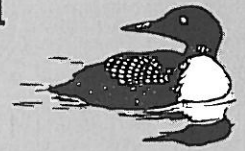


The Adirondack Council
A SPECIAL REPORT



NOVEMBER 1988

STATE OF THE PARK

1988

*A Review of Actions and Trends Affecting
The Adirondack Park*



THE ADIRONDACK PARK

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

Some 42 percent of the Adirondack Park is publicly-owned Adirondack Forest Preserve, protected as “forever wild” by the state constitution since 1895. One million acres of these public lands, representing one-sixth of the entire park, is further designated as Wilderness, where motorized use is prohibited.

The remaining 58 percent of the Adirondack Park is private land devoted principally to forestry, agriculture and open-space recreation. The park is home for 120,000 permanent and 210,000 seasonal residents, and hosts an estimated nine million visitors annually.

The western and southern Adirondacks are a gentle landscape of hills, lakes, ponds and streams. In the

northeast are the “high peaks,” 42 of them above 4,000 feet, nine of them with alpine summits.

The Adirondacks form the headwaters for most or part of five major drainage basins: Lake Champlain and the Hudson, Black, St. Lawrence and Mohawk Rivers. Within the park are 2,800 lakes and ponds and more than 1,000 miles of rivers fed by an estimated 30,000 miles of brooks and streams.

What most distinguishes the Adirondack Park is its diversity. Within this vast natural sanctuary is a combination of wildlife, forests, wetlands, waterways and mountains found nowhere else in the world.

The park offers superb opportunities for boating of all kinds, camping, hiking, mountaineering, hunting, fishing, swimming, bicycling, nature photography, downhill and cross-country skiing, ice skating, snowshoeing, horseback riding, and scenic motoring on some of the nation’s loveliest highways and backroads.



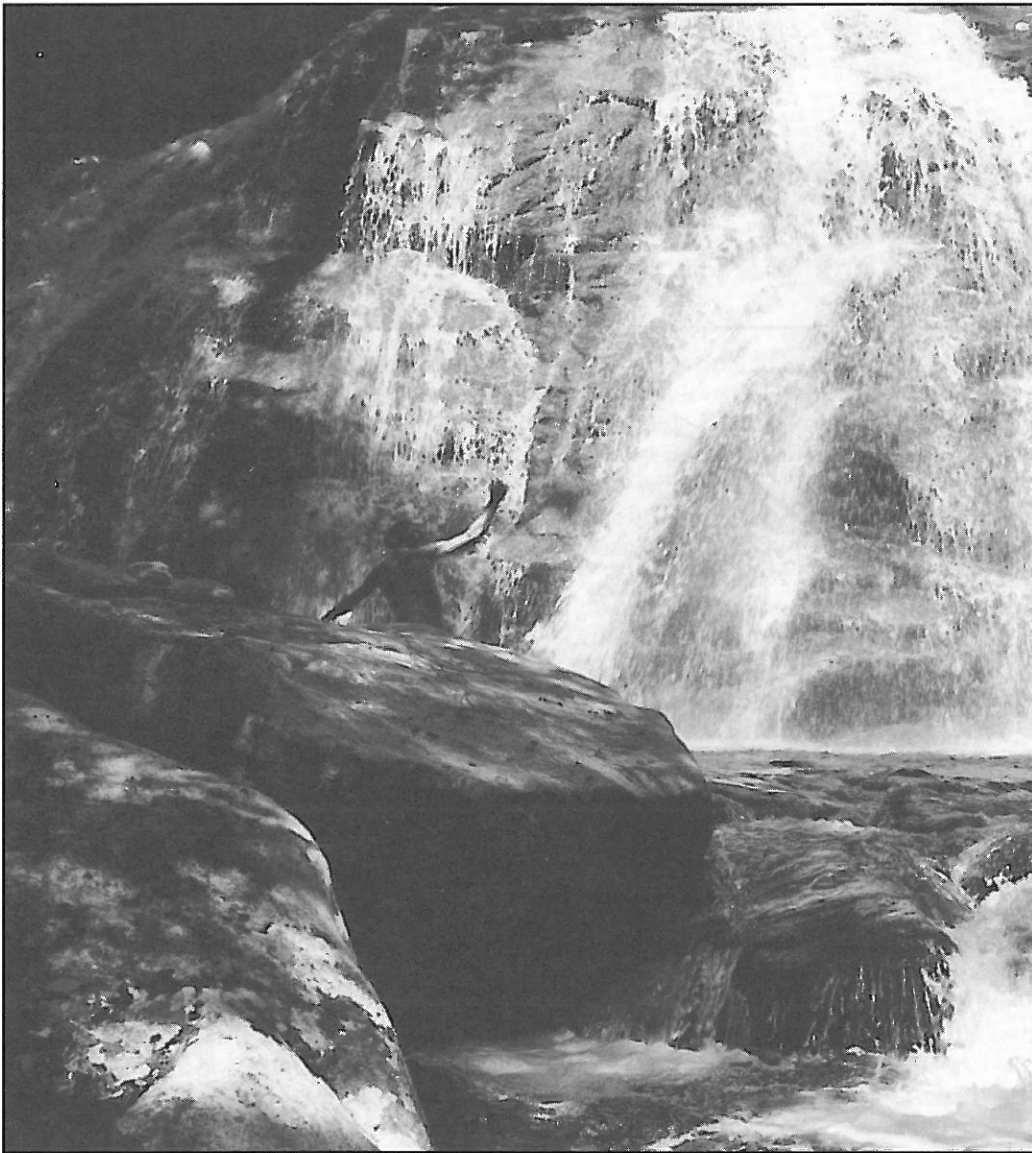
STATE OF THE PARK REPORT

This is the sixth annual report by the Adirondack Council on trends and events affecting the Adirondack Park. The state agencies most frequently cited in this report — those with primary responsibility for protecting and perpetuating the natural values of the park — are the Adirondack Park Agency and the Department of Environmental Conservation.

The **Adirondack Park Agency (APA)** is an 11-member commission appointed by the Governor, with a staff of about 50. The APA regulates the use of the park’s private lands, totalling 3.5 million acres, and develops

policy for the park’s public lands, consisting of 2.5 million acres of state-owned Adirondack Forest Preserve.

The **Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)** is headquartered in Albany and maintains regional offices throughout the State. DEC is entrusted with the custody of the publicly-owned Adirondack Forest Preserve, the acquisition of additional Forest Preserve lands, and the purchase of conservation easements on key private holdings.

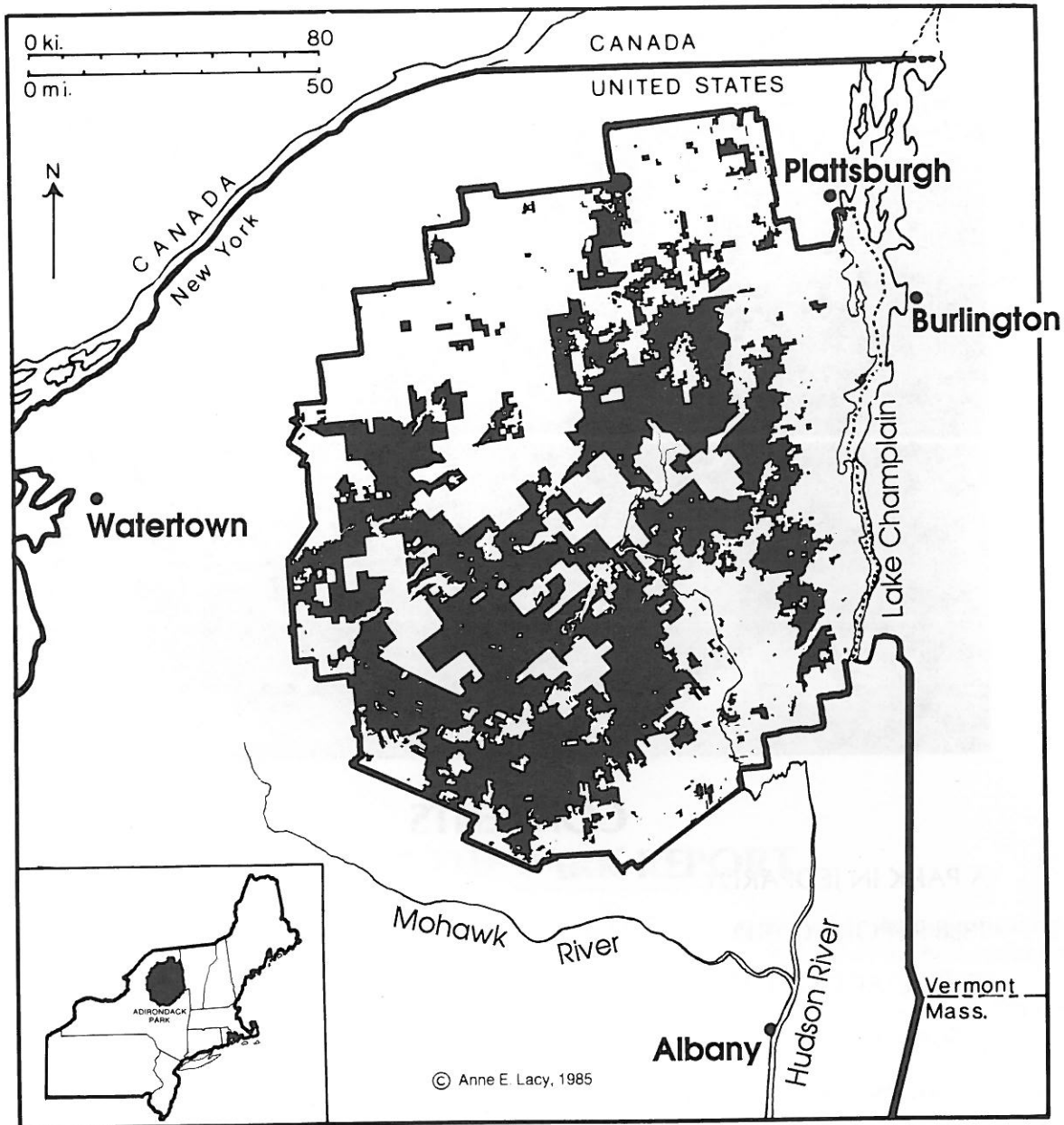


Robin Brown

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A FRAGILE OWNERSHIP MIX



The Adirondack Park is a patchwork of public (black) and private lands. Less than half the park — the fragmented parcels of State Forest Preserve — is in public ownership. As large private holdings break up, and land speculators and developers move in, the natural character of the park is increasingly threatened. To preserve the Adirondacks, the State must strengthen its legislative protections on private lands while pursuing a vigorous program of public land acquisition.

