

State of the Park
1999



The Adirondack Park

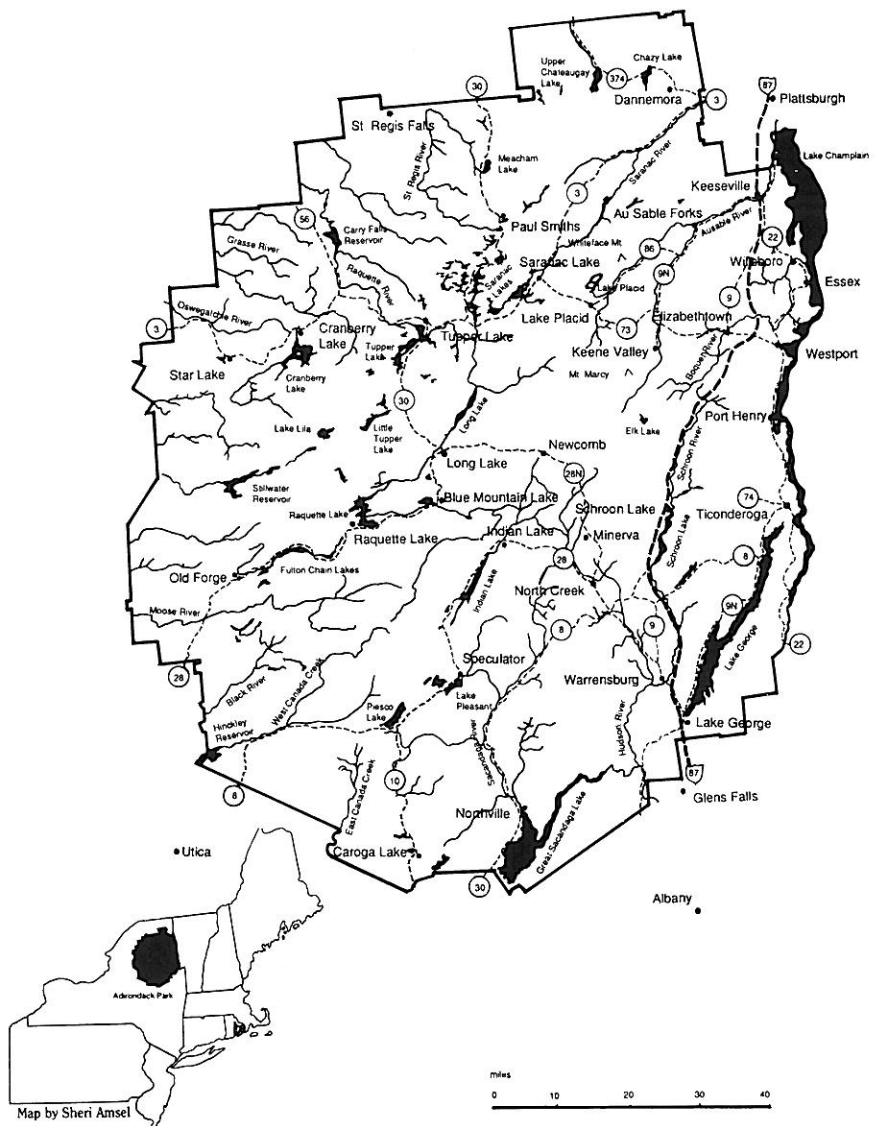
Six million acres of public and private land containing the largest assemblage of Old Growth forests east of the Mississippi River as well as 105 villages and towns...

The Adirondack Park is the largest park in the contiguous United States. It contains six million acres, covers one-fifth of New York State and is equal in size to neighboring Vermont. Few people realize that the Adirondack Park is nearly three times the size of Yellowstone National Park.

More than half of the Adirondack Park is private land, devoted principally to forestry, agriculture and open-space recreation. The Park is home for 130,000 permanent and 110,000 seasonal residents, and hosts an estimated nine million visitors each year.

The remaining 45 percent of the Park is publicly owned Forest Preserve, protected as "Forever Wild" by the NYS Constitution since 1895. One million acres of these public lands are designated as Wilderness, where a wide range of non-mechanized recreation may be enjoyed in an incomparable, natural setting. The majority of the public land (more than 1.3 million acres) is classified as Wild Forest, where motorized uses are permitted on designated waters, roads and trails.

Plants and wildlife abound in the Adirondack Park, many of them found nowhere else in New York State. Never-cut ancient forests cover more than 100,000 acres of public land. Ironically, much of the Park is wilder and more natural today than it was a century ago, when irresponsible logging practices and forest fires ravaged much of the yet-unprotected Adirondack region. Someday, all native wildlife species, including those lost in the last century (the wolf, moose, lynx and cougar) may live and breed here.



The western and southern Adirondacks are a gentle landscape of hills, lakes, wetlands, ponds and streams. In the northeast are the High Peaks. Forty-three of them rise above 4,000 feet and 11 have alpine summits that rise above timberline.

Nothing characterizes the Adirondack Park like its waters. The Adirondacks include the headwaters of five major drainage basins. Lake Champlain and the Hudson, Black, St. Lawrence and Mohawk rivers all draw water from the Adirondack Park. Within the Park are more than 2,800 lakes and ponds, and more than 1,500 miles of rivers, fed by an estimated 30,000 miles of brooks and streams.

Embodied in this and other Adirondack Council reports is a vision of the Adirondack Park that will serve as a

global model for integrated land use and conservation.

