

# **2020 VISION**

## **FULFILLING THE PROMISE OF THE ADIRONDACK PARK**

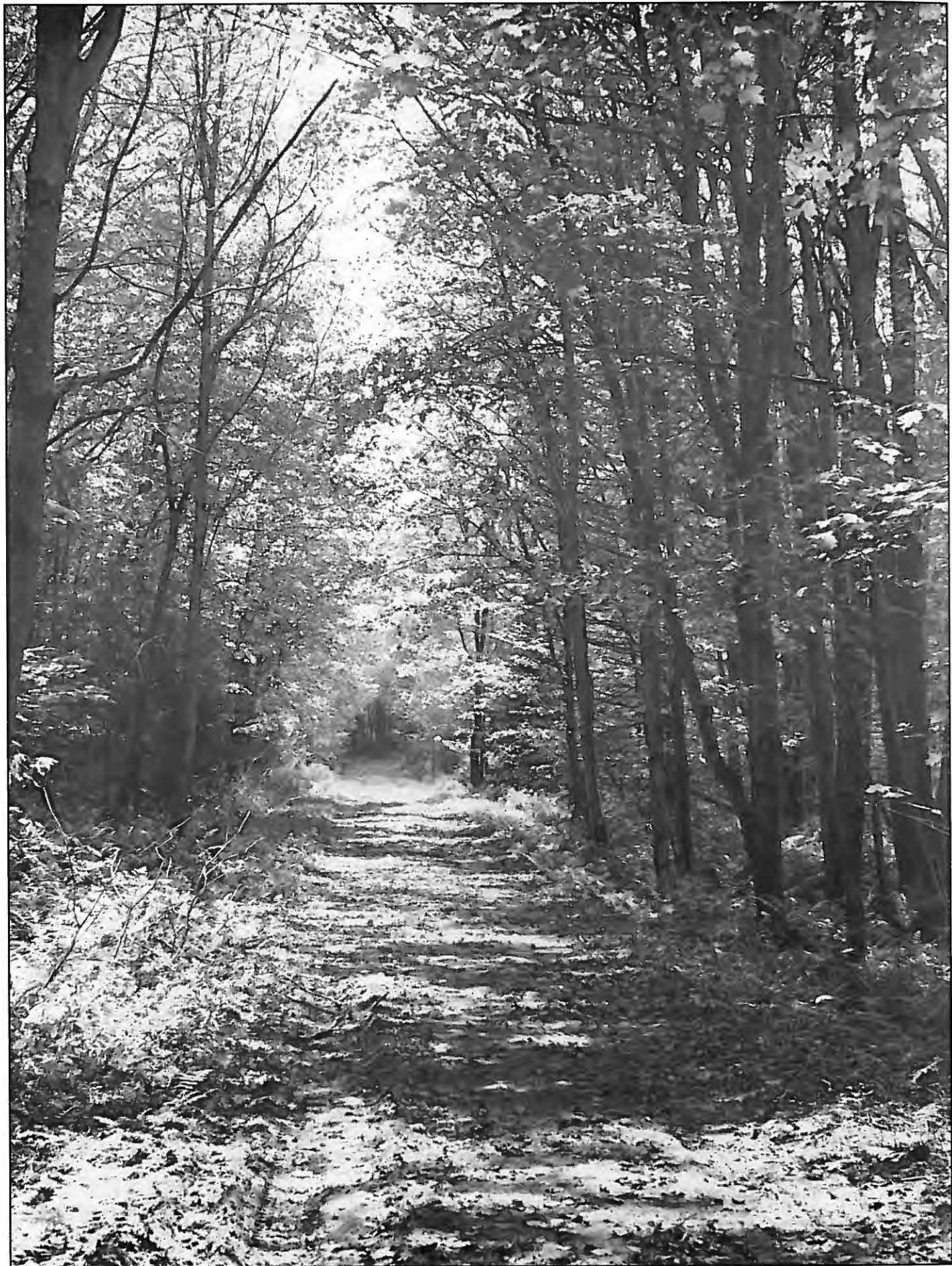


**VOLUME 3**

## **Realizing the Recreational Potential of Adirondack Wild Forests**

**The Adirondack Council**





Cover: *Huckleberry Cliffs in Wilcox Lake Wild Forest*

# **2020 VISION**

**VOLUME 3**

## ***DEDICATION***

*In Memory of Joan McAlpin's Father*

# **Realizing the Recreational Potential of Adirondack Wild Forests**

By Barbara McMartin

**THE ADIRONDACK COUNCIL**

**1990**

# Acknowledgements

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**Mrs. Joan McAlpin** provided major support for this volume in memory of her beloved father, who enjoyed and cherished the great natural beauty of the Adirondacks in his lifetime.

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Barbara McMartin

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Total acreage proposed for acquisition for Wild Forest	255,190	

### **Wild Forest Proposals**

<b>Proposed Wild Forest Additions:</b>	<b>255,190 Acres</b>
<b>Present Wild Forest (1990):</b>	<b>1,355,000 Acres</b>
<b>Proposed Reclassification of Wild Forest to Wilderness:</b>	<b>173,000 Acres</b>
<b>Total Proposed Wild Forest:</b>	<b>1,437,190 Acres</b>
<b>Net Gain in Wild Forest:</b>	<b>82,190 Acres</b>

# Introduction

The Adirondack region is much more than the sum of the best protected wild lands in the eastern United States. Because of its size, natural diversity, and location, it is potentially the country's most important vacation and recreation area.

About 42% of the Adirondack Park is Forest Preserve, owned by all the people of New York State and protected by the State constitution as "forever wild." Most of the Preserve is classified either as Wild Forest, where motorized recreation is permitted in designated places, or as Wilderness, where no motorized recreation is allowed.

The Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan is very specific about the purpose of Wilderness (the most remote lands of the Forest Preserve) but it barely hints at the ways in which Wild Forest should be used, managed, and enjoyed.

This study seeks to fill that void with a recreation

plan that puts people in the woods and on the waters in a way that preserves the resource and is consistent with the "forever wild" stipulation. The Adirondack Council has identified 255,190 acres of private land that should be purchased by the State to complete the Wild Forest System in the Adirondacks, thus enhancing the recreational opportunities of the park. This report recommends some management measures that will do much to fulfill the enormous potential of Wild Forest areas.

There are currently about 1,355,000 acres of Wild Forest in the Adirondack Park. In Volume 2 of its 2020 Vision series, the Council recommended that 173,000 acres of Wild Forest be reclassified as Wilderness. If the proposals in this report are carried out, the public will eventually own a total of 1,437,190 acres of Wild Forest, well-managed for all forms of compatible recreation.

## Existing Wild Forest

The people of New York own tracts of Wild Forest as undisturbed as any solitary hiker could desire. Other tracts are laced with gravelly old roads that entice horseback riders and those who favor motorized recreation. Wild Forests abound with small lakes and ponds, wooded hills, and ranges of open rock summits affording marvelous views. Yet only a few blocks of Wild Forest have been given adequate consideration for other than motorized recreation.

To its credit, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has worked to promote hunting within the Forest Preserve and to enhance fishing through reclamation and stocking of ponds and streams. A number of fishing access sites have been acquired and new boat access sites, most accommodating motorboats, have been provided. But other forms of recreation cry out for attention. Few trails have been constructed for family outings. The small mountains have been overlooked, often left trailless. With the closing and removal of many Adirondack fire towers, a shortage of small, accessible mountains with views and trails is clearly felt. Able hikers now count their climbs on peaks over 4,000 feet, while a great source of family fun has disappeared.

Some of the old logging roads that became snowmobile trails attract hikers and sportsmen year round, but these routes are poorly maintained. A large percentage of DEC's budget for trail maintenance has been concentrated in the popular High Peaks, a

response to legitimate needs that also — regrettably — makes it increasingly easy for more and more hikers to use this already-overused region. Meanwhile, less fragile summits in Wild Forest have been neglected; in much of the Wild Forest there remains an overall shortage of marked foot trails to mountain tops, lakes, ponds, waterfalls, and other good destinations.

Along with the hunter, trapper, fisherman, and snowmobiler, consideration must be given to the hiker, camper, picnicker, swimmer, boater, canoer, and family on outings.

Good stewardship and wise management of Wild Forest should include marking new trails, creating marked footpaths (requiring little maintenance), and building lean-tos, trailhead parking, and new snowmobile routes. It involves making sure that snowmobile trails are located and constructed so as to attract different kinds of use in warmer seasons; marking little-used snowmobile trails for cross-country skiers and advertising their availability; creating primitive campsites; hardening some existing trails for ease of access, and building some trails for handicapped access on suitable terrain. (A half dozen trails for handicapped access are mentioned in this report, in the units on Debar Mountain, Taylor Pond, Moose River Plains, Wilcox Lake, Independence River, and Fulton Chain Wild Forests. This list is only meant to be suggestive; with detailed study, other locations for easy access trails will be discovered.)



## Roads and Boundaries

Wild Forests tend to have many more jeep trails and old woods roads than does Wilderness. While roads are deemed incompatible with Wilderness, they are one of the blessings of Wild Forests, for they provide easier public access and additional recreation opportunities. The crazy-quilt pattern of relatively small blocks of Wild Forest interspersed with private lands is another blessing that should, for the most part, be encouraged and perpetuated. In particular, the large private holdings where timber is harvested are better suited to deer, rabbits, and ruffed grouse than are the older, uncut forests of the public lands. The close proximity of private timber lands improves hunting opportunities in the adjacent Preserve.

To realize the potential of Wild Forest areas requires a different approach from completing the Wilderness System. Instead of rounding out and filling in all Wild Forests to the best natural or management boundaries, as the Council advocates for Wilderness areas, it is often advantageous to leave the mosaic of Wild Forest and private lands, especially where trespass problems can be controlled. The existing road network can be most beneficial for families seeking short routes to mountains and lakes, for hunters whose travels from roadside are limited by distance they can carry big game, and for the growing number of people who seek well-marked trails for quiet recreation. The latter group often includes those who are older and less physically adept — a group that has seldom been the object of recreation planning in the Adirondacks.

## Acquisition Policies

Many large tracts, often corporately owned, should be acquired to complete Wilderness areas and a few large private preserves are also desirable additions to Wilderness (see Volume 2, 2020 Vision). But acquisitions for Wild Forest are much more complicated. Only a few, large, corporately-owned tracts are desirable additions to the Wild Forest System. The bulk of the big corporate holdings are best protected under conservation easements, where the land remains in private hands and logging, or other present uses, continue.

Several desirable Wild Forest tracts are smaller private preserves where public acquisition would disrupt the families who have owned these tracts for generations. Such lands should be protected from further development by means of conservation easements, and added to the Forest Preserve only when the owners wish to sell.

Many areas desirable for Wild Forest additions are already broken up into numerous small holdings where acquisition would dislodge a number of landowners. The acquisitions proposed in this report usually involve only access easements across such lands to otherwise isolated blocks of Wild Forest.