A PARK IN JEOPARDY

DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES BUILD AS OLD OWNERSHIP PATTERNS CHANGE

The current wave of speculation and development poses the greatest threat to the Adirondack Park in its 96-year history.

After nearly a century of stability, the park's traditional ownership pattern is changing. The large timber holdings and private estates, which account for much of the region's open-space character, are beginning to break up and go on the real-estate market. Children's camps, long a hallmark of the Adirondacks, are also going on the block. As these changes occur, a new wave of entrepreneurs has moved in to exploit and accelerate the trend.

The impending transfer of 96,000 acres to Lassiter Properties, Inc., a Georgia-based land speculator (see page 9), is the latest and most dramatic threat to the Adirondack Park. But the cumulative effect of other real-estate activity is also taking its toll.

Most of the park is in private ownership, and today no corner of it seems immune to the pressures to subdivide and sell. Hamlets, shorelines and remote backcountry areas are all fair game.

The projects, actual and proposed, have names like Brant Lake Heights, Mountain Meadows at Schroon Lake, Sugar Bush at Snug Harbor (Lake George), Willsboro Bay Marina (Lake Champlain), Rocky Point on Fourth Lake, Butler Lake Associates (see page 7), Deerwood Associates on Upper Saranac Lake, Lake-wood Properties near Lake Placid, Green Island Associates on Lake George, Paradise Bay Estates on Tupper Lake (see page 7), and Deer Trail on the Cedar River. The Seaway Hotel Corporation is planning a 250-room hotel, conference center, marina and condominium complex on Schroon Lake. Lew Egglefield is developing a hillside in Elizabethtown.

And, not to be outdone, the Forever Wild Development Corporation is touting "The Woodlands" as "a premier residential community" in the town of Jay.

The market for Adirondack backcountry has also been tapped by two of the nation's leading land speculators: Patten Corporation and Properties of America. Patten and POA buy large tracts of forest and farmland, then immediately subdivide and sell. Their sales pitch has a magical appeal to affluent urban dwellers: "Own your own piece of wilderness in the East's great wilderness park."

In just two years, Patten Corporation has acquired for subdivision and quick turnover some 14,000 acres in the Adirondacks. Patten's lots are exceptionally large, averaging 100 acres. But regardless of lot size, the end result is the same. Extensive subdivision of privately-owned backcountry will inexorably transform

the Adirondack Park. The creation of hundreds of privately-owned "mini-wilderness" areas, with the inevitable houses, roads, pets, cars, recreational vehicles, generators, utility lines, etc., will compromise the true wilderness character of the Adirondack Park as surely as suburban sprawl has devoured farmlands near countless cities and towns.

The State must move quickly and aggressively to protect the undisturbed lakeshores and remote backcountry of the Adirondack Park. Permanent protection can be achieved through:

1) Public acquisition of fee-title interest, in which private land is purchased by the State and becomes part of the public Forest Preserve, or

2) The acquisition of conservation easements, which leave the land in private ownership and allow such economic uses as timbering and farming to continue.

Where acquisition of fee-title or conservation easements are not feasible, more effective development controls will be necessary.

The Adirondack Council has called for a one-year study by the State to assess the full implications of present development trends in the park and consider such longterm protective measures as:

- An anti-speculation tax to curb large-scale, quick-turnover land sales;
- Strengthening the Adirondack Park Agency Act to better protect shorelines and backcountry;
- A real-estate transfer tax to provide a steady source of public funds for Adirondack acquisitions.

Meanwhile, to buy some much-needed time while the study is being conducted, the Council has also called for a one-year moratorium on all real-estate transactions involving 250 or more acres, and three or more lots, outside of hamlets.



Dan Plumley

1988 REPORT CARD

Rating the Public Trustees of the Adirondack Park

GOVERNOR MARIO CUOMO—B

The Governor deserves credit for three actions that affect the future of the Adirondack Park. During the past year he:

- Engineered a historic break-through in the national deadlock over acid-rain controls by joining with Governor Richard Celeste of Ohio to forge an agreement between New York State (a major victim of acid rain) and Ohio (a major producer of acid rain) that has resulted in remedial legislation recently introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives.

- Supported the appointment of Robert C. Glennon as executive director of the Adirondack Park Agency, thereby exercising the same good judgement he used in appointing Herman "Woody" Cole as APA chairman four years ago. Glennon has been a tireless and outspoken advocate of environmental protection.

- Appointed a professional environmentalist as Commissioner of Environmental Conservation. His appointee, Thomas C. Jorling, is a lawyer, teacher, and former top official for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The Governor missed a higher rating because:

- In the Adirondack Park, the State has spent less than 1% of the \$250 million approved by the voters in 1986 for public land acquisition statewide.

- The Governor failed to fund additional staff positions needed to protect the Adirondacks. For example, the Adirondack Park Agency has only one enforcement officer working fulltime to cover an area the size of Vermont, and the Department of Environmental Conservation remains undermanned in its land acquisition program.

- The Governor did not throw his weight behind a bill that would eliminate the double standard for development in the Adirondack Park by requiring that state-sponsored projects meet the same standards required of private developers.



ADIRONDACK PARK AGENCY—B+

The APA appointed a highly-qualified executive director (see above) and continued its strong stance on environmental protection along with its sensitivity to local economic needs. The APA also assumed a leadership role in attempting to cope with the problems caused by the development boom in the Adirondack Park.

The APA missed a perfect rating because it continued to be weak on enforcement (a staffing problem largely due to insufficient state funding); lacking in follow-up to determine whether its permit requirements are effective or are even being observed; and not imposing adequate permit conditions, such as strict vegetative screening requirements, to maintain the parklike character of the region.



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION—INCOMPLETE

DEC gets an "incomplete" pending the fate of Diamond International's 96,000 acres (see page 9). If the Diamond lands remain in the hands of Lassiter Properties, Inc., DEC will earn a failing grade for presiding over the biggest loss of wild backcountry to a private land exploiter in the history of the Adirondack Park. If DEC can rescue the deal, and permanently protect this critical acreage through easement acquisition and direct purchase, it will earn a high grade for honoring the public trust. (DEC may still have time to save the Otterbrook Timber Company lands as well — see page 8.)

On the plus side this year, DEC purchased 14,913 acres from International Paper Company. This important acquisition consolidates public holdings and provides new recreational access to the public. DEC also beefed up its ranger force and is moving ahead with management plans for various units of the Forest Preserve.

On the down side, the DEC has generally performed poorly as the public's purchasing agent in the Adirondack Park, spending only \$2.1 million on Adirondack acquisitions since 1986 and not yet purchasing a single conservation easement. The Adirondack Park is clearly *not* receiving a fair share of the 1986 bond act funds. Nor has DEC yet spent all the money allocated for Adirondack acquisitions in the previous bond act passed 16 years ago!

To his credit, DEC Commissioner Jorling has been meeting personally with some Adirondack landowners to initiate negotiations on key tracts of private land requiring permanent protection. To his discredit, the Commissioner has not yet filled a top-level DEC position that could give focus and impetus to the Adirondack acquisition program. That position has been vacant for over a year.

NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY—B+

As always in recent years, the State Assembly has suppressed the perennial spate of mischievous legislation, sponsored by North Country legislators, that would demolish or weaken long-established protections for the park and re-open the region to every kind of damaging exploitation.

Assemblyman Maurice Hinchey, chairman of the Environmental Conservation Committee, wins special praise for killing these bills. Adirondack legislators Chris Ortloff and Anthony Casale deserve credit for supporting legislation that would require state-sponsored projects to meet the same environmental standards that apply to private development in the park.

The Assembly missed a perfect score for not actively promoting some other desirable bills.



OLYMPIC REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY—D

For action and enterprise, ORDA is a model among government entities. Thanks to ORDA's efforts, an International Olympic Training Center is currently being constructed in Lake Placid; the Adirondack Park has gained prominence as a world-class setting for winter sports; and some economic stability has come to at least one corner of the region.

For arrogance and deception, ORDA also deserves a top rating. Last year ORDA made an environmental mess during construction of new parking lots at Whiteface Mountain. Careless construction resulted in the silting of the West Branch of the Ausable River (a trophy trout stream) and the destruction of a feeder stream to the Ausable. When publicly criticized for its insensitive site work, ORDA promised to act more responsibly in the future, and to conform its projects to

state standards (APA and DEC) governing private development in the park.

