



THE ADIRONDACK COUNCIL
Defending the East's Last Great Wilderness

SUMMER 2007

Dear Council Members and Friends:

In a recent survey of 4,000 of our supporters, we asked why you cared about the Adirondacks. The majority of the respondents mentioned the scenic beauty, wilderness character, solitude, and the contact with wild nature offered by this unique place. In our increasingly urbanized world, it is wonderful that residents and visitors alike appreciate this outstanding natural heritage, and the Council's efforts to protect it for future generations.

When we asked in the survey what the immediate threats to the Adirondack Park were, the overwhelming response was uncontrolled development, especially from huge subdivisions that cut up the backcountry with speculative second home developments. One example of this is the 6,400-acre Adirondack Club and Resort in Tupper Lake. Unfortunately, there are many other subdivisions proposed for the most fragile areas of the Park - the Resource Management and Rural Use zones. These lands were originally planned by the Adirondack Park Agency to be protected as working forests and farms, not as residential subdivisions. Our respondents also recognize that all of us must act now to shape the future of the Park.

The Adirondack Council advocates for appropriate development that is concentrated in and around villages and hamlets of the Park, which protects working farms and forests, and maintains the wild and scenic character of the back country. Through local planning, we can design the futures of our communities and set into place the economic actions to achieve it. We are already working closely with our elected officials and other organizations across the Park to identify common ground solutions that will benefit the environment, the communities, and their economies.

The Council is also working to ensure that crucial open spaces are protected. As you will see in the centerfold of this newsletter, our promotion and lobbying for the NYS Environmental Protection Fund and for the work of private land trusts, is achieving great results. Over the past year, the largest of the Park's remaining timber companies sold off their entire holdings, totaling more than 600,000 acres of mountains, forests and wild waters. If sold for development, these lands could have hosted more than 14,000 new building lots. Adirondack Council members can take pride in their role as advocates for the money and policies that will save those forests from development.

This newsletter will inform you about the many other activities of the Council. We have accomplished much, but still have work to do. Your support is needed during this historic turning point in Adirondack history. Thank you and enjoy your summer!

Sincerely,



Brian L. Houseal
Executive Director

Cover: The proposal to develop the hillsides surrounding Mount Morris and forested shorelines surrounding Lake Simond threatens to fragment the area's forests and degrade water quality throughout the vast waterways that surround the Adirondack Club and Resort project. The cover photo was taken by Adirondack Council staff thanks to Adirondack Flying Service who provided the opportunity to photograph this beautiful area from the air.

Newsletter Photos by Adirondack Council Staff unless otherwise noted.

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Update: Mega-resort project proposed for Tupper Lake

The Adirondack Council continues to oppose the proposed Adirondack Club and Resort development in Tupper Lake. As of this writing in mid-July, the project includes the re-opening of the Big Tupper Ski area and resort and development of the surrounding 6,400 acres with roughly 700 housing units including 24 “great camp” lots of about 50 acres each.

The Adirondack Council has concerns about the size of this project in its current form, and the impacts it will have on back-country lands, surrounding Forest Preserve lands, water quality, wildlife, and on the Town of Tupper Lake.

The Adirondack Council has been analyzing this project since the initial permit request was submitted to the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) in 2004. In January 2007, the APA decided that the proposal must go through a full adjudicatory hearing process, with 10 issues to be closely examined. In brief, these issues include:

1. Impacts on Resource Management lands from “great camp” lots and consideration of alternatives for clustering development;
2. Noise impacts of a proposed shooting school;
3. Impacts of subdivisions due to steep slopes, shallow soils, fragile vegetation and visual aspects;
4. Impacts of sewage treatment facility at Lake Simond on neighboring water bodies;
5. Fiscal impacts on governmental units re: infrastructure and utilities, and public vulnerability if project fails;
6. Impacts of burdens and benefits to the public, and guarantees that the Big Tupper Ski Area can be renovated and retained as a community resource;
7. Impacts to the Forest Preserve and intensive use areas;
8. Alternatives to minimize interference with wetlands;
9. Downstream impacts from storm water of the Base Lodge catchment area;
10. Mechanisms to ensure project compliance.

In March, the developer, Michael Foxman, submitted mitigation measures on the project which included: elimination of a subdivision on an area known as “East Ridge,” elimination of one of the two sewage treatment plants (the development would instead hook into Tupper Lake’s existing sewage lines), elimination of lots near Moody Pond, and the relocation of the shooting school to a location yet to be determined.

A pre-hearing conference was held in April in which party status requests were submitted to the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ). During this meeting, the applicant requested an adjournment on the hearing process to work on details around the proposed mitigation measures, and to obtain outstanding permits required by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

In June, the developer requested from the ALJ and the APA an additional 3-5 months to continue gathering information for the DEC, and to solidify mitigation measures. The judge granted this request, and more information is due from the developer in August.



A small beaver dam holds back the waters of Cranberry Pond in the Town of Tupper Lake, where the developers of the proposed Adirondack Club & Resort plan to build a wastewater treatment facility for the 700 homes they hope to build. If the resort is built as planned, it would be the collection pool for treated sewage and stormwater runoff, as well as the source of snowmaking for the ski hill.

The Council will continue to monitor this project closely to ensure that the ecology and the economy of Tupper Lake are protected, and so precedents are established that protect the most rural private lands of the Adirondack Park from inappropriate development.



The former Big Tupper Ski Area on Mt. Morris is the focal point of the Adirondack Club and Resort project. While the Council agrees that it would benefit the community to have the ski area reopened, the proposed resort, with over 700 living units, would do more harm than good. The beaver pond in the foreground of this photo (known as Cranberry Pond) is part of a proposed on site sewage treatment plan connected with the project. Photo © Adirondack Council/LightHawk

Council Wins Lawsuit vs. ATVs on Public Land

In March, the Adirondack Council won a lawsuit it brought against the Lewis County Legislature in State Supreme Court that reversed the county's decision to open public forests in the Adirondack Park to all-terrain vehicles (ATVs).

As a result of the lawsuit, a state judge ruled that the poorly considered ATV plan was illegal, since it was adopted without any serious environmental review.

The Council's lawsuit (an Article 78 petition) was filed by the organization and six of its members who are residents of Lewis County and live near the forests where ATV access would be expanded.

The decision struck down Local Law Number 2, passed in June 2006, which had allowed ATVs to be used on county "reforestation lands." Some of these scattered parcels of forest are located within the Adirondack Park in the towns of Greig and Lyonsdale. In all, the local law had opened 33 parcels of public forest, totaling 1,900 acres, to ATV access.

The basis of the Adirondack Council's lawsuit was the county's failure to fulfill its duties under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). Those requirements include identifying the ecological risks of the proposal, performing a full environmental review to assess potential impacts, and notifying the public about the action. The county didn't do any of that before passing Local Law Number 2.

The Adirondack Council and other organizations have documented widespread ecological degradation caused by ATV use in the Park. The western Adirondacks are especially hard hit. Deep ruts, eroded stream beds and trampled wildlife habitat are just some of the problems. Vandalism is out of control. Barriers erected by the DEC to keep ATVs out of sensitive areas have been broken and torn down.

The Adirondack Council was represented on the case by the Law Office of Marc S. Gerstman, based in Albany.



