

RE  
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



1048

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

### 1. Name of Property

historic name DEBAR POND LODGE

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number DEBAR PARK ROAD

	not for publication
	vicinity

city or town DUANE

state NEW YORK code NY county FRANKLIN code 033 zip code 12953

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.  
In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

Ruth A. Puipont DSHPD 10/20/14  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register  removed from the National Register
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Joe Edson Jr. Beall 12.16.14  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**DEBAR POND LODGE**  
 Name of Property

**FRANKLIN COUNTY, NEW YORK**  
 County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

**Category of Property**  
 (Check only **one** box.)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
7	1	buildings
0	0	sites
1	2	structures
0	0	objects
<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed  
 in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: camp  
 RECREATION & CULTURE: outdoor recreation

**Current Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT  
 RECREATION & CULTURE: outdoor recreation

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER

**Materials**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE, STONE  
 walls: WOOD: log, weatherboard  
 roof: ASPHALT  
 other: GLASS, METAL

**DEBAR POND LODGE**

Name of Property

**FRANKLIN COUNTY, NEW YORK**

County and State

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**Narrative Description**

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**Summary Paragraph**

*Synopsis*

Debar Pond Lodge is a ca. 1940 Adirondack camp located within the Adirondack Forest Preserve in Franklin County, New York. Built at the north end of Debar Pond, it commands a broad prospect of that body of water and the adjacent Adirondack mountain scenery that frames it. The principal building of the camp is the main lodge, a rambling two-story edifice of rustic conception designed by architect William Distin of Saranac Lake; it is of light-frame construction with an exterior veneer of half and full round logs. The interior, comprised of two floors of finished space, retains the bulk of its original floor plan and finish work, the latter of which features the extensive use of weathered horizontal and vertical sheathing boards for wall surfaces. Highlighting the interior is the centrally located Great Room, a two-story volume that rises from floor to ceiling and which has an exposed king post truss roof frame and a massive stone fireplace situated against the west wall. The camp additionally includes a number of support buildings including a garage with guide's quarters; a boathouse; and those which fulfilled agriculture-related functions. These features collectively represent a later epoch in the property's history, as it had previously been developed by Robert Schroeder, a German native and brewer who in the 1880s established an extensive hop-growing operation there, in addition to developing a sizeable dwelling which fell into dereliction and was demolished in advance of the construction of present lodge and features for the Wheeler family. The complex, centering on the main lodge, retains substantial physical integrity and remains an excellent example of mid-twentieth-century Adirondack camp design in Franklin County.

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**Narrative Description**

*Location & Setting*

Debar Pond Lodge is located near the northern border of New York's Adirondack Forest Preserve, approximately 18 miles south of the Village of Malone, in the Town of Duane, Franklin County. An access road, approximately four miles in length and known on maps as Debar Park Road, provides access to the core of the camp from New York Route 26. The associated property consists of 1,118.95 acres of heavily wooded land and is bordered by Debar and Baldface mountains. The nomination boundary contains a total of 11 buildings and structures, eight of which are considered contributing to the nomination. These are the main lodge; a boathouse; a guide house/garage; a generator house; a barn; a shed; a greenhouse and potting shed; and stone posts which mark the associated stone-lined walkway to the lodge's principal entrance. The property additionally includes a small concrete foundation, period and function unknown; a modern barn; and a chicken coop which is now in a semi-ruinous state with collapsed roof. These three features represent the non-contributing components. All of the nominated resources remain on their original site.

The main lodge and associated features and infrastructure are nestled on a point on the north side of the pond. The various buildings and structures which form the camp were sited on flat land; the land slopes gently downward towards water level between the lodge and the pond. Conspicuous on the access road as it approaches the main cluster of buildings are towering white pine trees, a character-defining feature of the immediate landscape and setting. The lodge was, as might be expected, oriented to face southwards so as to capitalize on the expansive view of Debar Pond and the accompanying mountain scenery. A grassy lawn stretches downward from the principal elevation of the house to the pond's shore, where the boathouse is located; it is interspersed with mature white pines. To the northeast of the main building complex is a flat open field, north from which extended, at one time, an airstrip for small planes. While partially overgrown, this landing strip is still visible in the landscape.

**DEBAR POND LODGE**

Name of Property

**FRANKLIN COUNTY, NEW YORK**

County and State

*Resource List*

The following is an itemized list of the contributing and non-contributing resources contained within the nomination boundary. All contributing features are presumed to date to 1939-40, the period during which the camp's existing features were erected. The site map included with this documentation indicates the positions of these resources relative to Debar Pond and one another.

Debar Pond Lodge (contributing building), ca. 1940

This light wood frame building with half-log veneer has an irregular footprint and is asymmetrically massed. It is a rambling two-story edifice characterized by the interplay of gable-roofed masses and was built above a foundation of concrete and stone. Character-defining features include full round logs at the building's corners, decorative round-log rafter and purlin tails, a large stone chimney mass, and metal casement windows of various configuration, including those which employ fixed transom units and/or sidelights. The half-log veneered walls give way to vertically oriented and lapped wood boards in the various gable fields. Asphalt covers the roof.

The principal elevation is that which faces southwards towards Debar Pond. It presents as a linear, eaves front elevation the horizontal emphasis of which is countered by the verticality of two projecting cross-gabled sections, the easternmost of which has a shallow projection which creates a superimposed gable. Windows are asymmetrically placed and include openings fitted with paired six-light casements (second story of eaves-front sections); openings that feature two pairs of eight-light casements, the outer ones being fixed (second story, cross-gabled projections); and those consisting of two pairs of eight-light casements with 16-light transoms above (first floor, cross-gabled projections). A screened porch with pent roof and log posts and rafters is situated between the two projecting gable sections; there is additionally a partially glazed enclosed porch with skylights near the southeast corner. Wood brackets are present below the first and second story windows of the cross-gabled sections and indicate the former position of flower boxes. Two Class A chimneys are located on this elevation; both rise upwards and through the roof deck, to which they are secured by metal straps.

The north elevation, which includes the principal entrance and associated walkway from the driveway, is similar in conception to the opposite south-facing elevation in its combination of a horizontally aligned eaves-front block punctuated by two projecting cross-gabled sections. The principal entrance corresponds with the easternmost of the two cross-gabled sections, and is located in a broad, single-story, gable-roofed projection. The other cross-gabled section exhibits superimposed gables and is partially engaged by a single-story wing that extends northward from the remainder of the elevation. Fenestration on this elevation is varied and largely characterized by openings with paired six-light casements, in addition to a large window with operable central units, flanking sidelights and a 16-light transom which brings natural light into the Great Room. Other windows, again of the metal casement type, include a fixed four-light unit (gable field, easternmost cross-gabled projection) and paired eight-light units with four-light transoms (easternmost cross-gable, flanking entrance vestibule).

The east elevation presents as a gabled section with small pent-roofed projection which houses a bathroom that is accessible from both the inside and outside of the lodge. Two windows with paired casements are present at second-story level and serve to bring light into the bedroom that occupies that space. The opposite west elevation is fronted by a single-story section in which an office is situated, and includes a screened porch which opens off of the single-story section which extends from the north elevation near the northwest corner.

The interior of Debar Pond Lodge has finished space at first and second-story level in addition to service and storage space at basement and attic level. The central room of the first floor is the aptly named Great Room, the keynote interior space, which links the east and west portions of the plan. The principal entrance opens

**DEBAR POND LODGE**

Name of Property

**FRANKLIN COUNTY, NEW YORK**

County and State

into a small vestibule which in turn opens into an entry hall with staircase to the second floor; this hall in turn communicates with the Great Room, a large den with bar (the former billiard room), and a cross hall that accesses the remaining spaces on the east side of the plan, among them an office, bedroom and bathrooms, and the glazed porch. The Great Room, measuring roughly 35' by 22,' has a large fireplace against its west wall and communicates directly with the screened porch, the den, and the dining room to the west, in addition to the entry hall. The dining room, which also opens onto the screened porch, communicates with a butler's pantry which is connected to the kitchen and a walk-in pantry and freezer. The remaining portion of the west side of the plan has an office, a small screened porch and, in the north wing, a playroom and bedroom with small bathroom. These at one time served in some measure as staff quarters.