In the next century and beyond, the Adirondack Park must continue to offer vast areas of undisturbed open space as a sanctuary for native plant and animal species, and as a natural haven for human beings in need of spiritual and physical refreshment. It must also provide for sustainable, resource-based local economies and for the protection of community values in a Park setting.

This publication is but one step in the Park-protection process. Through continuing public education and advocacy for the protection of the Park's natural character, the Adirondack Council hopes to advise public and private policy-makers on ways to safeguard this last remaining great expanse of open space.

On the Cover

Lake Lila, the largest lake surrounded entirely by the Forest Preserve and the center of the Lake Lila Primitive Area. There is a proposal to classify part of the Lake Lila area and three other parcels (totaling roughly 50,000 acres) as Wild Forest or another category less protective than Wilderness. All of the areas deserve to be part of the proposed Bob Marshall Great Wilderness, where motorized vehicles and watercraft would be banned, except on primitive corridors where inholders and others could drive until the inholdings are sold to the state. Photo: Gary Randorf.



The Adirondack Council

*State of the Park
November 1999*

Dear Members and Friends,

We're happy to report on the significant progress made in 1999 toward the protection of the Adirondack Park. Also, you will see in this *State of the Park* report that while state officials often took positions squarely in favor of the protection of the Adirondacks, many of the issues they addressed remain unresolved.

The completion of the largest land protection effort in the history of the Adirondacks, the 139,000 acre Champion deal, is cause for celebration, coming on the heels of the Whitney acquisition last year. It is clear that the State of New York is committed to protecting important lands in the Adirondacks. But acquisition of these lands is only the first step. The state must also: appropriately classify new acquisitions under the State Land Master Plan; adopt Unit Management Plans and management plans for easement lands; and, ensure careful management practices are followed by the Department of Environmental Conservation. The Adirondack Council is working very hard to see that these lands receive the protection they deserve.

Governor Pataki, Attorney General Spitzer, New York State's congressional delegation and a host of private groups all took actions in 1999 to advance the cause of stopping acid rain. What's missing is action on a bill to halt the ongoing damage in the Adirondacks and elsewhere across the U.S. -- a bill that passes Congress and is signed by the President.

Meanwhile, most private landowners in the Park are excellent stewards of their holdings, but some landowners are ignoring the Adirondack Park Agency Act and getting away with it. The APA is in dire need of new resources to reinvigorate its enforcement program.

We appreciate the energy and activism of Adirondack Council members and all who strive to preserve a wild and beautiful Adirondack Park for future generations. The Council will continue to work with officials on the state, national and local level to produce solutions to the problems that the Park faces today. Thank you for your commitment.

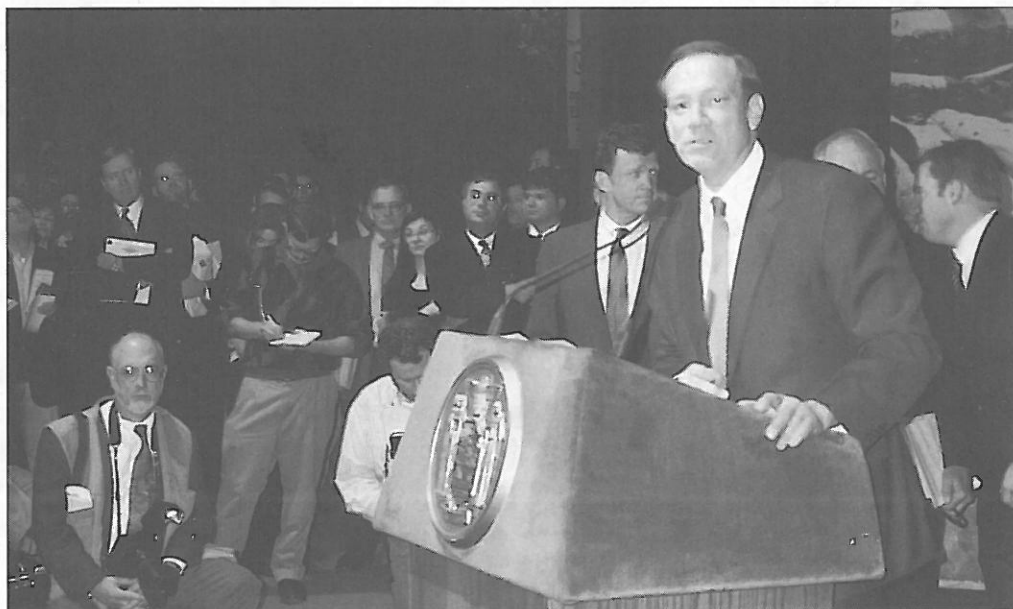
Sincerely,

Timothy J. Burke
Executive Director



The Governor

Gov. George Pataki announces the acquisition of 29,000 acres of new Forest Preserve from the Champion International paper company, plus 110,000 acres of conservation easements, in a ceremony at the NYS Museum. Photo by Jorie Favreau.



Walking the Talk



Gov. George E. Pataki announced on Oct. 14 that he was directing state officials to require all New York electric power plants to comply with strict new emissions standards beginning in 2003. New York utilities will be required to cut their sulfur dioxide pollution by 50 percent beyond current federal standards. Pataki also required a 70 percent cut in nitrogen oxide pollution. The cuts are identical to those proposed in the *Acid Deposition and Ozone Control Act* (S.172/H.R.25) sponsored by the entire New York Congressional delegation. One Midwest official immediately responded that the Governor's actions would improve New York's chances of getting other states to live by the same rules.