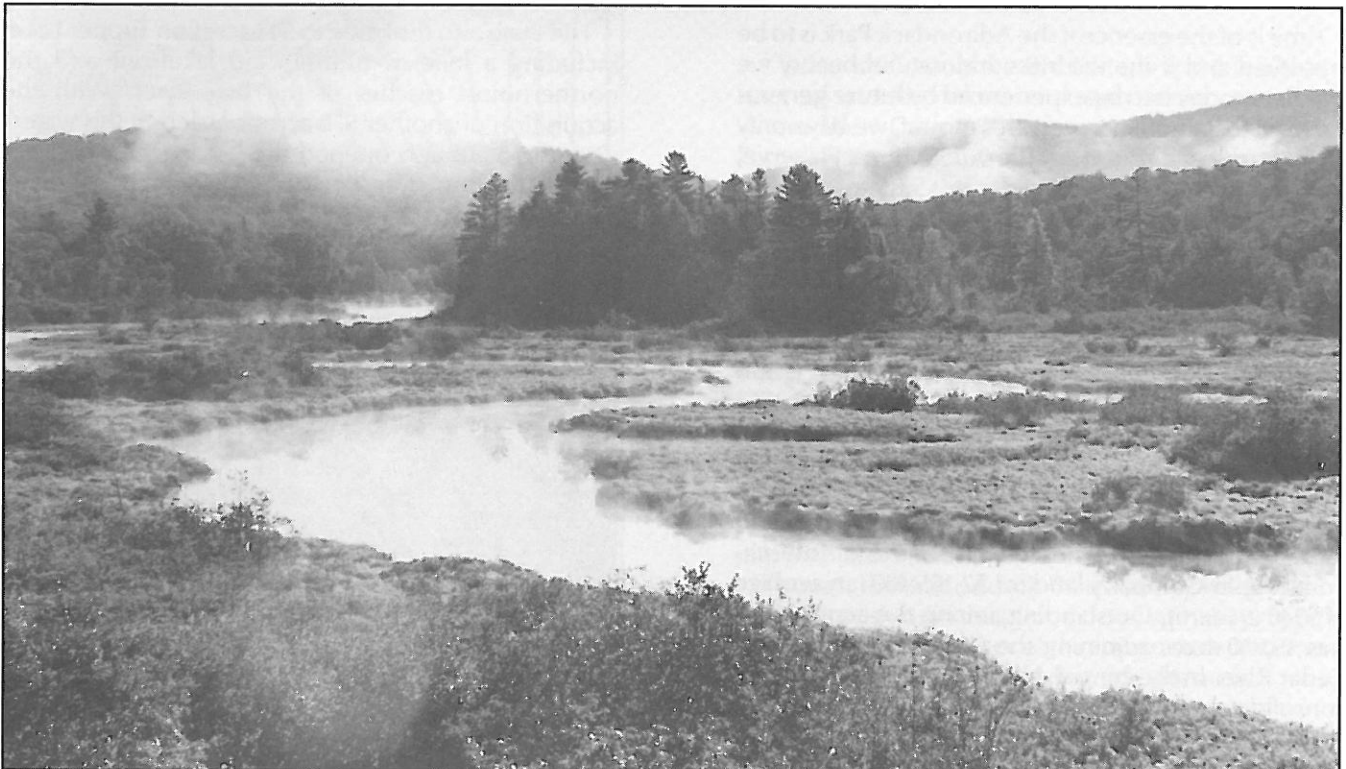
At that time, ORDA was seeking a constitutional amendment that would permit expansion of the Gore Mountain ski area. Opposition from environmentalists could have jeopardized passage of the amendment, and so ORDA was suddenly on its best behavior. As soon as the amendment passed, however, ORDA promptly reneged on its earlier promise of cooperation. A "memorandum of understanding" among the state agencies operating in the park, in which ORDA had agreed to submit to APA and DEC regulations, disappeared in a desk drawer in the ORDA offices, never to be seen again.



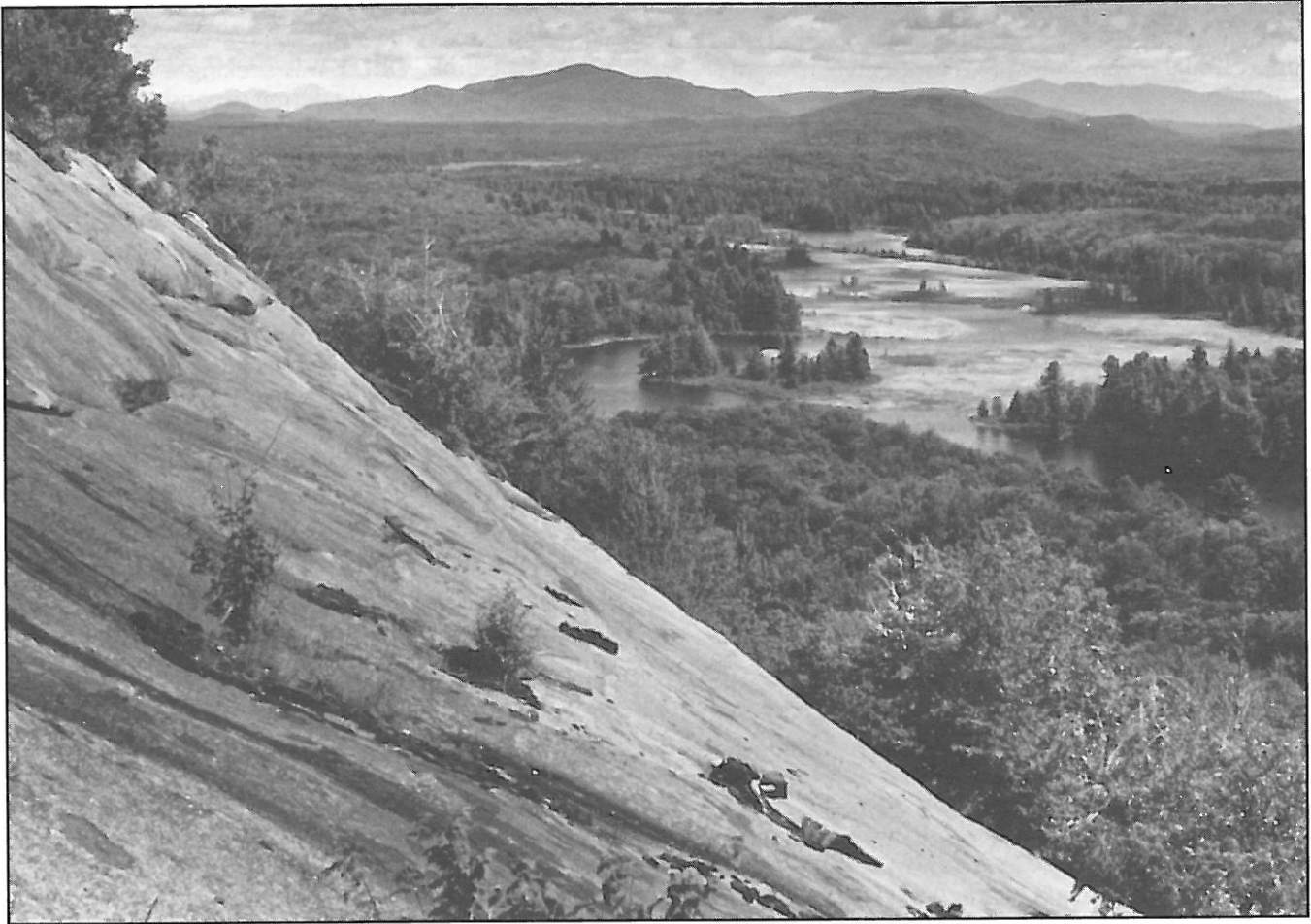
NEW YORK STATE SENATE—F (CONDITION APPEARS HOPELESS)

Once again, the Senate flunked. Deferring to its members from northern New York State, the Senate again concocted or warmed over a number of bills designed to thwart public land purchases, weaken the Adirondack Park Agency, undermine the "forever wild" protection of the State Constitution, open public Wilderness areas to automobiles, establish bounties on coyotes, change the park boundary to exempt certain towns and villages from State land-use controls, and reconstitute the APA to insure local domination.

These proposals are customarily rejected by the Assembly. But the tragedy of the Senate's tunnel vision concerning the Adirondacks is that none of the legislation needed to better protect and preserve the park can be passed into law so long as a few North Country legislators continue to hold sway, in their half of the State Legislature, over all Adirondack-related bills.



Barbara McMartin



Dave Dayger

The Bog River near Hitchins Pond, now part of a new public canoe route.

PUBLIC ACQUISITIONS: SOME RECENT GAINS

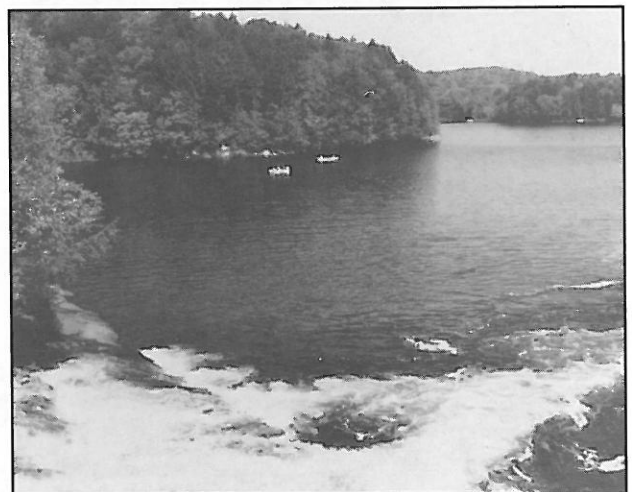
Time is of the essence if the Adirondack Park is to be preserved and if the wildness and natural beauty we find here today is to be experienced by future generations. As development pressures mount, we have only a few years left to round out the public Forest Preserve, complete the Adirondack Wilderness System, and protect the privately-owned backcountry, scenic highways, river corridors and natural lakeshores.

What the public saves today will be saved forever. What we lose now is permanently lost.

SAVED

In 1986, New York State voters approved \$250 million for public land acquisition statewide. In 1988, the State made its first significant Adirondack purchases with these funds, acquiring nearly 15,000 acres of International Paper Company land for \$2,105,400 (an average of \$140 an acre). Outstanding among the acquisitions was 10,000 acres adjoining the Cedar River Flow and Cedar River in the central Adirondacks. This purchase consolidates and enhances several units of public Forest Preserve, including the Blue Ridge and West Canada Lake Wilderness Areas.

The State also took title to 543 acres on Tupper Lake, including a mile of undisturbed lakefront and the northernmost reaches of the Bog River. With the acquisition of another 578 acres bordering this waterway, the State also opened the last inaccessible segment of the Bog River/Bog River Flow as a major public canoe area.



Gary Randorf

The Bog River entering Tupper Lake.

