The Taconic Crest Trail should be

preserved largely because it is not grand. As a nation, we have a propensity to conserve those places that are most spectacular and most beautiful. We are in love with the idealized notion of “nature” and tend to preserve those places that we think most exemplify it in all its grandeur. We need look only at our national parks for evidence of this phenomenon. While we certainly will not argue against the preservation of such places, we will argue that they are not the only places that should be preserved in relatively undeveloped conditions. We should not reduce our conception of nature to the glorious but should preserve it in smaller, more quotidian tracts throughout the country. Although majestic mountains may epitomize the American conception of nature, they should not epitomize all the land that we leave undeveloped.

While we can all benefit from contact with wild places, we will not all have the opportunity to visit those most grand of America’s wild places. For this reason, there is a strong argument for the preservation and management of a number of smaller wild places. Wild places should not just be available to those people who can afford to travel to them but to all people; in other words, if our only conservation were in the form of our national parks, we would not be making wild places accessible to the public at-large.

The Taconic Crest region is an excellent one to conserve with the aim of making a wild place accessible to the public. Because the trail is located on a narrow strip of undeveloped land rather than deep in a large tract of wilderness, it is accessible to a number of people. This accessibility is heightened by the trail’s relative proximity to urban centers such as Albany, Boston, and New York City in addition to the immediately neighboring towns. Because there are a number of accesses, the trail is well-suited to day use. Although the ridge does not reach extraordinarily high elevations at any points,

there are beautiful views from the ridgeline; one can see the Adirondacks and the Catskills from the summit of Berlin Mountain on a clear day. Unusual geologic features are also present on the crest; the Snow Hole, a small cave where snow can be found year round, is one of the most popular sites along the trail. As Leslie Reed-Evans of the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation pointed out, “for a lot of people, this is the most scenic they’re going to see.”⁹ For this value alone, the trail and surrounding lands should be conserved. The social value of this trail is evidenced by the amount of time that private groups and individuals have given to it over the years, whether through informal Taconic Trails Council meetings or through trail crew workdays; it is apparent that people care about the Taconic Crest Trail.

If these anthropocentric arguments for preserving the trail are not convincing enough, ecological arguments abound as well. Because the trail is located along a relatively undeveloped ridgeline, it serves as one of the last few wildlife corridors in this region. If the trail were extended northward and southward in connection with other trails and trail systems, an even larger wildlife corridor could be preserved. Furthermore, the ridgeline also serves as the top of three watersheds, two to the east and one to the west. For this reason, it is crucial that the ridgeline not be polluted. Pollution from development along the Taconic Crest could potentially seep into the groundwater and contaminate the larger watersheds.

As can be seen, it is in the interests of both humans and this environment to conserve the Taconic Crest region. We would be losing something as a community if we let this region become developed extensively, especially given that the region is not well suited to uses other than recreation throughout and logging on the slopes. Accounting for

⁹ Leslie Reed-Evans, Personal Interview, 28 November 2000.

both local conditions and national conceptions, it makes sense to take further steps toward full preservation of the Taconic Crest region. The trail already exists and is protected to some extent along most segments. It would be easy to further protection where it has already been started, making the region a case study of how multiple interests can work together to conserve a small, quasi-natural landscape.

We have established that it would be beneficial in many respects to protect this trail and region. Unfortunately, such a statement is not enough to ensure its protection in the long run. Caring about conservation of a particular region on a theoretical or personal basis is not enough in itself. To elucidate this argument, it is helpful to think of the Taconic Crest region as a “commons” as conceived by Garrett Hardin in “The Tragedy of the Commons.” Hardin outlines how resources and environments available to the public can easily reach states of ruin when people act only upon personal interests. He argues that some semblance of management is critical in preventing this situation even though it limits personal freedom.

Every new enclosure of the commons involves the infringement of somebody's personal liberty. Infringements made in the distant past are accepted because no contemporary complains of a loss. It is the newly proposed infringements that we vigorously oppose; cries of "rights" and "freedom" fill the air. But what does "freedom" mean? When men mutually agreed to pass laws against robbing, mankind became more free, not less so. Individuals locked into the logic of the commons are free only to bring on universal ruin; once they see the necessity of mutual coercion, they become free to pursue other goals.¹⁰

This implies that getting public approval for increased management of the Taconic Crest Trail will not necessarily be easy. The public will need to be convinced that improved management of some sort is the only feasible way to conserve the region.

To many, the word coercion implies arbitrary decisions of distant and irresponsible bureaucrats; but this is not a necessary part of its meaning. The only kind of coercion I

¹⁰ Garrett Hardin, “The Tragedy of the Commons,” 1968.

recommend is mutual coercion, mutually agreed upon by the majority of the people affected.¹¹

Such an improvement is more likely to be successful if its impetus comes from local people rather than from outside government agents. Therefore, people need to realize the value of the Taconic Crest Trail and its surrounding lands before significant steps toward preservation can be made.

Goals for Protection & Management

As identified earlier, there are three main facets of the current protection and management situation that pose obstacles: 1) the inconsistency of management and ownership, 2) the lack of an established body to focus solely on the Taconic Crest region, and 3) insufficient communication between agencies and organizations and with trail users. It is for these reasons that it is worth thinking about ways to improve protection and management of the region.

Before looking at schemes within which to do so, it is imperative to identify goals for such changes. We believe that the Taconic Crest region can be a valuable resource to nearby communities and should be used. There is the potential for over-use; this mandates that management not only promote human use but look to ensure ecological sustainability.

We have identified four goals in increasing management so as to guarantee that any changes will accommodate multiple natural and human needs. Access to and responsible use of the trail should be promoted in order to assure that people are benefiting from this resource without harming it. Responsible use stems from an

¹¹ Ibid.

appreciation and understanding of the environment of the region which in turn encourages low-impact use. Planning for the future of the trail will depend on an awareness of how the trail is used and how this affects the region; this could be obtained by monitoring uses in the upcoming years. With this information, elements of a master plan could be appropriately implemented.

Goals for Management
1) to promote access to and responsible use of the trail
2) to ensure the continued ecological health of the region
3) to monitor use in order to consider use designations and/or restrictions
4) to implement elements of the 1994 master plan

We associated several criteria with these goals and critiqued the options according to their compliance with these criteria: involvement of local organizations, agencies, and individuals in management decisions, unification of management across state boundaries, identification of recreation as the primary use, allowance of other use of natural resources, and protection of the entire region. In light of these goals and criteria, we considered protection and management schemes at local, state, interstate, and national levels in addition to the status quo.

Management Options

Status Quo

Management Option	Local Involvement	Unified Across States	Recreation as Primary Use	Resource Use Allowed	Protection of Region
Status Quo	4		?	4	?