Land Champion



Governor Pataki's decision to purchase a conservation easement on 110,000 acres of Champion International's Adirondack lands instantly doubled the size of the Park's state easement acreage. In a single transaction, Pataki protected more working forest than both Governors

had during the previous 20 years. The deal also added nearly 30,000 acres to the Forest Preserve, protecting important watersheds, river corridors, wetlands and wildlife habitat. It was the largest public/private conservation deal in New York history and the largest single addition to the Forest Preserve in more than a generation.

Land & Water Work



The Pataki Administration brought together dozens of interested organizations from across New York to help lobby Congress for additional funding in the federal Land & Water Conservation Fund. Paid for by offshore oil drilling royalties, the fund was established to support both federal and state conservation programs. However, the fund's money has been largely diverted to other areas of the federal budget for more than a decade. Most of the projects funded have been federal land purchases west of the Mississippi River. Pataki is seeking an increase in grants to states, which could use the money for purchases of conservation easements and non-federal Park lands.

New Leadership



Governor Pataki appointed three attorneys to the Adirondack Park Agency board of commissioners this summer, filling a need for legal expertise. Cecil Wray, an attorney who resides in New York City, was appointed to an out-of-Park seat. Wray resigned from the Adirondack Council's board of directors when he was confirmed as an APA commissioner by the State Senate. James T. Townsend, an attorney from Rochester, replaced out-of-Park member Eleanor Brown of Schenectady, whose term had expired. William H. Kissell, a Lake Placid attorney, replaced Barbara Sweet of Newcomb. The governor also reappointed Katherine O. Roberts of Garrison and APA Chairman Richard Lefebvre of Caroga Lake to new terms.

All three new appointees, plus the two reappointees, have expressed strong interest in protecting the Park's environment. Commissioner Frank Mezzano, who is a town supervisor in Lake Pleasant, and Commissioner James Frenette, a Tupper Lake resident and former Franklin County Legislator, continue to serve on expired terms. One vacancy, for a Park resident, still exists. The final three seats on the 11-member board are filled by delegates from the departments of State, Economic Development and Environmental Conservation.

Stewardship Funding



The Governor proposed \$14 million in new funding for stewardship of state lands and facilities. He also proposed \$72 million for open space protection, with \$32 million coming from the Environmental Protection Fund and another \$40 million coming from the Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act. The Legislature moved \$2 million from stewardship to open space protection, but otherwise left the Governor's well-crafted proposal intact.

Water, Water Everywhere



The Governor's \$477 million allocation for drinking water projects from the Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act will provide more than \$50 million to Adirondack communities in Clinton, Essex and Franklin counties alone -- all of



Pataki with Council board member John Ernst, left, and Executive Director Tim Burke in the capitol's Red Room.

them within the district of Sen. Ronald Stafford, R-Plattsburgh, a staunch bond act supporter. The funds include grants and zero-interest loans to pay for new drinking water systems and improvements.

EPF = Everyone's Pork Fund?



The \$100-million-per-year Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) was established by the Legislature in 1993 to be a steady source of funds for open space protection, solid waste facilities and recycling.

Over the past few years, other items have been added to the list, accompanied by additional funding to pay for them. However, the EPF was meant to be a trust fund as well, in which unspent money would remain for use in subsequent years.

This year, the Governor proposed, and the Legislature agreed, to sweep clean any remaining funds and spend them on pet projects. Some of them were only peripherally related to the environment.

Mission Impossible



Despite clear evidence that the Adirondack Park Agency's enforcement staff is in need of substantial assistance, the Governor has filled two vacant positions, but failed to propose additional funding or staff. The APA has been carrying a backlog of more than 1,000 open enforcement cases for many years. The APA has only three enforcement officers to cover a 10,000-square-mile park.



NYS Legislature

This year was a largely unfruitful one for anyone who dealt with the Legislature. Some individual lawmakers turned in excellent perfor-

mances, but leaders in both houses seemed uninterested in making law on key issues, such as acid rain, timber taxes and sprawl.

Both Houses

Worth the Wait?



The state budget was approved in August instead of April again this year. But the Legislature did a good job of providing the needed funding for open-space projects within the Environmental Protection Fund and Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act. With \$34.2 million going into the EPF (\$2.2 million more than Governor Pataki had proposed) and another \$40 million flowing from the Bond Act, the state will again be in a good position to act on the need to protect lands and waters for public use. In addition, the Legislature agreed to the Governor's plan to add \$12 million in stewardship funding to help maintain trails, campgrounds, access points for the disabled and other public facilities.

Dodging Jet Skis



Despite repeated calls for action from lake associations, backwoods guides, environmentalists and shoreline landowners across the state, the Legislature failed to approve a single bill controlling the operation of jet-powered personal watercraft, a.k.a. jet skis. Jet skis, by their design, are capable of operating in very shallow water. Their speed and noise can imperil fish spawning areas, shoreline wildlife habitat, swimmers and other recreationists. Jet ski engine noise is multiplied whenever the exhaust pipe and the waterjet pipe rise above the waterline. Because jet skis use high-speed, yet inefficient two-stroke engines, they dump nearly 20 percent of the gas/oil mixture they consume into the water unburned. It takes only a few drops of gas or oil to contaminate

thousands of gallons of fresh water. However, Assem. Tom DiNapoli, D-Great Neck, and Sen. Carl Marcellino, R-Oyster Bay, deserve credit for introducing legislation in each house. Each said he would do so again in 2000.