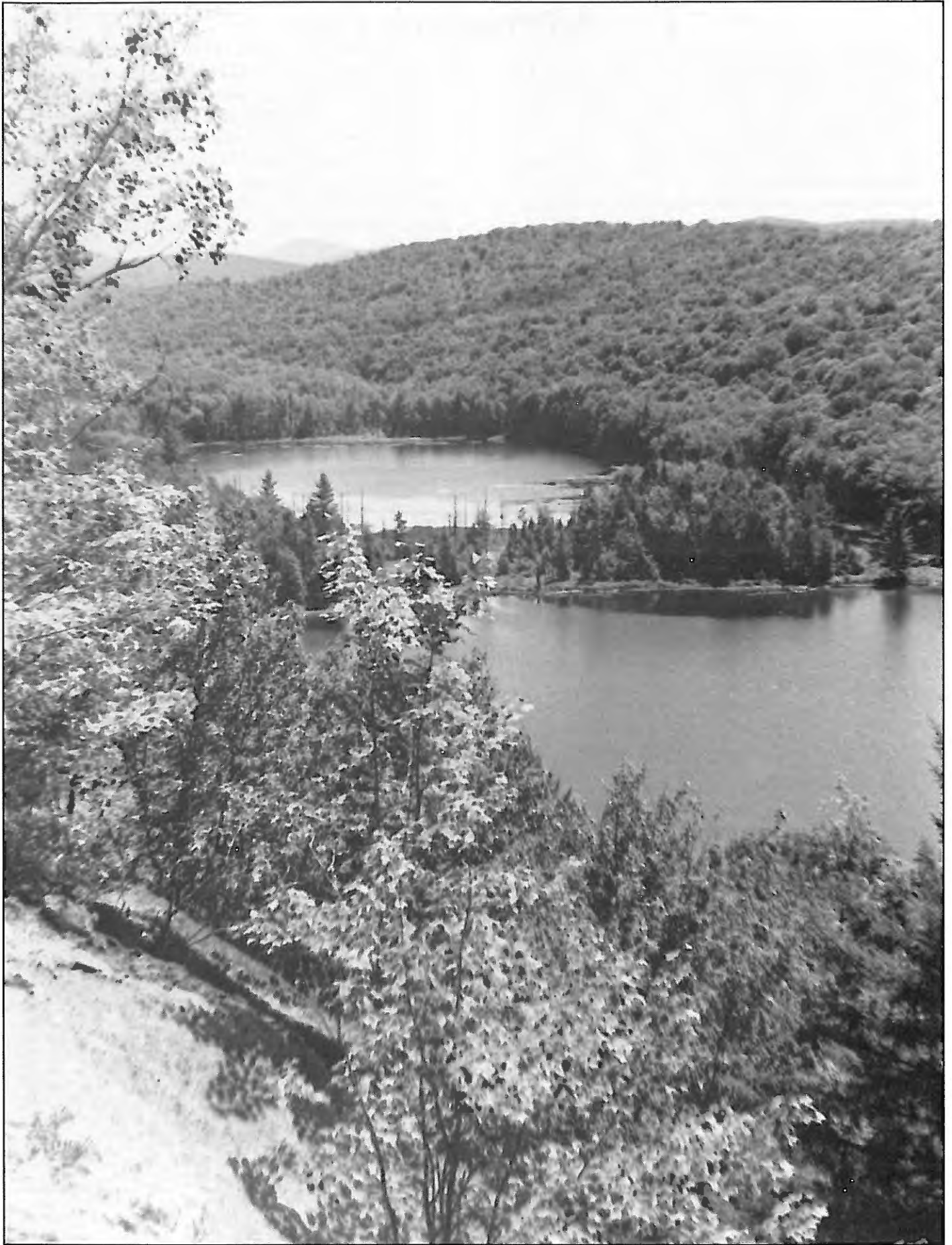
In many Wild Forest areas, most or all of the surrounding road network is on private land, thus preventing access to the public holdings. Access easements should be acquired by the State whenever such access will facilitate public use and enjoyment of the Wild Forest. Where the public has been allowed access by private landowners, easements should be acquired to guarantee such access in perpetuity.

This report outlines an acquisitions program to realize the recreational potential of Adirondack Wild Forests, without degrading the natural resource. In addition to detailing fee acquisitions, the report, in a few instances, suggests easements as a way of accomplishing this goal. It should be noted, however, that many more easements are desirable and this is not to be considered a complete list of possible easement lands. On the other hand, easements cannot be considered a substitute for Wild Forest fee acquisitions, unless the easements prohibit development, limit logging, and permit public recreation. Lands that are logged are appropriate for a narrow range of recreation, but are not the equivalent of Wild Forest lands that are part of the "forever wild" Forest Preserve.

Appropriate management of Wild Forest lands is as crucial to the goal of realizing their recreational potential as are new acquisitions. This report mentions examples of good Wild Forest management and points out a few specific management proposals such as handicapped access, new trails, trailheads, and parking facilities. It does so only as an indication of what must be done; it is essential that the State Land Master Plan be strengthened to give better direction to Wild Forest management and recreation planning.

Additions that will provide new canoe routes in Wild Forests are also noted; again, this is only a partial list of those waterways that should be opened to public recreation. Those mentioned in the report were listed because they are important components of recommended Wild Forest acquisitions.





*Mitchell Ponds in Moose River Plains Wild Forest*

# The Adirondack Park

The Adirondack Park is the largest American 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.

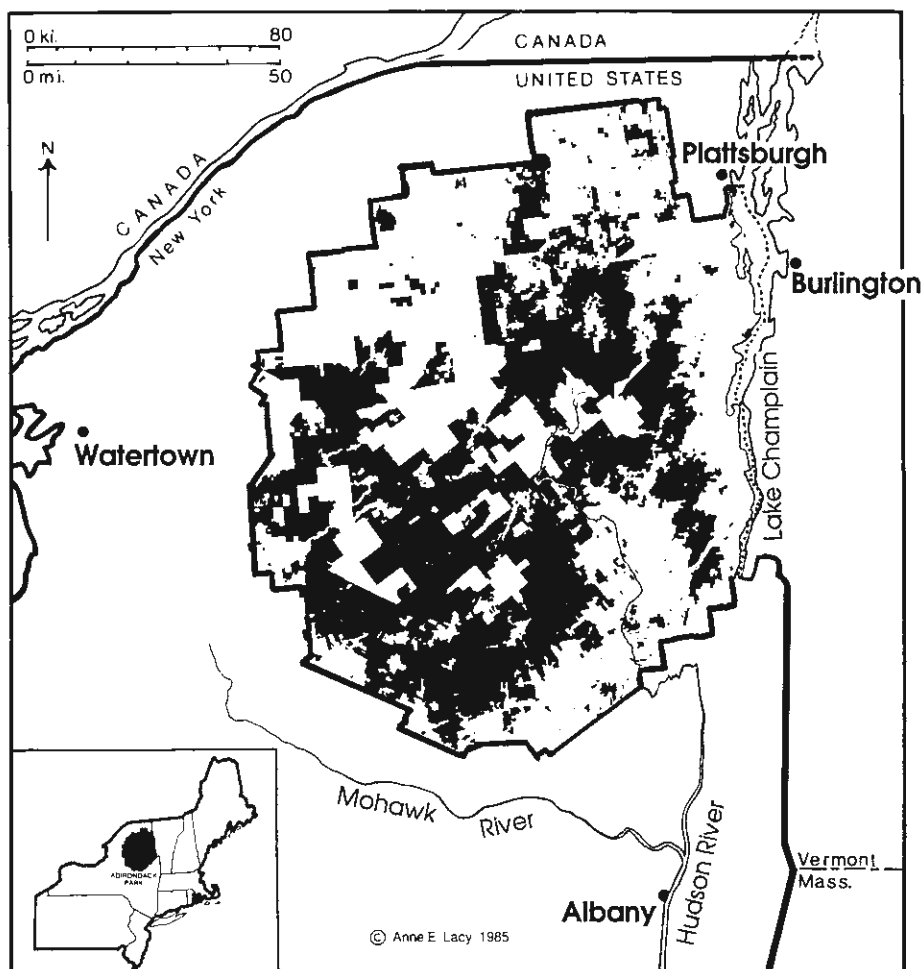
Some 42 percent of the Adirondack Park is publicly-owned Forest Preserve, protected as "forever wild" by the state constitution since 1895. One million acres of these public lands, representing one-sixth of the entire park, is further designated as Wilderness, where a wide range of non-motorized recreation may be enjoyed in an incomparable natural setting.

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," 46 of them above 4,000 feet, nine 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.

Embodied in this and other Adirondack Council studies is a vision of an Adirondack Park in the year 2020 and beyond that will serve as a global model for land use and conservation. The Adirondack Park in the year 2020 must continue to offer vast areas of undisturbed open space, a sanctuary for native plant and animal species, and a natural haven for human beings in need of spiritual and physical refreshment.



*The Adirondack Park is a patchwork of public (black) and private lands.*

# The Adirondack Forest Preserve

*The lands of the state, now owned or hereafter acquired, constituting the forest preserve as now fixed by law, shall be forever kept as wild forest lands. They shall not be leased, sold, or exchanged, or be taken by any corporation, public or private, nor shall the timber thereon be sold, removed, or destroyed.*

Article XIV, New York State Constitution

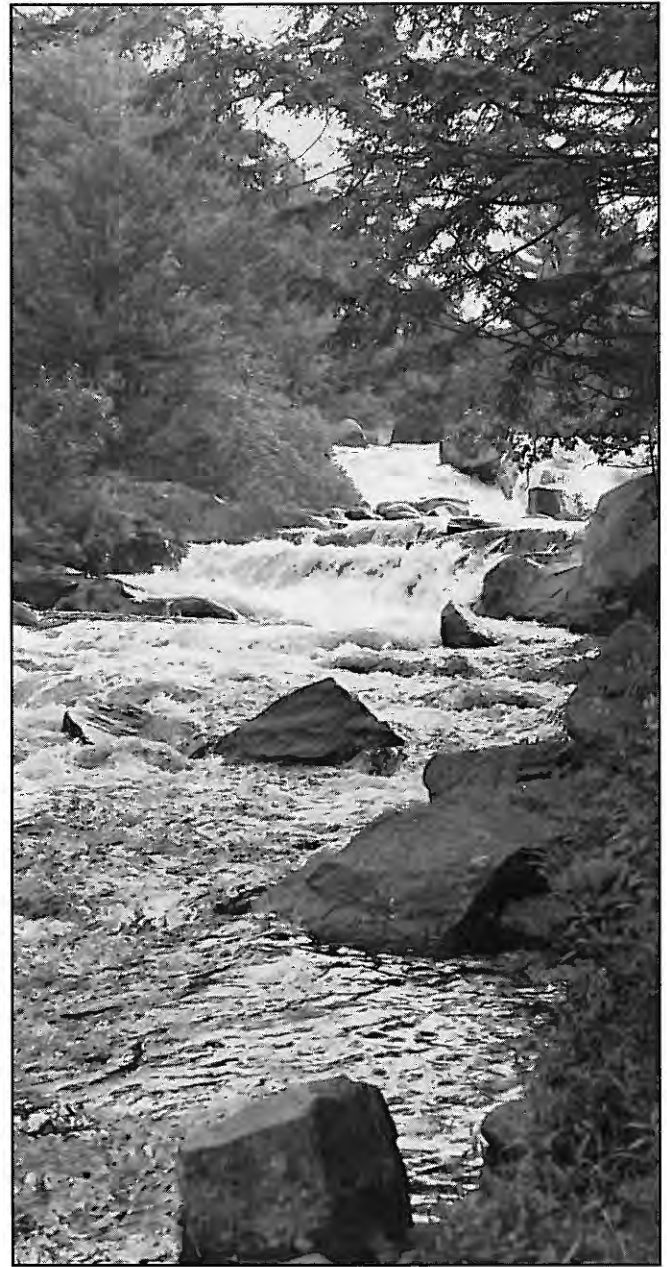
Long before it became fashionable to set aside public parks, reserves and similar sanctuaries for preservation purposes, New York State pioneered in this field by creating the "forever wild" State Forest Preserve.

Established in 1885, the Adirondack Forest Preserve has always provided for a wide range of recreational uses consistent with a wild forest setting. As both technology and leisure time have expanded, however, recreational conflicts have arisen in the Preserve, primarily between motorized and non-motorized users. In the 1950s, conflicts began between jeep users and hikers, both intent on enjoying the same backcountry roads. In the 1960s, tensions developed between cross-country skiers and snowshoers on the one hand, and snowmobilers on the other. Canoeers in search of wilderness tranquility clashed with motorboaters seeking greater speed and convenience. Visitors arriving by floatplane competed with hikers and canoeers for prime campsites on backcountry lakes. The need to preserve the natural serenity became increasingly important to increasing numbers of recreationists, while the demand for motorized recreational use also grew.

Adding to the controversy were state employees who drove their maintenance vehicles on fire truck trails deep into the "forever wild" Preserve, while the public hiked or canoed many miles to these same locations.