The second floor of the plan has a total of eight bedrooms and three bathrooms; the master bedroom is located on the east side of the plan with windows looking southward out over Debar Pond. Staff bedrooms were located on the opposite west side of the plan. The east and west sides of the plan are separated by the two-story open volume of the Great Room, with communication provided by means of a walkway aligned along the south wall. There is additionally a small balcony, located off of the hall on the east side of the plan, which opens onto the Great Room.

The basement contains service spaces and rooms for storage and mechanicals. As for the attic, it is largely unfinished, save for a cedar-lined room, which functioned as a large walk-in closet, which is accessible by way of a pull-down stair.

The interior finishes of Debar Pond Lodge, while decidedly rustic in nature, deviate from the distinctive Adirondack rusticity of the preceding Great Camp era. The Great Room, while it incorporates a large rustic split-granite fireplace and chimney the entire mass of which is expressed internally, has walls of weathered sheathing boards which are affixed to studding with cut nails—a seemingly conscious decision and one post-dating the introduction of wire nails—and is spanned by a series of large king-post trusses fashioned from repurposed hewn timbers. Purlins are framed into the top chords of these trusses and support the common rafters. The fireplace opening is spanned by a massive stone lintel above which is a stone mantel shelf sustained by cantilevered stones. Flooring consists of wide plank oak of varying width. The second-story balcony and walkway offer views into this room from above.

The den, another of the principal social spaces within the lodge and the onetime billiard room, has weathered vertical board walls and exposed hewn ceiling beams, and has a built-in window seat along the west wall; such built-ins are employed extensively throughout the house on both levels. There are additionally period cabinets and closets with original hardware, which is surface-mounted. The kitchen, which features the bulk of its original finishes, is characterized by the extensive use of knotty pine for walls, cabinets and drawers.

The principal staircase, in the entry hall, is of a closed stringer type; it rises to a landing before turning and completing its run to the second floor. The stair is of rectilinear design and employs vertical boards and square-profiled balusters and an unmoulded handrail.

The upstairs bedrooms are typified by the use of horizontally aligned weathered boards and built-in cabinets and window seats. Bathrooms, meanwhile, incorporate decorative colored tile as an important aspect of their aesthetic.

Interior doors include, at first-floor level, those of a bi-fold type with glazed upper panel, and those of a vertical board type with surface-mounted hardware, the latter employed at second-story level. Surface-mounted hardware used in Debar Pond Lodge includes L-hinges (cabinet doors, den); long strap hinges with spoon-and-arrow heads (second floor bedrooms); Suffolk-type thumb latches (second floor bedrooms); HL-

**DEBAR POND LODGE**

Name of Property

**FRANKLIN COUNTY, NEW YORK**

County and State

hinges (second floor bedroom cabinets); and simple lift hinges. Hardware in the kitchen area, such as that employed for drawers and cabinetry, is of a more conventional nature.

Entrance posts & walkway (contributing structure), ca. 1940

The walkway between the house and driveway is flanked by stone posts which mark the width of the path and which further serve as flower boxes. These posts, which largely mirror one another, have a square-plan section and a short corresponding section of wall. The stonework of the posts consists of irregularly shaped units laid in "web wall" manner. Each of the posts has an electric lamp rising from it.

Boathouse (contributing building), ca. 1940

The boathouse, located to the southeast of the lodge, is a single-story building with gable roof. The exterior walls are covered with half-log siding and the roof is laid with asphalt. It is one-bay wide by two-bays deep; windows—one on the north and two on the west elevation—are fitted with fixed six-light wood sash. The south gable elevation faces the lake and communicates directly with a small dock that extends into the pond. The building is of light frame construction consisting of dimensional lumber sheathed with pine boards, to which the half-log veneer is affixed. A porch, which appears in historic images on the lake elevation, has since been removed.

Guide House/Garage (contributing building), ca. 1940

This wood frame building is located immediately north of the lodge. It consists of a one-and-one-half story main block and a smaller single-story wing that extends from the former's southeast corner, aligned so that the south pitch of the main block's gable roof and that of the wing form a continuous slope where they meet. Siding is of a wavy edge rustic type and the roof is clad with asphalt. The north-facing elevation of the main block originally consisted of four large bays to accommodate vehicles; these, while still readable within the wall, have nevertheless been enclosed. The eaves project well beyond the wall plane and are embellished with decorative log rafter ends and, on the gable ends, decorative purlin tails. Original windows are largely of the paired six-light casement type with fixed transom or otherwise paired six-light casements. The north pitch of the main block's roof is punctuated by a shed-roof dormer while a stone chimney rises from the south pitch where it meets the roof covering the one-story wing. A small single-story bump out is located on the west gable wall of the wing where it meets the south wall of the main block.

Large shed/Generator house (contributing building), ca. 1940

This building is located north of the Guide House/Garage. It is a compact gable-roofed building erected above a roughly square-shaped plan, oriented with its principal elevation facing east. The exterior has novelty siding, un moulded corner boards and asphalt roofing. There are two windows on the south elevation, both of which are fitted with paired six-light casements spanned by fixed transoms. Paired doors with glazed upper panels provide access to the interior from the east elevation.

Barn (contributing building with non-historic addition), ca. 1940 & ca. 1978

The barn is located to the northeast of the house and consists of two sections, both of which are gable ended, erected above rectangular plans and arranged with parallel roof ridges; the westernmost section is the earlier of the two while the other dates to ca. 1978. The original section has, on its north elevation, three sliding doors which presumably communicated with interior stalls; the south elevation has a large open bay and associated sliding doors. A human door and window are present on the west wall. Siding consists of a wood novelty side with plain boards at the corners; the roof is presently covered with tarps but is presumably laid with asphalt. As for the later eastern section, it has a large open bay with associated sliding door on the south elevation, vertical wood siding and a corrugated metal roof. Both were built above poured concrete pads.

**DEBAR POND LODGE**

Name of Property

**FRANKLIN COUNTY, NEW YORK**

County and State

Small Shed (contributing building), ca. 1940

This building is located at the northwest extreme of the complex. It is a small, gable-roofed edifice and has a door with glazed panel on its east elevation. The north and south walls have flush-board siding while the east and west walls have narrow clapboard. The roof is laid with asphalt siding.

Adjacent to the small shed is an open barn (non-contributing building), which post-dates ca. 1978. It is a long, gable-roofed building of light-frame construction with slatted siding and a corrugated metal roof.

Greenhouse & Potting Shed (contributing building), ca. 1940

The greenhouse, located southwest of the small shed, is a single-story wood frame structure divided into two sections. The westernmost section is a potting shed that contains the building's entrance, located on the west wall. The roof of the shed and the northern slope of the greenhouse section are laid with asphalt; the lower portion of the walls in the greenhouse are clapboarded, matching the walls of the potting shed, while the upper walls and south slope of the roof are glazed. There is additionally a single pane, vertical-tilt window on the south wall of the potting shed.

Foundation Remnant (non-contributing structure), date unknown

While this feature may date from the historic period, there is presently not sufficient information with which to justify contributing status.

Chicken Coop (non-contributing structure), ca. 1940

The chicken coop, a small wood-frame structure with a shed roof, was built above a poured concrete pad; it is located to the north of the barn. This building has flush-boarded exterior walls and doorways are located on the east and west ends. The north elevation is blind. A series of windows are located on the opposite south elevation; there are a total of four windows, the westernmost of which is a fixed two-pane unit, the remaining ones being of two-over-two configuration. There is presently a hole in the roof corresponding with the location where three rafters and associated roof decking failed.