Stiffing Local Government



Adirondack municipalities were dealt a financial blow by the Legislature when it again failed to approve a timberland tax-abatement reimbursement law. Adirondack communities are losing millions of dollars each year in local tax revenues due to state-mandated property tax breaks. The abatements are granted to timber companies and other major landowners who agree not to develop their lands. The abatements serve the statewide purpose of preventing the fragmentation of open space. The state should be footing the bill.

Growth That Smarts



A three day conference at the State Capitol in January was crammed with politicians embracing the idea of "smart growth," which involves careful community planning and preservation of open spaces. But as winter turned to spring and summer, legislators from both houses failed to come to agreement on a single smart growth bill. Instead, legislators spent \$30 million to extend water lines into green spaces to attract new industrial and commercial growth -- precisely the kind of sprawl that was condemned only months before.

NYS Senate

Acid Shock



After refusing to consider an Assembly acid rain bill for three consecutive years, the Senate surprised everyone this summer by unanimously approving a bill that would accomplish very similar goals. The bill was sponsored by Carl Marcellino, R-Oyster Bay, chairman of the Senate environmental conservation committee. It would discourage New York utility companies from permitting their leftover pollution allowances to fall into the hands of plants that cause acid rain in New York. Sens. Ronald B. Stafford, R-Plattsburgh, and James Wright, R-Watertown, were instrumental in this success.



Acid rain is melting the elegant carved limestone of the NYS Capitol. Sen. Marcellino broke a three-year Senate logjam on state legislation, only to watch the Assembly do nothing in response. Photo by Gary Randorf.

Looks Like a Million Bucks



Senator Stafford secured a \$1 million grant from the Environmental Protection Fund to help Adirondack communities eliminate some of the junk and clutter on public and private properties. Stafford noted that some Park hamlets need to make themselves more attractive to tourists and potential commercial investors.

Can't Rustle-Up Solution



Despite an increase in the number of timber theft cases on public lands in the Adirondack and Catskill Parks, and despite the Assembly's approval of a good bill to increase the fine for stealing trees from public lands, the Senate once again failed to pass anything. The \$10 fine per tree has been the same for 90 years.

NYS Assembly

Adirondack Initiative



Assembly Environmental Conservation Chairman Richard Brodsky, D-Scarsdale, found money in the state budget to limit pollution from a state fish hatchery on Upper Saranac Lake, repair bridges to an historic Great Camp and lay a foundation for an Adirondack Research Library.

Brodsky realized there was a flaw in his bill this session and pulled it back for amendment after it had passed. But he never sought approval for either bill. Brodsky's absence from Albany in the waning days of the session doomed any Assembly consideration of the Senate bill.

Acid Shock II



For three years, the Assembly has passed, and challenged the Senate to pass, acid rain legislation. The bills would discourage the sale of pollution allowances from New York utilities to coal-fired power plants in the Midwest. But when the Senate finally passed a similar bill this session, the Assembly refused to consider it. EnCon Chairman



Upstream Against the Flow

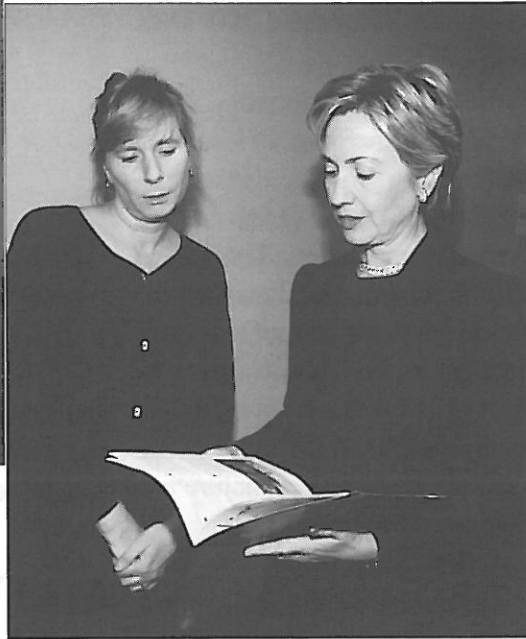
Assembly leaders again insisted on limiting working forest conservation easement projects from the Environmental Protection Fund. It limited them to the lands of only two specific major landowners in the entire state. The Assembly had abandoned that position just last year when it agreed to the Governor's proposal for a more flexible definition of "working forest."