The most obvious protection and management scheme to consider for the future is that which we have today; it is conceivable that the mechanisms of the status quo continue to be employed. The organizations currently involved in managing the trail have made great progress in recent years and may continue to do so. However, as Garrett Hardin points out, it is important to look at the status quo as critically as any new options:

Once we are aware that the status quo is action, we can then compare its discoverable advantages and disadvantages with the predicted advantages and disadvantages of the proposed reform, discounting as best we can for our lack of experience. On the basis of such a comparison, we can make a rational decision which will not involve the unworkable assumption that only perfect systems are tolerable.¹²

The main advantage in not implementing a new scheme is that there would be no need to establish additional governing bodies, funding, or legal framework; there would be no more bureaucratic hassles than there are today. Management of the region would continue as it stands now with differing levels and types of attention. Regulations and restrictions would not necessarily be increased. Furthermore, a number of parties would remain involved in the protection and management of the region. Local interests could maintain the capacity to initiate changes.

While this capacity for informal and local initiative seems promising, the recent

¹² Hardin.

history of human involvement with the region suggests that it is difficult for people to capitalize on this capacity. We can hope that more attention would be given to the Taconic Crest region in the future, but that cannot be guaranteed given the current situation. It is hard to protect and manage the Taconic Crest region as a whole without one unified structure. If we feel that it is important to give more attention to the protection and management of this region, it is crucial to look at the implementation of new coordinated mechanisms as well.

Nonprofit Organization

Management Option	Local Involvement	Unified Across States	Recreation as Primary Use	Resource Use Allowed	Protection of Region
Nonprofit Organization	4	4	4	4	4

The least structured change in management scheme would be the creation of a nonprofit organization. Although there are certain guidelines that affect the workings of nonprofit organizations, there are no stringent criteria as outlined for governmental management bodies and designations. This means that there is potential for more flexibility and thus more specificity. A nonprofit organization could be specifically suited to the needs of this region. The Taconic Trails Council does already exist as an informal group attuned to the management of the Taconic Crest Trail. It may initially seem excessive to create a nonprofit organization to do the same thing.

As mentioned at the Taconic Trails Council meeting this fall, the most significant advantages of nonprofit status are the abilities to apply for grants and to accept donations;

in other words, nonprofits can acquire funding for projects whereas the Taconic Trails Council cannot do so in its current state. Therefore, it is worth considering the benefits of designating the existing Taconic Trails Council as a nonprofit or establishing a new one. Management across state lines could be strengthened by the increased formality of an organization while remaining local and low-profile. It is likely that the public would react more favorably to management at a local level than to management at a higher governmental level.

If the Taconic Trails Council were to gain designation, the people who have already expressed interest in the trail and who have already given much time to its protection could remain involved and could acquire funding with which to make larger improvements. It should be noted that lack of funding is not the only obstacle that the Taconic Trails Council faces. In addition, the Council is comprised of people who have time-consuming commitments elsewhere. For this reason, the idea of a nonprofit organization staffed by new people bears consideration as well.

As with all options, there are some disadvantages to the nonprofit management scheme. The main difficulty is the constant need to maintain public support and funding in order to stay running. Fundraising and public relations would be challenging and would take up staff time that could be used in other ways under another management scheme with established funding. Furthermore, a nonprofit organization would not have legal authority or policy-making capacity. While nonprofits can affect local decisions and can petition to impact larger ones, they have no direct connection to or bearing upon the government. As can be seen, this is both an advantage and a disadvantage. Because there are no set criteria for such a nonprofit, preservation of all segments of the trail

would not be mandated as it would be under some governmental management schemes. Rather, protection would have to be set up on a case-by-case basis via conservation easements, much as it is now. The difference between this scheme and the status quo lies largely in the existence of an orchestrating body.

State Options

Options for future management and protection of the Taconic Crest Trail should include a consideration of state programs since the majority of current management and protection is through the DEM in Massachusetts and the DEC in New York. These agencies already manage State Forests and State Parks in the region but the specific regulations and management procedures vary between the states, as do other options for state protection.

State Forest

Management Option	Local Involvement	Unified Across States	Recreation as Primary Use	Resource Use Allowed	Protection of Region
State Forest				4	4

Most states have provisions in their codes for State Forest lands, which are owned and managed by individual states for timber production, conservation, and recreation. New York currently manages most of its lands along the crest as State Forest and logs the area sustainably in addition to allowing recreational use of the land. Massachusetts has a similar program that it employs in the Pittsfield State Forest and several other smaller

parcels. These designations can be applied by the state agencies that acquire the land and can be used to protect a region permanently from development.

There are several benefits of using a State Forest designation for managing the Taconic Crest. Because it is already in place on a number of acres, a State Forest designation would not need a new infrastructure and would probably not be opposed by residents. Funding for management and resources would be incurred by the state agencies owning the land, and the property might be able to help support these costs through continued logging. A state forest would maintain the multiple uses and resource harvesting that currently occur across much of the land and would also protect the land surrounding the trail as well as the trail itself.

Logging is, however, a primary purpose for State Forests, and we feel that it is not a primary goal of the Taconic Crest Trail. Furthermore, a State Forest system would leave management divided across state boundaries and thus would not serve to unify regulations and strategies. A further concern would be that, as a component of a larger State Forest system, each individual forest would not necessarily get the attention and resources that it might need; a smaller non-governmental organization might be better suited to provide these services. Because of the failure of the system to meet these requirements, we did not consider it further as an overall strategy for management of the Taconic Crest Trail.

State Park

Management Option	Local Involvement	Unified Across States	Recreation as Primary Use	Resource Use Allowed	Protection of Region
State Park			4		4

State Parks are established by state codes and managed by individual state departments; the process of establishment and management is similar to that for State Forests. Parks, like State Forests, have already been established in New York and Massachusetts and already exist in places along the Taconic Crest. The Taconic State Park is just south of the Taconic Crest Trail in New York, and lands owned by the DEM in Massachusetts are designated part of the undeveloped Taconic Trails State Park. Logging is generally not allowed in State Parks, but a wide variety of recreational uses are; protection may be even stronger than in State Forests.

Management of the Taconics through a State Park system would be advantageous for many of the same reasons a State Forest would be. Funding and management responsibilities would be assigned to specific agencies, and an infrastructure would already be in place for working in this region. The added publicity of the designation might attract more users, and maintenance would be likely to improve.

Many of the same drawbacks exist also for this system, however. The Park would only exist as part of a larger system and might not receive the attention it needs; responsibilities and regulations would still be divided at the state line. It is also likely that logging would not be allowed in a State Park, and the reduction of resource use in the area might not be a popular facet of this program. Based upon the failure of State Parks to meet the criteria of unifying management, we did not continue looking further at this option.