ATV damage on the trail up Lyon Mountain in Clinton County



ATV Park Proposed

A Warren County couple has requested permission from the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) to construct an all-terrain vehicle park on more than 700 acres of forest land straddling the Johnsburg-Thurman town line.

The applicant would like to build approximately 30 miles of ATV and motor cross trails, 152 campsites, and multiple houses and seasonal cabins. A tiny portion of the property has been used as a sand and gravel pit where ATV use might be suitable. But the remainder is forested and mountainous, crossed by two significant streams, all within the watershed of the Upper Hudson River.

Although the land at stake is privately owned, the impacts of heavy ATV traffic would be felt far beyond the area itself. The northern boundary of the property abuts "Forever

Wild" Forest Preserve which may be damaged if ATV riders trespass on those public lands. Neighboring landowners are concerned about noise, dust, exhaust fumes, and trespass.

The Council has shared concerns with the APA regarding erosion, disruption of hydrology, the spread of invasive species, noise and air pollution, disruption of native wildlife, as well as a host of other questions that need answering.

For these reasons, the Adirondack Council wants tighter restrictions on motorized off-road use in the Adirondack Park, including a ban on ATVs on public lands (except for special permits for people with disabilities on designated trails).

The Adirondack Council will work with the Park Agency and with neighboring landowners in an effort to scale-back or deny this permit request.

Northway Cell Phone Coverage Plan in the Works

In April, Governor Eliot Spitzer brokered an agreement in principle among the Adirondack Council and other environmental organizations, Verizon Wireless and a handful of state lawmakers regarding the construction of cell phone towers on a stretch of the Adirondack Northway (I-87).

In October 2006, State Police used their own funds to replace the roadside emergency phones located between exits 26 and 34 (Schroon Lake to Keeseville), where the interstate runs between large tracts of “Forever Wild” Forest Preserve, passing only a few isolated communities along the way. The phones are located two miles apart on the shoulder of the highway. First installed in the 1980s, the phones had stopped working in 2000.

The Adirondack Council worked with the State Police and state consultants in 2002 to design and site a combined cell phone/emergency radio network along this portion of the Northway. The plan included replacing the roadside phones, plus the construction of 33 poles with cell phone antennas along the corridor, connected by fiber-optic cable.

The plan was approved in 60 days by the Adirondack Park Agency, but the state and the cell phone carriers could not agree on who would pay for the equipment and poles. The cell companies (Sprint and US Unwired) dropped out of the talks in 2003, leaving the plan in limbo.

Although the State Police repaired the emergency phones last fall, there were two auto accidents on the Northway last winter in which two victims died because neither could get out of the car to reach the phones, and there was no cell service available. NYS Senator Elizabeth Little (R-Queensbury) blamed the APA and environmentalists for stalling the cell phone network.

Little and Assemblywomen Janet Duprey (R-Plattsburgh) and Teresa Sayward (R-Willsboro) then demanded that Governor Spitzer set aside \$10 million and disregard all of the rules about development in the Adirondack Park (including the Constitutional ban on development in the Forest Preserve) to allow a network to be built immediately. The three said cell phone companies should be allowed to build whatever they wanted, wherever they wanted.

To his credit, the Governor worked out an agreement in which Verizon will follow all of the rules and regulations regarding construction in the Park. In exchange, environmental organizations agreed to cooperate in the permit approval process.

Verizon said it planned to build 11 non-networked towers on various locations between Schroon and Keeseville. Unfortunately, the system will take several years to complete and will only provide service to Verizon users unless other companies collocate on those towers. They will also not be connected by fiber-optics, nor will they be linked to the emergency phones, as originally planned. Verizon will pay for the towers.

Principles of the Agreement

The agreement announced will help guide the development of a wireless system in the Adirondack Park. Environmental organizations will use their best efforts to facilitate the timely review, approval and deployment of wireless communication systems that are in accord with the following principles:

- The system must be designed to provide wireless communications services for motorists traveling the Adirondack Northway with public safety and emergency use as a primary goal;
- The system must not result in any construction of communications towers, maintenance roads or electrical power lines on the New York State Forest Preserve land;
- That the entity developing the system will comply with the Adirondack Park Agency’s regulations, including the “Towers Policy” to ensure that towers meet the standard of “substantial invisibility,” and the State Environmental Quality Review Act;
- That the communications network be designed to blend into the landscape;
- That the system honors all scenic easements that New York State has acquired along the Northway corridor;
- That the system allows for collocation by the Statewide Wireless Network (SWN) project, other carriers and public-safety groups to the extent permitted by the Adirondack Park Agency; and
- That the system recognizes the unique situation of the Northway passing through the Adirondack Park.



Blueprint for the Blueline Available On-line

The Adirondack Council helped spearhead the formation of the Common Ground Alliance with more than 25 local leaders of nonprofit organizations, municipal governments, businesses, and economic development efforts to work with policy makers to address a broad spectrum of common concerns with innovative solutions. To read the Common Ground Alliance’s Blueprint for the Blueline, visit our website: www.adirondackcouncil.org.

Surge of Inappropriate Development Threatens the Adirondack Park

The subdivision of Resource Management (RM) and Rural Use (RU) lands continues to weaken the fabric of the Adirondack Park. The small remaining amounts of undeveloped privately owned shoreline in the Park, which are usually in the less-restrictive Moderate or Low Intensity Use categories of the Park's density-based zoning plan, are also being rapidly lost to developers. In the last two years, the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) has fielded record numbers of permit applications (nearly 500 a year) and granted well over 300 permits each year.

The Adirondack Council remains committed to directing residential development toward existing towns and villages – where it enhances local economies – and away from wildlands, where development drains economic and natural resources alike.

In recent months, the Adirondack Council has been involved in the following development projects. We believe these projects, if built as proposed, would result in adverse impacts to the ecological integrity and wild character of the Adirondack Park.

Keene: Saddled with an extremely heavy property tax burden, owners of Highlands Farm, a magnificent mix of forest and field in “The Glen” in the town of Keene, have applied for a permit from the Adirondack Park Agency to subdivide some of their roughly 1900 acres into residential lots. The area proposed for development is just west of the Jay Mountain Wilderness and is important to regional habitat connectivity.

The Council has written letters to the APA and has been working with Glen neighbors and other conservation groups in hopes of securing conservation easements on the property to

minimize development impacts and create habitat linkages between the Champlain Valley and the High Peaks.

Silver Lake: A developer whose family has been connected with Silver Lake since the late 1800s is now threatening to subdivide his entire mile-long shoreline, into a hundred lots or more. Silver Lake, in the Town of Black Brook, has much of its shores protected as parts of the state's Taylor Pond Wild Forest and Adirondack Nature Conservancy's Silver Lake Bog Preserve. At the urging of neighbors and environmentalists, the APA's Enforcement division has just reopened a case against the developer for past violations. The Council has been attending public hearings in the Town of Black Brook, and has been working with concerned lake shore neighbors, the DEC and the APA to analyze the proposed development.

Johnsburg: A 700+/- acre property in the Towns of Johnsburg and Thurman is threatened with the proposal of an ATV park and campground. The applicants have submitted plans to the APA, asking for approval of 30 miles of backcountry ATV trails, 152 campsites, and multiple houses and seasonal guest cabins. (See related article on page 4.)