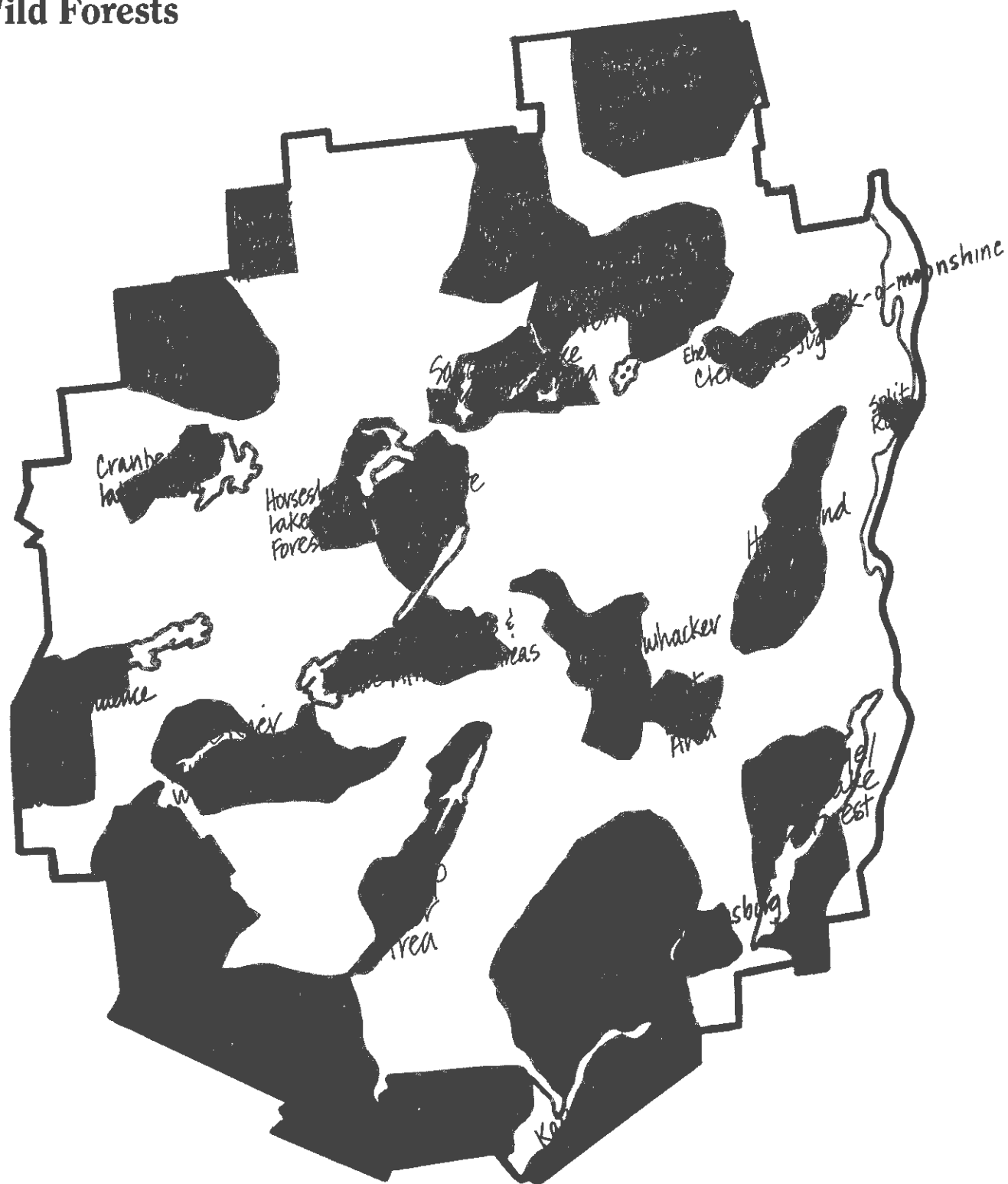
Such conflicts were addressed by a Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources in the late 1950s and early 1960s; by Governor Rockefeller's Temporary Study Commission on the Future of the Adirondacks in the late 1960s; and by the Adirondack Park Agency in its Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan of 1972.

To avoid recreational conflicts and protect the natural qualities of the Forest Preserve, the plan classified approximately half the Preserve as Wild Forest, allowing limited motorized use in these areas on designated routes. The plan also classified approximately half of the Preserve as Wilderness, Primitive or Canoe, where no motorized use would be permitted except for emergencies.



*Shingle Mill Falls in Independence River Wild Forest*

## Areas of Concentration For Adirondack Wild Forests





# Wild Forest

Well over half of the state lands in the Adirondack Park are designated Wild Forests. According to the State Land Master Plan definition, these are areas where:

**The resources permit a somewhat higher degree of human use than in wilderness, primitive or canoe areas, while retaining an essentially wild character. A wild forest area is further defined as an area that frequently lacks the sense of remoteness of wilderness, primitive or canoe areas and that permits a variety of outdoor recreation.**

## **State Land Master Plan Guidelines for Management and Use of Wild Forests include:**

- The primary wild forest management guideline will be to protect the natural wild forest setting and to provide those types of outdoor recreation that will afford public enjoyment without impairing the wild forest atmosphere;

- When public access to and enjoyment of the wild forest areas are inadequate, appropriate measures may be undertaken to provide improved access to encourage public use consistent with the wild forest character;

- All structures and improvements permitted under the guidelines covering wilderness areas will be allowed in wild forest areas. In addition the structures and improvements listed below will be allowed:

- small groupings of primitive tent sites;
- nature and interpretive trails;
- trailheads adjacent to public highways;
- stream improvement as structures for fishery management purposes;
- fishing and waterway access sites adjacent to public highways;
- horse trails; and
- picnic tables;

- The use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment and aircraft will be allowed by the general public as follows, subject to the basic guideline that no new roads or jeep trails will be constructed in wild forest areas, and only on:

- existing public roads;
- open jeep trails now or hereafter designated by the Department of Environmental

Conservation; and

- rivers, lakes and ponds now or hereafter designated by the Department of Environmental Conservation as suitable for such motorized use;
- trails now or hereafter designated for snowmobile use by the Department of Environmental Conservation;

- The Department of Environmental Conservation may restrict the use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment and aircraft by the public where in its judgment the character of the natural resources make such restrictions desirable;

- The educational and informational aspects of certain fire towers should be encouraged and wherever possible these fire towers should be retained where consistent with their need from a fire control and communications standpoint;

- All types of recreational uses considered appropriate for wilderness areas are compatible with wild forest and, in addition, snowmobiling, motorboating and travel by jeep or other motor vehicles on a limited and regulated basis that will not materially increase motorized uses that conformed to the Master Plan at the time of its adoption in 1972 and will not adversely affect the essentially wild character of the land are permitted;

- Certain wild forest areas offer better opportunities for a more extensive horse trail system than in wilderness, primitive or canoe areas and horse trails and associated facilities in these areas should be provided where appropriate;

- Although the nature of most wild forest areas indicate that potential recreational overuse will not be as serious as in wilderness, primitive and canoe areas, care must nonetheless be taken to avoid overuse, and the basic wilderness guidelines in this respect apply also to wild forest lands. The relatively greater intensity of use allowed by the wild forest guidelines should not be interpreted as permitting or encouraging unlimited or unrestrained use of wild forest areas.

*See the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan, January 1985, for the complete Guidelines for Management and Use of Wild Forests.*

# Definitions

Some terms used in the descriptions of and recommendations for Wild Forest areas in this report are defined as follows:

**Trail:** A route marked and maintained by DEC or by other groups with state sanction.

**Marked Footpath:** A marked route without extensive maintenance and construction such as bridges. By simply marking them, the State can open to a wider public many miles of wilderness-type paths, now used by a few knowledgeable sportsmen. (The public should be forewarned not to expect the grooming that regular trails receive.)

**Path:** An unmarked route, traditionally used by fishermen and hunters.

**Primitive Campground:** A small (less than a dozen) group of campsites, usually associated with a lake, pond, or stream, always near access roads. Camping is limited to designated sites that have been carefully chosen to protect the natural resources; sites must be sufficiently far from water and separate from their neighbors. Individual sites will usually have pit privies and fire rings. The greatest benefit of such designation will be to ensure that the numerous ad hoc camping spots, which have appeared in the past two decades, are sited in a way that clearly protects the resource.

**Hardened Trail:** A few, short nature trails should be made as smooth and level as possible for ease of walking and to provide handicapped access. In some instances, it may be desirable to treat surfaces with wood chips or such mineral particles as wollastonite tailings. Boardwalks may be built in wet areas. Hardening does not mean paving.

**Snowmobile Trails:** This study occasionally recommends some new snowmobile trails within the limits of the mileage specified in the State Land Master Plan. These recommendations recognize that certain trails with low or moderate use have already or will become cross-country ski routes.

## Maps

The maps in this report show areas that are now Wild Forest or should be considered for additions to the Wild Forest System of the Adirondack Park. Some traditional Wild Forests areas are missing because the Adirondack Council has proposed that they be reclassified as Wilderness.

These Wild Forests are not areas around which a boundary can be drawn and where all land within the boundary should be acquired by the State. Rather, these are areas of concentration where state land, private land, future acquisitions, and future easements are intermixed.

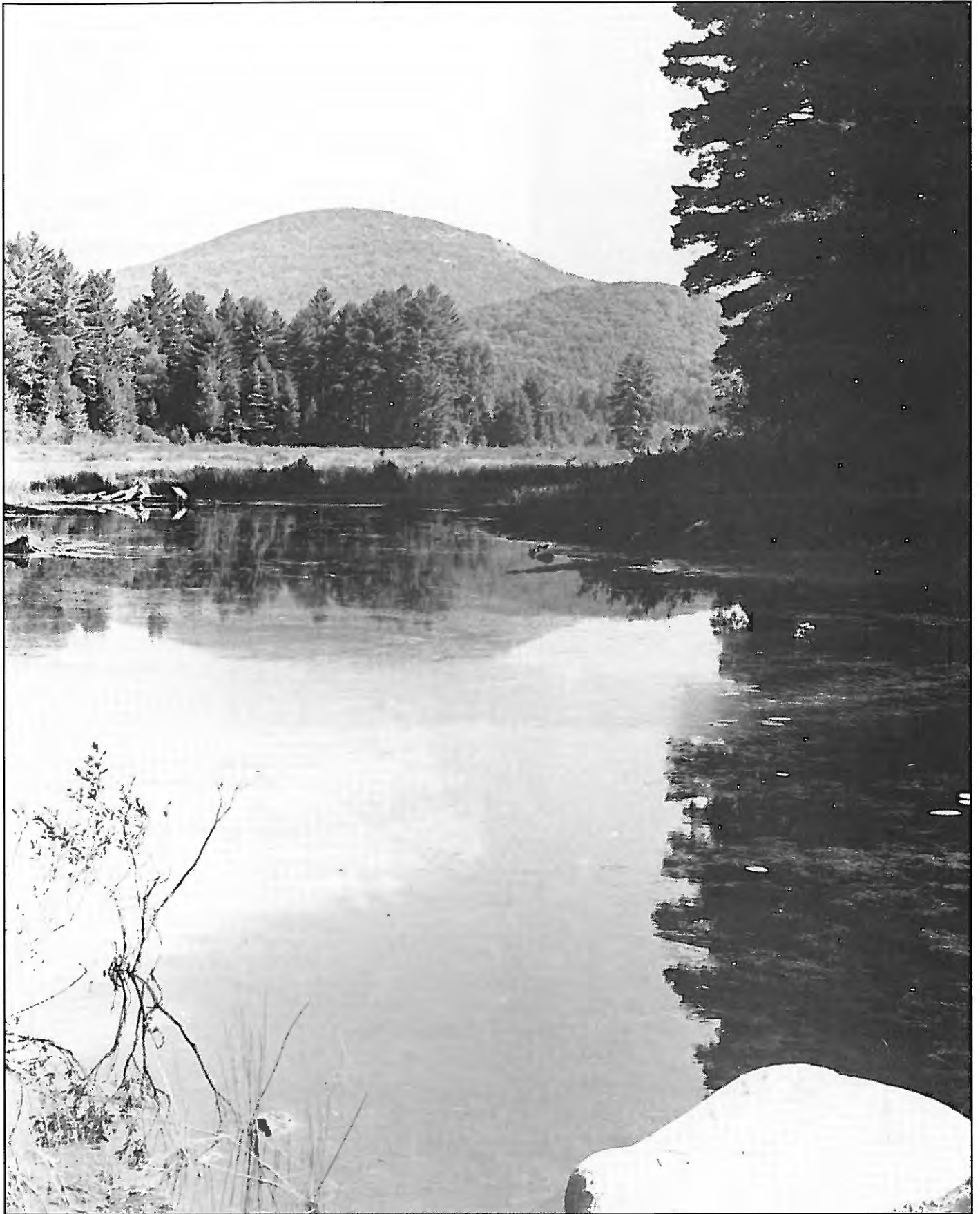
Bounding roads are shown to give a rough idea of the areas of concentration, major flowages are indicated, and some of the penetrating roads that give access to the Wild Forests are sketched. Private lands are white, existing Forest Preserve is shown in light grey, and proposed acquisitions are shown with slashed lines. A few recommended easements are indicated with the same lines as acquisitions, but most areas that lend themselves to access easements with hunting rights are not shown.

In a few instances, trail networks are sketched in dotted lines to indicate the direction that new recreational development might take.