**DEBAR POND LODGE**  
Name of Property

**FRANKLIN COUNTY, NEW YORK**  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

**ARCHITECTURE**

**ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION**

**Period of Significance**

ca. 1939- 1959

**Significant Dates**

ca. 1939-40; 1959

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Distin, William G., architect

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance, 1939-1959, is initiated with the construction of the house and terminates with the end of the Wheeler ownership period. No evidence of buildings, structures or infrastructure which conclusively pre-dates the acquisition of the property by the Wheeler family—notably from the era corresponding with the occupancy of Robert Schroeder— has been identified.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

N/A



**DEBAR POND LODGE**

Name of Property

**FRANKLIN COUNTY, NEW YORK**

County and State

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph**

*Synopsis*

Debar Pond Lodge is an architecturally and historically significant property located in Franklin County, New York. Built at the head of Debar Pond, a picturesque body of water nestled in the saddle between Baldface and Debar mountains in the Town of Duane, the nominated resource represents a ca. 1939-40 building campaign the principal feature of which was the main lodge, built to the designs of Saranac Lake architect William G. Distin. The construction of this camp, undertaken for the family of Arthur Wheeler, followed an earlier period of development that had been initiated in the 1880s by German-born brewer Robert Schroeder, who established an extensive hop-growing operation on the nominated property and saw to the construction of a sizeable dwelling the lavishness of which was widely noted. Following the collapse of Schroeder's business interests, the property fell into dereliction and was eventually sold. The existing buildings, structures and infrastructure appear to date to the Wheeler ownership period and later; all tangible evidence of Schroeder's earlier agricultural and domestic infrastructure appears to have been lost. The centerpiece of the nomination is the lodge, a rambling rustic affair designed by Distin and sited so as to capitalize on the scenery of Debar Pond. A native of Plattsburgh, Clinton County and a protégé of noted Adirondack architect William Coulter, Distin enjoyed a productive architectural practice in the region from the early 1910s into the middle years of the century. Debar Lodge ranks among Distin's major and mature-period designs, along with Camp Wonundra, ca. 1934, Eagle Nest, ca. 1937 and Camp Minnowbrook, ca. 1948. For it, Distin combined an exterior of rustic conception, predicated on the use of a log veneer, with an interior of eclectic rustic conception the plan of which hinged on the centrally placed Great Room. The main lodge survives with a high degree of physical integrity and in an intact and evocative mountain setting with a full complement of outbuildings. It is being nominated in association with Criterion A, in the area of Entertainment/Recreation, for its direct association with Adirondack tourism in the first half of the twentieth century, and under Criterion C, as an example of Adirondack camp design from the first-half of the twentieth century and as an important work of noted regional architect William Distin.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance**

*Historical Context & Ownership Overview*

The Town of Duane, within which Debar Pond Lodge is located, was formed 1828, at which time it was partitioned off from the Town of Malone. Lands were later taken from it to form the Town of Harrietstown, at which time Duane assumed its present boundary. The processing of iron ore was the principal early endeavor in this area, ca. 1825-50, and, in the words of historian Franklin Hough, "gave life and spirit to the settlements" there; the earliest iron forge was noted as producing between 100 and 125 tons of iron annually during its heyday. The town takes its name for James Duane, a proprietor and the town's first permanent settler, ca. 1825.<sup>1</sup> The Meacham Lake Hotel was a popular tourist resort until it closed in 1921; in the early 1930s its lands were purchased by New York State for conversion into a campground by the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Debar Pond was discovered by the Canadian hunter-trapper John Debar in 1817, and thus came to take his name. Settlement on this remote body of Adirondack water was initiated during the 1880s, at which time Robert Schroeder (ca. 1846-1913) purchased land and assembled a tract of over 2,100 acres. An immigrant son of a German brewer and a prominent national dealer in hops with business concerns based in Utica and New York City, Schroeder sought to expand the family's business interests by planting 300 acres of these lands in hops. The following account outlines the operation Schroeder established on the nominated property:

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<sup>1</sup> Franklin Hough, *A History of St. Lawrence and Franklin Counties, New York* (Albany, 1853), 497-98.

**DEBAR POND LODGE**

Name of Property

**FRANKLIN COUNTY, NEW YORK**

County and State

THE SCHROEDER HOP FARM

Robert Schroeder, the hop merchant of Utica and New York, has a 2,000 acre farm at Duane, Franklin County, 300 of which are set out to hops. 100 laborers are at work at the hop yards and farm. They expect to sow 1,000 bushels of oats, and plant 100 acres of potatoes. The soil is a light yellow loam. They use muck from a bed on the farm which gives them a large supply. This mixed with phosphate, plaster and lime is relied upon as a fertilizer for hops. Duane is situated in the Adirondack regions, where both land and hop poles must be cheap.<sup>2</sup>

On this land Schroeder eventually erected a sizable and well-appointed dwelling, boasting 60 rooms, comprised of frame and stone sections, the latter which accommodated the family, the former for guests. This followed an earlier "cottage" which he had erected and which was lost to fire. Schroeder became familiar with Franklin County as he had procured hops from that region, which in turn inspired him to invest in his own hop cultivation operation there, extensive in scale; his purchase, on a plateau of land in Duane, represented the bulk of the arable land available in that town. Schroeder had fertilizer and other supplies freighted to Malone and brought overland by teamsters to Debar Pond, which he came to know following a fishing excursion with an associate. As for his business methods and lifestyle, the following is excerpted from *Historical Sketches of Franklin County*, 1918:

Everything was done with a lavish disregard for expense, and there were no profits. The yield per acre was light, the price of hops fell to a point below the cost even of economical production, and after a time yard after yard was abandoned until none remained in cultivation. Of his forest land Mr. Schroeder made a private park, and built a fine cottage on the shore of a handsome sheet of water known as Debar pond. He was then a bachelor, and with a gentleman employee and friend as companion spent a good deal of his time in the summer months at this point. Male guests from New York City were present frequently, and upon such occasions the fun was reported to have been fast and "loud." These affairs were expensive, too, for items of wine and broken china, and the upkeep of the cottage could hardly have been less than that of the farms. The cottage was once burned, but was rebuilt even finer than before. Mr. Schroeder at length failed, and the entire property was sold at a great shrinkage in price as compared with cost. Mr. Schroeder returned to New York City to reside, and committed suicide there a few years ago.<sup>3</sup>

Schroeder's demise and that of his wife, who was the heiress to the Ullman brewery fortune— a fortune which was largely lost along with that of her husband— was precipitated by both business and personal events. Following the collapse of his business interests, Schroeder filed for bankruptcy in 1902 for liabilities in excess of \$200,000. It was additionally in the first years of the 1900s that Schroeder's daughter, Elsa, eloped with a cigar store clerk, Richard Arkovy, who had deceptively portrayed himself to her as one Baron Von Arkovy of Hungary:

Shortly [after the elopement] the girl's mother inhaled gas and died in the bathroom of their home, the direct result of grief over her daughter's unfortunate match, and it was in the same bathroom that Schroeder today killed himself. Arkovy killed himself with gas last October in the Hotel Carlton, London. He and his bride had lived much in Europe on the generous allowance which Schroeder gave his daughter though the brewer steadfastly refused to recognize his son-in-law.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> "Hops," *Waterville Times*; undated newspaper fragment, ca. 1882-87.

<sup>3</sup> Frederick J. Seaver, *Historical Sketches of Franklin County and its Several Towns* (Albany: J.B. Lyon Co., 1918), chapter XIV.

<sup>4</sup> "Third Suicide by Gas in Family of Wealthy Brewer," *The Niagara Falls Gazette*, 25 July 1913.