Nature Preserve

Management Option	Local Involvement	Unified Across States	Recreation as Primary Use	Resource Use Allowed	Protection of Region
Nature Preserve			4		4

Most states have a number of other, smaller designations for protecting land, many of which would not apply to the Taconic Crest Trail and surrounding lands. The Nature Preserve program is one operated in Massachusetts which could potentially be extended to the Taconic Crest, but there is no reciprocal program for the New York lands. Nature Preserves recognize and protect native, natural communities as representatives of state communities or ecosystems. Nature Preserve management focuses on a multitude of low-impact uses, including research, recreation, preservation, and education.

While most communities on the Taconic Crest are not specifically worthy of such designation, the spruce-fir forest on the northern end might be. Because the Taconic Crest region is primarily composed of northern hardwood communities, though, we feel that the area as a whole would not be ideal for nomination for this program. We have not considered this option for a final recommendation because it would not reach the goal of managing the area as a whole.

Interstate Options

As has been described above, the Taconic Crest Trail embodies a difficult management situation due to its location in more than one state. Generally, there are not structures set up to coordinate management of an ecosystem across political boundaries. In areas that are deemed special for their aesthetic, ecological, or historical features,

concerned groups have sought out ways to provide protection and management despite the inherent difficulties due to split jurisdictions. One such scheme is interstate management.

Interstate Park

Management Option	Local Involvement	Unified Across States	Recreation as Primary Use	Resource Use Allowed	Protection of Region
Interstate Park	4	4	4	?	4

The establishment of an Interstate Park is one way to circumvent the difficulty of managing an ecosystem divided by political boundaries. Without ceding control to a national agency, an Interstate Park arrangement provides a framework within which to manage natural areas as ecoregions. The legislatures of the states involved create a joint commission to protect and manage a shared resource. The specifics of the agreement and the management strategies are not pre-determined but can be written to reflect the needs of a given region. Because this model has succeeded in several places throughout the country, including Breaks Interstate Park on the Kentucky/Virginia border and Palisades Interstate Park on the New York/New Jersey border, it seems to have potential for the Taconic Crest region.

This model represents an appealing alternative to either continued individual state management or higher-level national management. While continuing management on a lower level would not alleviate the current problems outlined above, stepping up to management by a national agency has its drawbacks as well, as will be discussed shortly. The establishment of an interstate park would not actually be much of a departure from

the current management scheme. While two state agencies (along with a number of other organizations) are currently involved in the management of the Taconic Crest Trail, an interstate park framework would unite these concurrent efforts under the direction of an autonomous body.

National Options

Because the trail is in three states, we felt obliged to consider protection and management options at the federal level as a way to disregard state boundaries and to look at the trail holistically. National conservation means are detailed in Title 16 of the United States Code. Looking through Title 16 for the first time, five options seemed potentially viable: a National Forest, a National Wilderness Area, a National Conservation Recreational Area, a Rural Environmental Program, and a National Trails System. Upon further research, it became apparent that enlisting the Taconic Crest Trail in the National Trails System is the only truly viable option. Despite the inapplicability of the other national conservation means, we outline them here in a process of elimination.

National Forest

Management Option	Local Involvement	Unified Across States	Recreation as Primary Use	Resource Use Allowed	Protection of Region
National Forest		4		4	4

Much of the Taconic Crest region is forested, and much of it has been logged at one time or another. Today, W.J. Cowee Company, Inc., harvests a large tract in New

York and a smaller tract in Massachusetts, and Kelly Hardwood Company harvests a moderately-sized tract in Massachusetts. In light of this, it seems logical to consider making the region a National Forest, for this title allows, and in fact mandates, multiple uses in the plot.

There is definitely merit to a multiple-use model. As Craig Gutermuth, the Vice President of W.J. Cowee Company, Inc., pointed out to us, resource use is not maximized in delegating a tract to either recreation or logging. Rather, it is most effective to use tracts for multiple uses, bearing in mind that certain sections are more conducive to certain uses. For example, ridgelines are more conducive to recreation while slopes are perhaps more conducive to logging.

Recognizing that logging has been and will continue to be a prominent land use in the Taconic Crest region, we considered designation as a National Forest.

No national forest shall be established, except to improve and protect the forest within the boundaries, or for the purpose of securing favorable conditions of water flows, and to furnish a continuous supply of timber for the use and necessities of citizens of the United States...¹³

Given that logging occurs in the region and that the crest drains into two watersheds, there is potential for these criteria to apply. However, National Forest designation does not seem to be the most apt for the Taconic Crest Trail and region; ideally, we would like recreation, instead of logging, to be stated as the primary purpose for conservation.

¹³ United States Code, Title 16 §475.

National Wilderness Area

Management Option	Local Involvement	Unified Across States	Recreation as Primary Use	Resource Use Allowed	Protection of Region
National Wilderness Area		4	?		4

We considered protecting the Taconic Crest region under the National Wilderness Preservation System because the region is relatively undeveloped. However, we found that it is too developed to meet the stringent criteria for designation as a National Wilderness Area. The Taconic Crest region does not meet many of these criteria. The area as of now does not total more than 5000 acres, the minimum area requirement. Humans are present in the region not just as visitors but as residents. Furthermore, development, logging, and a well-established trail are all evidences of human impact on the landscape.

Therefore, despite the recreational, scenic, and educational potential of the region, these aspects cannot be maintained under the National Wilderness Preservation System. The area is neither pristine nor arguably to be improved by the elimination of human impact. Humans have been and will continue to be a noticeable presence in the region. Thus, it makes sense to adopt a management scheme that will allow multiple uses of the land beyond strict preservation.

National Conservation Recreational Area

Management Option	Local Involvement	Unified Across States	Recreation as Primary Use	Resource Use Allowed	Protection of Region
National Conservation Recreational Area		4			4

With multiple use designation in mind, we looked into the potential for a National Conservation Recreational Area, thinking that this would allow more human use and impact. We imagined that the criteria for this designation would be similar to those for a National Park but that the area would have to be less monumental than those that are currently National Parks. This is not the case. It turns out that a title of National Conservation Recreational Area is an addendum to, or a further consideration for, a National Wildlife Refuge System. The title is a way in which public recreation can become a permitted “incidental or secondary use” on lands that are administered by the Secretary of the Interior for “fish and wildlife purposes.”¹⁴ In other words, wildlife preservation must be the primary purpose for conservation of the land. Although the Taconic Crest region undoubtedly contains flora and fauna whose habitat should be protected, none of the species identified to date are endangered or threatened; there is no basis on which to make an argument for federal conservation strictly for wildlife purposes. Therefore, this region does not meet the basic criteria for a National Conservation Recreational Area.

Rural Environmental Conservation Program

Management Option	Local Involvement	Unified Across States	Recreation as Primary Use	Resource Use Allowed	Protection of Region
Rural Envir. Conservation Program	4	?		4	

¹⁴ United States Code, Title 16 §460k.