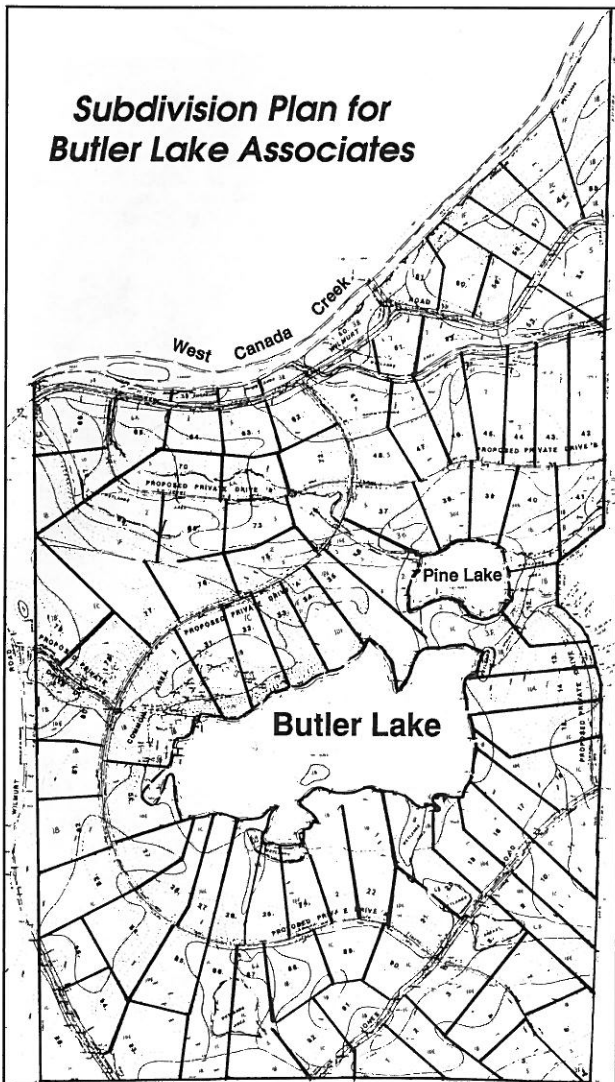
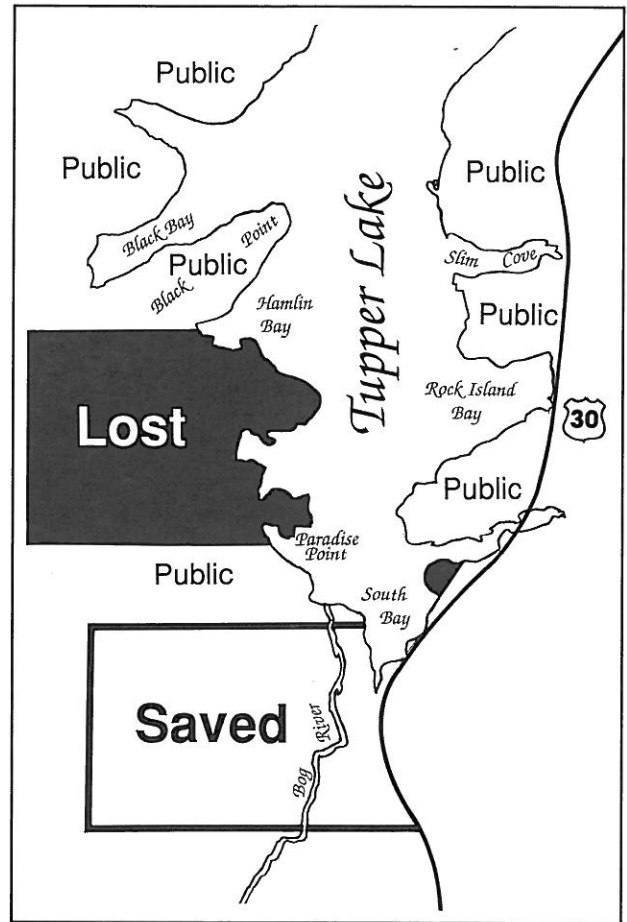
PUBLIC ACQUISITIONS: TWO BIG LOSSES

Tupper Lake

The State missed another wonderful acquisition opportunity two years ago when it failed to bid on 1,300 acres at the southwest end of Tupper Lake. This is the former Veterans Mountain Camp, a largely-undisturbed tract including three miles of lakeshore bordered on both sides by Forest Preserve.

The entire property was purchased by Adirondack Mountain Properties, Unlimited, for something under \$1 million. Since then, dozens of lots have been created, most of them concentrated on the water. The lots are priced up to \$500,000 each, and sales have been brisk. In addition, the remaining mile of shoreline that has not yet been subdivided is now on the market for \$2 million.

The big winner here was the land developer. The big loser was the public. The last opportunity for consolidating state ownership at the south end of Tupper Lake, and for preserving one of the longest continuous stretches of natural shoreline on a large Adirondack lake, has come and gone.



Butler Lake Associates

"Twice lost" could be the epitaph for this 620-acre tract of woods, lakes, and spectacular streamside where West Canada Creek enters the Ohio Gorge. Formerly a summer camp for the Boys Club of Utica, this property in the southwest Adirondacks first appeared to be doomed to intensive development last year when a Maryland company contracted to buy it. That offer was later withdrawn, but the reprieve was brief.

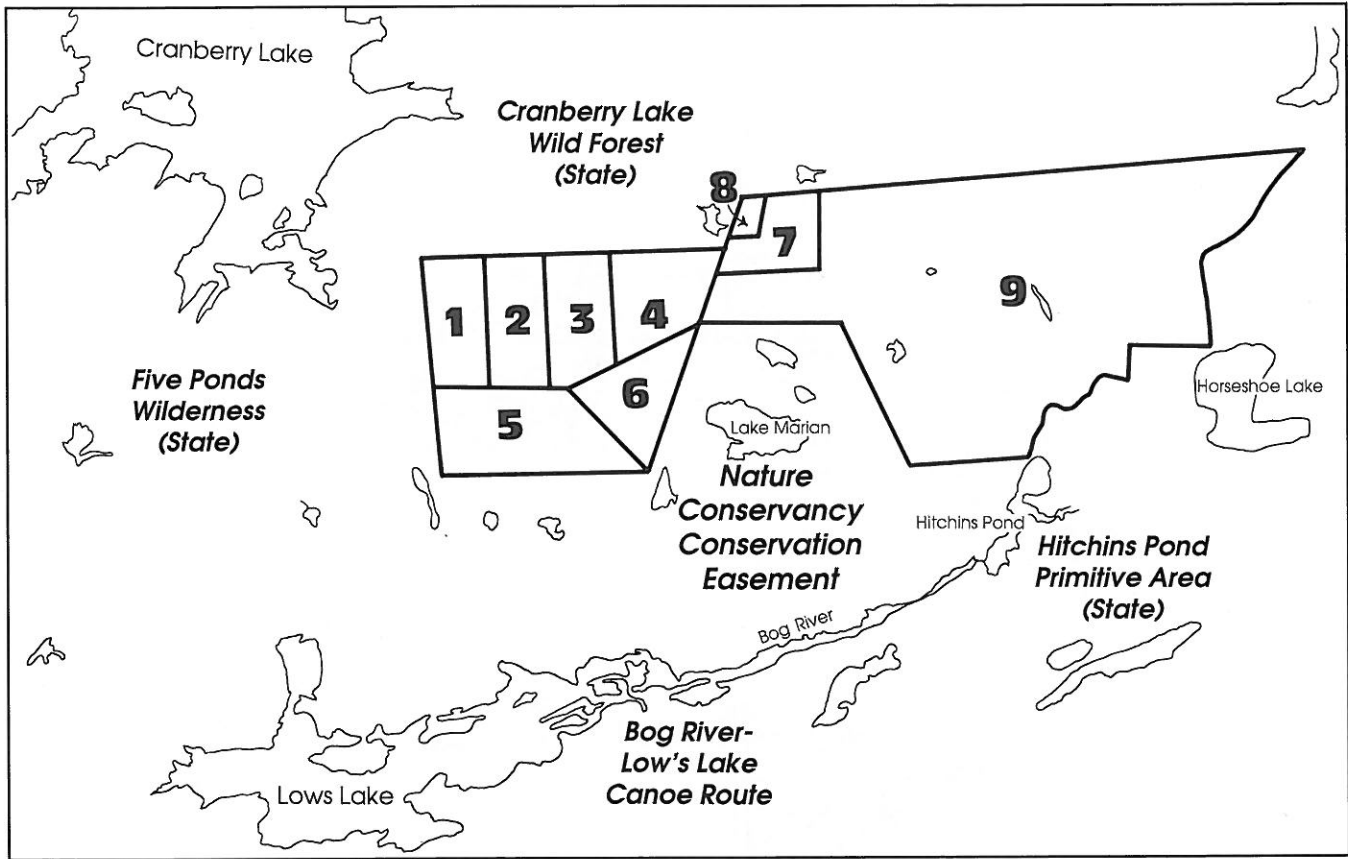
Three Old Forge businessmen, under the name of Butler Lake Associates, purchased the property for \$476,000.

"We're very concerned with preserving the character of the area," one of the associates told a local newspaper reporter. But their plan for a 96-lot subdivision seems more like a blueprint for devastation (see plat map at left).

Though the Adirondack Park Agency will probably require revisions in the plan, a development project of half or even one-quarter of that magnitude and insensitivity would permanently degrade the area.



PUBLIC ACQUISITIONS: A MAJOR FAILURE



Otterbrook Timber Company Turns Subdivider

The public is now on the verge of missing a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to permanently protect 9,000 forested acres adjacent to the Five Ponds Wilderness Area in the northwest Adirondacks. The owner, Otterbrook Timber Company, had waited for three years to sell the State an easement. When the State finally completed the appraisal process, however, its price offer was not acceptable to the owner.

Otterbrook is now planning to subdivide and sell the land itself, thus becoming the first forest products company to undertake a major subdivision of back-country in the Adirondack Park. For starters, the company has carved its vast tract into nine parcels (see above).

In a recent public statement, the Otterbrook owners commented:

The State has never had so much money available for land acquisition at a time when there has been so much land for sale. It has a unique opportunity and yet appears unable to act decisively at a time that could not be better for them. Today the State appears afraid of over-paying — an attitude that will nearly guarantee that tomorrow they will pay even more.

The Council has identified the Otterbrook tract as vital for the creation of a proposed Bob Marshall Great Wilderness, a 400,000-acre area that could be the finest publicly-owned wilderness in the northeastern United States. At this writing, Otterbrook is awaiting the necessary subdivision permits. Thus there may still be time for the State to save this wildland legacy.



PUBLIC ACQUISITIONS: LOOMING DISASTER

Diamond Sells Out To Atlanta Speculator

On September 15, Lassiter Properties, Inc., a Georgia-based land speculator, purchased 96,000 acres of wild, forested land in the northern Adirondacks. The owner, Diamond International, had been asking \$193 an acre. The State's best offer was \$145 an acre for a portion of the property. The entire tract was sold to the Georgia company for \$177 an acre.

