

Denton Publications
October 22, 2009

Green group lauds APA, blasts local officials

By Thom Randall, Editor, Adirondack Journal

WARRENSBURG — In the Adirondack Council's annual State of the Park report — which presents the organization's opinions on elected officials, issues and agencies prior to the general election — the environmental group praised the Adirondack Park Agency and some state officials.

And the Council didn't hesitate to air some criticism of a few local state representatives.

Adirondack Council Executive Director Brian Houseal explained that although the highly influential organization didn't approve of Governor David Paterson's attempt to cap tax payments on state own land, he got a few things right.

"Governor Paterson received praise for his recent proposal to curb carbon dioxide emissions," Houseal said. "He also won praise for making solid appointments to the Adirondack Park Agency and U.S. Senate and for signing the new Bigger Better Bottle Bill."

The council also blasts Paterson for taking \$50 million from the Environmental Protection Fund and using it towards general-fund deficits.

The reports lauds the state Assembly and Senate for rejecting Paterson's tax cap proposal, although the state Senate received a "thumbs down" for its near collapse last summer following the widely publicized coup.

The council overwhelmingly applauded the Adirondack Park Agency's job over the last year, stating that APA Board Chairman Curt Stiles has made the agency more transparent and accessible.

It also praised the three proposed APA legislative measures as well as the reclassification of Lows Lake and revised shoreline setback regulations.

But not everyone received praise.

The Council's report ripped local Assemblywoman Teresa Sayward for introducing three pieces legislation designed respectively to open up some wild forests to timber harvesting, prevent the state from abandoning and closing some local roads and a measure to relax building density regulations for in-park campgrounds.

All three bills failed in committee.

The issue of All-terrain vehicle access is of particular interest to the Adirondack Council in the report.

The organization blasts the Lewis County Legislature for attempting to open several local roads to ATV access.

It also criticizes the nine in-park counties and 11 towns that have pledged \$3,000 each to support a lawsuit against the newly adopted APA shoreline setback regulations.