One of the stated purposes of the Rural Environmental Program is to “improv(e) the level of management of nonindustrial private forest lands” by protecting “forests or other land and surrounding areas, its wildlife, and nearby populace and communities from erosion, deterioration, pollution by natural and manmade causes...”¹⁵ As can be seen, the purpose for this conservation extends beyond wildlife preservation and thus is inherently more applicable to the Taconic Crest region than is a National Conservation Recreational Area. Through the Rural Environmental Program, landowners and operators of land submit plans for conservation measures and enter into contracts of 3, 5, 10, or 25 years with the Secretary. In doing so, they receive federal funds to cover 50-75% of the costs of the outlined conservation measures.

There are several features that make this program especially appealing for this region. First of all, current landowners can retain ownership entirely. Lands are not being turned over to the national government but simply being given national funds. Furthermore, conservation measures are not being implemented by national decree but as a result of landowner interest. This ensures that the management scheme will be established only if the landowners are invested in doing so. In addition, landowners may be more receptive to an impermanent contract than to a permanent one. They would not be bound to the program indefinitely but instead would be receiving money for a trial conservation scheme.

Despite these advantages, there are downsides to the applicability of this program, one of which is embedded in one of the advantages. Is there enough landowner interest in increasing conservation measures for the trail, or is this something that needs to come

¹⁵ United States Code, Title 16 §§1501-1502.

by decree from planners, state agencies, or private organizations? Perhaps a grassroots initiative from the landowners is unlikely in this situation. More importantly, does the Rural Environmental Program apply only to forests used for timber and agriculturally-related purposes? Recreation, not logging, should be the primary purpose for the conservation of the lands of the Taconic Crest region.

National Trails System

Management Option	Local Involvement	Unified Across States	Recreation as Primary Use	Resource Use Allowed	Protection of Region
National Trails System	4	4	4	4	

For this reason, we turned to the National Trails System. This system is composed of four types of trails: National Recreation Trails, National Scenic Trails, National Historic Trails, and connecting or side trails. The Taconic Crest Trail is most applicable for this protection as a National Recreation Trail. It could also qualify as a National Scenic Trail if it were combined with other trails so as to exceed the 100-mile minimum length for that designation. Because the Taconic Crest Trail is not an extended trail which “follow(s) as closely as possible and practicable the original trails or routes of travel of national historical significance,” it could not be conserved as a National Historic Trail.¹⁶

However, the criteria for designation as a National Recreation Trail are quite fitting for the Taconic Crest Trail.

¹⁶ United States Code, Title 16 §1242.

- (i) trails in or reasonably accessible to urban area may be designated as “National Recreation Trails” by the appropriate Secretary with the consent of the States, their political subdivisions, or other appropriate administering agencies;
- (ii) trails within park, forest, and other recreation areas owned or administered by States may be designated as “National Recreation Trails” by the appropriate Secretary with the consent of the State; and
- (iii) trails on privately owned lands may be designated “National Recreation Trails” by the appropriate Secretary with the written consent of the owner of the property involved.¹⁷

Remarkably, this designation could potentially enable all segments of the Taconic Crest Trail to be given national protection status without turning over ownership of any land to the federal government. Because of the trail’s relatively close proximity to Albany, Boston, and New York City, it can be considered to be “reasonably accessible to urban area(s).” Therefore, all that would be needed to be eligible for this designation would be the agreement of the various state and private landowners.

Given the multiple ownership status of the trail, such a designation makes a lot of sense. Although federal agencies may acquire lands for the National Trails System by negotiation or condemnation proceedings, we would not advocate doing so in the Taconic Crest region. Instead, we would advocate either the retention of current ownership or the conveyance of real property rights to organizations for management. Both of these scenarios are allowed in the creation of a National Recreation Trail. This is but one of the benefits of establishing the trail in the National Trails System.

In its details, designation as a National Recreation Trail is advantageous in that it implements a universal marker and allows a number of uses:

Potential trail uses allowed on designated components of the national trails system may include, but are not limited to, the following: bicycling, cross-country skiing, day hiking, equestrian activities, jogging or similar fitness activities, trail biking, overnight and long-distance backpacking, snowmobiling, and surface water and underwater activities. Vehicles which may be permitted on certain trails may include, but need not be limited to, motorcycles, bicycles, four-wheel drive or all-terrain off-road vehicles.¹⁸

¹⁷ United States Code, Title 16 §1243(b).

¹⁸ United States Code, Title 16 §1246(j).

As can be seen, a variety of recreational uses can be allowed on the trail. Furthermore, because protection would be only for the trail itself and not for its abutting lands, logging and other uses could continue in the region. In addition, if the trail were extended so as to qualify for designation as a National Scenic Trail, the Secretary would establish an advisory council. Under either designation, the Secretary may “enter written cooperative agreements with the States or their political subdivisions, landowners, private organizations, or individuals to operate, develop, and maintain any portion of such a trail either within or outside a federally administered area.”¹⁹ In addition, the Secretary is “authorized to encourage volunteers and volunteer organizations to plan, develop, maintain, and manage, where appropriate.”²⁰ This means that organizations such as the Taconic Hiking Club, the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation, and the Taconic-Rensselaer Land Conservancy could continue to fulfill roles in the management of the trail.

These details yield advantages on a large scale. First of all, the Taconic Crest Trail would gain national recognition and attention. Recreation, the obvious use of any trail, would be recognized as the primary purpose for conservation. Most importantly, federal overseeing would be coupled with state, private organization, or individual ownership and/or management; local responsibility would not be ceded entirely.

While this arrangement sounds promising, there are some setbacks to it as well. Is there something unique enough about this trail to merit national protection status? Even if there is, would landowners and the user public be unreceptive to such increased management? If so, would the little protection afforded be worth the potentially negative

¹⁹ United States Code, Title 16 §1246(h).

²⁰ United States Code, Title 16 §1250(a).

stigma of federal involvement? After all, such a designation would only protect the trail itself, not the surrounding lands. Finally, is there any funding available for the creation of new National Recreation Trails? While the United States Code outlines criteria and implementation fairly extensively, it says little about funding. For these reasons, the feasibility of such a designation is questionable.

Recommendations

Final Options

Having compared the different options for increased management according to the criteria we outlined originally, we selected the four most appropriate options for the the Taconic Crest region: the status quo, a nonprofit organization, an Interstate Park, and a National Recreation Trail. The latter three meet at least four of the five criteria that we outlined; for this reason, we feel that they have significant potential for improving the current situation and receiving public support. Although the status quo option does not meet as many criteria, we continue to consider it because it would not require any changes and maintains the possibility for incremental improvements. To review, we outline the crucial pros and cons of these four options again.