The Diamond lands constitute the fourth largest private land ownership in the Adirondack Park, and probably in the whole state. In this one transaction, the State could have determined the future land use, and safeguarded the natural landscape, of key elements of the Adirondack Park *in perpetuity*.

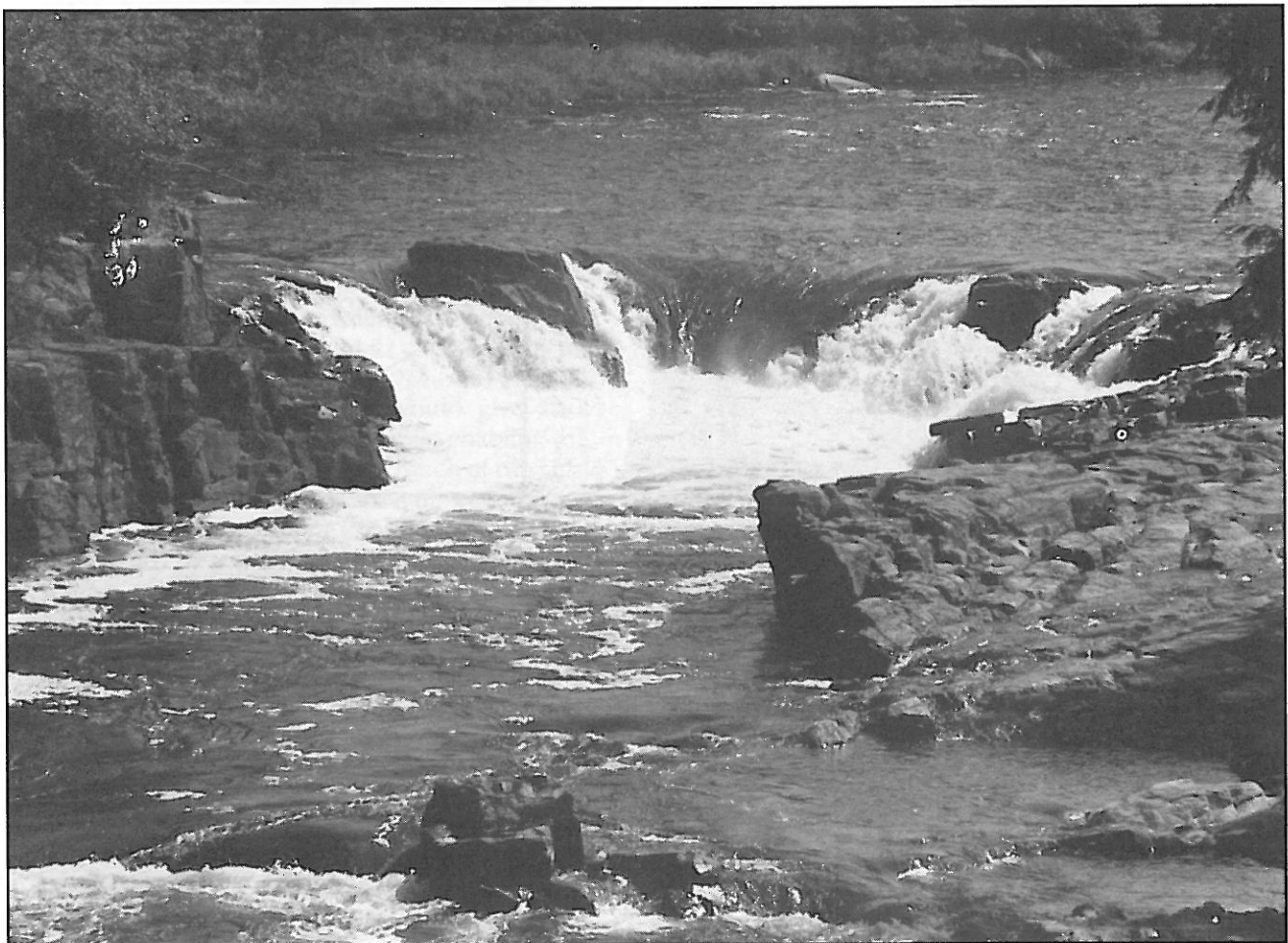
The closing of the Diamond sale is set for December 21. Using all the authority and ingenuity at its disposal, the State can still save these lands from subdivision, resale, and development.

The Adirondack Council has identified 92,000 acres as integral to the natural character and ecological integrity of the Adirondack Park. Portions of this

acreage should be protected by conservation easements, which would permit continued timber harvesting; the remainder should be purchased by the State and incorporated into the "forever wild" Forest Preserve.

One of the Diamond tracts could form the core of a new Boreal Wilderness encompassing the rare (in New York State) northern ecosystem of low-elevation spruce and fir forests, which provides ideal habitat for moose, spruce grouse, and other rare and endangered animals and plants. Public acquisition of another Diamond tract would expand the Five Ponds Wilderness and preserve 12 miles of the Middle Branch of the Oswegatchie River.

State acquisition would also help to achieve the Council's goal of creating a Bob Marshall Great Wilderness. If the public interest prevails and all the pieces can be put into place, this could be one of the finest government-protected wilderness areas in the United States.



Barbara McMartin

West Canada Creek just above the Ohio Gorge. The Butler Lake Associates subdivision (see page 7) abuts the shoreline and waterfalls pictured here.

PUBLIC ACQUISITIONS: ON THE BLOCK

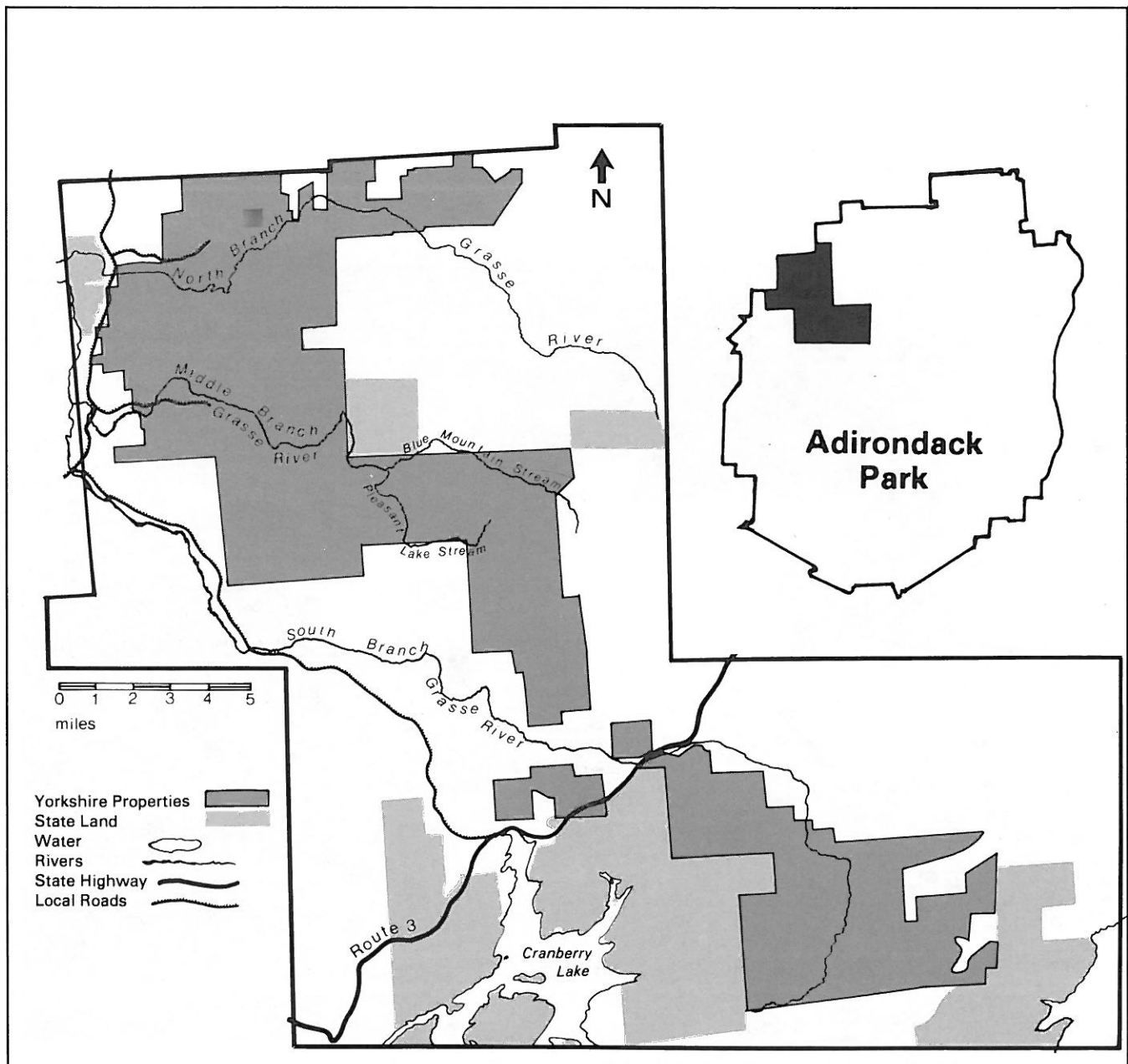
Yorkshire Timber Company

Yorkshire Timber Company owns 72,000 acres in the northwest Adirondack Park in St. Lawrence County. Yorkshire has been ready and willing to sell conservation easements that would 1) allow the continuation of timber harvesting, 2) preserve the natural character of the region, and 3) open key areas to canoeing, hiking, hunting, fishing and camping. Of particular public value are some 50 miles of remote and virtually untouched sections of the Grass River drainage, along