Council's Advocacy Efforts Bring



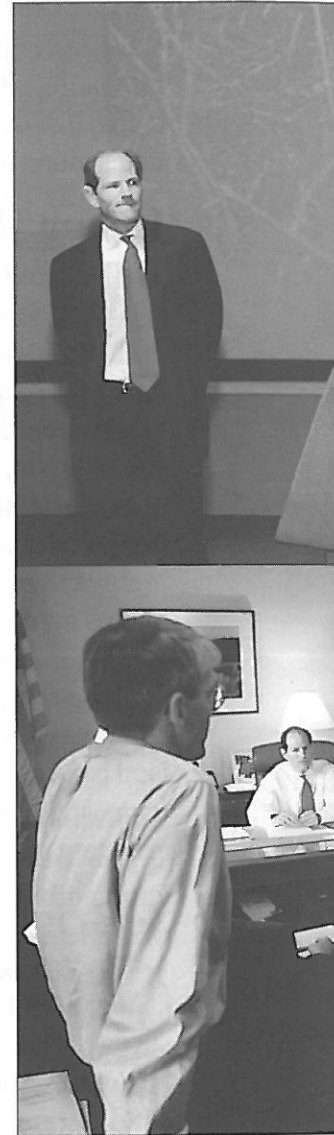
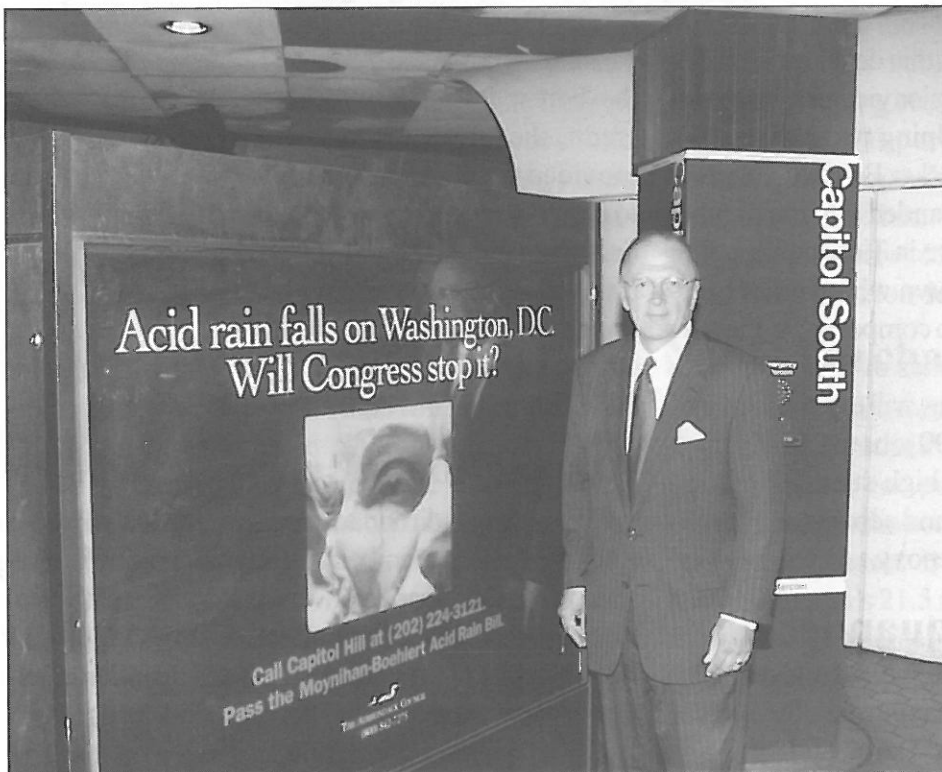
Ralph Alswang

In Lake Placid



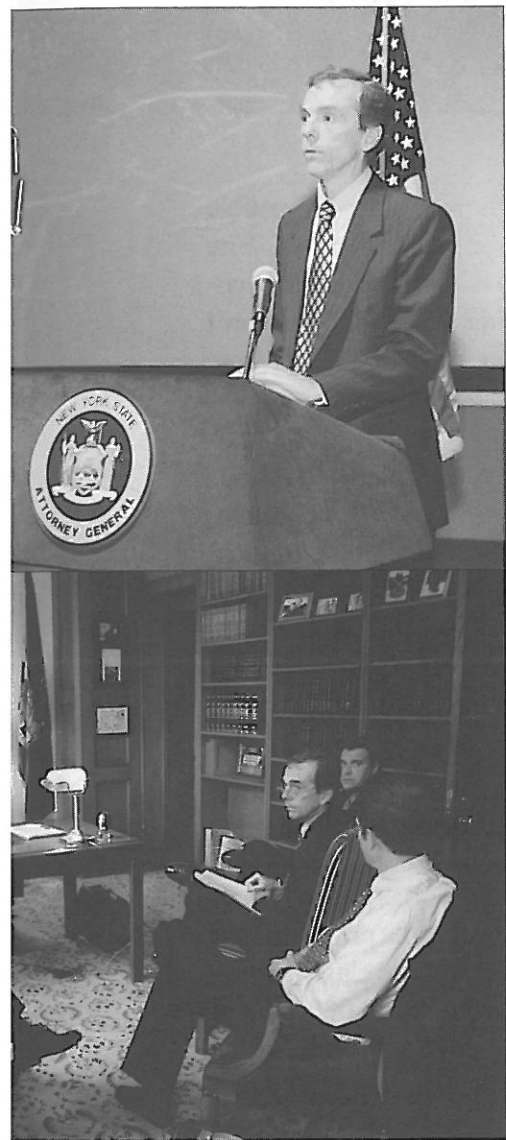
Ralph Alswang

Beneath Washington, D.C.



Clockwise, from top left: discusses *State of the Park 1998* with A **Top center**, Council Executive Director Spitzer's plan to sue 17 utility companies; Legislative Director Bernard Melewski, 1 top staff attorneys. **Top right**, Syracuse Lake for the first time, while interviewing Program Analyst Dave Greenwood, left McCaffrey and Peter Rafle of Trout Un rain; below that, U.S. Senator Charles : Winery of Westfield, NY. Ives grapes are **Left**, U.S. Rep. Sherwood Boehlert, R-I billboards promoting his acid rain bill (§ Representatives.