## Acreage

This report gives only estimates for the acreage of proposed acquisitions. Because no accurate figures exist for the size of individual Wild Forests as identified in this report, estimates of the amount of state land in these units is generally omitted from the report.

# The Eastern Adirondacks



*Mt. Blue and Madison Creek Flow in Wilcox Lake Wild Forest*

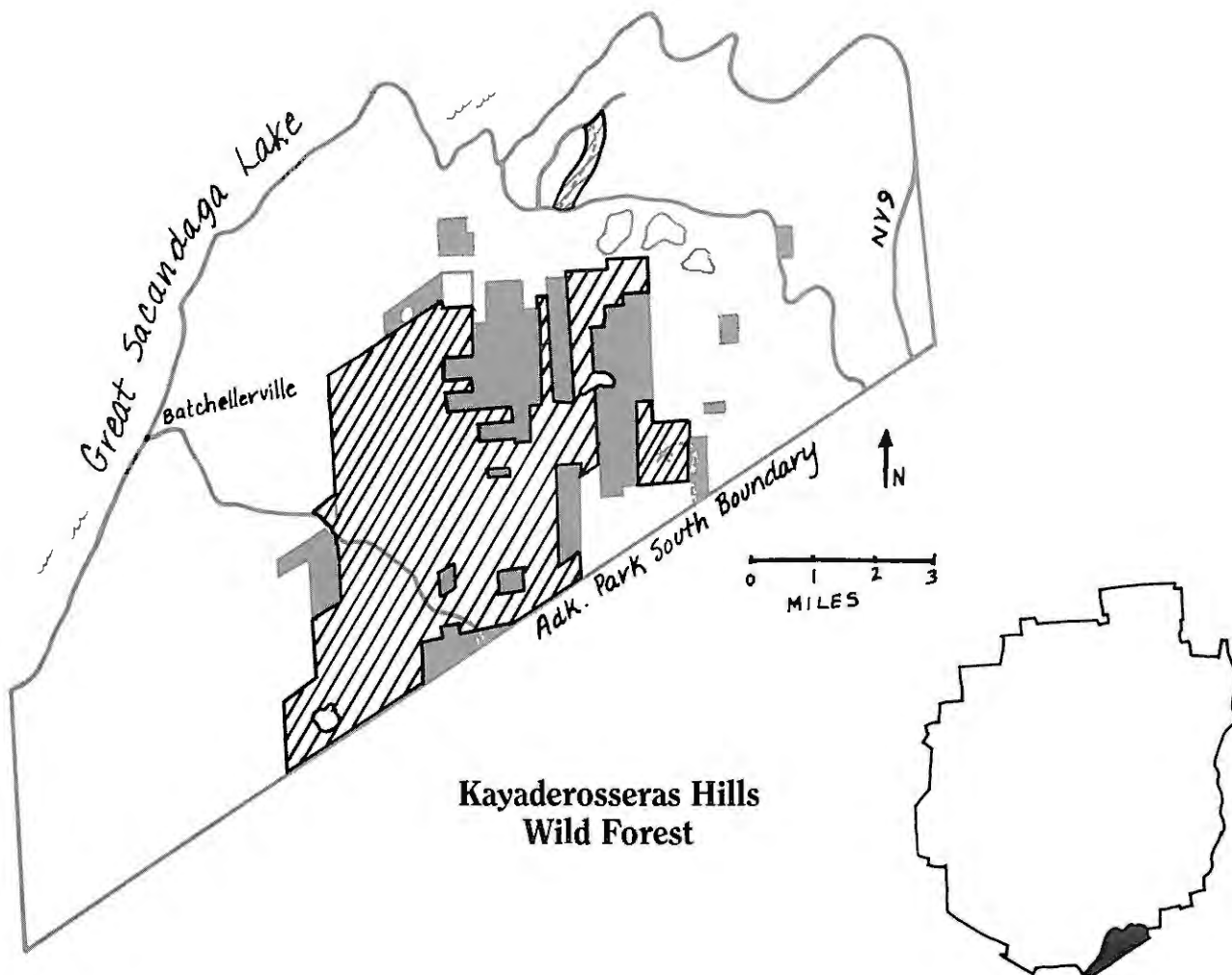


## Kayaderosseras Hills Wild Forest

Between the southern shores of the Great Sacandaga Lake and the park's southern boundary is a high, wet plateau, known as Thousand Acre Swamp, nestled in the Kayaderosseras Hills. It is the realm of hunters and fishermen.

**Acquisition by fee or easement of 11,880 acres would:**

- Consolidate, and provide access to, several rectangles of state land;
- Complete state ownership of several small bodies of water;
- Provide access to the informal trail that winds across Shippee's Ledge with its marvelous views to the north and west across the Great Sacandaga Lake and its opportunities to view soaring eagles and hawks.





## Wilcox Lake Wild Forest

Few areas in the park have the potential for hiking, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing as does the Wilcox Lake Wild Forest. Larger than most Wilderness areas, close to the capital district, and containing an exceptional array of forest types and recreational opportunities, this could be a premier recreation area.

Spectacular mountains, only two with trails, line the eastern boundary of the Wild Forest. All these fire-scarred open peaks are small, but they rise over 2,000 feet above the Hudson Valley, offering distant views to the High Peaks, Vermont, and the Sacandaga Valley.

Penetrating roads kept the Wilcox Lake area from Wilderness status. The State should now capitalize on these roads to create the park's most important and accessible recreation area by connecting the long flat trails to a network that joins the open peaks. Needed are a limited amount of public land acquisition, new trailhead and parking facilities, construction of three lean-tos, trails to the open peaks with connecting trails between, and a bit of publicity.

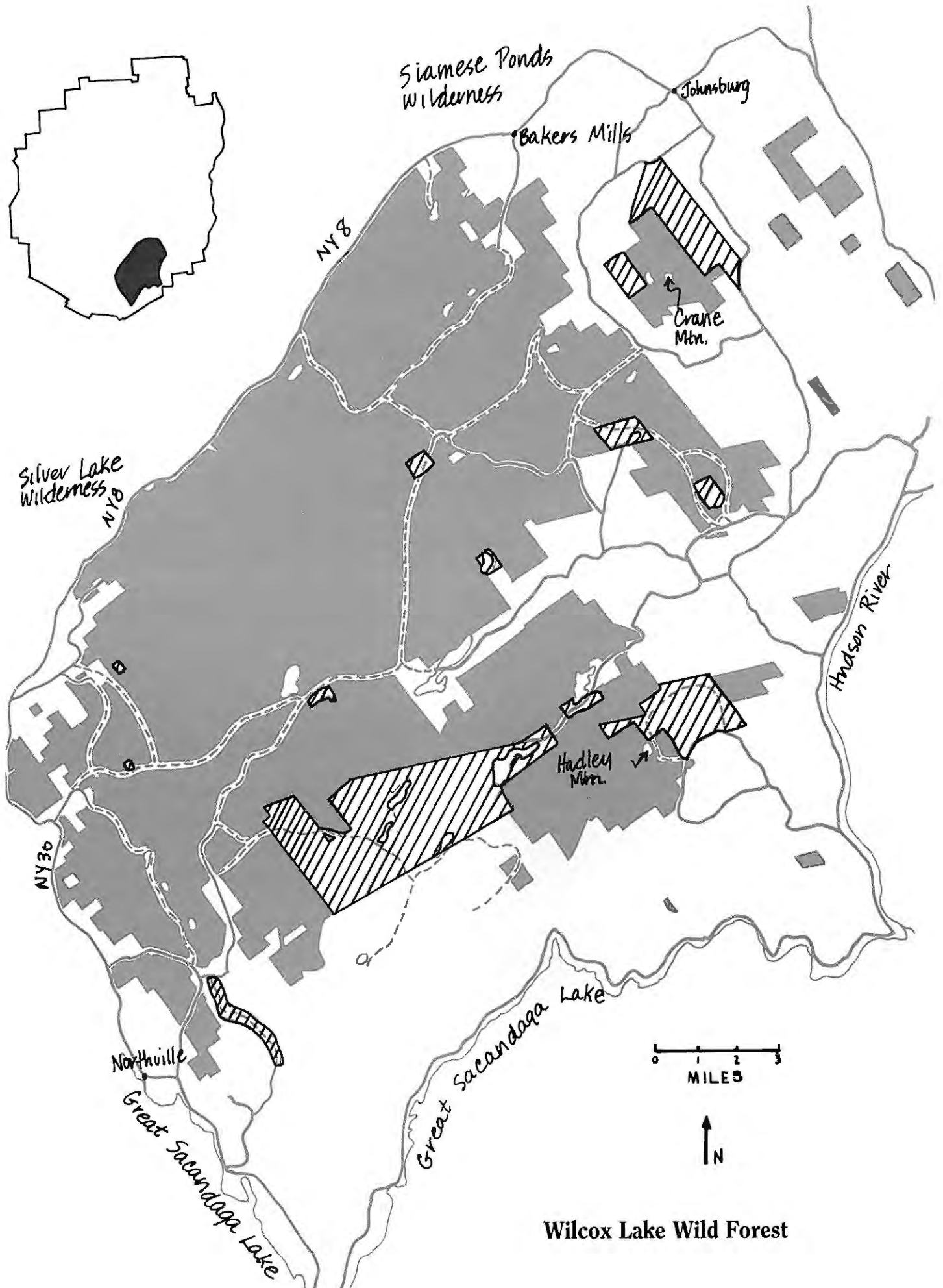


*Tenant Creek Falls in Wilcox Lake Wild Forest*

Some 60 miles of hiking and snowmobiling trails along old roads trace the area's historical development. An additional 30 miles of trails will add loops to the network for cross-country skiers and to the open peaks for hikers. Trails to Tenant Creek's three waterfalls and along Stony Creek invite backpackers and long-distance skiers. Few other Wild Forest areas are large enough for such long trails as the 25-mile route connecting the hamlet of Hope Falls with the Oregon trailhead.

### **Completion of the trail systems and acquisition of 13,280 acres of Forest Preserve in a dozen parcels would:**

- Provide trails for day hikes to Rand and Moose mountains on the west side of the Wild Forest and Huckleberry, Baldhead and Moose, Roundtop, and Bearpen mountains and Mount Blue on the east; and provide loop trails between the eastern cluster and the region's other open peaks, Hadley and Crane;
- Allow for the continuation of inholdings at Moosewood Club, Fullers, and Brownell Camp, as long as there is access to trails through these properties and trespass problems along them are controlled; limit development of these inholdings and acquire them as they become available;
- Connect the existing snowmobile trails between the Oregon and Bartman trailheads; add trails between Hope Falls and Northville and between the Stony Creek valley and town roads north of the Great Sacandaga Lake;
- Incorporate the Tenant Creek drainage in the Forest Preserve;
- Improve public access to Garnet Lake, Lens Lake, Mud Pond, Middle Flow, and both Upper and Lower Tenant Creek Falls;
- Permit public access to Wolf Pond caves;
- Establish new trailheads at Crystal Brook, Garnet Lake, Paintbed Brook, and Putnam Farm;
- Create loop trails for cross-country skiing through the Jimmy Creek and Crystal Creek-Paintbed Brook valleys, through the vleys west of Spruce and Cattle mountains, and between the Willis Lake trail and the Stony Creek network;
- Establish nature trails along Wolf Creek, on Moose Mountain, and near Madison Creek Flow, and a canoe-nature trail on Lens Lake and promote their educational possibilities;
- Preserve access by road to Harrisburg Lake, Baldwin Springs, and Brownell Camp;
- Secure easement over the shortest route to Pine Orchard and consider building a nature trail here for handicapped access to the most impressive and accessible stand of old-growth pines in the Adirondacks.