The Adirondack Council will continue monitoring development applications at the APA, working with local citizens and attending public hearings, to prevent or reduce the ecological impacts of each of these large-scale developments in order to fulfill a vision of the Park that has large core wilderness areas, surrounded by working farms and forests, and vibrant local communities.



Looking down upon Highlands Farm on the Styles Brook Road in Keene, from Clements Mountain. This 1900-acre property, which lies just west of Jay Mountain Wilderness and is important to the protection of a Champlain/Adirondack wildlife corridor (Split Rock Wildway), is proposed for subdivision.

Acid Rain Monitoring Threatened by President's Budget

The Adirondack Council and the Institute for Ecosystem Studies in Millbrook joined forces in June to call on the New York Congressional delegation to rescue almost \$7 million in acid rain research funding that was cut from the Bush Administration's 2008 budget proposal.

The funding is crucial to many of the state's most prominent and effective acid rain research programs, including the monthly lake chemistry surveys of the Adirondack Lakes Survey Corp. (ALSC) and the state's acid rain monitoring stations. These stations are an excellent example of how scientific data are used to inform public policy. Acid rain monitoring stations provide the only reliable information on the effectiveness of the nation's air pollution controls. Closing them down, even for a few months, would wipe out more than two decades of continuously collected scientific data.

By early June, the House Appropriations Subcommittee in charge of the funding had restored about \$5 million of the cuts, leaving the language vague as to which programs would lose money. The bill reported from committee stated: "The Committee directs no less than \$5,000,000 to the Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program, to restore the majority of the reductions proposed by the President. The Committee finds decreases to ecosystems research unacceptable."

Thanks to US Representative John McHugh, R-Watertown, the \$1 million reduction for the air monitoring program known as CASTNET (Clean Air Status and Trends Network) was restored on the floor of the House as the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) budget was being considered for a final vote. McHugh's floor amendment was accepted and passed by the House. CASTNET provides much of the data collected on dry deposition of the pollutants that cause acid rain. The program has been running on a budget of only \$4 million dollars and has been in place since 1987.

However, in order for the programs to remain intact another year, the Senate must agree to restore the same \$6 million as the House. As of this writing, the Senate Appropriations Committee had not included the necessary restorations. We will continue to work with Senators Clinton and Schumer and others who are interested in restoring the programs to make sure the final bill includes the \$6 million to make the program whole this year.

New York overcame tough resistance from the Midwest in getting these monitoring stations created and funded in the 1980s and 90s. The stations provided the scientific proof we needed to persuade the federal government to regulate smokestack pollution from power plants, through the Clean Air Act. In 1990, they helped to persuade

the first Bush Administration to create the nation's acid rain control program. Most recently, they provided the data needed to persuade the second Bush Administration to impose the Clean Air Interstate Rule.



Council staff participated in the Step It Up workshop in Lake Placid. Sponsored by the Essex County Visitors Bureau, group members analyzed their carbon footprints and set goals to reduce their carbon producing activities.



The Adirondack Council hosted a table at the Paul Smith's College Step It Up event on April 14, which was part of a nation-wide campaign to address global climate change.

Legislature Acts on Adirondack Environmental Measures

While many issues did not reach a conclusion during the last legislative session, the NYS Legislature did pass a variety of bills that will have an impact on the Adirondack Park's environment. The Council's government relations team worked with a variety of partners to accomplish the successes listed below:

Raquette Lake Water Supply: This Constitutional Amendment allows for a land exchange between the Town of Long Lake and the state so that the hamlet of Raquette Lake can convert its water supply from an outdated surface reservoir to safer drilled wells. The Forest Preserve will see a net increase with this exchange as the state will give the town one acre and receive 12 acres elsewhere in Hamilton County in return. The bill passed both houses in 2006 and now will be on this November's state-wide ballot. It does not require the Governor's signature. The bill was sponsored by Senator Elizabeth Little (R-Queensbury) and Assemblyman Robert Sweeney (D-Lindenhurst), the new Assembly EnCon chairman.

Route 56 Power Line Construction: This Constitutional Amendment would grant National Grid, the partner of the New York Power Authority (NYPA), special permission to construct a power supply line from the Stark Falls Reservoir dam in Colton, St. Lawrence County, to Tupper Lake, Franklin County, where power outages have been severe and frequent. National Grid and NYPA have agreed to build the line along the side of Route 56, crossing a small area of Forest Preserve, rather than detour the line six miles through an environmentally sensitive area containing endangered species, wetlands and an ancient white pine forest. In this case, the private lands around the Forest Preserve are wilder and in greater need of protection than the area of Forest Preserve adjacent to the state highway.

This represents first passage of a new amendment, so it must be passed again by a separately elected Legislature before it can go on the ballot. The soonest that can happen is January 2009, when the Legislature elected in November 2008 takes office. The bill was sponsored by Senator Little and Assemblyman Sweeney.

Fire Fighting Costs: If signed into law, this bill would repeal the requirement that the 12 Adirondack Park counties and 3 Catskill Park counties repay the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation half of the costs for the assistance of state employees in fighting forest fires on lands within specially designated fire towns and fire districts in the two parks. While historically these fees have been low, any bad season could cause a financial hardship on a county. This bill was first introduced by the late Senator Ron Stafford in 1996. The bill was sponsored by Senator Little and Assemblyman Darrel Aubertine (D-Cape Vincent.)

Lake Colby Horsepower Limit: This bill would limit the size of boat motors on Lake Colby, near Saranac Lake, to 10 HP. Lakeshore owners requested this for their own peace and to protect nesting loons. Many shore owners had been voluntarily following this limit for a number of years. Once signed by Governor Spitzer, it will be a mandatory requirement. The bill was sponsored by Senator Little and Assemblywoman Janet Duprey (R-Plattsburgh).



Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee Chairman Robert K. Sweeney

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Environmental Funding Continues to Grow

Twice during the New York State legislative session, the Senate and Assembly took action to ensure that the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) will continue to increase over the next three years. In January, Governor Spitzer proposed increasing the EPF from last year's all-time high of \$225 million to \$250 million, with the increase coming from the proceeds of an expanded bottle deposit law. However, during the budget negotiations, the Legislature rejected the bottle bill but did agree to add \$25 million to the EPF for this year only.

During the waning hours of the legislative session, the Senate approved a bill that would make this year's amount permanent and increase the fund to \$300 million by the 2009-10 fiscal year.

The Assembly had already passed the bill, which was sponsored by the Environmental Conservation Chairmen of each house, Assemblyman Robert Sweeney and Senator Carl Marcellino (R-Syosset).

As of this writing, the bill had been sent to Governor Spitzer for his signature but he had not yet signed it into law.

The EPF's main capital projects funds are for landfill closure and recycling grants, parks and historic preservation, and open space. Funds available for open space are currently \$55 million annually and should increase as the fund increases. The largest of the state's dedicated funding sources for the EPF is the Real Estate Transfer Tax, which generates close to \$1 billion annually.

New Faces on Spitzer's Environmental Team

After 12 years of the Pataki Administration, state agencies will continue to receive a personnel makeover in the coming months, by newly elected Governor Eliot Spitzer. Some of the changes already made include:

Department of Environmental Conservation

Albany: Former Manhattan Assemblyman Alexander "Pete" Grannis took over as Commissioner in April. Grannis worked as an attorney at DEC before he was elected to the Legislature in 1974. He was confirmed by the Senate over the objections of several Adirondack state legislators, who didn't like his opposition to the use of all-terrain vehicles on public lands, and his sponsorship of several environmental bills that never became law. Grannis replaced Denise Sheehan, who departed in late 2006.