**DEBAR POND LODGE**

Name of Property

**FRANKLIN COUNTY, NEW YORK**

County and State

Efforts to sell the estate began before Robert Schroeder's death, as attested to by real estate advertisements from 1912, one of which noted a country estate for sale, located on Debar Pond, "built by a millionaire with a millionaire's lavishness."<sup>5</sup> While some accounts painted an unflattering picture of Schroeder and the reckless manner in which he conducted both his personal and business affairs, another such contemporary account noted him as "a typical German of the well-to-do class. He possessed the sturdy, substantial qualities of his race and a fine sense of personal and financial honor... Old Franklin county acquaintances have learned of his troubles in his declining years and the fate which has finally befallen him with deep sorrow and regret."<sup>6</sup>

The Schroeder estate remained largely unoccupied after this time, passing through a succession of owners, until its purchase, in 1939, by Arthur Ellison Wheeler (1886-1966) and his wife, part-time residents of Palm Springs, Florida and Oyster Bay, Rye, Locust Valley and New York, New York variously.<sup>7</sup> Among the uses in the interim was that corresponding with the ownership of B. L. Reynolds and Clarence W. Briggs, both of Malone, ca. 1920s; it was during this period that the partners sought to develop a silver fox farm on the property.<sup>8</sup>

By the time the Wheelers acquired the property, which had long since fallen into dereliction—a 1913 account indicated that it was "deserted and had fallen into ruin"<sup>9</sup>—the Schroeder house had been abandoned for so long as to require its demolition. The existing buildings, structures and infrastructure are post-1939 manifestations and in large measure the result of the efforts of the Wheeler family, which worked with architect William Distin to develop the scheme for the main house. For roughly the next 20 years the family enjoyed their Debar Pond camp in characteristic Adirondack fashion; there they fished, canoed, swam, hunted, played badminton, rode horses, and hosted picnics and cookouts. The interior of the new lodge proved well-suited for entertaining family and friends, boasting as it did a billiards room, a fully stocked bar, a large kitchen and dining area, and a Great Room, the dwelling's central social space.

In 1959 the Wheelers sold the property to Farwell T. Perry of Connecticut, at which time they purchased Camp Taboo on Lake Placid. Perry, a Second World War Navy pilot, often traveled to and from the camp by way of a twin-engine seaplane. Some twenty years passed until New York State purchased the estate's 1,200 acres, including the main lodge, the outbuildings, and a remnant building from the Schroeder-family era, which was built for Robert Schroeder's son, who had contracted tuberculosis; that building has since been razed. A 25-year lease was a condition of the sale to the state, and it mandated the use of the lodge during that period by Barry Silverstein, a term which expired in 2004. The property is now a part of the Adirondack Forest Preserve and under the management and control of the Department of Environmental Conservation.

*Architectural Context*

For the main house at Debar Pond the Wheelers engaged the Saranac Lake-based architect William G. Distin (1884-1970). Distin is today considered among the premier architects active in the Adirondacks in the first half of the twentieth century. A native of Plattsburgh, Clinton County, Distin moved with his family to Saranac Lake during his youth and, following his graduation from high school, gained a draftsman's apprenticeship in the office of William L. Coulter (1865-1907). Coulter, who retains a position of considerable importance in the development of Adirondack camp design, worked for the New York City architectural firm of Renwick, Aspinwall and Renwick before coming to Saranac Lake in association with the expansion of the Adirondack Cottage Sanitarium, a center for the treatment of tuberculosis, and his own

<sup>5</sup> "Country Estate for Sale," *New York Herald*, 19 May 1912.

<sup>6</sup> "Suicide of Robt. Schroeder," *The Ogdensburg Journal*, July 1913.

<sup>7</sup> Palm Beach directories, 1927-34.

<sup>8</sup> Maitland C. De Sormo, "Schroeder of Debar Pond," *Franklin Historical Review*, vol. 4 [1967].

<sup>9</sup> "Robt. Schroeder."

**DEBAR POND LODGE**

Name of Property

**FRANKLIN COUNTY, NEW YORK**

County and State

illness with that disease. During a brief span of approximately 10 years, Coulter enjoyed a lively professional practice and planned and designed a number of high-profile Adirondack camp buildings and complexes. Among the domestic projects Coulter fielded, prior to establishing a full partnership with Max Westhoff, was the six-family complex known as the Knollwood Club, Lower Saranac Lake, ca. 1900; the Otto Kahn Camp on Bull Point, Upper Saranac Lake, ca. 1901; and the Recreation Hall at Sagamore Lodge (NHL 2000) near Raquette Lake, ca. 1901. Following Westhoff's arrival in 1902, the office designed Adolph Lewisohn's Prospect Point Camp on Upper Saranac Lake; the Eagle Island complex (NHL 2004) for Levi P. Morton, also on Upper Saranac; and, prior to that, modifications to Camp Pinebrook, Upper Saranac Lake, which had been acquired by Morton around 1898.<sup>10</sup> Distin therefore had the opportunity to work with a leading Adirondack architectural practitioner at the beginning of his career and one at the leading edge of contemporary camp design at the turn of the twentieth century.

Following Coulter's death in 1907, Distin attended Columbia University, graduating from that institution's architecture program in 1910. He enjoyed a brief sojourn in Chicago, working in association with S. S. Beekman designing houses for a development in Highland Park, prior to traveling for a time in Europe. Around 1912 he returned to Saranac Lake where he joined the successor to Coulter's architectural firm and the latter's sometime partner, Max Westhoff, in the firm of Westhoff & Distin. During the First World War Distin was employed for a time in Washington, D.C. and, following the war and his return to Saranac Lake, assumed the principal position in the former Coulter-Westhoff office, as Westhoff had removed to Massachusetts prior to retiring in 1937.<sup>11</sup> Distin's first major commissions came during the 1930s, among them Camp Wonundra, for William Rockefeller, ca. 1934; Eagle Nest, at Blue Mountain Lake, for Walter Hochschild, ca. 1937; and Camp Minnowbrook, in the same area, for R.M. Hollingshead, ca. 1948. Additional work included smaller commissions on Upper Saranac Lake and Lake Placid. In addition to his domestic work, Distin also designed a number of notable churches, among them St. John's in the Wilderness Episcopal Church in Paul Smiths and the Island Chapel on Upper Saranac Lake. He is also credited with the design of the Olympic Ice Arena at Lake Placid, ca. 1932.

Distin's professional career was initiated during the heyday of Adirondack "Great Camp" design, of which his mentor, William Coulter, was an important contributor. It was during this era that wealthy patrons developed seasonal camps, often on a grand scale, following the example set forth by William West Durant, an innovative figure in the field of Adirondack camp design and one of the first promoters of the region as a tourist destination for the affluent. Durant's Camp Pine Knot on Raquette Lake, begun in 1877, formed the prototype for the decentralized Adirondack camp and proved a landmark architectural essay in the development of the type. Expanded over the course of ensuing years, it exhibited the principles of the compound plan and other distinctive trademarks associated with the Adirondack Great Camp, among them the use of indigenous materials and forms—drawn in large measure from the region's rustic vernacular—and sensitivity to setting and location. Aesthetic precedents included the rustic architecture of the shelters and shanties built by local Adirondack guides, in addition to the architecture of the Alps Mountain region of Europe. The continued development of Pine Knot, guided by Durant until 1900, offered him the opportunity to formulate his aesthetic philosophies regarding camp architecture in advance of his later designs for Camp Uncas, ca. 1893, and Sagamore Lodge, ca. 1897. Camp Pine Knot, with its rustic, interrelated buildings developed sensitively within a remote and secluded location on Raquette Lake, offered the prototype for the seasonal Adirondack camp and the so-called Adirondack style. The rustic style developed in large measure

<sup>10</sup>Biographical information on Coulter was largely drawn from Mary Hotaling's 1995 Master's Thesis from the University of Vermont, "W.L. Coulter, Adirondack Architect."