Attention to Acid Rain, Wilderness



In Albany



On Little Tupper Lake

At the U.S. Capitol

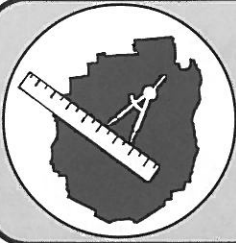


Jorie Favreau



Jorie Favreau

In a visit to Lake Placid, First Lady Hillary Clinton reads and
 Rondack Council Development Director Anne Trachtenberg.
 Tim Burke congratulates Attorney General Eliot Spitzer on
 for violating the Clean Air Act; below that, Burke and Council
 Burke's right, strategize with Spitzer, center, and two of his
 newspapers Regional Editor Scott Scanlon sees Little Tupper
 a Council staffer about wilderness. **Right**, above, Council
 chats with Associated Press Washington reporter Shannon
 mited, prior to the Council's June press conference on acid
 chumer holds a bottle of Ives Noir from the Johnson Estate
 dying out due to the same air pollution that causes acid rain.
 tica, takes his first look in September at one of the Council's
 172/H.R.25), in the subway station closest to the House of



Adirondack Park Agency

Fine Time



When APA staff discovered hundreds of land-use violations on the parcels the state was about to purchase from Champion International (or protect through conservation easements), observers worried that there would be no time to bring proper enforcement actions. Only a few weeks were left before the massive deal was to be signed. However, the staff managed to negotiate a fine of nearly \$100,000. The APA also required Champion to post a \$500,000 bond and imposed \$350,000 in additional penalties: to cover the expenses of dealing with any violations found after the sale was completed; to fund local environmental projects; and, to purchase sulfur dioxide pollution allowances for retirement to help fight acid rain. The \$949,900 agreement was approved on time. It represented the third time in two years that the APA levied the largest fine in its history.

Fix It Fine



Last year's *State of the Park* report gave the APA credit for standing its ground in the face of enormous criticism from local officials and fans of country music star Shania Twain. Critics wanted the APA to look the other way after extensive land-use violations were discovered on Twain's property. After months of work, the APA negotiated a \$45,000 fine and remediation package. Part of the money will be used to fix damage to the Twain property and the rest will go toward a wetland restoration/protection project elsewhere in the Park. Until the Champion enforcement action (above), this was the largest penalty the APA had ever imposed.

Resort Redux



A decade ago, the APA was falsely accused of singlehandedly sinking the gigantic Gleneagles development project proposed for the former Lake Placid Club. This year, the APA

approved redevelopment of the site that is compatible with the area's open space and scenic vistas. The APA permit and master plan will ensure that the economic boost the Club provides to the village won't cause unanticipated environmental problems later on.

Stepping Out



APA Executive Director Daniel Fitts, Chairman Richard Lefebvre and other commissioners paid long-overdue visits to local groups throughout the Park that have been critical of the APA. Fitts noted that by listening to people's complaints and concerns, the agency could improve both its performance and its image inside the Park.

Taking Sides



During September's public hearings, APA staff refused to recommend a Wilderness classification for four Forest Preserve parcels, although all of them are within the proposed Bob Marshall Great Wilderness Area. The classification task facing the APA includes roughly 50,000 acres of remote Forest Preserve. At stake is the fate of the William C. Whitney forest, the adjoining Lake Lila Primitive Area, the existing Alice Brook Wilderness Area and Watson's East Triangle. APA staff advocated eliminating the roadless status of the Alice Brook

Should jet skis like this one be allowed on Little Tupper? Photo by Gary Randorf.





Aerial view of the Lake Placid Club grounds, the hills behind it and the State Route 86 corridor. Photo by Gary Randorf.

Wilderness and cutting a snowmobile trail through it. It also proposed that parts of the Watson's East tract be designated as Wild Forest, to accommodate motorized traffic.

The Whitney family has told state officials that the Little Tupper Lake parcel it sold to the state last summer should be classified as roadless wilderness, or they may be unwilling to offer any of the remaining 36,000 acres in their ownership to the state.

When this publication went to press, the APA board had not yet voted. While that vote may come as early as December 1999, Governor Pataki will make the final decision on the fate of Alice Brook and the other tracts in the proposed Bob Marshall Great Wilderness. No Governor has ever eliminated an Adirondack Wilderness Area.

Watered Down



The APA is seeking to enact a model wastewater ordinance for use by Park communities that is weaker than the current standards on private septic systems, administered by the APA.

The new model would make the protective measures that the APA insists upon optional. The board has been strict in its protection of surface- and ground-water supplies from faulty wastewater systems, especially on steep slopes.

For example, the APA has consistently rejected plans for new systems near water that include mounding earth over rocky areas or augmenting natural soils with fill taken from other places. Such systems are unreliable.

However, they are routinely approved by local governments in non-park communities. Water quality protection was one of the main reasons for creating the Adirondack Park. The APA should offer a model that sets a higher standard than those in non-Park towns.

Let Me Stamp That For You



The agency has been issuing after-the-fact permits to land-use violators, contrary to its own 1991 enforcement guidelines, which call for fines and remediation.



NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

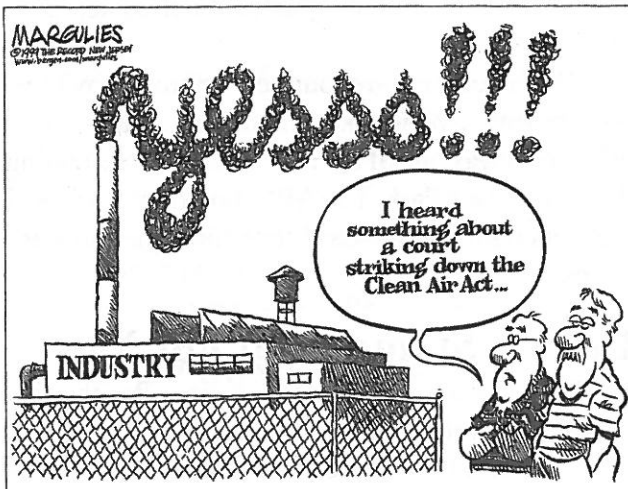


Commissioner Cahill, center, chats with Council Chairman David Skovron, left, and Executive Director Tim Burke before receiving the Council's Conservationist of the Year Award. Photo: Joseph Moore.

Kudos to Cahill



This spring, federal courts halted the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's attempt to impose stricter rules for smog and acid rain. At EPA's request, DEC Commissioner John P. Cahill attempted to negotiate new regulations with the two dozen states whose emissions fall on the Northeast. While Midwestern states eventually walked away from the table, Cahill's effort was worthwhile.



This Margulies political cartoon first appeared in The Record of Bergen County New Jersey at the end of May.

A Great Deal



DEC staff secured the most complicated of the separate deals Champion International paper company signed with the states of Vermont, New Hampshire and New York. In the process, the 29,000-acre Forest Preserve acquisition will permanently protect valuable wetlands and river corridors. The 110,000-acre easement agreement will open vast new areas for public recreation, while also protecting open space.

They Said It Couldn't Be Done



For the past 28 years, the state's management plan for the High Peaks Wilderness languished, a victim of squabbling and budget cuts. Rather than allowing further degradation of the state's most popular wilderness area, DEC worked out the details of a plan that will better protect the environment, while giving visitors ample opportunities for recreation.

This balancing act took into consideration the desires of local government, environmental organizations with differences of opinion and a divided public. It included a plan to close South Meadow Road and institute a pilot camping permit system for an over-used area in the eastern High Peaks.

Don't Feed the Bears



Senior Biologist Kurt Armstrong did everyone a favor during the summer drought by issuing two stern warnings to Adirondack residents and visitors. First, dry conditions may cause black bears to become more aggressive in seeking food, and less wary of people. Second, anyone shooting a bear that was not actually inside a person's house could count on a \$2,000 fine and a trip to jail.



This magnificent stretch of the St. Regis River meanders through the Champion International paper company property purchased by the state, opening public access for the first time in a century. Photo by Gary Randorf.

Rangers to the Rescue



DEC's Forest Rangers and the volunteers they enlisted did a superb job of fighting and containing a series of forest fires spurred by a long summer drought. Hundreds of acres were ablaze at one point or another, yet serious injuries and damage to private homes were avoided.



Adirondack black bears like this one became a far too common sight for some people this summer. See Don't Feed the Bears on page 12. Photo by Gary Randorf.

Gas 'Em Up



In the course of defending itself in a federal lawsuit, DEC was forced to reveal that its staff has been cavalier in its use of motor vehicles in restricted areas of the Forest Preserve. It also admitted issuing permits for others to use vehicles in off-limits areas. In response, the Adirondack Council and three other organizations obtained permission from state courts to sue DEC for failing to uphold the NYS Constitution's Forever Wild clause and DEC's own regulations. The case is pending.

More and Less



DEC should make Forest Rangers' salaries comparable to those of Environmental Conservation Officers' while making the Ranger training course less like a police academy. Rangers earn \$6,000 per year less than ECOs for a job that is no less difficult or dangerous. Ranger training programs should emphasize conservation, interaction with hikers and campers, and Forest Preserve issues.



NYS Attorney General

Following Suit



In September, Attorney General Eliot Spitzer became the first A.G. in New York history to sue out-of-state polluters for the harm they cause in New York. Spitzer announced that he would sue the owners of 17 power plants in five Southern and Midwestern states for violating current clean air standards. By the time this report went to press, similar plans had been announced by the U.S. EPA, State of New Hampshire, City of Toronto and 14 environmental organizations in Ohio and Indiana, where many of the plants are located.

Rounding Up the Rustlers



This winter, the Attorney General's staff secured the stiffest penalty ever handed down for stealing trees from the Forest Preserve. In the first timber rustling case to draw a jail sentence, a Queensbury man was sentenced to up to seven years in state prison. The penalty was imposed for cutting 600 oak, cherry, maple and ash trees and damaging 300 others in the Catskill Park town of Halcott. He was also accused of timber theft in Connecticut. His

partner, who was convicted by Atty. Gen. Dennis Vacco in 1998, testified against him in exchange for a lighter sentence.

Rookie Mistake



The Attorney General's lobbying team missed a golden opportunity to pass one of its program bills during Spitzer's first year in office. The bill would increase penalties for timber theft on the Forest Preserve from the \$10-per-tree fine established in 1909 to a penalty that reflects current market values. It has passed the Assembly repeatedly but had always stalled in the Senate, due to the opposition of the timber industry and some key lawmakers.

Battered in the press over their opposition for the last two years, the industry seemed poised to accept increased protections. The A.G.'s team instead grew discouraged and walked away from the bargaining table. Stiffer fines are needed to deter theft and to more accurately reflect the market value of stolen timber.

Local Government, continued ...