Region 5: Elizabeth "Betsy" Lowe became the new Regional Director in late May as a replacement for Stuart Buchanan. Lowe had worked at DEC for nearly 20 years before she helped create the Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks (Wild Center) in Tupper Lake. DEC Region 5 oversees state lands in the eastern two-thirds of the Park.



New DEC Region 5
Director Elizabeth
"Betsy" Lowe

Region 6: Watertown conservation lawyer, Judy Drabicki replaced Sandra LeBarron as the new Regional Director in early June. Drabicki previously worked as Region 6's attorney before entering into private practice. Region 6 includes the western one-third of the Park.



New DEC Region 6
Director Judy Drabicki

Adirondack Park Agency

The Governor announced in May that he intended to appoint Cornell University conservation law Professor Richard Booth as a Commissioner to the Agency. Booth, a trustee of the Adirondack Council from 1982 through 1992, is a highly acclaimed expert in environmental issues and is a native of the Town of Ausable, Clinton County. The Administration has yet to announce who will be nominated to fill the other two vacancies resulting from terms which expired on June 30. Booth's appointment as a Commissioner must be approved by the Senate.

Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation:

Carol Ash was confirmed as Commissioner this spring as a replacement for Bernadette Castro. Ash had been the Director of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission prior to her current position.

APA Sees Staff Increase

On the heels of our latest Adirondack Park Agency (APA) enforcement report, *Swept Under the Rug* (available on our website at www.adirondackcouncil.org), Governor Eliot Spitzer proposed adding five new staff to the APA in his first Executive Budget, announced in January. The Senate and Assembly accepted the Governor's recommendation of the new positions as the budget was being finalized in March. With the new additions, the total number of employees working at the Agency will be 72.

Of the five new positions, two will be dedicated to enforcement. Two others will work on project review and the last will

handle state land issues. These positions were desperately needed as the caseload for new permits continues to increase and the backlog of enforcement cases grows nearly every month. The State Lands Department also greatly needed additional staffing to deal with Unit Management Plans (UMPs) and related issues.

This is the first major increase in staffing at the APA since we released our previous enforcement report, *Falling Further Behind*, in 2001. At that time, Governor Pataki proposed two new enforcement staff to deal with the backlog of thousands of enforcement cases.

Council Paper on Climate Change Available on Website

The Adirondack Council's Executive Director Brian Houseal and Conservation Director John Davis presented their paper *Climate Change and Future Land Use in the Adirondack Park* at the Adirondack Research Consortium annual conference in May.

"As climate change forces species to adapt, they will attempt to migrate to suitable habitats. Unfortunately, so much of our north-eastern U.S. and southern Canada landscapes are built up with cities, suburbs, highways, farms, dams, and other obstacles on the land that native flora and fauna have little chance of moving northward or upward to escape climate change. As we plan for the future, we need a landscape that is permeable to the movement of creatures, from the smallest salamanders and turtles, to the largest moose and mountain lions. And lest we forget, human populations will also be undergoing significant adaptations in their social and economic activities at the same time."

The paper includes recommended policy actions. To read the complete five page document, visit our website:
www.adirondackcouncil.org

Nature Conservancy Buys Finch-Pruyn Lands

In June, the Adirondack Nature Conservancy, with the assistance of the Open Space Institute and John Hancock Corp., purchased the entire 161,000-acre Adirondack timber holdings of Finch, Pruyn & Co. of Glens Falls for a price of \$110 million. It was the single most expensive open space acquisition in Adirondack history.

The lands are spread across 31 towns and six counties, but the bulk of the lands are in the southern High Peaks region, surrounding the headwaters of the Hudson River. The sale marks the passing of the last major commercial timberland company in the Adirondack Park.

In the Finch agreement, the state had too little time to act when Finch accepted a bid in May for its mill and lands from Atlas Holdings, of Greenwich, CT. The Conservancy will spend the next 18 months determining which of the Finch lands should be protected by inclusion in the state Forest Preserve and which are better suited to continued timber management.

In an unusual move to appease local government officials, the tax-exempt Adirondack Nature Conservancy has agreed to pay full local property taxes on the lands it purchased. That will cost more than \$1.1 million annually. The Conservancy has also agreed to supply timber from the lands to the Finch mill in Glens Falls for at least the next 20 years. Conservancy officials said they expect a large portion of the lands to remain in private forestry management over the long-term.

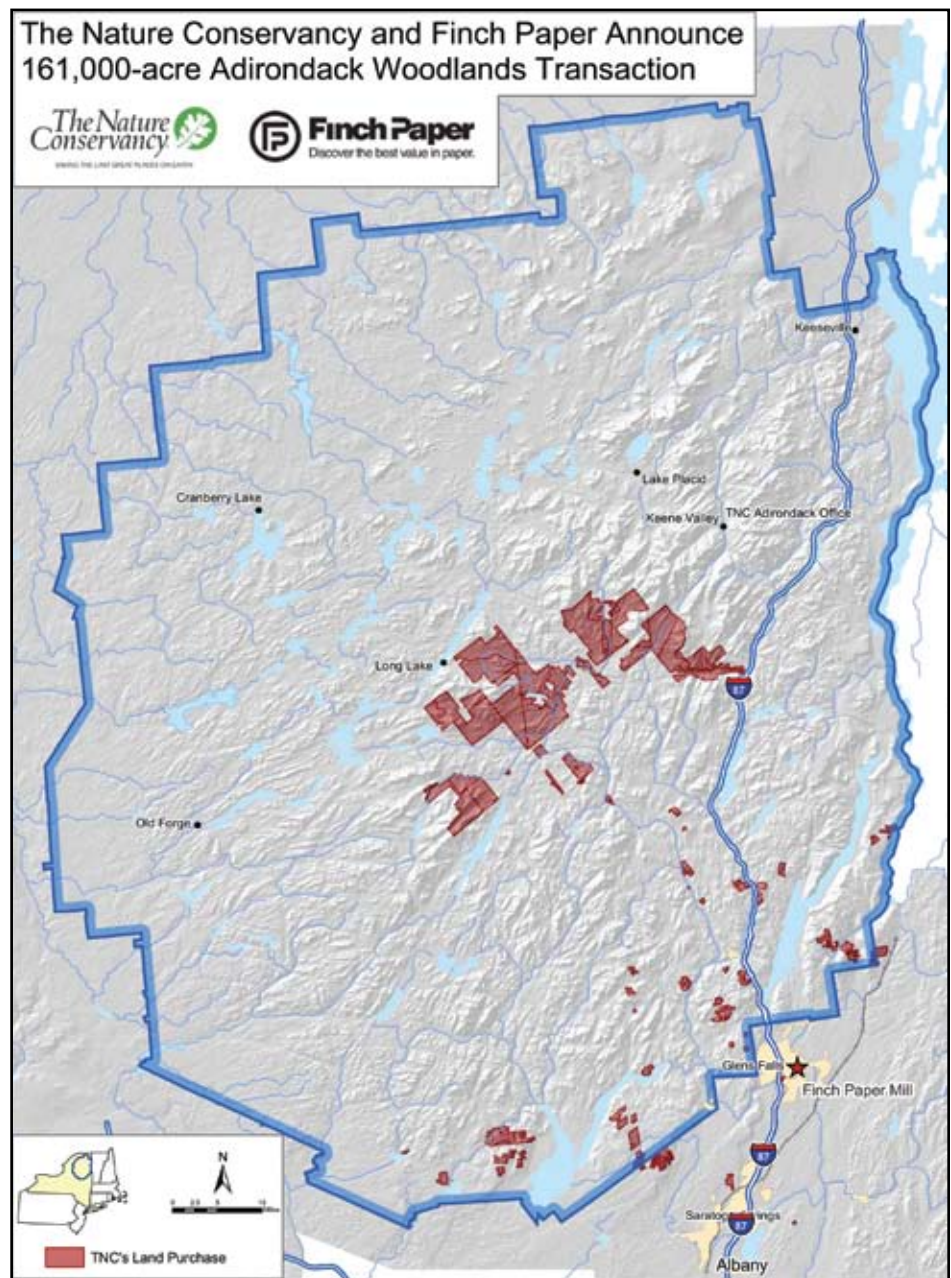
If the state buys some of the land for the Forest Preserve, it too would pay local property taxes, as it must for all Adirondack Forest Preserve lands. The state may also opt to buy development rights on a large portion of the land, allowing the Conservancy to sell the lands themselves to a responsible timber management company that would harvest trees under state or Conservancy supervision. This ensures that the lands will remain as open space, growing trees and providing jobs and wood products. The forests will remain forests, rather than being converted to residential or commercial developments.