<sup>11</sup>Craig Gilborn, *Adirondack Camps: Homes Away From Home, 1850-1950* (The Adirondack Museum/Syracuse University Press), 256-59.

**DEBAR POND LODGE**

Name of Property

**FRANKLIN COUNTY, NEW YORK**

County and State

by Durant was subsequently taken up by other professional architects in the Adirondack region, notably Coulter. Other architectural influences, among them Japanese, also helped inform this style. This rustic aesthetic was widely disseminated throughout the region by the early twentieth century and employed for camps of both modest and substantial scale and character.

The main lodge at Debar Pond designed by Distin, while rooted in the Adirondack camp work of the preceding decades, nevertheless deviated from it in significant ways. Unlike the tendency of the earlier Great Camps towards a decentralized plan, whereby dining facilities and other keynote domestic spaces were housed in separate and oftentimes fully detached buildings, the main house at Debar Lodge housed both family and guest quarters, service spaces, and dining and kitchen facilities. As such, the principal and secondary social and domestic spheres were contained underneath a single roof. Also noticeable is a shift in aesthetic preference away from the earlier rustic sensibility—embodied in the use of bark-clad logs and interior and exterior surfaces covered with stretched birch and cedar bark—to an eclectic rustic one that combines aspects of the earlier mode with other influences. The exterior, while it appears as log construction, is nevertheless merely a veneer applied to a light-wood frame of dimensional lumber. Windows, of the metal casement type, reflected advancements in window technology and were not a kind employed in the earlier period of camp design. On the interior, walls and some ceilings are sheathed with weathered boards, of both horizontal and vertical orientation, and are affixed to studding with cut nails, which, given the date of ca. 1939—well past the introduction of wire nails—would seem a conscious design perhaps meant to impart a particular effect. This, along with the exposed hewn beam ceiling in the former billiard room, the kingpost trusses of the Great Room which, like the ceiling beams in the billiard room, were built using reused hewn components, and the surface-mounted hardware, suggest an early American rusticity that would seem to relate to Colonial Revival impulses. A noticeable exception on the interior is the Great Room’s massive rustic fireplace, which recalls earlier examples of regional camp design.

A comparison of Debar lodge’s interior finishes with that of Distin’s Eagle Nest, ca. 1937, reveals significant differences. For the Hochschilds’ Eagle Nest, Distin employed more characteristic Adirondack rustic finishes, among them expressed log surfaces on the inside, stretched-bark wall and ceiling surfaces, and a rustic staircase formed of half-log steps with peeled log railings. The design for the Wheeler’s house also eschewed features characteristic of Distin’s other camp work, namely octagonal rooms and “butterfly” or “sun trap” plans.<sup>12</sup> Notable, too, was the free use of decorative tiles in the various second-floor bathrooms, which lend these spaces a decidedly personalized aspect.

Among those features which relate the Debar Pond Lodge more strongly to the earlier tradition are its decidedly asymmetrical and complex massing, the manner in which it was sited relative to a specific view shed and on a secluded body of water, and the nature of the complex as a largely self-sufficient operation. Sensitivity to site was among the prevailing principles of Adirondack camp design and one which was instilled in him by his mentor, William Coulter. In an interview in 1970, near the end of his life, Distin indicated that Coulter was in part known “by his love of the country and the way he adapted himself to it, so that all his work, which I tried to follow in later years, was designed to fit the site.”<sup>13</sup> This philosophy was by no means new to American architecture, as it was a central mantra of the Picturesque work of mid-nineteenth century architects, among them Calvert Vaux and Alexander Jackson Davis.

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid, 261.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid, 260.

**DEBAR POND LODGE**  
Name of Property

**FRANKLIN COUNTY, NEW YORK**  
County and State

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

De Sormo, Maitland C. "Schroeder of Debar Pond," *Franklin Historical Review*, vol. 4 [1967].

Franklin Hough, Franklin. *A History of St. Lawrence and Franklin Counties, New York*. Albany, 1853.

Gilborn, Craig. *Adirondack Camps: Homes Away From Home, 1850-1950*. Adirondack Museum/Syracuse University Press, 2000.

Hotaling, Mary. "W.L. Coulter, Adirondack Architect." Master's Thesis, University of Vermont, 1995.

Seaver, Frederick J. *Historical Sketches of Franklin County and its Several Towns*. Albany: J.B. Lyon Co., 1918.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 1,118.95 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>18</u>	<u>564326</u>	<u>4943823</u>	5	<u>18</u>	<u>564238</u>	<u>4939359</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>18</u>	<u>564516</u>	<u>4943417</u>	6	<u>18</u>	<u>563551</u>	<u>4940556</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
3	<u>18</u>	<u>564937</u>	<u>4940711</u>	7	<u>18</u>	<u>563256</u>	<u>4943445</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
4	<u>18</u>	<u>564592</u>	<u>4939402</u>	8	<u>18</u>	<u>563493</u>	<u>4943746</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

**DEBAR POND LODGE**

Name of Property

**FRANKLIN COUNTY, NEW YORK**

County and State

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary for the Debar Pond Lodge NRHP nomination has been illustrated on the three maps included with this documentation. These were drawn at a scale of 1: 38,000 (Owls Head and Debar Mountain USGS quadrangles), 1:24,518 (orthoimage), and 1:24,000 (Owls Head and Debar Mountain USGS quadrangles).

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary for this nomination has been drawn to include 1,118.95 acres of land, all of which is historically associated with the property and the cited period of significance, ca. 1939-1959. The boundary was drawn using a survey map executed in 1979 to facilitate the transfer of Debar Pond Lodge and its historically associated acreage to the State of New York. Lands contained within the boundary were originally associated with Lots 32, 40, 48 and 56 of Township 12, Great Tract 1, of the Macomb Purchase, in addition to Lots 350 and 351, Township 9, of the Old Military Tract. This boundary includes all of Debar Pond and a portion of Debar Brook; small areas of Debar and Baldface mountains; the developed core of the camp; and a portion of, but not all of, the access road from County Highway 26. No buffer land or non-historically related acreage has been included.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title William E. Krattinger, NYS DHP, and Susan Arena, AARCH

organization NYS Division for Historic Preservation

date July 2014

street & number PO Box 189

telephone (518) 237-8643

city or town Waterford

state NY

zip code 12180

e-mail [William.Krattinger@parks.ny.gov](mailto:William.Krattinger@parks.ny.gov)

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs:**

**Photographs, TIFF format, by William E. Krattinger, June 2014**

Digital files at NYS DHP, Peables Island State Park, Waterford, NY 12188

- 0001 EXTERIOR, view roughly northwards to south elevation of Debar Pond Lodge
- 0002 EXTERIOR, view roughly southwards showing principal entrance, east side of north elevation of Debar Pond Lodge
- 0003 EXTERIOR, view southward showing western portion of north elevation of Debar Pond Lodge
- 0004 INTERIOR, view looking west, Great Room
- 0005 INTERIOR, detail view showing horizontal board wall sheathing
- 0006 EXTERIOR, view to southeast showing Boat House, Debar Pond in background
- 0007 EXTERIOR, view roughly southwards showing Guide House/Garage
- 0008 EXTERIOR, view eastward showing Barn Complex
- 0009 EXTERIOR, view looking to west showing Greenhouse
- 0010 EXTERIOR/SETTING, view southward on Debar Pond from waterfront

**DEBAR POND LODGE**  
Name of Property

**FRANKLIN COUNTY, NEW YORK**  
County and State

**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name NYS Department of Environmental Conservation  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