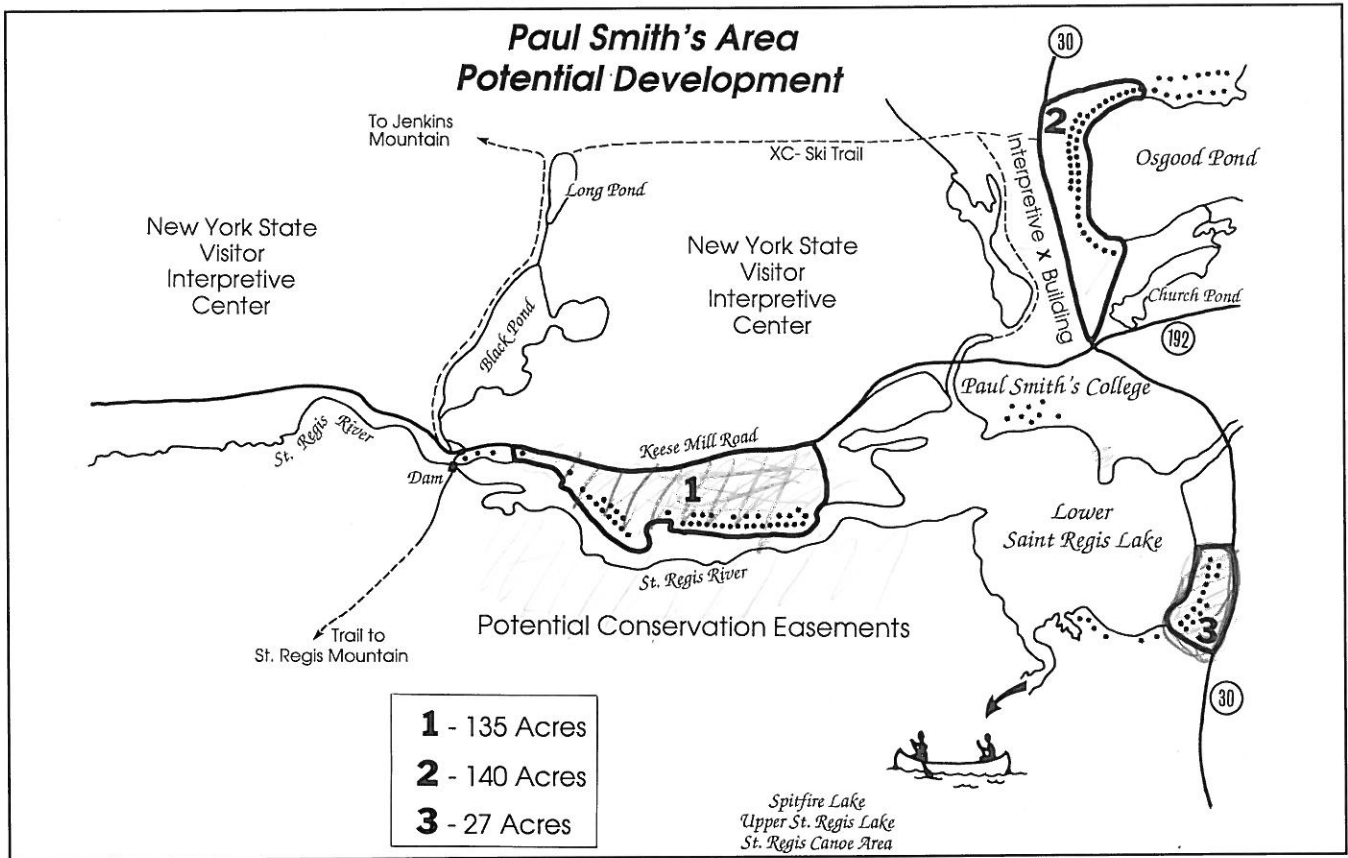
with Blue Mountain and Lake Pleasant streams.

Opposing the sale of easements to the State are 21 private clubs that lease exclusive hunting rights on the Yorkshire timberlands.

Whether the State is willing to purchase easements on all or part of the Yorkshire lands is unclear. What is clear is that an opportunity now exists that may never again be offered to the public.



YORKSHIRE TIMBERLAND — AN IDEAL EASEMENT OPPORTUNITY



Scenic canoe route could be marred by intensive shoreline development.

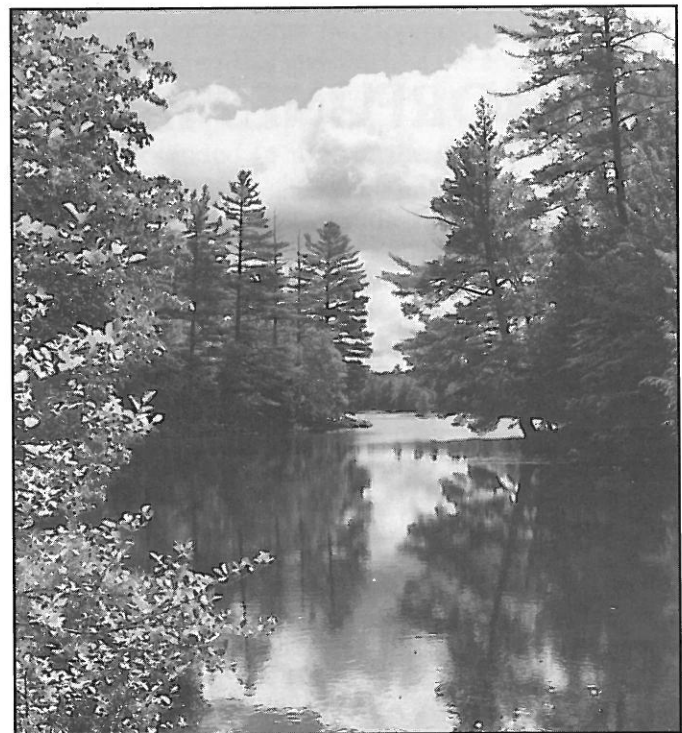
PUBLIC ACQUISITIONS: ON THE BLOCK

Paul Smith's College Land

Paul Smith's College appears willing to sell conservation easements or fee-title interest to the State on about 9,000 acres of forest land northwest of Saranac Lake Village. Such a transaction would give Paul Smith's a financial shot-in-the-arm while enabling the College to continue to own and use much of the land for educational purposes. This transaction would also benefit the public by protecting important open-space resources, and by providing public access where desirable.

Unfortunately, however, the College appears determined to retain three undisturbed shoreline parcels as a future "nest egg" — which could well mean future development. These parcels include 135 acres and nearly three miles of natural shoreline along the east side of the St. Regis River between Lower St. Regis Lake and the Keese Mill dam; 140 acres on the west end of Osgood Pond; and 27 acres on Lower St. Regis Lake south of the college campus.

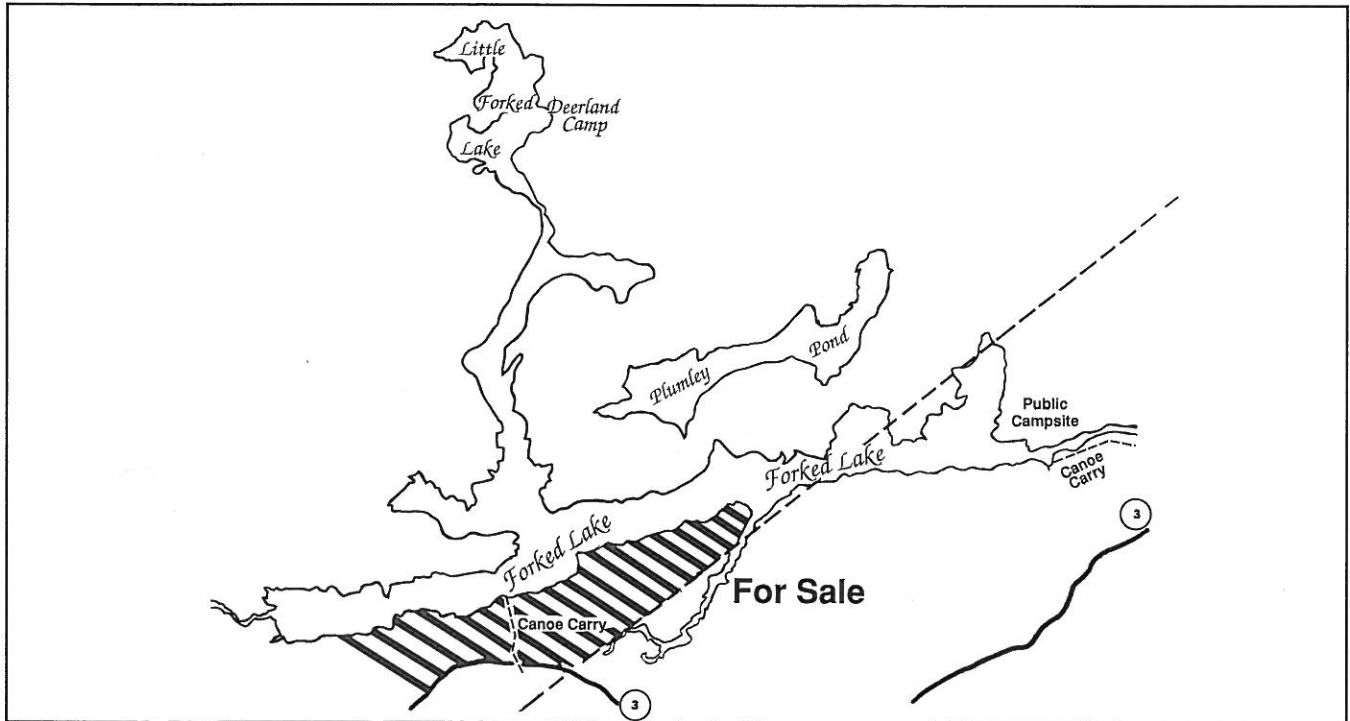
Preserving these undeveloped parcels is essential for maintaining the natural character of the three waterways and protecting their public recreation values — particularly as segments of important Adirondack canoe routes — in perpetuity.



Alan Cederstrom

**NATURAL BEAUTY IN NEED OF PRESERVATION —
The St. Regis River between the dam and the college.**

PUBLIC ACQUISITIONS: ON THE BLOCK



Whitney Industries

The first parcel of the 50,000-acre Whitney family holding has gone on the market: 520 acres with approximately two miles of frontage on Forked Lake (see map above). This property also borders both sides of the canoe carry from Raquette Lake.

The owners are asking \$1,500,000 for this acreage — but the public values at stake are priceless. The wild, undisturbed shoreline of Forked Lake is a crucial component of the most popular canoe route in the Adirondack Park.