The Adirondack Council's *2020 VISION: Fulfilling the Promise of the Adirondack Park; Volumes 1 and 2* (1988; 1989) show the Finch-Pruyn lands to be of supreme conservation importance in terms of biological diversity and wilderness potential. Boreas Ponds and Boreas Mountain are noted as good additions to the High Peaks Wilderness. Other lands are identified as being better suited to a newly created Wild Rivers Wilderness south of the High Peaks. The former Finch-Pruyn lands also include many important wetlands.

Thanks to the existence of the NYS Environmental Protection Fund and the 1986 and 1996 Environmental Bond Acts, when major timber companies have offered their land for sale, the state and/or a private land conservancy have stepped in to purchase development rights on the lands, as well as some outright acquisitions for the Forest Preserve. The Adirondack Council has been a leader in the creation and enhancement of the EPF since it was first proposed. The Council was also a leading advocate for the \$1.75-billion Bond Act of 1996. None of the acquisitions would have been possible without those funds.

The Council will work to ensure that the Conservancy gets the help it needs from the state to safeguard the ecological integrity and wild character of the Finch lands.

See our website at: www.adirondackcouncil.org for a copy of *2020 VISION: Volumes 1, 2, 3 and 4*.



Map courtesy of TNC and Finch-Pruyn & Co.

Park's Largest Conservation Deal Now Complete Thanks to Mellon Foundation's Help

NY State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Pete Grannis announced this spring that he had completed a conservation easement agreement on all of the lands formerly owned by the Adirondack Park's largest timber company, International Paper (IP).

IP announced in April 2004 that it would sell all of the development rights on its 260,000 acres to the state and open most of its lands to public recreation. The Conservation Fund of Arlington, VA, provided funds until the state could complete the complex approval process involved in any purchase of land or development rights. Lyme Timber Co., of Lyme, New Hampshire recently announced it would purchase the newly protected lands from IP.

As a result of the agreement, IP extinguished 90 pre-approved subdivisions in 34 separate towns and the rights to build more than 6,000 principal residences, plus related structures – ensuring its lands would remain open space and available for timber harvesting.

The deal prevents forever the fragmentation and conversion to new uses of nearly 10 percent of all the private land in the Adirondack Park. About two-thirds of the company's holdings will be partially opened for public recreation. About 80,000 acres will be opened to full public access.

This agreement will also safeguard extensive plant communities and wildlife habitat. There are seven vital locations within the IP easement lands that were first identified in the Adirondack Council's landmark study *2020 VISION, Volume One: Biological Diversity, Saving All the Pieces*. Council staff worked with IP for years to work out the details of these special conservation plans.

Although the deal was first announced three years ago, it ran into resistance from some local officials, whose formal objections caused the Pataki Administration to balk at completing the purchase with monies from the Environmental Protection Fund.

Meanwhile, the state completed the easement deal on lands in the 29 other Adirondack towns that didn't object, and negotiated with the resistant five: Colton, Piercefield, Hopkinton, Parishville and Black Brook.

This spring, Colton agreed, but some towns still objected to the loss of "development potential." Others exercised their "vetoes" for reasons unrelated to the terms of the conservation easement. Private funding from the Richard King Mellon Foundation of Pittsburgh, helped break the stalemate. By avoiding the use of the Environmental Protection Fund, Grannis felt he was not obligated in any way to seek local approval.

The Town of Black Brook has sued the state in an attempt to stop the \$28 million purchase.

Biological Treasures Preserved in Deal

The IP-Lyme Timber conservation agreement protects rare wetlands, floodplain forests, unusual wildlife and rare mixes of vegetation that provide homes to unique species. The Adirondack Council will work with state officials and the landowner to ensure that these areas are taken into consideration when harvesting and recreational plans are discussed.

They include Ireland Vly, Auger Flats Floodplain Forest, Kunjamuk Wetlands, Massawepie-Grasse River Flow, North Branch Alder Carr, Sevey Bog and Silver Lake Mountains. (Read *2020 VISION, Volume One* online in the "Library" section of our website at www.adirondackcouncil.org.)

More Wilderness on the Way

The High Peaks Wilderness is due to grow a little larger soon, and will be more accessible, thanks to an agreement between a local timber company and the Open Space Institute (OSI).

In June, OSI swapped a 2,927-acre parcel of commercial forest land in the Essex County Town of Newcomb to Finch, Prun & Co., of Glens Falls, in exchange for six parcels totaling 2,035 acres; some are adjacent to the High Peaks Wilderness.

Under the agreement, trees will be harvested from the former OSI parcel under a conservation agreement. OSI will add the six parcels to the lands it acquired in 2003 from NL Industries in the Newcomb hamlet of Tahawus. Those lands

contain part of the headwaters of the Hudson River and will provide public access from the south to the High Peaks Wilderness – a popular area whose eastern and northern entrances are being impacted by heavy use. These lands will be opened for public use following the preparation of a recreation plan.

The six new parcels acquired by OSI are in Newcomb and the neighboring towns of Minerva and Schroon. Five of the six parcels are inholdings within the Adirondack Forest Preserve. The sixth parcel lies on the eastern flank of Santaroni Mountain, one of the 46 "High Peaks" (elevations higher than 4,000 feet). OSI intends to convey the land to the New York Department of Environmental Conservation so it can be added to the Forest Preserve.

Council Spells Out Vision for Private Lands Management

In May, the Adirondack Council released a formal action plan for state officials and private landowners who want to protect the vast, private lands of the Adirondack Park.

The new, 40-page, full-color publication, *2020 VISION Volume Four: Private Land Stewardship* is the first of the Council's *2020 VISION* policy documents to focus exclusively on private property management. About half of the Adirondack Park is private land, where development and land use are guided by the state's Adirondack Park Agency. The other half is public Forest Preserve, protected from development and logging by the "Forever Wild" clause of the NYS Constitution.