Management Option	Local Involvement	Unified Across States	Recreation as Primary Use	Resource Use Allowed	Protection of Region
Status Quo	4		?	4	?
Nonprofit Organization	4	4	4	4	4
State Forest				4	4
State Park			4		4
Nature Preserve			4		4
Interstate Park	4	4	4	?	4
National Forest		4		4	4
National Wilderness Area		4	?		4
National Conservation Recreational Area		4			4
Rural Envir. Conservation Program	4	?		4	
National Trails System	4	4	4	4	

Status Quo	
PROS	CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible in terms of exact components of plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing degradation and erosion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflicting uses unresolved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No need for additional funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impermanence of protection on all sections of the trail
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued informal involvement of various parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate signage and other information for users
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesser adverse reactions from public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambiguity and potential impermanence of accesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued use by a wide variety of groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity costs for recreation, research,

Nonprofit Organization	
PROS	CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to apply for grants and to accept donations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No legal authority or policy-making capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain local, low-profile management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preservation of all segments is not mandated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management across state lines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constantly need to find money and public support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not bound to particular management structure 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run by people with vested interests and genuine care 	

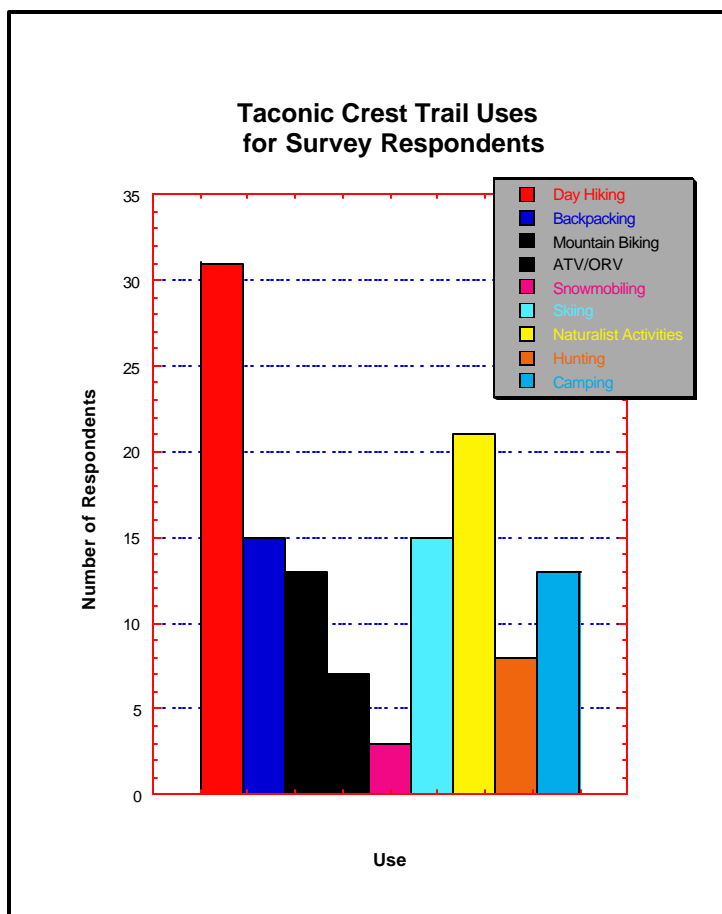
Interstate Park	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal entity granted authority by state constitutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires legislation to be established
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint management under one governing body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires consent and commitment of all states involved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates interstate communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landowners and the user public may be unreceptive to increased management structure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structures for management of recreation areas are precedented in the states 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interstate management is unprecedented in Massachusetts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run by commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area may be too small to merit this
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple ownership remains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple ownership remains
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal signage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear where funding comes from

National Recreation Trail	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not be unique enough to merit national status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal overseeing coupled with involvement at other levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landowners and the user public may be unreceptive to increased management structure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple ownership remains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surrounding lands are not protected along with trail
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal trail marker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear what funding is available
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows a number of uses 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meant to be located near population density 	

Public Input

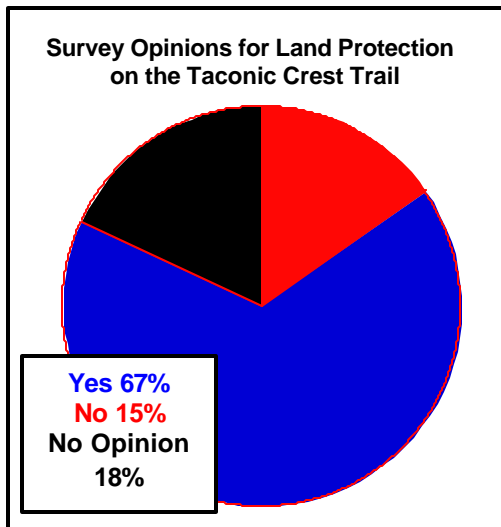
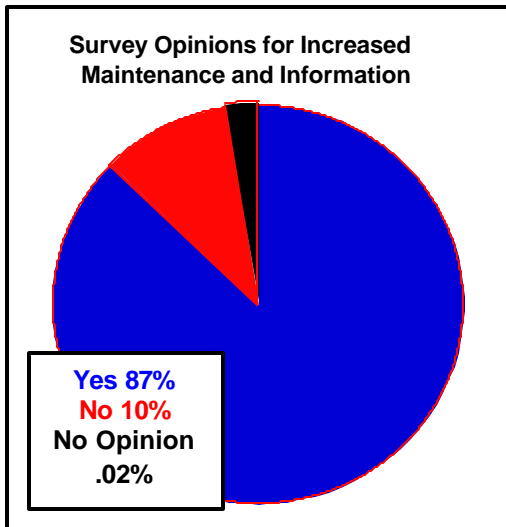
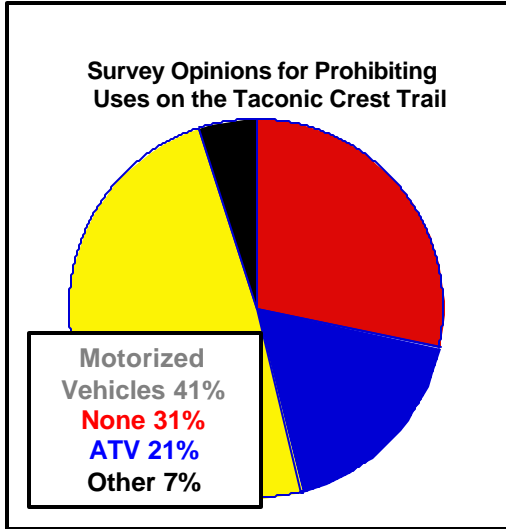
Even though we looked extensively at all of these options, we did not feel justified in making a final decision on our own because of our perspectives as college students and temporary residents of the region; we felt that we needed to gauge public opinion before making a final recommendation. For this reason, we invited the public to an open presentation in which we presented these options. Prior to the presentation, we mailed invitations and use surveys to 25 individuals involved with the Taconic Crest Trail and placed 100 copies in public locations throughout the surrounding towns.