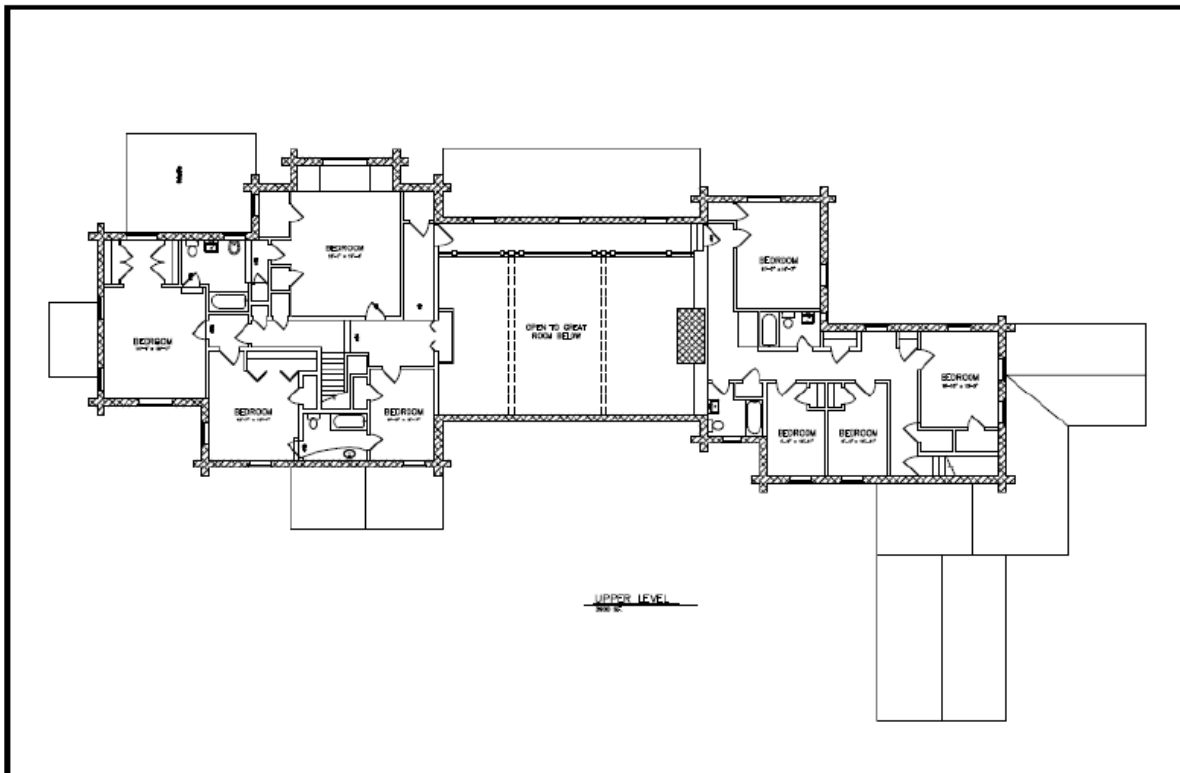
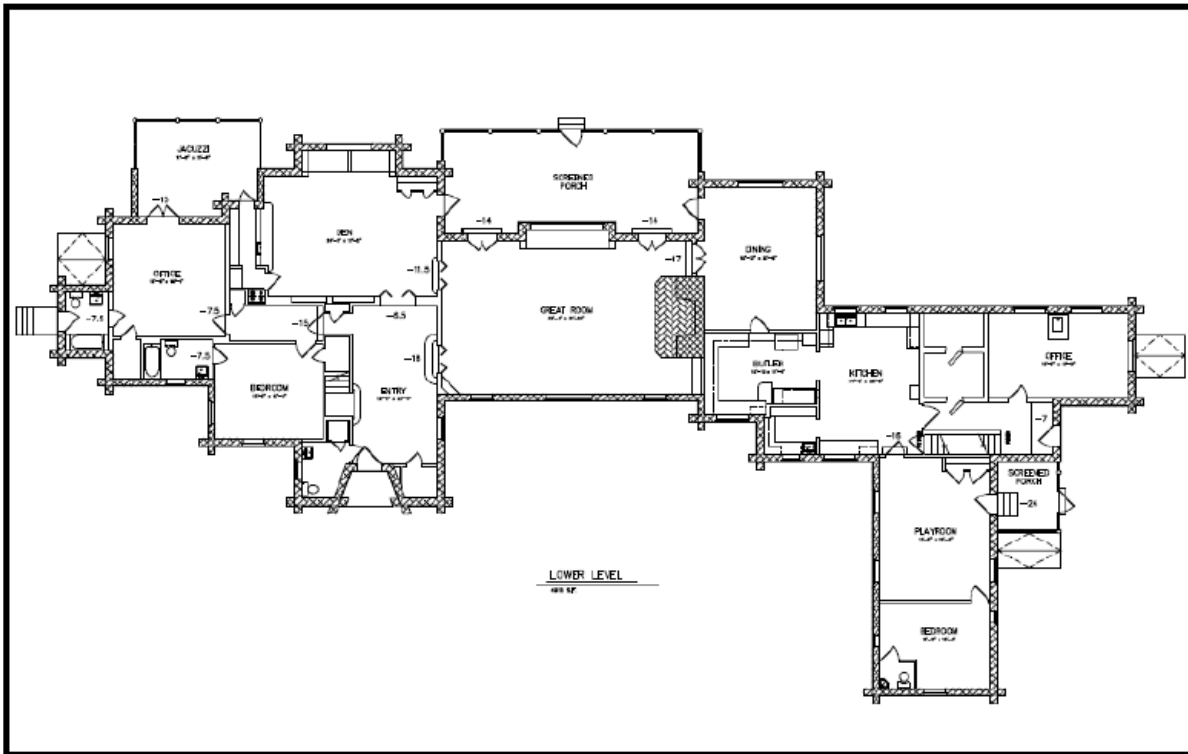