In *2020 VISION Volume Four*, the Council provides guidance to landowners in the Park on the tools available to keep their large holdings intact and undeveloped. The Council also reminds state officials there are things they can do to help, including needed policy changes.

Vast amounts of private land have changed hands in the Adirondacks over the past decade, including virtually all of the holdings of the Park's major timber companies. These large, undivided land holdings make up the transition zone between the Forest Preserve and the Park's 104 villages and towns.

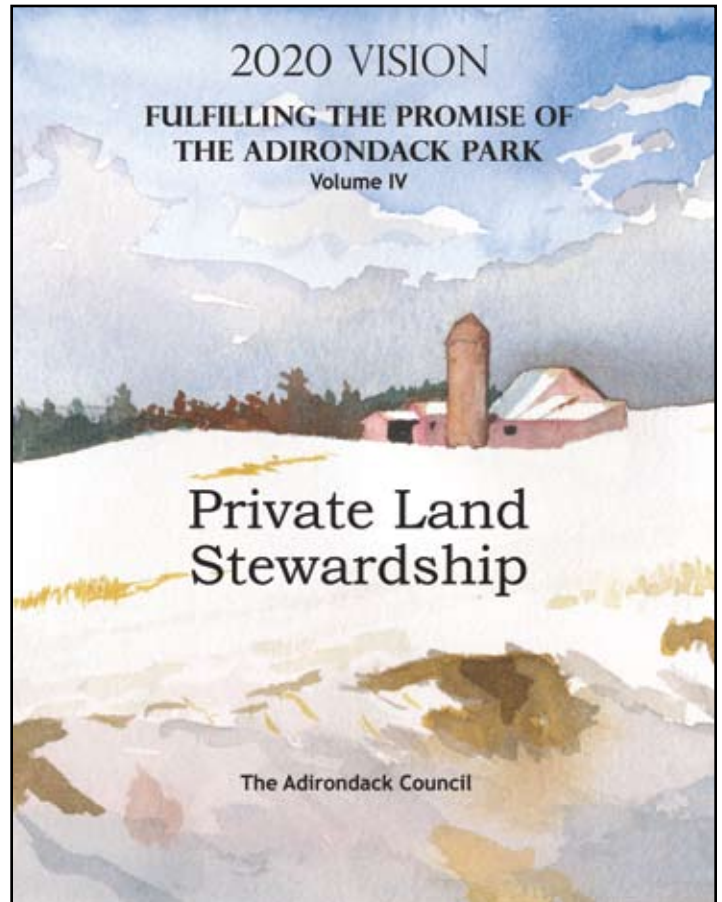
When they are well-managed, private lands provide wildlife habitat that can't be found on either the Forest Preserve or in settled areas. They are crucial buffers that protect water quality and soak up carbon dioxide, thus helping to slow global and regional changes in climate. They can also provide good, steady jobs, small business opportunities and useful wood products.

All four volumes of the *2020 VISION* series are subtitled *Fulfilling the Promise of the Adirondack Park*. The Adirondack Park is unfinished – a work in progress. The decisions made now will have a lasting impact on how the Park looks and works for future generations.

The action plan in *2020 VISION Volume Four: Private Land Stewardship* was developed in concert with a broad array of landowners and land use experts. They included: Brandreth Park Association, Adirondack Landowners Association, Northeast Wilderness Trust, International Paper Co., Finch, Pruyn &

Co., Adirondack Nature Conservancy, Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies, Adirondack Mountain Reserve, and others.

A copy of the *2020 VISION Volume Four* is available on the Council's website at www.adirondackcouncil.org. The first three volumes are also on-line. Printed booklets of all four volumes are available by calling toll-free 1-877-873-2240.



Large tracts of private forest lands act as buffers between the public Adirondack Forest Preserve and the Park's rural communities.

Essex to Build New Sewage System

The Town of Essex may be able to begin construction later this summer on a new sewage treatment plant that will help the community improve water quality along its portion of the Lake Champlain shoreline. Last summer, the community was troubled by an outbreak of a potentially deadly form of algae in the lake that was believed to be the result of too much septic waste and untreated sewage.

At the end of May, Essex learned it was one of five New York towns that are expected to share a \$25 million grant to upgrade sewer and other wastewater facilities as part of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). The announcement was made by US Senators Charles Schumer and Hillary Clinton.

The total cost of an entirely new sewage facility for Essex is estimated at \$7.2 million. Town officials said that, along with previous grants and funding, Essex now has enough money to begin. The WRDA was recently passed in the US Senate. In early June, the bill was headed to a House and Senate conference committee to resolve differences between the two versions of the bill. The Adirondack Council has urged New York's Congressional delegation to seek speedy approval for the legislation.

Lake George Purity Gets a Boost

Local governments in the Lake George basin joined forces with three conservation organizations in June to un-develop a portion of downtown Lake George Village. The groups plan to create a new wetland on the site of the former Gaslight Village at the southern tip of Lake George. The Fund for Lake George, the Lake George Land Conservancy and the Lake George Association pledged \$2.1 million toward the completion of the \$4.1 million reconstruction. Under the plan, the community will forego any future development on the site. Over time, its soils and vegetation will act as a natural filter for storm water runoff from nearby Route 9, the Adirondack Northway and a plethora of poorly planned commercial facilities whose on-site drainage is inadequate.



The Adirondack Water Quality Conference will focus on local planning efforts to maximize water quality protection. The conference, organized by a steering committee of organizations including the Adirondack Council, is for property owners, developers, and public officials who want to learn more about doing what they can to protect water quality. For more information or to register, contact Daniel Kelting at the Adirondack Watershed Institute of Paul Smith's College at 518-327-6213, dkelting@paulsmiths.edu, or www.paulsmiths.edu.



Landlocked Atlantic Salmon

Salmon in the Pacific Northwest are celebrated as icons of that area's biological riches. Salmon in the Atlantic Northeast are largely forgotten, having been driven from most of our region's streams a century or more ago, by dams, deforestation, development, pollution, and competition with exotic species. To the extent the unique landlocked Atlantic salmon is remembered, it is usually as a leaping sport fish, stocked annually by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) as part of its game fish management efforts. Sadly, the landlocked Atlantic salmon is functionally imperiled, with little natural reproduction occurring and survival depending on annual stocking of hatchery fish.

To restore naturally reproducing landlocked Atlantic salmon to Lakes Champlain, George, and Ontario is among conservationists' highest long-term aspirations, along with restoring sea-run Atlantic salmon to our region's major rivers, such as the St. Lawrence. Such wildlife restoration would require undoing decades of damage, with actions such as removing or modifying insurmountable dams, restoring riparian forest, and closing or more carefully regulating artificial canals (frequent conduits of invasive species).

The threat to salmon that now has biologists and anglers most worried is viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS), an alien pathogen possibly introduced through dumped ballast water. VHS is already ravaging populations of many fish species, including salmon and trout in Lake Ontario, leaving beaches lined with dead fish. The trafficking of recreational and commercial boats between the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain and other popular

water bodies means invasive species brought initially up the St. Lawrence River in commercial ships all too often find their way into many area water bodies, threatening native species as they spread. Thankfully, regulations to slow the spread of VHS have recently been adopted by the DEC, including controls on the sale and use of both live and dead baitfish.