Because we did not distribute these surveys randomly, they do not necessarily



constitute a representative sample. Because we did not survey a large number of people, we recognize that our results are not statistically significant. Nonetheless, we feel that it is valuable to consider the opinions of those people concerned enough to fill out the surveys. This use survey is included in Appendix 1,

and a spreadsheet with its results is included in Appendix 2.



Of the 39 people who responded to our use survey, we found that the majority used the Taconic Crest Trail for day hiking (80%) and naturalist activities (54%). The least popular activities were snowmobiling (0.7%) and ATV/ORV use (18%). Respondents used the trail moderately for backpacking, camping, skiing, hunting, and mountain biking.

Although respondents acknowledged a wide variety of uses, most did not use the trail frequently. A significant number also favored restricting uses on the trail. 62% favored restricting either ATV/ORV's or all motorized vehicles from the Taconic Crest Trail, but a large number of users also did not want to see any restriction. Users were also divided on the issue of more unified management; the majority favored a unified management scheme, but a significant number opposed it or had no opinion.

Although uses varied significantly between respondents, most agreed on several

issues regarding the trail. 87% of respondents wanted to see increased management and information about the trail. Likewise, 67% of respondents favored increased protection of the trail and surrounding lands.

In addition to these use surveys, we received public input via a survey that we distributed to those in attendance at our presentation. This survey focused on considerations of the four final management schemes. This survey is included as Appendix 3, and its results are included as Appendix 4. Of the eleven people who completed this survey, no one was in favor of maintaining the status quo or gaining designation as a National Recreation Trail. Four supported the creation of a nonprofit organization, and six supported the establishment of an Interstate Park. The remaining person suggested that we “encourage strong management partnership between the NYS DEC and MA DEM with Taconic Trails Council involvement.” While we recognize that these opinions are not representative of the public at-large, we maintain that it is important to consider them. For this reason, we eliminated the status quo and National Recreation Trail from our final considerations. Our respondents felt that protection and management of the Taconic Crest region should be improved to some extent without reaching a federal level, and we chose to heed these opinions.

Future Directions

Both a nonprofit organization and an Interstate Park are appealing options because of their adaptability to the specific needs of the Taconic Crest Trail and surrounding lands. This flexibility will be advantageous in the long run but makes initial steps more unclear. There are no set criteria for the establishment of either of these

management bodies; for this reason, we have looked at existing nonprofits and Interstate Parks as precedents. We include descriptions of these bodies in order to outline the potential that exists for the protection and management of the Taconic Crest region.

Potential for a Nonprofit Organization

The larger mountain ranges to the east and west of the Taconic Crest are both managed and promoted by large and well-established nonprofits, the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) and the Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK). Both of these clubs uphold mission statements with dual purposes: conservation and recreation.

The Appalachian Mountain Club promotes the protection, enjoyment, and wise use of the mountains, rivers and trails of the Northeast. We believe that the mountains and rivers have an intrinsic worth and also provide recreational opportunity, spiritual renewal, and ecological and economic health for the region. We encourage people to enjoy and appreciate the natural world because we believe that successful conservation depends on this experience.²¹

The Adirondack Mountain Club -- ADK -- is dedicated to the protection and responsible recreational use of the New York State Forest Preserve, parks and other wild lands and waters. The Club, founded in 1922, is a member-directed organization committed to public service and stewardship. ADK employs a balanced approach to outdoor recreation, advocacy, environmental education and natural resource conservation.²²

Given the duality of these mission statements, these clubs fulfill a variety of functions.

The Appalachian Mountain Club lists both recreation and conservation initiatives.

We teach skills, run backcountry lodges (open to all), fix trails, publish guides, help with land stewardship, work on conservation issues - and have a great time together enjoying the great outdoors.²³

As mentioned above, such clubs have no direct bearing on governmental policies.

Nonetheless, the Adirondack Mountain Club is pursuing conservation efforts through advocacy.

²¹ <http://www.outdoors.org>, 14 December 2000.

²² <http://www.adk.org>, 14 December 2000.

ADK's conservation and advocacy program grew in response to the need for responsible policy development concerning the care of the Forest Preserve, the right of the public to use it for recreation, and the protection of natural resources. Our Public Affairs Office, located in Albany, New York operates our legislative advocacy program.²⁴

This range of functions holds enormous potential. However, it should be noted that both the Appalachian and Adirondack mountain ranges are significantly larger than the Taconic Crest range. Consequently, their clubs are much larger and much more active than a nonprofit in this region would ever need to be. For example, the Appalachian Mountain Club currently has 87,000 members.

Although it does not manage a mountain trail, the Maine Island Trail Association (MITA) deserves consideration as a precedent.

The Maine Island Trail is a 325 mile long waterway designed for small boats, extending from Casco Bay to Machias. It includes approximately 35 privately-owned and 48 state islands, mostly small and uninhabited, where one can visit or camp in a wilderness setting.²⁵

The inclusion of both private and public properties is the crucial parallel between the Maine Island Trail and the Taconic Crest Trail. In 1985, the Maine Bureau of Public Lands determined that the recreational potential of the state-owned islands should be evaluated. This governmental agency contracted the Island Institute, a nonprofit organization, to do so. The Island Institute found that recreational potential could be managed most effectively outside of the government, so MITA was founded in 1987 to serve this purpose. MITA's mission statement quickly came to encompass the duality found in those of the AMC and the ADK.

The Maine Island Trail Association's goal is to establish a model of thoughtful use and volunteer stewardship for the Maine islands that will assure their conservation in a

²³ <http://www.outdoors.org>.

²⁴ <http://www.adk.org>.

²⁵ *Maine Island Trail Association: Frequently Asked Questions.*

natural state while providing an exceptional recreational asset that is maintained and cared for by the people who use it.²⁶

Indeed, MITA organizes a number of programs to engage local volunteers in the maintenance of the trail: the Adopt-an-Island Program, the Monitoring Program, and fall and spring clean-ups. MITA publishes the *Stewardship Handbook and Guidebook* to provide information about the islands on the trail and *Fragile Islands* to educate users about low-impact ways of recreating. Annually, they compile the data collected through the Monitoring Program into *The Monitoring Report of Recreational Use*. It would be extremely helpful to collect such use information on the Taconic Crest Trail in order to determine how and to extent the trail should be managed. Indeed, many of MITA's programs could be adapted effectively for a nonprofit organization to oversee maintenance of the Taconic Crest region.

Although it operates on a much larger scale, the Appalachian Trail Conference also bears consideration as an exemplar nonprofit for a specific trail. "ATC is both a confederation of the 31 clubs with delegated responsibility for managing sections of the trail and an individual-membership organization."²⁷ It is a relevant precedent in that its management efforts do not reside in just one body or on just one scale.

Since the beginning in the 1920s, the management of the Appalachian Trail has been a cooperative effort of:

- The conference.
- Independent local outdoors organizations in 14 states (what we call "Trail-maintaining organizations").
- The National Park Service and its local administrations in the six other national-park units along the trail.
- The USDA Forest Service at the Washington and regional (southeast and northeast) levels and the administrations of the eight national forests bisected by the trail, down to the district-ranger level.
- State and local administrators of state parks, state forests, and state gamelands.
- Counties and cities along the trail.