**DEBAR POND LODGE**

Name of Property

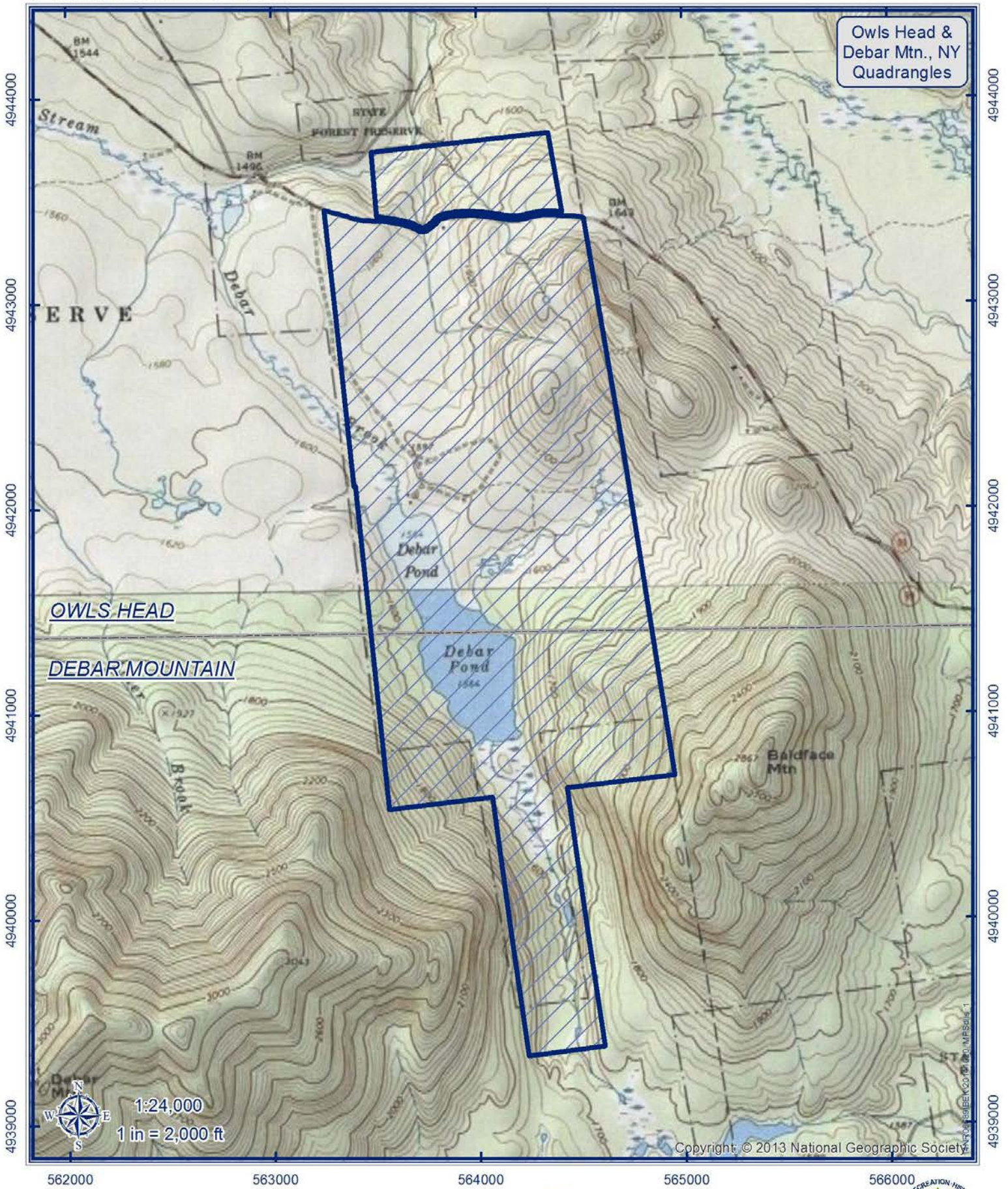
**FRANKLIN COUNTY, NEW YORK**

County and State



ABOVE & BELOW, floor plans, Debar Pond Lodge

Owls Head &  
Debar Mtn., NY  
Quadrangles



OWLS HEAD



DEBAR MOUNTAIN

1:24,000  
1 in = 2,000 ft

Copyright © 2013 National Geographic Society

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N  
Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter

0 650 1,300 2,600 Feet

 Debar Pond Lodge  
 USGS quad index

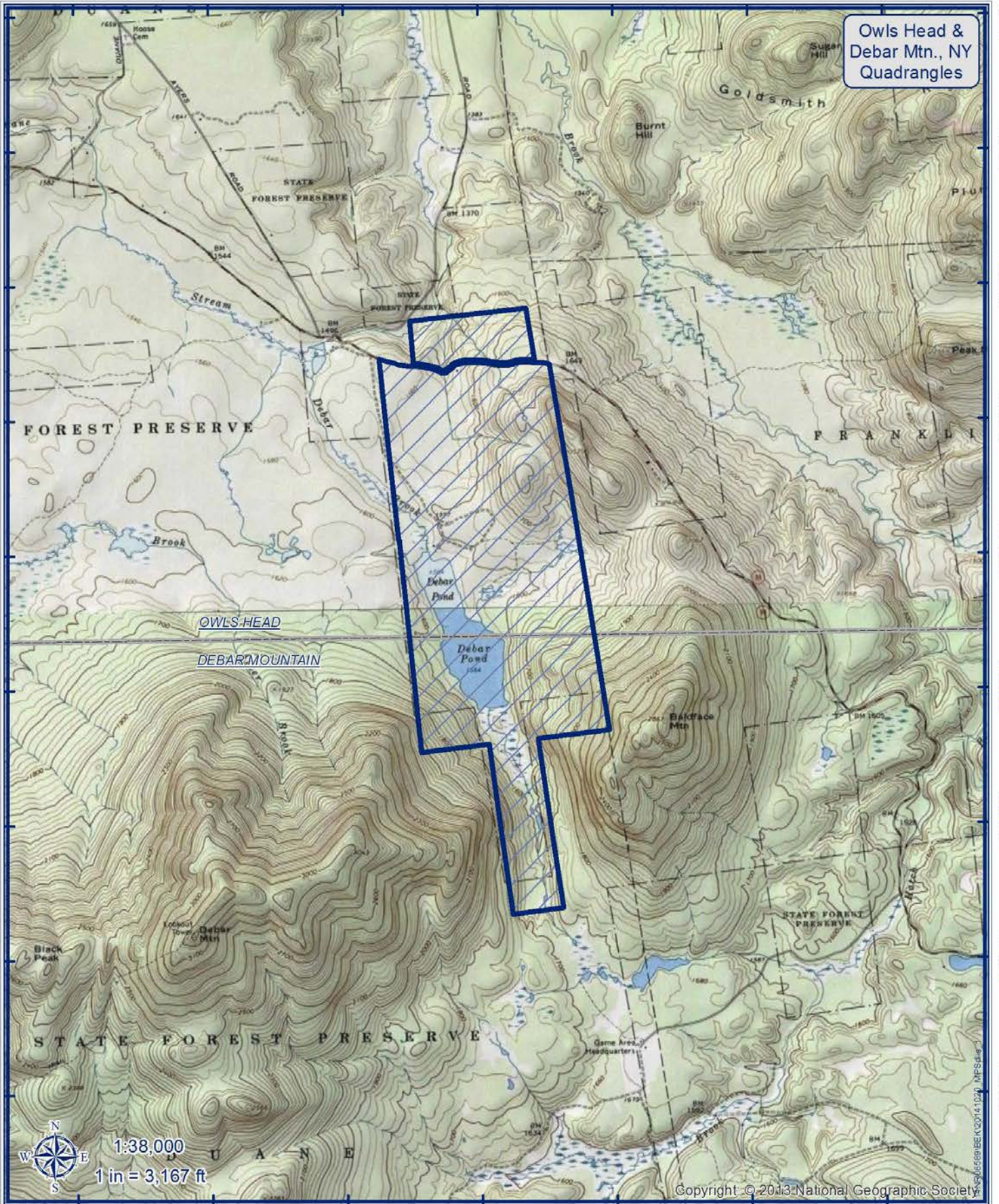
Tax Parcel Data:  
Franklin Co, RPS  
franklin.sdgnys.com



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4941000  
4940000  
4939000  
4938000

Owls Head &  
Debar Mtn., NY  
Quadrangles





1:38,000  
1 in = 3,167 ft



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Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N  
Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter

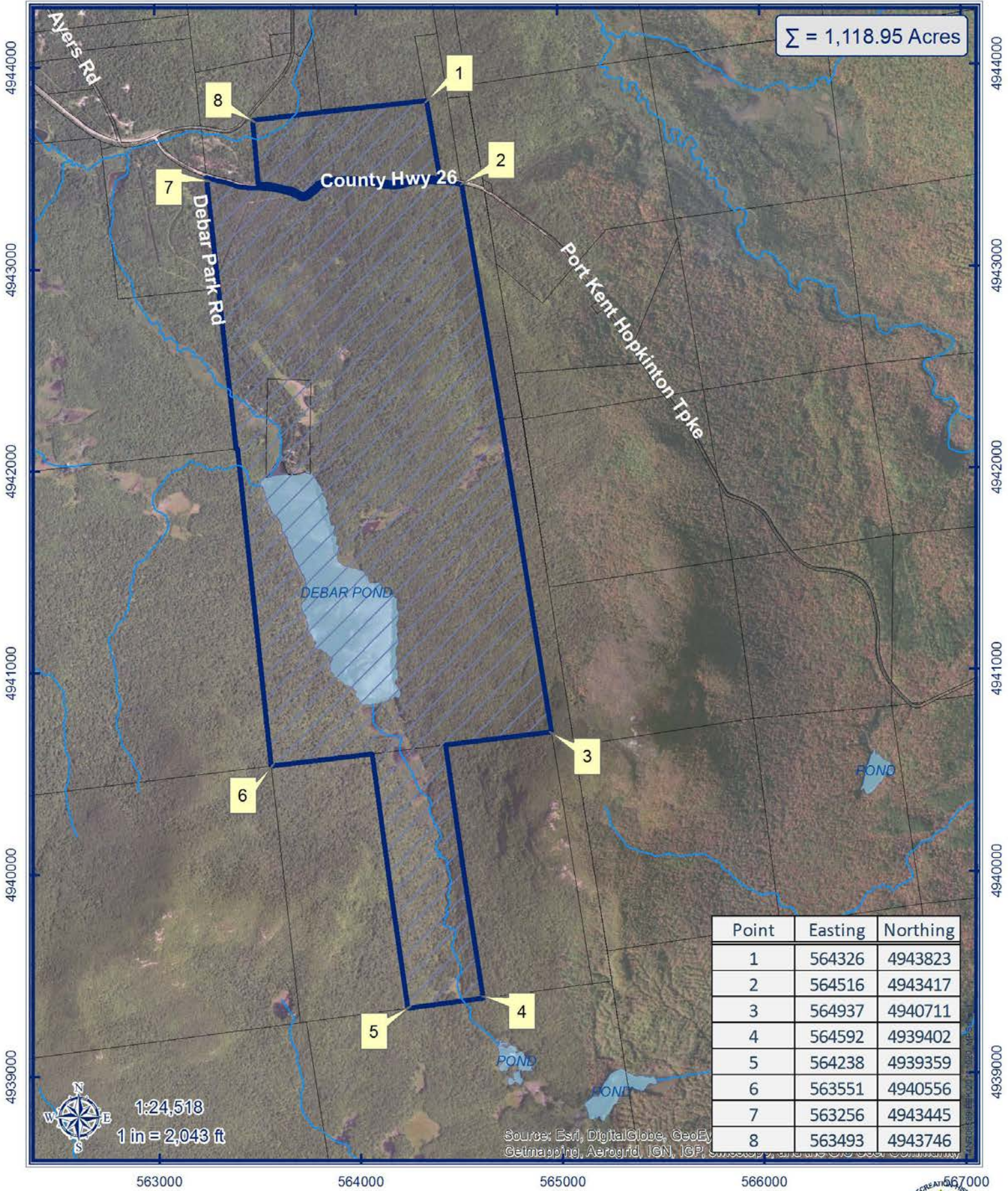
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 Debar Pond Lodge  
 USGS quad index

Tax Parcel Data:  
Franklin Co, RPS  
franklin.sdgnys.com



$\Sigma = 1,118.95$  Acres



Point	Easting	Northing
1	564326	4943823
2	564516	4943417
3	564937	4940711
4	564592	4939402
5	564238	4939359
6	563551	4940556
7	563256	4943445
8	563493	4943746

1:24,518  
 1 in = 2,043 ft

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, Swirecity, and others

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N  
 Projection: Transverse Mercator  
 Datum: North American 1983  
 Units: Meter



Debar Pond Lodge

Tax Parcel Data:  
 Franklin Co, RPS  
[franklin.sdgny.com](http://franklin.sdgny.com)



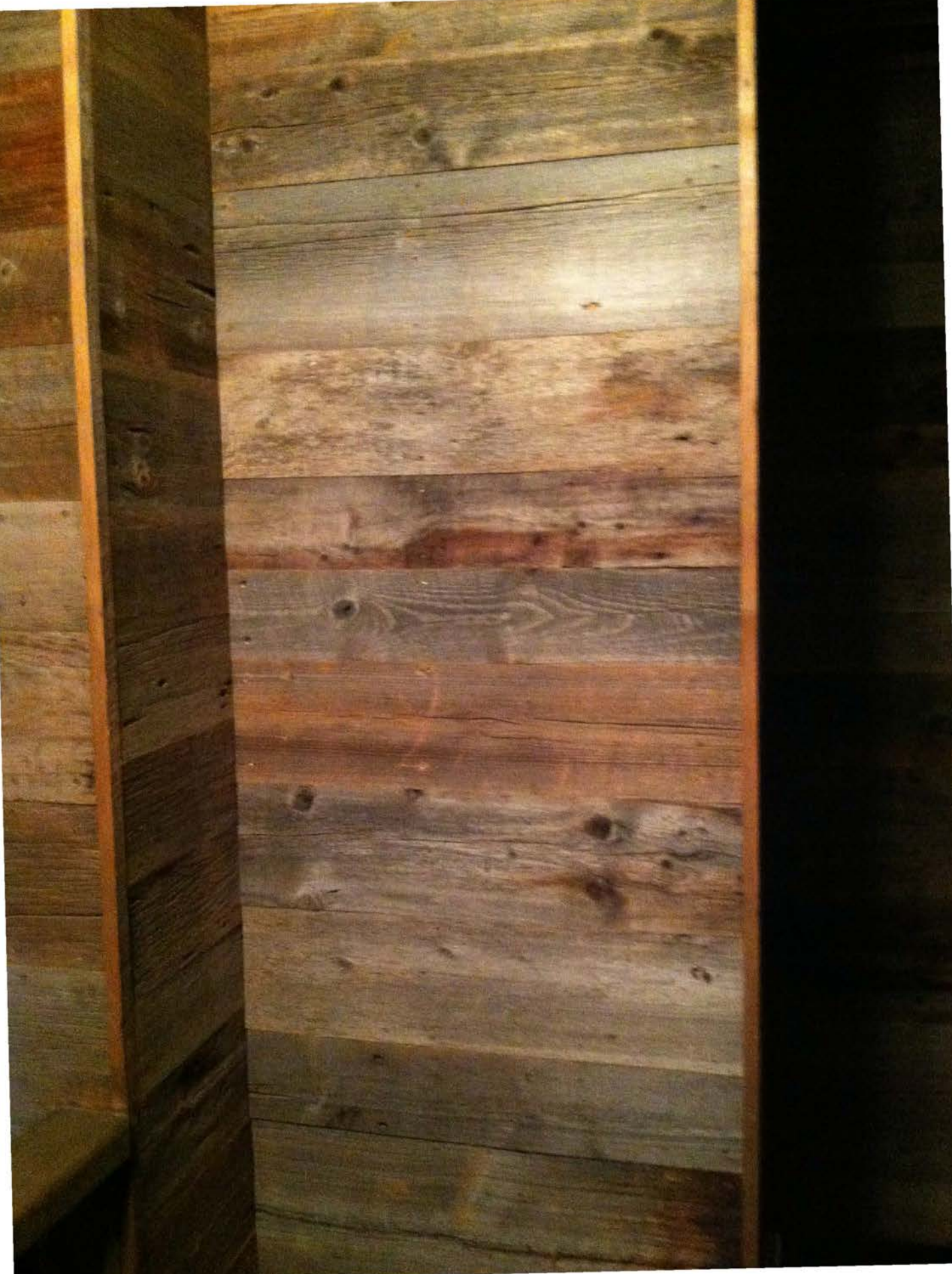














NO CAMPING









UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Debar Pond Lodge  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, Franklin

DATE RECEIVED: 10/31/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/25/14  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/10/14 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/17/14  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14001048

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 12.16.14 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



## New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Division for Historic Preservation  
P.O. Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189  
518-237-8643

Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor

Rose Harvey  
Commissioner



24 October 2014

Alexis Abernathy  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 Eye St. NW, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to enclose the following nomination, on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Debar Pond Lodge, Franklin County

Please feel free to call me at 518.237.8643 x 3261 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank  
National Register Coordinator  
New York State Historic Preservation Office