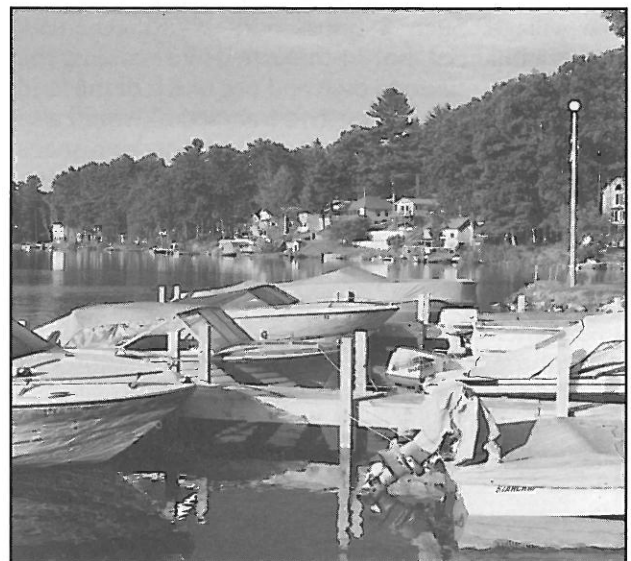
SHORELINES TARGETED BY DEVELOPERS

Most lakeshores in the United States are now ringed with houses and docks, abuzz with motorboats, and plagued by pollution. For many visitors to the Adirondack Park, the region's most appealing feature is the extent of undisturbed wooded lakeshores and natural serenity.

In today's crowded world, these qualities are rare and fragile. Without prompt public intervention, many Adirondack lakes could, within the next few years, suffer the same fate of most other American waterbodies.

Though the Adirondack Park Agency exercises limited control over development on private lakeshores, its regulations do not adequately protect these waterbodies against the growing assault from speculators and subdividers. It has been calculated that the privately-owned shorelines of 921 Adirondack lakes could, under current APA zoning, be subdivided into 62,000 additional building lots.

The lake pictured at the right is just outside the Adirondack Park. This same kind of overuse and over-



Alan Cederstrom

development could soon afflict many of the still-undeveloped lakeshores within the park.

RARE AND VULNERABLE



Nancie Battaglia

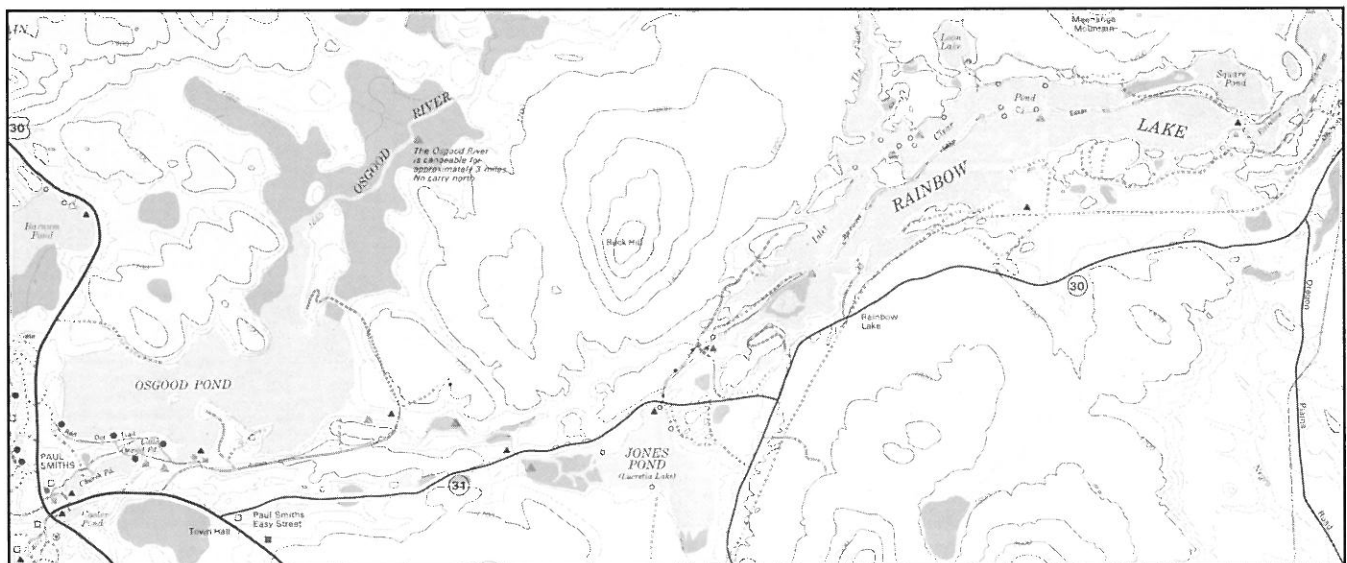
NATURAL NORTH SHORE OF RAINBOW LAKE. (SEE NEXT PAGE FOR SOUTH SHORE.)

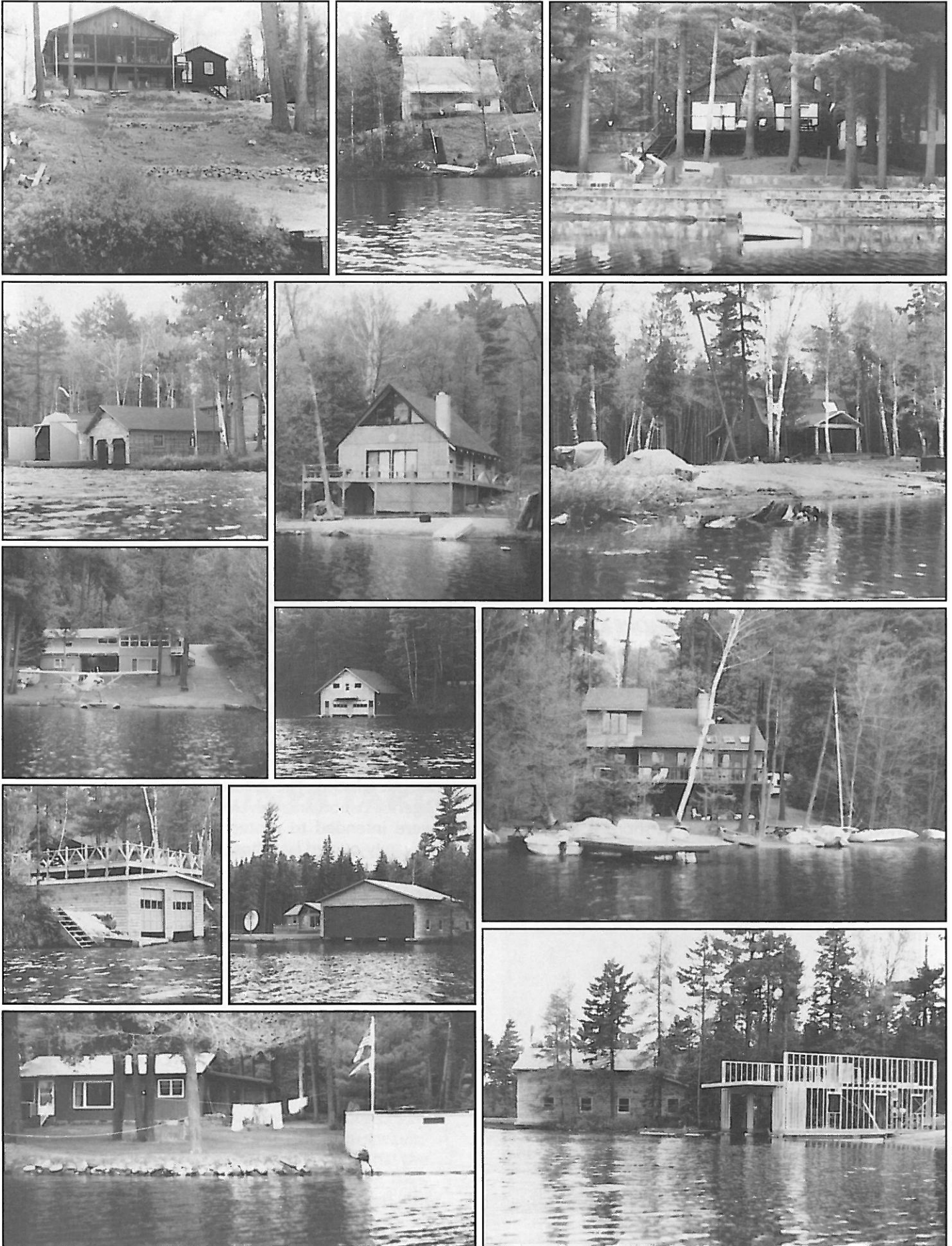
Rainbow Lake

Rainbow Lake was named for its shape, a long, narrow arc. The largely-undisturbed condition of its forested shoreline has made this waterbody a delightful northern link in an extended canoe route through the park.

Most of Rainbow Lake's north shore is publicly-owned Forest Preserve. As such, it must remain "forever wild." The south side, however, is in private owner-

ship. In recent years this shoreline has been transformed by intrusive development, including float-plane hangers that give the lake the appearance of an aquatic airstrip. The failure of the Adirondack Park Agency's shoreline development restrictions, which were intended to protect the natural character of privately-owned lakeshores, may be seen in many of the pictures on page 14.