The life cycles of salmonids (the fish family comprising trout, salmon and char) make them great indicators and umbrella species. They tell us much about the conditions of our waters and adjacent lands. If conservation plans meet their expansive needs, the needs of many other, generally less demanding species, will be met as well. Depending seasonally on clean, cold lake waters and abundant smaller fish species therein as prey, and on clear, free-flowing streams with ample spawning beds, Atlantic salmon recovery would entail a conservation plan that would restore natural forests and streams to much of our region.

In recent decades, after most Atlantic salmon populations had long since been obliterated, biologists studying Pacific salmon have begun to understand the tremendous complexity of salmon lives and the immense contributions they make to forest, as well as stream, health. Healthy salmon populations feed countless predators and scavengers, from otters to bears, from osprey to eagles, and in so doing transport nutrients from water to land. Master recyclers, these salmon can be bellwethers of ecosystem health. Where salmon swim in natural patterns of diversity and abundance, watersheds are intact and the resident wildlife is well fed.



Courtesy of US Fish and Wildlife

Birch Bark Theft Threatens Great White Trees

A rash of criminal stripping of White Birch (*Betula papyrifera*) trees for their beautiful paper-like bark has left hundreds of these trees in the eastern Adirondacks wounded and vulnerable to pathogens. Volunteer land stewards in Split Rock Wildway, a wildlife corridor linking the Champlain Valley with the Adirondack's High Peaks Region, were among the first to document this emerging threat to native trees. South of Black Kettle Farm, in Essex, New York, nearly thirty paper birches were sliced open for their bark. Just north of there, a landowner reported upwards of sixty of his birches being poached for bark. Birch bark theft has also been reported from private forest lands near Lewis and Willsboro, and on state lands near Bloomingdale.

New York's Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is investigating leads into these thefts. Theft of birch bark is punishable under trespassing and timber theft laws, with substantial penalties when landowner losses exceed \$1,000.

Birch bark used in furniture making, home interior design, and arts & crafts has unfortunately become archetypical of the "Adirondack style." With the boom in second homes, an insatiable demand for these trees has emerged. Selective cutting of firewood can be a relatively benign way to provide birch bark as a by-product for these uses. Thieves, in contrast, wound the trees by exposing sensitive layers of inner bark and puncturing the trees with spikes used for climbing. Consumers should refrain from purchasing birch bark products unless they are verified as being from a legal, sustainable source. Woods walkers should report any bark theft immediately to the DEC Environmental Conservation Officer Ken Bruno at: 518-834-1138 and also alert nearby landowners.



Stripped Paper Birches on protected Eddy Foundation property in Essex. Bark theft is becoming a serious threat to birch trees, whose bark is used in Adirondack crafts and furniture.



Kim (left) and Binnie Smith opened their Concord Bookshop for a gathering of Adirondack enthusiasts, including Sue Jewell (right). The group shared their concerns about the health of the Park's environment and rural communities.



Amy and Adam Ruder joined a group of Boston area Adirondack enthusiasts. The group of lifelong visitors and seasonal residents representing hundreds of years of stewardship in the Adirondacks joined in a conversation about issues facing the Adirondack Park.

Meet the Council's Summer Interns!

This summer, three Clarence Petty interns in our Elizabethtown office will represent the Council at tabling events throughout the Park.

Living near the shores of Lake Champlain in Moriah, NY, **Crystal Thompson** appreciates the beauty of the Adirondack mountains. Crystal graduated from Paul Smith's College with an associate's degree in Fish and Wildlife Technology, a bachelor's degree in Natural Resources with a concentration in Environmental Science and a certificate in Geographic Information Systems. Crystal enjoys hunting, fishing, camping, hiking and canoeing.

Andrew Clopman completed his first year in the J.D. Program at Vermont Law School, where he studies Environmental Law and participates in the General Practice Program. He received his bachelor's degree from McGill University in History and Geography, and he also studied journalism at Brandeis University. After graduation he worked as a staff writer for the Daily Courier-Observer in Potsdam, NY, and as a journalist, translator and writer in Montreal. He grew up in Massena, NY, just north of the Adirondack Park near the Canadian border.

Peter Hyson is a senior at Middlebury College with a projected major in Russian and Eastern European Studies. He is

a Lake Placid native with a great interest in skiing, hiking, rock climbing, and canoeing. He hopes to support the continuing preservation of his home and learn more about what this effort entails through his internship at the Council.

In our Albany office, **Allison Beals** works with our Government Relations and Communications staff. She is a University at Albany graduate with a bachelor's degree in Environmental Science and is currently working toward a Master of Arts in Public Policy at the Rockefeller College for Public Affairs. As a frequent hiker and camper in the Adirondack Park, she enjoys learning how the Council successfully affects legislation for the Park's protection. Her professional goal is to persuade the public and private sectors to improve current practices for the betterment of the global environment.

For more information on the Clarence Petty Internship contact Susan Hughes at: shughes@adirondackcouncil.org.



*Albany Clarence Petty Intern
Allison Beals*



Council staff and Clarence Petty Interns (CPI) put in a day of labor cutting out unused farm fencing to free wildlife habitat at Black Kettle Farm in Whallonsburg. Pictured left to right: John Davis, Conservation Director, Leah Nelson, Conservation Assistant, Erika Edgley, Conservation Associate, Peter Hyson (CPI), Crystal Thompson (CPI), Andrew Clopman (CPI).



Thanks to our Forever Wild Partners for supporting our outreach and education efforts!

Adirondack Farmers' Cooperative · Adirondack Camps · Adirondack Country Inn · Adirondack Lakes Center for the Arts · Adirondack Living Show · Arts Center/Old Forge · Atea Ring Gallery · Brant Lake Camp · Camp Treetops · Depot Theatre · Elk Lake Lodge · Essex Theatre Company · Lake Placid Center for the Arts · The Lodge on Lake Clear · Minnowbrook Conference Center · Old Adirondack · Pendragon Theatre · Silver Bay Association · Split Rock Lighthouse and Split Rock Farmhouse



Author Donates Portion of Proceeds of New Book to the Council

Author Lueza Thirkield Gelb has kindly offered to donate part of the proceeds from her memoir *Schroon Lake* to the Adirondack Council to support our efforts to protect the Adirondack Park. To order your copy and read reviews, visit www.Amazon.com.

About the Author

Lueza Thirkield Gelb was born in Plainfield, New Jersey, in the first part of the twentieth century, two years after the stock market crash, and grew up in the Adirondacks before and during WWII. A graduate of Wells College, she has a Ph.D. in history from Teachers College, Columbia University, and has taught at Pace University and Marymount-Manhattan College. She lives in New York City with her husband, Ambassador Bruce Gelb.

About the Book

The memoir tells the story of a girl born to wealth and privilege in 1931, who watches the money go down the drain until there was nothing. She observed, listened and absorbed her family disintegrating, yet staying together in a multi-generational household. It wasn't only money that drove them apart. The family survived at great emotional cost, and that girl is finally telling the story.



Recognizing a Bald Eagle

The striking white head and tail and the sheer size of its wingspan (6-7 feet) makes the bald eagle hard to miss. However, it is not until an eagle reaches maturity, at about five years, that the white plumage develops. Younger (immature) bald eagles are chocolate brown and mottled white. For this reason, it is important to learn their size, shape and flying posture to correctly identify bald eagles.