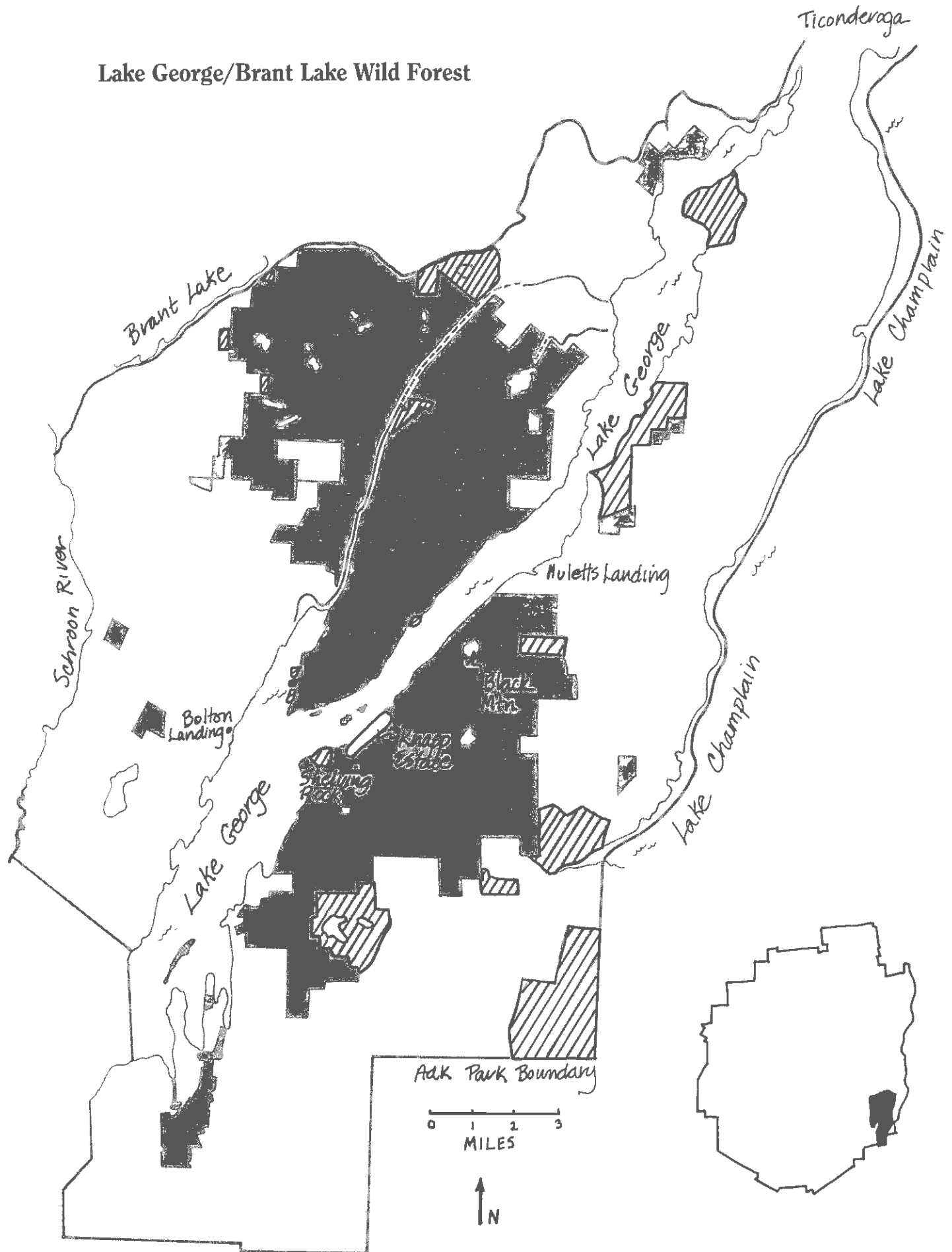


Wilcox Lake Wild Forest



*Shelving Rock Falls in Lake George Wild Forest*

# Lake George/Brant Lake Wild Forest





# Lake George Wild Forest

Lake George Wild Forest is a magnificent land of mountains bordering the region's most beautiful lake. Although much of Lake George's shoreline is private and has been developed for many years, two significant tracts of state land and the state-owned islands will help preserve the shore's beauty for the future. Making such large public purchases along the lakeshore today is difficult, so we applaud the foresight of early preservationists who acquired these tracts for the State.

## Eastern Shore

An extraordinary tract lies along the eastern shore. Its nucleus was the Knapp estate that stretched for four miles north of Shelving Rock. Lovely carriage roads were so well built that today they have mellowed to beautiful and natural hiking trails through a majestic forest that has not been cut for nearly a century and a half. These are smooth trails, easy to walk, appealing to all levels of hikers. They wind through the forests, along streams, beside waterfalls, and out to points overlooking the lake. The level lakeshore trail is one of the most beautiful in the East. The mountain summits and five interior ponds are linked with one of the finest trail networks in the park.

Horse trails circle some of the mountain slopes. Snowmobile trails use many of the carriage roads. Cross-country skiers can also enjoy these trails. This is a multiple use area at its best. However, there are gaps in the tract, some of them along the waterfront.

## Tongue Mountain Range

The Tongue Mountain Range on the west shore of Lake George is almost entirely owned by the State. What a superb recreation area it is! Its trails and overlooks, the marshes along Northwest Bay, the cliffs and ledges, and the unusually rich flora, all attract hikers and nature-lovers. Its mountain chain, with combined elevation gains of over 3,000 feet challenges more avid climbers. The trail network is excellent and well-designed to take in the best views. With the exception of several small parcels, the tract is complete.

## Brant Lake Tract

The Brant Lake Tract, which stretches from Tongue Mountain north to Brant Lake, has enormous possibilities, some of them realized. The recent addition of Jabe Pond to the tract brings the public additional good fishing waters. Lily Pond is a wonderful camping and fishing pond, and trails branch from it to smaller Round, Duck, and Island ponds. The ponds on this eastern side of the park are

less impacted by acid rain than those to the west; they are good fishing ponds and should be managed as such. The network of trails that extends south from Brant Lake to Padanarum Road attracts cross-country skiers, snowmobilers, hikers, and campers, as well as fishermen.

### **Slightly improved parking at trailheads and the acquisition of 8,560 acres would:**

- Add three miles of Lake George shoreline to the Forest Preserve from the Morgan, White, and Bird properties north of Huletts Landing and complete acquisition of shoreline at Pilot Knob and Shelving Rock;
- Protect Anthony's Nose, a spectacular rock massif with great hiking potential;
- Protect the range of sharp conical hills south of Lake Champlain;
- Add Sugarloaf Mountain to the Black Mountain tract;
- Complete acquisition of the Tongue Mountain tract;
- In the Brant Lake tract, add Swede, North, Crosset, and Thurber ponds to the Forest Preserve and incorporate trails through their tracts with existing state trails;
- Improve access and parking for the Brant Lake snowmobile network.

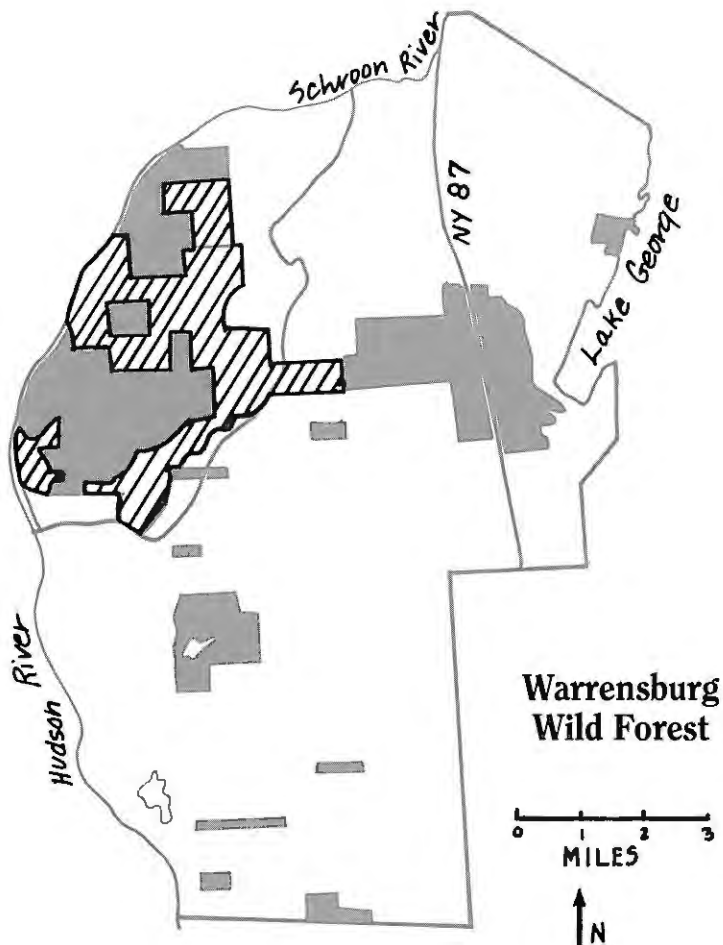


*Buttermilk Pond in Brant Lake Tract, Lake George Wild Forest*



Elythe Robbins

View of High Peaks from Bloody Mountain, Hammond Pond Wild Forest

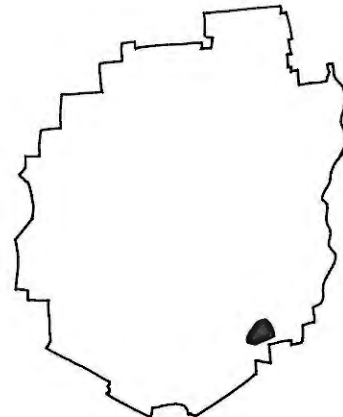


## Warrensburg Wild Forest

Southwest of Warrensburg there are several patches of Wild Forest that can be joined by acquisitions or easements to create a small recreational area that would border the Hudson River. Rock-crested hills would lure hikers, a ski or snowmobile route along the Hudson would attract winter travelers, and a connecting trail west to the Prospect Mountain complex would greatly expand that very accessible area.

### Acquisition of 4,320 acres would:

- Create a new Wild Forest adjacent to the Hudson with numerous recreational opportunities;
- Connect patches of state land with the trails on Prospect Mountain.

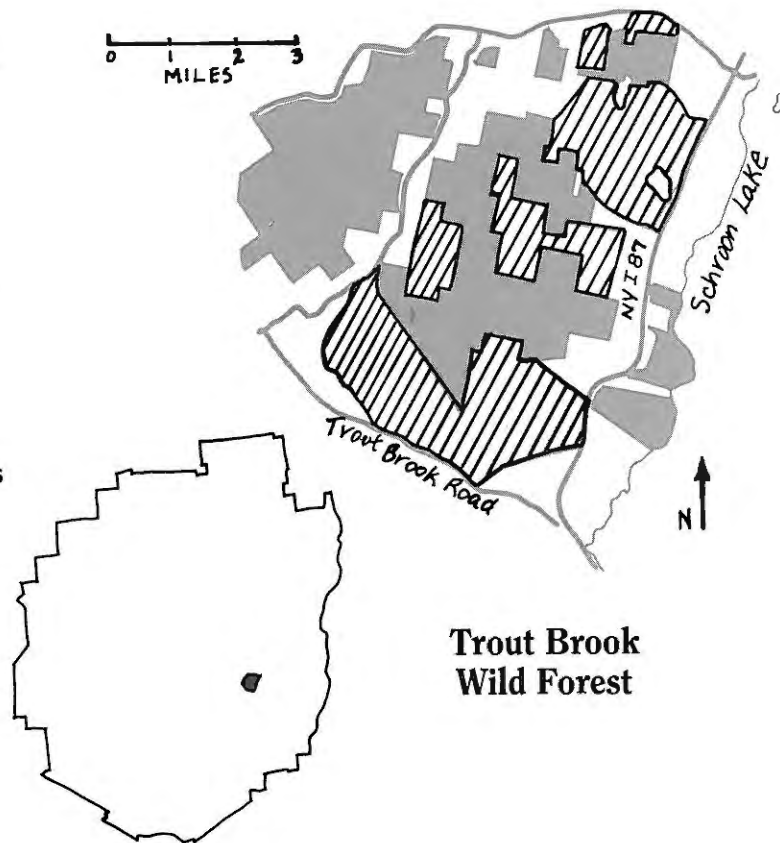


## Trout Brook Wild Forest

Rocky hills line the west side of the Northway west of Schraon Lake and north of Trout Brook. A small snowmobile network winds through those patches, but almost all connections with town roads cross private lands. A Wild Forest could be completed around the existing state land, and bring state land out to a number of access points along town roads. This would provide streams for fishing and hills for climbing, and protect the vista from the Northway. Proximity to the Northway means this area will take some of the recreational pressures off the Pharaoh Lake Wilderness to the east.

