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BLOG ENTRY

Visitor Interpretation Centers to close under budget proposals

By Stephen Williams

There are now three competing state budget proposals in Albany, but all three would close the two Visitor Interpretation Centers run by the Adirondack Park Agency.

The Senate and Assembly budget proposals released this week would both otherwise restore the unpopular closings of state parks and historical sites proposed by Gov. David Paterson.

Both legislative budgets would also put millions of dollars back into the Environmental Protection Fund for open space acquisition – something Paterson wants to zero out.

But the Visitor Interpretative Centers in Newcomb and Paul Smiths get the axe under all the proposals, eliminating 10 APA jobs. Two existing vacancies on the APA staff in Ray Brook would also not be filled.

Groups like the Adirondack Council and Adirondack Mountain Club had joined other forces in fighting to keep the state parks and historical sites open, and aren't giving up on restoring the Adirondack-related cuts.

"The Adirondack Council will work to restore the APA's funding and the money for the two visitors' centers," said council spokesman John F. Sheehan.