²⁶ *A Brief History of the Maine Island Trail Association.*

²⁷ <http://www.atconf.org>, 14 December 2000.

This is an active, daily partnership at the local level. Policies for overall trail management (beyond those set by federal and state laws and the regulations of the agencies involved) are developed through joint meetings of various kinds, usually at a regional level, with the ATC board of managers the hub of a wheel that turns by as close to consensus as the partners can achieve. Some view it as a three-legged stool: ATC, the clubs, the agencies.²⁸

In the Taconic Crest region, it seems important to keep both the local clubs and organizations and the appropriate agencies involved. For this reason, the Appalachian Trail Conference serves as a viable model of an orchestrating body that does not take over entirely but rather facilitates communication and action.

While there is something to be gained from the precedents of the Appalachian Mountain Club, the Adirondack Mountain Club, the Maine Island Trail Association, and the Appalachian Trail Conference, none of these are on the same scale as a nonprofit for the Taconic Crest region would be. Therefore, it is worth looking at land trusts as a more localized subset of nonprofit organizations committed to conservation.

Nonprofit, voluntary organizations that work hand-in-hand with landowners, land trusts use a variety of tools, such as conservation easements that permanently restrict the uses of the land, land donations and purchases and strategic estate planning, to protect America's open spaces and green places, increasingly threatened by sprawl and development. Local, regional and national lands trusts, often staffed by volunteers or just a few employees, are helping communities save America's land heritage without relying exclusively on the deep pockets of government.²⁹

The Taconic Crest Trail and surrounding lands would certainly be an applicable region for a land trust, for land trusts are intended to protect open spaces of all kinds. Indeed, the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation and the Rensselaer-Taconic Land Conservancy are both land trusts that have dealt with this region. We purport that there may be something to be gained in the creation of a land trust focused solely on the Taconic Crest region. If the objective of increased management would be to keep the

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ <http://www.lta.org>, 14 December 2000.

region undeveloped, a land trust would be an appropriate means. Furthermore, a national Land Trust Alliance exists to aid local people in creating and running land trusts. In other words, there is a structure of sorts within which to start such a management scheme.

Founded in 1982, LTA is the national membership organization of land trusts, providing leadership, information skills and resources to the 1,227 local, regional and national land trusts across the nation. Its sole mission is to strengthen the land trust movement, helping to ensure that land trusts conserve land for the benefit of communities and natural systems.³⁰

One example of the valuable services provided by the Land Trust Alliance is the publication of “Standard Regulations and Practices” as guidelines for legal and ethical functioning.

As can be seen, the creation of a nonprofit organization, or land trust more specifically, deserves extensive consideration for the Taconic Crest region. It represents a local and malleable management option.

Potential for an Interstate Park

As mentioned earlier, there are two prime examples of Interstate Parks in the United States. Along the Kentucky/Virginia border, Breaks Interstate Park contains 4200 acres that border the Russell Fork River. The park features the largest canyon east of the Mississippi and contains 12 miles of hiking trails. Its success demonstrates how two state governments can coordinate sound management and preservation of an area across state boundaries.

Both the Kentucky and Virginia legislatures granted autonomy to the Breaks Interstate Park Commission. According to the Kentucky State Code, they created “a joint corporate instrumentality of both the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the

³⁰ Ibid.

Commonwealth of Virginia...[that] shall be deemed to be performing governmental functions of the two states.”³¹ This joint commission was given legal authority and the ability to “acquire by gift, purchase or otherwise real estate and other property,” including the right of eminent domain.³² These powers are echoed in the Virginia State Code. The commission that followed from these legislative designations has facilitated interstate communication and thus has instituted effective management. By considering the region as a whole and introducing a joint management body, the two states have been better able to protect and manage this resource.

The Palisades Interstate Park protects 2500 acres of the Hudson River Shoreline along the New York/New Jersey border. The park is 30 miles long and ½ mile wide. It was established in 1900 in response to concern over intensive quarrying of the Palisades for rock, an interest in the public welfare, and a desire for “the conservation of outstanding scenic features and the promotion of outdoor recreation.”³³ Much as for the Breaks Park, the two states legislated the creation of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission:

...a joint corporate municipal instrumentality of both the state of New York and the state of New Jersey...which shall be deemed to be performing governmental functions of the two states in the performance of its duties...the commission shall have power to sue and be sued, to use a common seal and to make and adopt suitable by-laws.³⁴

Like the Breaks Interstate Park Commission, the Palisades Interstate Park Commission has the power to acquire lands for the park and the power to manage these lands. When the park was founded, nearly all the land that comprises it today was in private hands.

However, the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, through the authority granted to it by

³¹ Kentucky State Code.

³² Ibid.

³³ <http://www.njpalisades.org>.

³⁴ New Jersey State Code.

the two states involved, has been able to acquire the land needed for the effective establishment and management of the park. We would not recommend that a Taconic Crest Interstate Park Commission acquire lands by condemnation proceedings or eminent domain, but it would be allowed.

One of the key advantages of an interstate management scheme is that it can be created for and tailored precisely to a specific area. Legislators, agencies, organizations, and landowners involved in the region today would meet to develop a set of rules, a governing body, and limitations on the power of a Taconic Crest Interstate Park Commission. Once granted authority by the constitutions of the states involved, the Commission would be able to function as an effective local entity.

Final Recommendation

In light of the history, current status, and future needs of the Taconic Crest Trail and region, we recommend one of three options: creation of a nonprofit organization, establishment of an Interstate Park, or some combination of these two management schemes. While both could be effective on their own, it could be beneficial to combine the local, low-profile demeanor of a nonprofit organization with the legal authority and formality of an Interstate Park.

Regardless of whether it is possible to realize any of these three options in the near future, we believe that it is imperative to look immediately at the Taconic Crest Trail, surrounding lands, and surrounding communities as an entire region. Ecosystems do not adhere to state or ownership boundaries. If any and all parties involved with the Taconic Crest today come to think of it as an ecoregion, management steps will begin to

reflect this holistic view regardless of whether these steps are being implemented by a larger body.

There are a number of small initiatives that could begin to address our goals for protection and management without any significant changes in management structure. For example, more accesses could be established on the New York side of the trail. Informative signs could be placed on roads leading to trailheads. A universal trail marker has already been created by the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation, but it could be placed consistently along the trail. Trail registers could be placed at trailheads to monitor use. Uses could be streamlined along continuous segments of the trail.