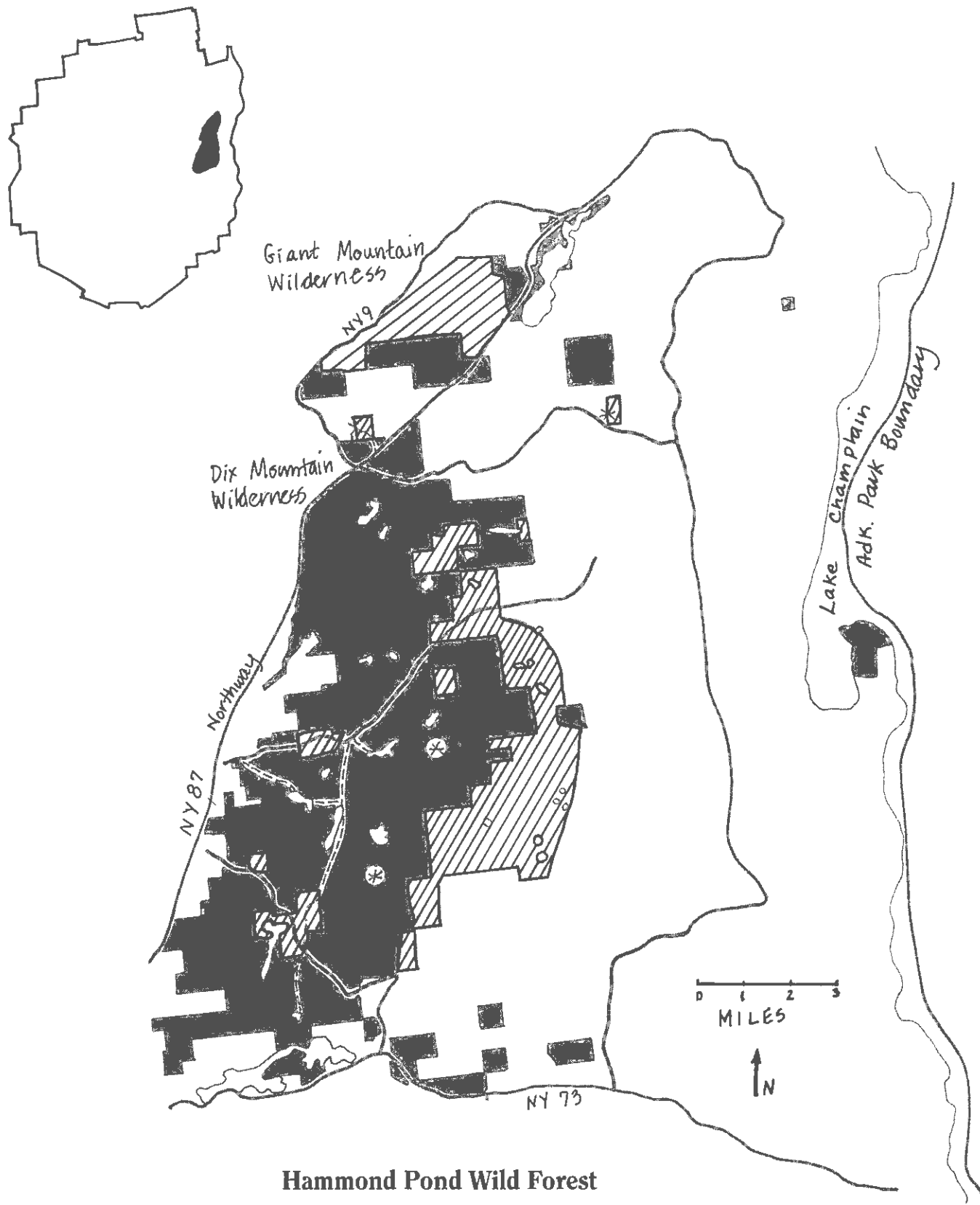
**Acquisition of 7,720 acres and addition of 10 miles of trails would:**

- Assure public access to a snowmobile network;
- Provide public access for fishermen along Alder Brook and parts of Trout Brook;
- Add several small, family-sized hills to climb;
- Limit development on Thurman and Horseshoe ponds by easement and bring them into the Forest Preserve should they ever be offered for sale.



*Twin Ponds in Hammond Pond Wild Forest*

Dennis Conroy





## Hammond Pond Wild Forest

Hammond Pond Wild Forest, the northern counterpart to the nearby Pharaoh Lake Wilderness Area, could become a premier recreation area close to the Northway. It has the same steep slopes, many of them fire-scarred, with summits open to sweeping vistas. A number of small ponds lie tucked in deep mountain valleys. Of these, Brother and Shingletree have handsome boggy shores. A few long level routes, such as the one proposed by the area's unit management plan for Berryhill Flow and Brook, are already inviting to hikers and cross-country skiers. Beautiful pine forests crown glacial ridges. But there the similarity ends between the Pharaoh Lake and Hammond Pond areas.

Two major roads traverse the Hammond Pond Wild Forest. Except in the few places blocked by private lands, the area is eminently accessible. While Pharaoh Lake Wilderness has dozens of miles of trails, Hammond Pond has but 9.5 miles of trails and only one trail leading to a mountain. Even without acquisitions, the area could be attractive for all forms of outdoor recreation. With a few acquisitions, and some intelligent publicity, this Wild Forest could take recreational pressure off the heavily used Wilderness to its south.

As in most Wild Forest areas, Hammond Pond has a number of unmarked paths, known mostly to local people. Designating their trailheads and occasionally marking their routes would make them accessible to a larger public.

Hammond Pond Wild Forest has the potential to attract fishermen, families enjoying short hikes to quiet ponds, cross-country skiers as well as snowmobilers, and long-distance hikers.

This is one of only three Wild Forests for which unit management plans have been prepared. This plan accomplishes part but not all of what is needed in the area. It identifies several tracts for acquisition, all included below; it suggests several new trails, but does not go far enough; and it recommends marking certain routes, some of which were abandoned snowmobile trails and old roads. Little new construction is needed to finish the network of trails suggested below. It is important, however, that trails should be marked to some of the mountains that offer wonderful views.

Among the attractions of the Pharaoh Lake Wilderness are the long chains of trails connecting myriad lakes and ponds and routes to mountain tops. With the recommended acquisitions, these same popular attributes could be duplicated in the Hammond Pond Wild Forest.

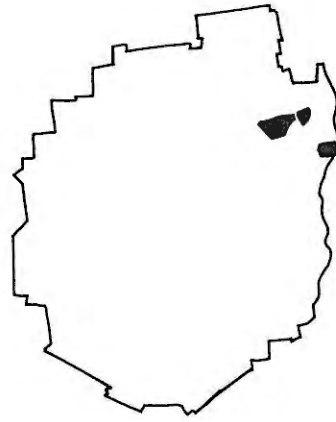
One reason this Wild Forest offers such varied recreational opportunities is that International Paper Company grants public access to its Nichols Pond Tract. In return, the State stocks ponds on the tract. This arrangement should not be altered unless development or closure of public access is threatened — in which case a recommendation to purchase public access rights via a conservation easement should be added to those listed below.

### **Marking existing footpaths, adding a few trails, and acquiring 11,440 acres would:**

- Improve access to existing state land;
- Attract climbers to the cliff-top heights by acquiring access to Makomis, improving access to Skiff, Peaked, and Belfry mountains, and adding trails to one or more other summits — Bald Pate, Owl Pate, Sweet Fern Hill, and Hail and Bloody mountains;
- Protect Sliding Rock Falls and Mountain;
- Add the summits of Gilligan and Negro Hill to the Forest Preserve;
- Acquire tracts near Johnson and Proctor ponds, Berryhill Stream, and Crowfoot Pond;
- Mark existing footpaths to half-a-dozen interior ponds and add trails to the acquired ponds to complete a network that reaches all the ponds and features a long north-south trail, with several intertwining loops, linking the Paradox Lake Campground on the south to the Sharp Bridge Campground on the north;
- Acquire the range of hills on the eastern slopes of the Wild Forest as well as the two chains of small ponds along the upper Paradox and Mill Creek valleys, with adequate access from the east;
- Give public access to a number of small fishing ponds.

## Five Small Wild Forests

A common thread uniting these five proposed Wild Forests is their accessibility — all are close to the Northway or NY 9 and 9N. They are near centers such as Wilmington, Jay, and Upper and North Jay where local economies are dependent on recreation. And each unit is replete with small mountains, cliffs, and open summits. With the exception of Pok-o-moonshine, however, there are no public hiking trails to any of these peaks from Lake Champlain west to Whiteface. Here is an ideal opportunity to integrate Wild Forest nuclei with surrounding timber lands to create real recreation areas!



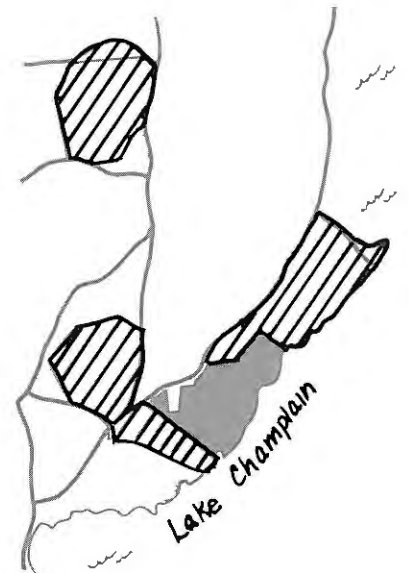
### Split Rock Wild Forest

Split Rock Wild Forest demonstrates how enlarging a piece of state land can provide many forms of recreation. The State has owned Barn Rock and its beautiful bay to the south for years, but it was accessible only from Lake Champlain or over private land. When the State acquired part of Split Rock Mountain, the public gained access to Barn Rock via a system of old roads that became trails used by skiers and hikers. Now points along the Champlain Palisades are open to hikers, who can explore an abandoned granite mine. To make this an important recreation area, the State needs to continue to acquire nearby land.

**Acquiring 4,880 acres and adding a few trails would:**

- Preserve and open all of the Lake Champlain shoreline between Rock Harbor and Split Rock lighthouse;
- Expand the Wild Forest northwest to the Boquet Mountains, affording public access to the views from South Boquet Mountain;
- Protect historically-significant Coon Mountain with its floating bogs.

### Split Rock Wild Forest

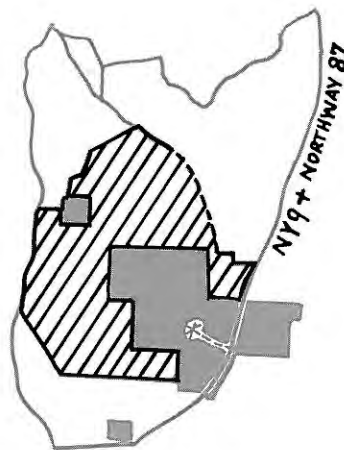


### Pok-o-moonshine Wild Forest

Pok-o-moonshine is a climbers' mountain. The rock face that challenges technical climbers is state-owned. A campground is sheltered beneath the cliffs near the highway. A state trail leads to the summit of Pok-o-moonshine, which sports a fire tower and wonderful views of Lake Champlain and the Green Mountains. It is a popular spot — yet Pok-o-moonshine is just one of a cluster of mountains with exposed rock ledges, the nucleus of what could be a splendid hiking and climbing area, easily accessible from the Northway and NY 9.

**Acquiring 3,660 acres to the north and west would:**

- Incorporate into the Wild Forest the summit of Carl Mountain with its inviting rock ledges;



### Pok-o-moonshine Wild Forest

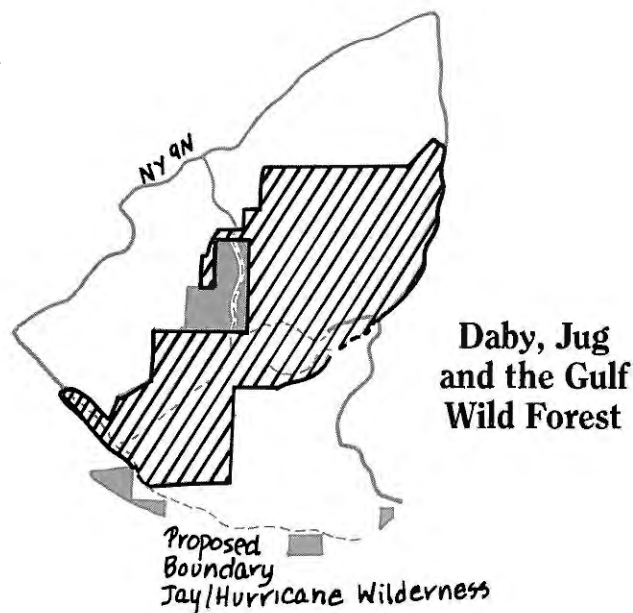
- Provide access to Old Rang and Rocky mountains, both with south-facing cliffs;
- Add the summit range from Deerfield and Notch to Baldface mountains.