RAINBOW LAKE — DEVELOPMENT IN PROGRESS

ADIRONDACK LAKES: A FRAGILE RESOURCE

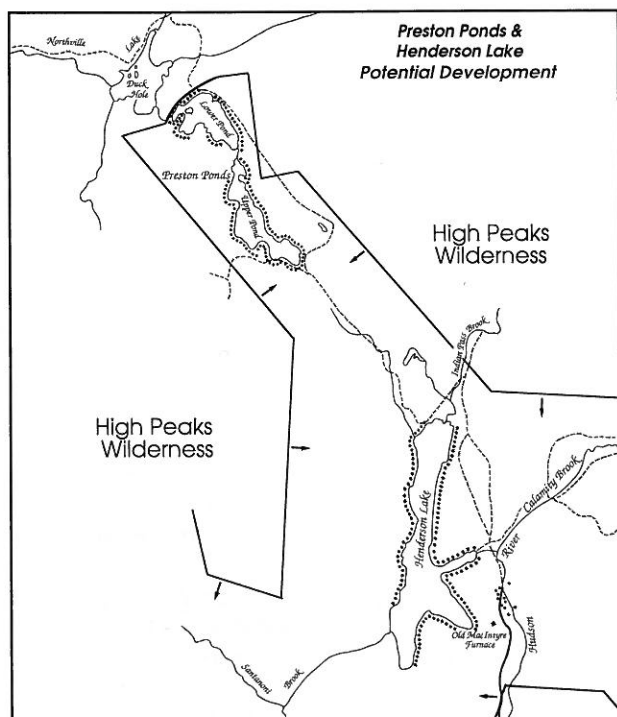
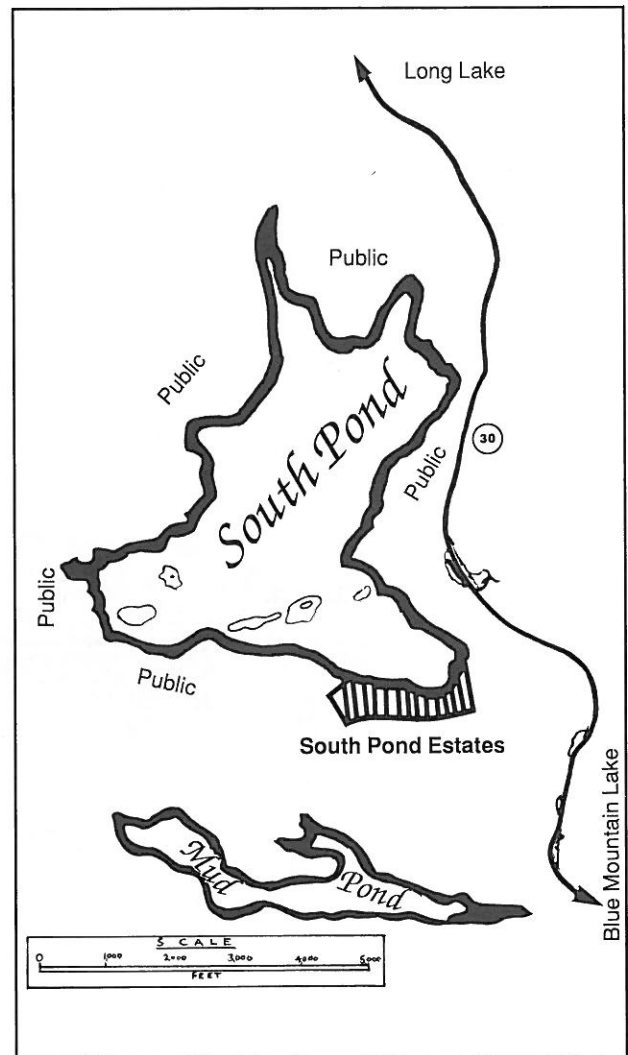
South Pond Estates

A classic example of how a natural lakeshore could be altered by just one misguided development project can be seen in the approved subdivision plan for South Pond.

Situated in the central Adirondacks between Long Lake and Blue Mountain Lake, South Pond is more than a mile long and almost a mile wide. It is dominated by Blue Mountain, encircled by undisturbed forest, and graced with several small, pine-studded islands. Most of the shoreline, and all of the islands, are publicly-owned and protected by the state constitution as "forever wild." The few private camps on the lake are mostly old, unobtrusive structures, well-screened by trees and bushes from the water.

South Pond Estates is the first significant subdivision to be undertaken by Finch-Pruyn, a paper company with extensive holdings in the Adirondacks. Finch-Pruyn owns half a mile of hitherto-untouched shoreline at the south end of the pond. The company's original plan (shown here) squeezed in the maximum number of shoreline lots permitted under the Adirondack Park Agency Act.

To its credit, the company has agreed to reconsider this project with an eye toward maintaining the natural character of the area.



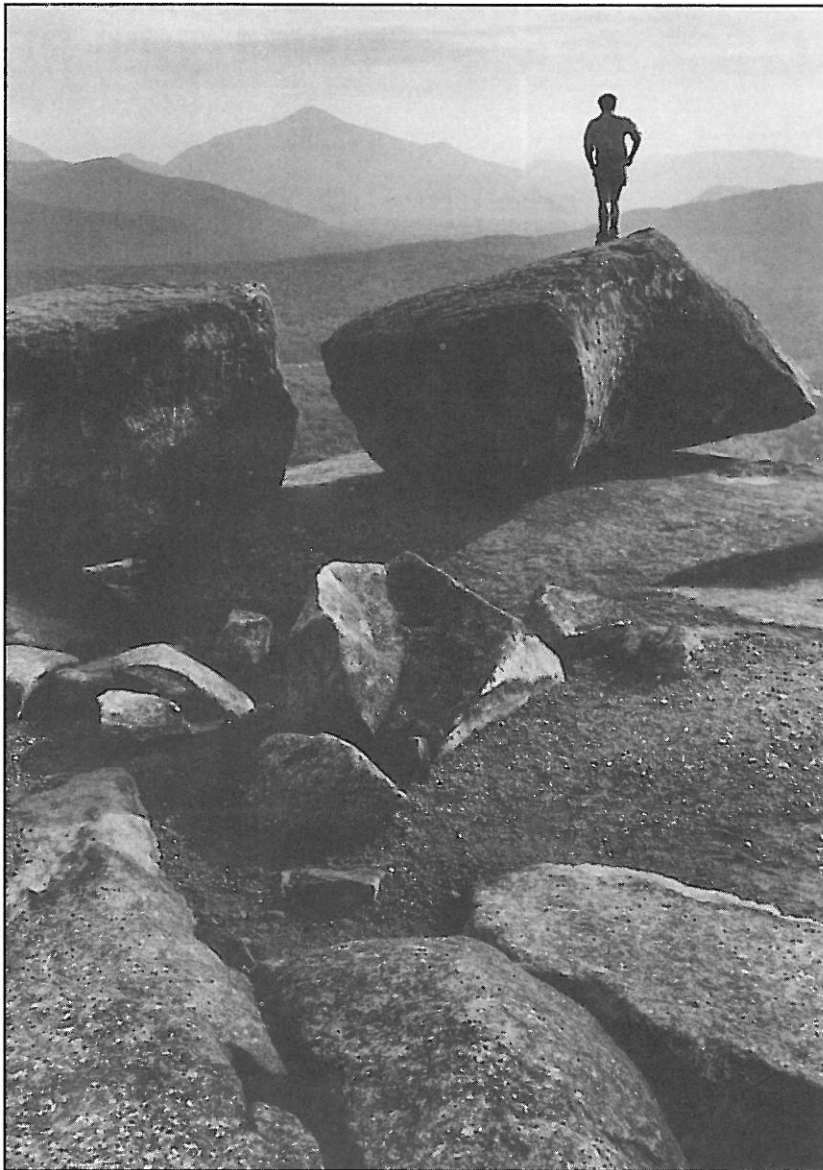
Now completely undisturbed and natural, privately-owned Preston Ponds could be transformed by second-home development. Each dot represents a permissible dwelling under the APA's "development intensity guidelines."

Henderson Lake/Preston Ponds

These wilderness waterbodies, part of some 5,000 acres owned by N-L Industries, are nearly surrounded by the publicly-owned High Peaks Wilderness, with the Santononi Range to the west, the McIntyre Range to the east, and Duck Hole and Indian Pass just a few miles down the trail.

Under the APA Act, the pristine shorelines of Henderson Lake and the Preston Ponds could be extensively developed (see diagram). The APA restrictions for this zone require only that a waterfront lot be at least 200 feet wide, that buildings be set back at least 100 feet from the water, and that no more than 30% of the lot and its shoreline be stripped of trees and other vegetation (a "restriction" that allows a 60-foot-wide swath to be cut between each house and the lake).

What could happen here in the way of destructive development could happen to hundreds of other pristine Adirondack lakes currently in private hands.



Nancie Battaglia

STATE OF THE PARK, 1988

Change is coming to the Adirondacks. After decades of relative stability, lakeshores and backcountry have become hot real estate. If the public is to compete successfully with the growing number of speculators, subdividers and developers for the critical private tracts, the State must be quicker with its checkbook and more realistic about the changing market value of Adirondack land.

Given the size of the Adirondack Park, and its importance as the last large bastion of undisturbed lakes, forests, mountains, streams, wetlands and diverse wildlife habitat in the northeastern United States, it is fitting for the State to allocate at least one-fourth of its 1988 acquisition funds, or \$62.5 million, toward preserving the park.

Never again will the State be able to buy large, critically-important Adirondack tracts at the bargain prices of today. Land that can be purchased "in bulk"

for \$177 an acre on today's market (the price paid by Lassiter for Diamond's 96,000 acres) will soon cost the public many times that amount if it is still available at all.

The state of the Adirondack Park is still excellent — and the opportunities for permanently preserving the park have never been greater. At the same time, however, the future of the Adirondacks has never been more in doubt. If the State continues to fail in its acquisition responsibilities, and if the inadequacies of the State's land-use controls are not corrected, the Adirondack Park will be irretrievably diminished.

The final allocation of the Adirondack landscape is taking place. What this generation does (or doesn't do) to preserve this natural treasure will determine the shape of the Adirondack Park for all generations to come.

THE ADIRONDACK COUNCIL

Founded in 1975, the Adirondack Council is dedicated to protecting the Adirondack Park through public education, working with government agencies and lawmakers, and undertaking legal action when necessary.

The Council is a coalition of the National Audubon Society, Wilderness Society, Natural Resources Defense Council, National Parks and Conservation Association, and Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks.

While the Council receives moral support from these member organizations, its financial sustenance comes mainly from its 8,500 individual members and from private foundations.

Individual membership categories begin at \$25. Membership benefits include regular newsletters, reports and action alerts, along with the personal satisfaction of helping to preserve the Adirondack Park.

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THE ADIRONDACK COUNCIL, Box D-2, Elizabethtown, NY 12932. Tel. 518-873-2240



Len Rue Jr.

The Adirondack Council
P.O. Box D-2
Elizabethtown, NY 12932

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