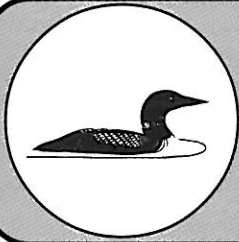
improvements at Mt. Van Hoevenberg. AATV officials claimed that the new luge and bob runs were needed to ensure that the inaugural Winter Goodwill Games were held here rather than in Norway. When a local reporter discovered that the Goodwill Games' president had no intention of moving the games -- new track or no new track -- she attended the rally to spread the good news.

Rather than breathing a sigh of relief, rally attendees shouted her down. A day before the rally, the Olympic Regional Development Authority had received a loan to cover the cost of construction until the Legislature could act.

Down by the Delta



The towns of Queensbury and Lake George ignored the Lake George Park Commission's June 18 deadline for adopting new controls on storm water runoff entering the lake and its tributaries. Developers and town officials complained that new regulations would add too much to the cost of new construction. Storm water from parking lots, nearby I-87 and other paved areas causes excess nutrients, petroleum products and road debris to pollute the lake, bury fish spawning areas and widen deltas of sediment that have formed where streams enter the lake.



1999 Award Winners

DEC Commissioner Cahill Wins Top Award

The Adirondack Council presented its highest honor to state Environmental Conservation Commissioner John P. Cahill during our annual awards dinner, held at the Lake Placid Resort in July.

We honored John Cahill for his commitment to the Adirondack Park, his tireless efforts to acquire new lands for the Forest Preserve, his defense of wilderness and his efforts to curtail acid rain. The award was presented to Cahill by Chairman David Skovron of the Council's board of directors.

From the Whitney Estate acquisition to the massive Champion deal, Commissioner Cahill has served the Adirondacks very well. His negotiations with a major power company led to an agreement that will prevent at least two million tons worth of federal pollution credits from falling into the hands of Midwestern polluters over the next 20 years alone.

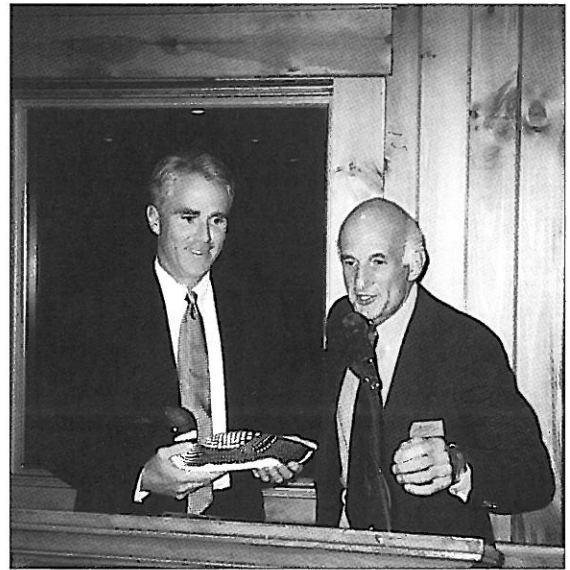
Cahill is the first DEC Commissioner to receive the Council's coveted Conservationist of the Year Award in the award's 15-year history. The Adirondack Council, founded in 1975, began presenting the award at its annual dinner in 1984.

Previous Conservationists of the Year include Governors Mario M. Cuomo (1986) and George E. Pataki (1996); Timothy Barnett, founding director of the Adirondack Nature Conservancy (1998); author and conservationist Paul Schaefer (1985); Assemblyman Maurice Hinchey (1992); Adirondack Park Agency Executive Director Robert C. Glennon (1991), and Attorney General Dennis Vacco (1997).

Also honored at the ceremony were:

Park Communicator Award: George Gates, editorial writer for The Buffalo News, for his outstanding advocacy on behalf of environmental protection in the Adirondacks.

Environmental Education Award: Newcomb Central School, Newcomb, N.Y. for saving the school by instituting an environmentally focused curriculum in



Cahill accepts a hand-carved loon, an award presented only to the Council's Conservationist of the Year. Photo by Joseph Moore.

grades K-12. Newcomb School Supt. Barbara Kearns was recently honored by Time Magazine as one of only nine "Heroes for the Planet."

Community Action Award: Sound Adirondack Growth Alliance of Saranac Lake, for its battle to preserve and enhance the community's small-town quality of life and to prevent out-of-state mega-retailers from degrading the community.

Land Stewardship Award: The Ausable Club, St. Huberts, N.Y., for its 112 years of protection for the eastern gateway to the High Peaks Wilderness, and its efforts to share the bounty of its land holdings with the public.

Park Heritage Award: Adirondack Architectural Heritage, Keeseville, N.Y., for its efforts to preserve the Park's most unique and historically significant residential, commercial and industrial structures.

All of the award winners, in their own way, have helped to make the Adirondack Park a better place.

The Adirondack Council

Founded in 1975, the Adirondack Council is a private, not-for-profit organization dedicated to protecting and enhancing the natural and human communities of the Adirondack Park through research, education, advocacy and legal action.

The Council receives moral and financial support from its more than 18,000 members and from private foundations. The Council's national and regional member organizations include the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks, Citizens Campaign for the Environment, National Audubon Society, National Parks and Conservation Association, Natural Resources Defense Council and The Wilderness Society, with a combined membership of more than 1.4 million people.

Adirondack Council memberships begin at \$25. Membership benefits include regular newsletters, special reports such as this one, action alerts and the opportunity to play an active role in protecting the Park's future.

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