## Daby, Jug, and the Gulf Wild Forest

Daby and Jug mountains are similarly the nucleus of a Wild Forest that could attract hikers and cross-country skiers as well as snowmobilers and hunters. Old roads extend south from Black Mountain Road to the foot of those peaks. Existing logging roads would provide the basic network of trails through the valleys.

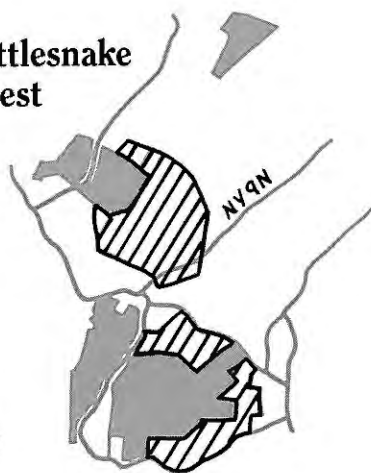
### Acquisition of 7,760 acres and marking as trails some of the network of logging roads would:

- Provide link trails with the northern border of the Hurricane-Jay Wilderness Area;
- Give access to the summits of Daby and Jug mountains;
- Preserve and allow the public to enjoy the Gulf, the steep chasm where Bald and Long Tom mountains enclose Durgan Brook.



## Ebenezer & Rattlesnake Wild Forest

## Clements Wild Forest



## Ebenezer and Rattlesnake Mountain Wild Forest

These two small peaks west of Jay are already enjoyed by bushwhackers who must obtain permission to cross the private lands along NY 9N to the east. These are superb climbing mountains with open peaks and distant views.

State ownership of the summits would create a highly desirable patch of recreational Wild Forest. An access easement would permit the State to construct a family hiking trail that would traverse both peaks. A varied tree cover ranges from lowland ironwood, basswood, white oak, white ash, and dogwood, through stands of maples to summit stands of jack pine, here near its southern limits. The array of wild flowers is amazing.

Views across the cliffs of Ebenezer enhance the climb that follows a deep draw to the summit. From both mountains you can see Whiteface, the Sentinels, and the Jay Range, just the right length for a family day-outing — and it's all within two miles of a major road!

### Acquisition of 1,360 acres and the marking of one trail would:

- Bring the summits of both mountains into the public domain and provide easy public access to them.

## Clements Mountain Wild Forest

North of the Jay Range, state land around Clements Mountain offers the nucleus for another important segment of Wild Forest. Here there is public access from the north along Straight Road. The State should extend the parcel south to Glen Road and to 9N. Recent acquisitions surrounding Clements Pond open the possibilities for fishing as well as hiking. The principal mountain in this buffer to the Jay Range, Clements offers a series of five vantages from which to view that range.

### Acquisition of 880 acres and the marking of one trail would:

- Bring the borders of this patch of state land to public roads on all three sides;
- Create a wonderful north-south hiking trail that encompasses all the vantages on Clements Mountain.

# The South-Central Adirondacks



*The Powley-Piseco Road in Ferris Lake Wild Forest is typical of the roads that penetrate Wild Forests to give the public easy access to those areas of the Forest Preserve.*



# The NY 30 Corridor

## Shaker Mountain Wild Forest

Shaker Mountain Wild Forest buffers the Silver Lake Wilderness on the southern boundary of the park north of Johnstown and Gloversville. The largest segment lies north of the Benson Road, Fulton County Routes 112 and 125. In spite of its proximity to the resort lakes of Caroga and Canada, the natural integrity of the northwest portion is remarkably intact, with few inholdings and generally good public access.

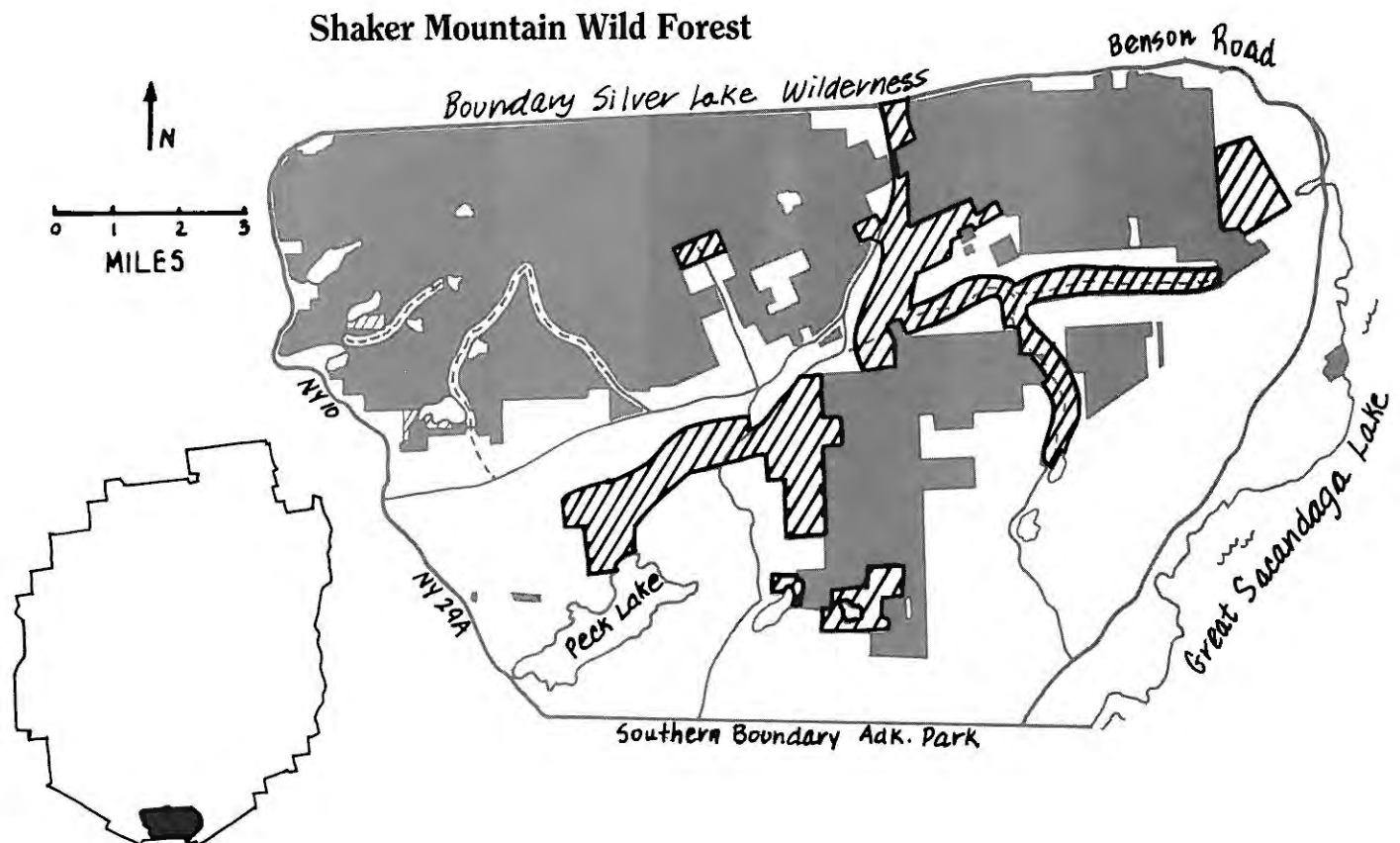
Hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowmobile trails traverse old roads to the most desirable destinations: Stewart and Indian lakes, Holmes Lake, Irving Pond, and Kane Mountain.

Several parcels within the western portion are prime acquisition targets; a number of parcels to the east should also be considered because of the way they will improve access. Otherwise the mix of public and private lands, which supports deer hunting and the local economy, should be maintained.

**Acquisition of 7,100 acres in 16 different parcels plus the continued maintenance of Fulton County's snowmobile trail network would:**

- Complete state ownership of two very attractive bodies of water, Irving Pond and Otter Lake;

- Complete a locally-promoted ski trail;
- Add a forest tract and stream at the end of Pinnacle Road;
- Improve access to Chase Lake;
- Add fishing and canoeing access to the flooded portion of Hatch Brook;
- Protect and give improved public access to all of Stony Creek;
- Provide access to state land from the end of Lake Edward Road;
- Acquire and protect tracts laced by old roads that radiate from Warner Hill Road;
- Limit development on Woodworth Lake by easement and acquire the Boy Scout property should it be offered for sale;
- Provide access to a lovely cliff top in the Mayfield Hills, overlooking much of the Sacandaga Reservoir;
- Protect the snowmobile network north of Jackson Summit;
- Provide access through Finch-Pruyn lands to an isolated block of state land. (As an alternative, the State could swap that holding for desirable lands along the Hudson River Gorge, while protecting by easement the portion of the county snowmobile network that traverses Finch-Pruyn lands.)





*Boyer Lake in western Ferris Lake Wild Forest*

## Ferris Lake Wild Forest

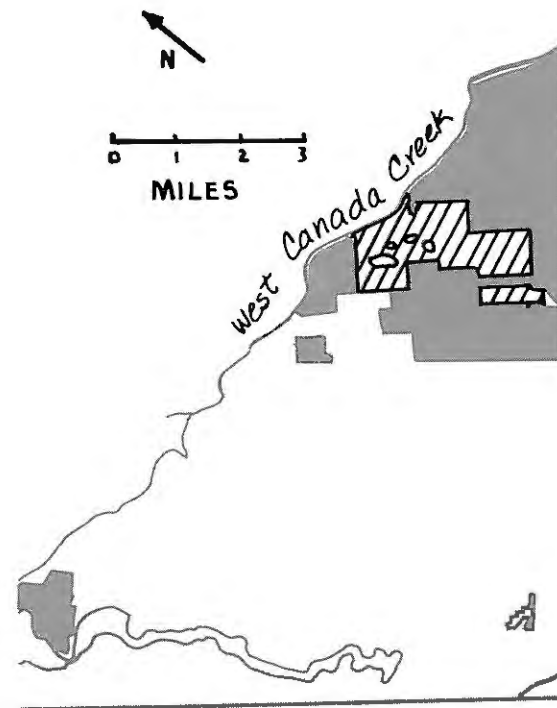
At the southern edge of the Adirondack Park, the Ferris Lake Wild Forest is interwoven with private lands. Its proximity to centers of population, myriad lakes, and a dense network of old logging roads (ideal for cross-country ski and snowmobile routes) make the area attractive for varied recreation.

Although one major seasonal road traverses the area (the Powley-Piseco Road) and several dirt roads pierce it, Ferris Lake Wild Forest contains several contiguous blocks of Forest Preserve that are larger than all but a few of the designated Wilderness areas.

The northeastern part of the Wild Forest already has a superb network of old roads currently maintained as trails. Most are marked as snowmobile trails, but snowmobile use of the interior is waning while cross-country skiing has increased.

Several privately-owned lakes lie within the Wild Forest. Two of these lakes should be pursued immediately for acquisition. For the others, easements to limit development should be obtained. If they ever become available, the State should acquire these lakes, because they present outstanding opportunities for dispersed waterfront campsites. Jerseyfield Lake with its adjacent private preserve and cluster of small ponds could be as attractive to campers as the Pharaoh Lake area.