These small steps could make a difference in both the conservation and recreation potential of the Taconic Crest region. If the involved parties do not see the creation of a nonprofit organization or the establishment of an Interstate Park as viable or necessary options for the next few years, we advise that they take small steps such as these. There are two levels on which improvements can take place; even if there is not a way to make large-scale changes at this time, there is no reason not to make small improvements. Such changes could benefit both the natural environment and the humans who inhabit and use it.

Appendix 1

Use Survey

100 stamped copies distributed with invitations at the following locations in towns along the trail: Post Office and Town Library in Petersburg, NY; Post Office and Stewart's Shop in Berlin, NY; Pizza Plus in Stephentown, NY; Post Office in Pittsfield, MA; Store at Five Corners, Cold Springs Coffee Roasters, Berkshire Hills Market in Williamstown, MA, 12/3/00

Where do you live? _____

How often do you use the Taconic Crest Trail for the following activities?

	<i>never</i>	<i>rarely</i>	<i>occasionally</i>	<i>frequently</i>
<i>Day hiking</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Backpacking</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Mountain biking</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>ATV/ORV</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Skiing</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Snowmobiling</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Naturalist activities</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Hunting</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Camping</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you feel that any of these uses should be prohibited from the trail?

Do you feel that any of these uses should be restricted to certain sections of the trail?

Do you feel that there are adequate accesses to the trail?

Yes No

Which accesses do you use? _____

Would you like to see more trail information and better trail maintenance?

Yes No No Opinion

Would you like to see one organization or agency managing the whole trail?

Yes No No Opinion

Would you like to see more of the land along the trail protected?

Yes No No Opinion

Would you like to see stricter enforcement of the regulations on the trail?

Yes No No Opinion

Would you like to see more public events happen on the trail?

Yes No No Opinion

Would you like to see an environmental education center along the trail?

Yes No No Opinion

Any additional comments?

Appendix 2

Use Survey Results

Location	Day Hiking	Back-packing	Mtn. Biking	ATV/O RV	Skiing	Snow-mobiling	Naturalist	Hunting	Camping
?	O	O	N	O	N	O	O	R	O
?	O	O	N	N	N	N	O	N	O
?	O						O		
?, NY	O	R	R	N	R	N	O	N	R
Berlin	F		O		F		F	F	F
Berlin	F	R	N	O	N	N	R	N	N
Berlin	N	N	N	F	N	F	N	F	F
Berlin			O	O			O	O	
Berlin			O	O				O	O
Berlin	N	N	N	F	N	O	N	O	N
Berlin	F	O	N	N	N	N	F	N	N
Lanesboro	O	N	O	N				N	
New Ashford	F	O	N	N	N	N	F	N	O
Petersburg	F	R	O	N	F	N	O	N	R
Petersburg	F	O	N	N	N	N	F	N	O
Petersburg	F	O	N	N	O	N	N	N	N
Petersburg	F	O	N	N	N	N		O	N
Petersburg	O	N	N	N	N	N	F	N	N
Petersburg	O	O	R	R	O	N	O	O	O
Pittsfield	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Stephentown	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Williamstown	F		F		F				
Williamstown	F	N	R	N	R	N	O	N	N
Williamstown	O	R	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Williamstown	O	N	N	N	O	N	F	N	N
Williamstown	O	N	N	N	N	N	O	N	N
Williamstown	F	R	R	N	O	N	F	N	R
Williamstown	R	N	R	N	N	N	N	N	N
Williamstown	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Williamstown	N	N	R	N	N	N	N	N	N
Williamstown	O								
Williamstown	O	N	N	N	O	N	O	N	N
Williamstown	F	R	N	N	F	N	N	N	N
Williamstown	F	N	N	N	O	N	F	N	N
Williamstown	O	N	N	N	N	N	R	N	N
Williamstown	F		O		F	N			R
Williamstown	F				O				
Williamstown	O	R	N	N	R	N	R	N	R
Williamstown	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N

Use code: F (frequent use); O (occasional use); R (rare use); N no use)

Location	Uses prohibited?	Uses restricted?	Adequate access?	More Info & maintenance?	Unified management?	More land protection?	More Enforcement?	More public events?	Envi.Ed. Center?
?	None	No	N/O	Yes	N/O	No	No	N/O	N/O
?	ATV	Yes	N/O	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
?	ATV	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
?, NY	Motor	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/O
Berlin	ATV	Yes	No	No	N/O	Yes	Yes	No	N/O
Berlin	None	No	Yes	Yes	N/O	N/O	No	No	N/O
Berlin	None	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Berlin	None	No	Yes	Yes	N/O	N/O	N/O	Yes	Yes
Berlin	None	No	Yes	Yes	No	N/O	No	N/O	N/O
Berlin	None	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
Berlin	None	No	Yes	Yes	N/O	Yes	No	No	N/O
Lanesboro	ATV	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/O	Yes	Yes
New Ashford	None	Yes	N/O	Yes	No	Yes	N/O	No	Yes
Petersburg	ATV	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/O	No
Petersburg	None	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/O	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Petersburg	Motor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Petersburg	ATV	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	N/O	N/O
Petersburg	Motor	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/O	N/O	N/O	Yes	Yes
Petersburg	ATV	No	N/O	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pittsfield	Motor	No	N/O	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Stephentown	Motor	Yes	N/O	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Williamstown	None	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	N/O
Williamstown	ATV	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/O
Williamstown	Motor	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/O
Williamstown	Motor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/O
Williamstown	Other	No	Yes	Yes	N/O	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/O
Williamstown	Motor	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/O	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/O
Williamstown	Motor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/O	N/O
Williamstown	ATV	Yes	N/O	N/O	N/O	Yes	N/O	Yes	N/O
Williamstown	Motor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/O
Williamstown	Other	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Williamstown	None	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/O	N/O	Yes
Williamstown	Motor	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Williamstown	Motor	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/O	Yes	Yes	Yes
Williamstown	Motor	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	N/O
Williamstown	Other	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/O	Yes
Williamstown	None	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/O	N/O	No	No	No
Williamstown	Motor	No	N/O	Yes	N/O	Yes	No	Yes	No
Williamstown	None	Yes	N/O	Yes	Yes	N/O	N/O	N/O	N/O

Suggestion Code: Yes (approve of suggestion); No (don't approve of suggestion); N/O (no opinion)

Appendix 3

Post-presentation Recommendations Survey Distributed to audience and collected at ENVI 302 Presentation, 12/6/00

Given the information and options presented tonight, I would advocate:

- Maintaining the status quo
- Setting up a nonprofit organization
- Designating an Interstate Park
- Designating a National Recreation Trail
- Other: _____

Why do you think this option is best?

Is there anything you think we did not address tonight and should address in our final paper?

Thank you for coming and for providing your input!

Appendix 4

Results

Post-presentation Recommendations Survey, 12/6/00

Option	Status Quo	Nonprofit Organization	Interstate Park	National Recreation Trail
Number of responses	0	4	6	0
Other: strong partnership between DEC and DEM w/ Taconic Trails Council Involvement				

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