As an eagle flies toward you, its wings are held straight out, unlike the more common turkey vulture, which soars with its wings in a V-shape. As the eagle passes overhead, you'll notice that the feathers at the tips of its wings are widely separated. Its relatively short tail is usually fanned open. (source: NYSDEC)



Photos © Jim Craner, www.paws-photo.com

Consider a Planned Gift to Protect the Adirondack Park

A planned gift of any amount through a trust, will, life insurance policy, or other giving plan is greatly appreciated and will provide the resources the Council needs to protect the beauty and natural heritage of the Adirondacks for many years to come. Your financial or legal advisor can guide you through the various options in order to make arrangements for a charitable gift through your estate planning that considers your individual circumstances, your family needs, and your charitable goals. For more information, contact Diane Fish, Director of Fund Development, toll-free at: 877-873-2240 or dfish@adirondackcouncil.org.



Earth Share of New York Contributions Make a Difference

Thank you to those who support the Adirondack Council by making payroll contributions through Earth Share of New York's workplace giving program at numerous private companies, colleges and universities, many state and municipal government organizations, and in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). Contributions to Earth Share of New York support a broad range of charities committed to protecting public health and our air, land, water and wildlife. The Adirondack Council is a member of Earth Share of New York, a partnership of respected environmental and conservation charities in New York state and throughout the country. For more information about Earth Share, including how your employer can host a payroll-contribution campaign, visit Earth Share of New York's website at www.earthsharenyc.org.



The work of Adirondack artist Edward Cornell was the focus of an Adirondack Council gathering in New York City. Ted described his oil paintings ~ available for viewing at www.crookedbrookstudios.com ~ and sculpture that were on display at the Williams Club. You can visit Ted's "art farm" in the town of Wadhams in the Champlain Valley. Pictured (l to r): Dan Gersen, Ted Cornell, Adeline Gersen and Rhonda Butler with Ted's painting "For Sale by Owner."

New Old Adirondack Chair Benefits the Adirondack Council

The Adirondack Council is thrilled to be partnering with Old Adirondack, Inc. in Willsboro to offer their natural white cedar folding Adirondack chair with our Forever Wild logo. Old Adirondack, Inc. is based in the Adirondacks and is dedicated to local wood and craftsmanship. The company is making this special chair available to benefit the Adirondack Council's advocacy efforts. We are grateful for their support and their commitment to the Adirondack Park. For additional Old Adirondack products visit their website: www.oldadirondack.com or showroom in Willsboro. Price: \$210 includes shipping.



IT'S EASY TO PLACE AN ORDER!

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Additional items are available on our website at www.adirondackcouncil.org.



THE
Adirondack Living
SHOW™

A celebration of camps, Adirondack art, & rustic living

Come see us at the Adirondack Living Show...

Held at the Lake George Forum in Lake George, NY on August 17, 18, and 19. The Living Show is a Forever Wild Partner of the Adirondack Council, working with us to raise public awareness about the issues facing the Adirondack Park and the Adirondack Council's advocacy and outreach programs. The show is a celebration of camps, Adirondack art, and rustic living. With 160 exhibitors and crafts people offering a multitude of products and services including timber frames, canoes, art work, composting toilets and alternative energy, there is something for everyone. If you go, please come by and say hello. We would love to see you and thank you in person for being a member of the Adirondack Council!

Adirondack Park Map Second Edition Now Available

By popular demand, the Adirondack Council has published the 2nd Edition of our Adirondack Park map (35" x 43") showing public and private lands, wilderness areas, mountains, rivers, towns and highways.

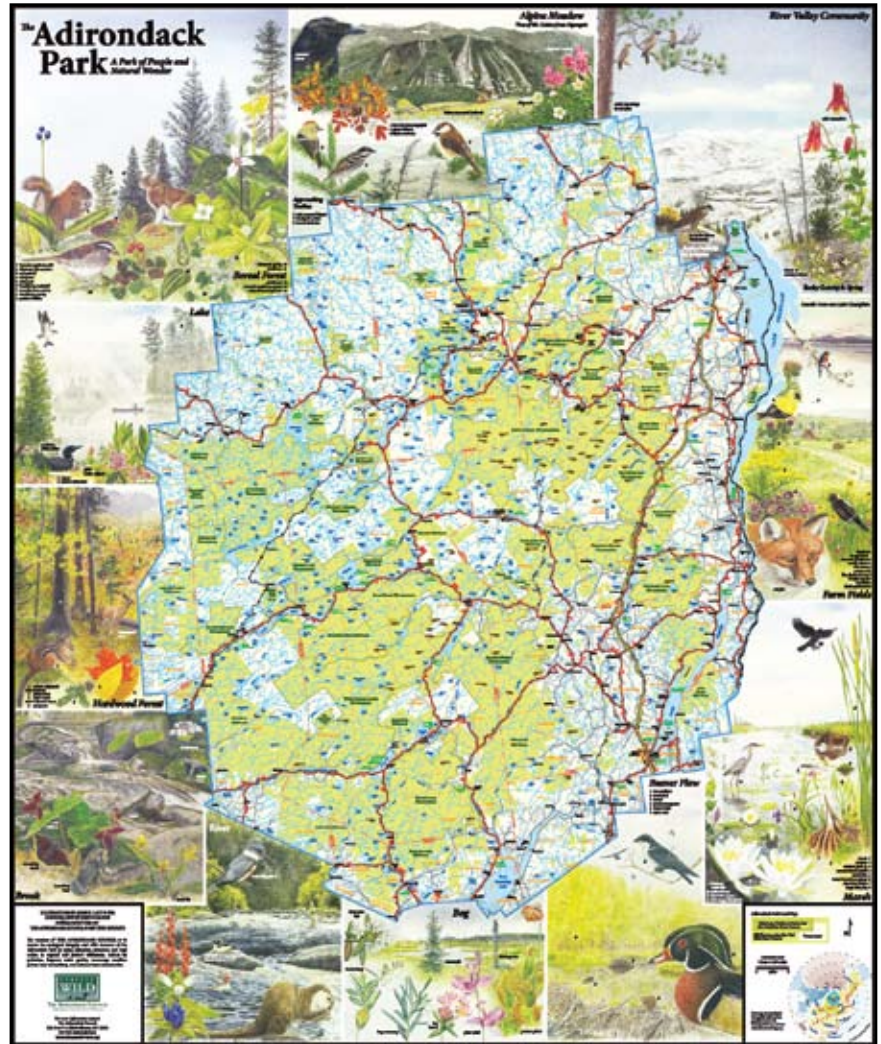
The Council map is bordered by beautiful, detailed watercolor illustrations by artist Anne Lacy depicting various habitat found in the Adirondacks: alpine meadow, river valley, marsh, bog, river, brook, hardwood forest, lake and boreal forest.

Price: \$25
Laminated copies: \$40
(plus shipping)

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Additional items are available on our website at www.adirondackcouncil.org.



The mission of the Adirondack Council is to ensure the ecological integrity and wild character of the Adirondack Park. Founded in 1975, the Council is a privately funded, not-for-profit organization with members in all 50 states.

Printed on Mohawk Options recycled paper (100% post-consumer content) and printed with soy-based inks.



THE ADIRONDACK COUNCIL
Defending the East's Last Great Wilderness

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