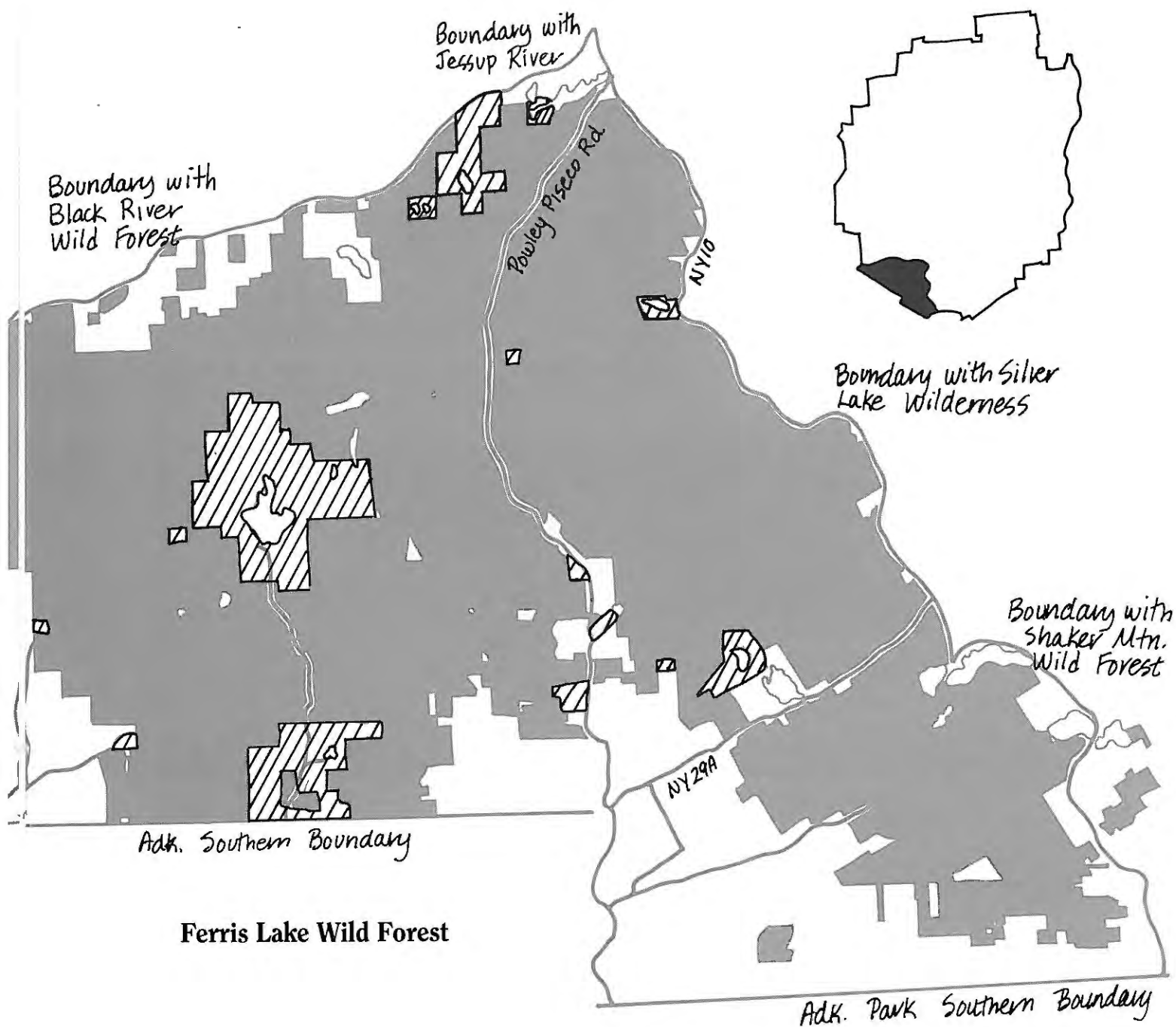
Marking the many sportsmen's paths to distant ponds, streams, and waterfalls, adapting the snowmobile network for four-season use, designating campsites along the Powley-Piseco Road, and improving trailheads and public access are among the management needs in this region.

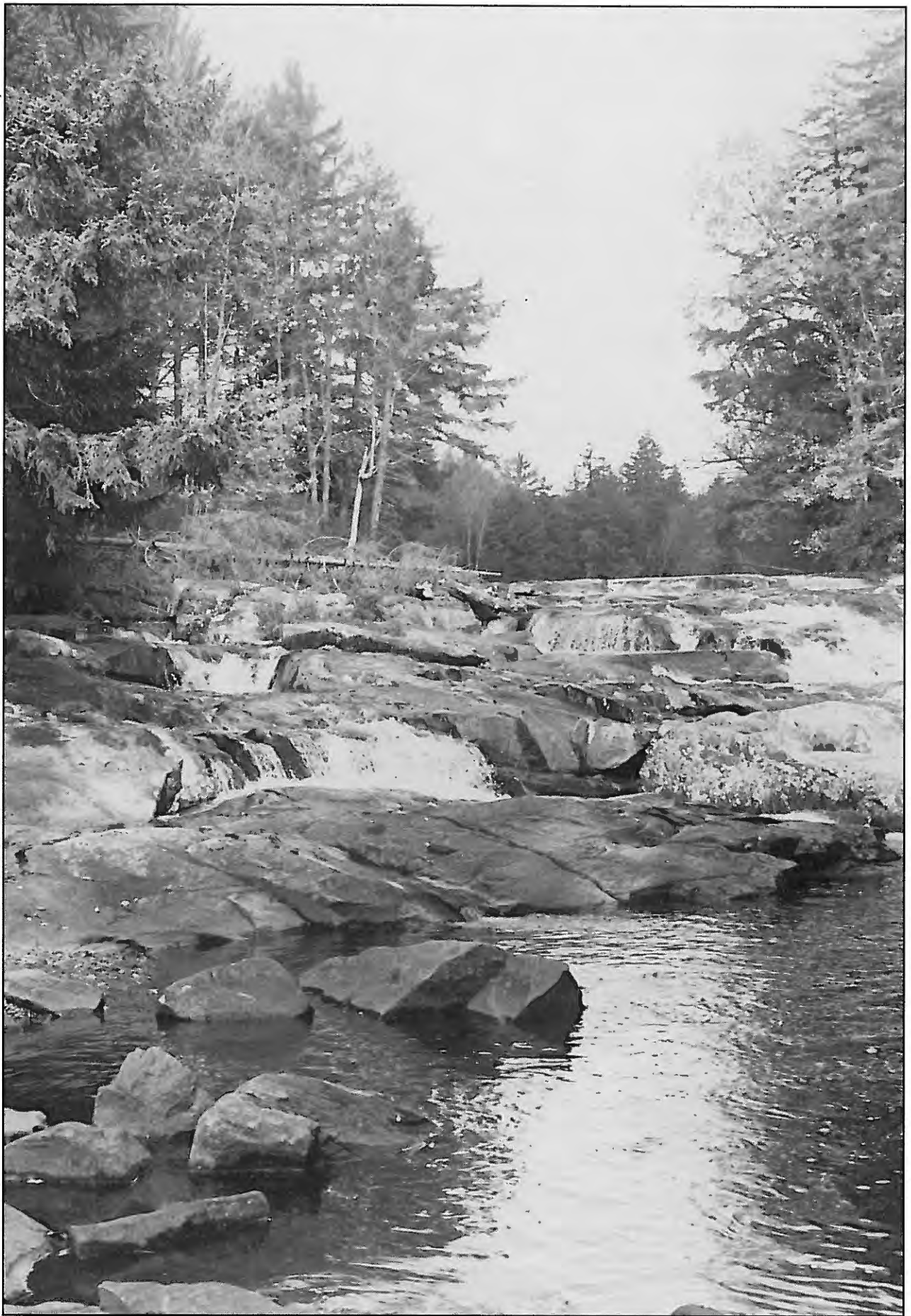


**A combination of better management for recreation and the eventual acquisition of 7,480 acres of new land (thereby doubling the area's use for recreation) will make the Ferris Lake area an outstanding example of the Wild Forest concept. These steps would:**

- Protect from development, and make available to the public, many miles of waterfront on Ayres, Ferris, Sheriff, Blue, Indigo, and Jerseyfield lakes, on Kennels Pond and Klondike Reservoir;
- Acquire a picnic site at the waterfalls on West Canada Creek and protect the gorge below the falls;
- Improve access to House Pond, Goldmine Stream waterfalls, the flume on East Canada Creek, and Knapp Reservoir;

- Provide public fishing access to Fourmile Creek, particularly its headwaters, and to its tributary, Twomile Creek;
- Ensure that campsites along the Powley-Piseco Road are properly sited with respect to water and are concealed from the road;
- Provide connectors to the extraordinary snowmobile network that follows the abandoned railroad grade west and north of Klondike Reservoir and add connecting trails for sportsmen and hikers to Kettle Beaver and Trammel Creek;
- Improve access to and management of snowmobile trails from Bull Hill to French Creek and to the Jerseyfield Road;
- Improve access for fishing, hunting, and camping throughout the Wild Forest.





*Waterfalls on the East Canada Creek in Ferris Lake Wild Forest*

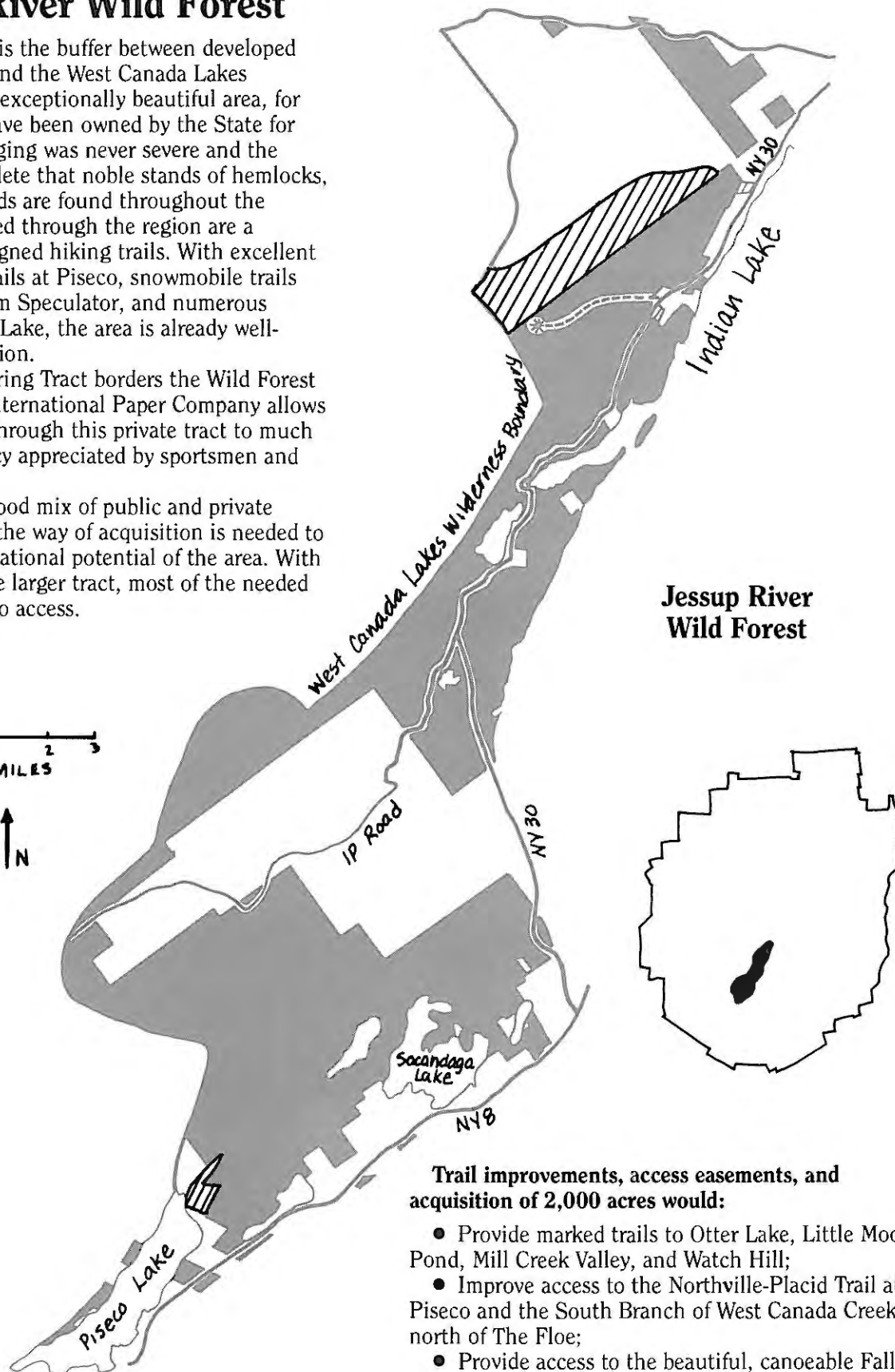
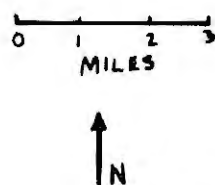


# Jessup River Wild Forest

This Wild Forest is the buffer between developed areas along NY 30 and the West Canada Lakes Wilderness. It is an exceptionally beautiful area, for some of its tracts have been owned by the State for over 150 years. Logging was never severe and the recovery is so complete that noble stands of hemlocks, pines, and hardwoods are found throughout the region. Also scattered through the region are a number of well-designed hiking trails. With excellent cross-country ski trails at Piseco, snowmobile trails spreading north from Speculator, and numerous campsites at Lewey Lake, the area is already well-managed for recreation.

The Perkins Clearing Tract borders the Wild Forest to the northwest. International Paper Company allows easy public access through this private tract to much state land — a policy appreciated by sportsmen and hikers alike.

Because of this good mix of public and private lands, very little in the way of acquisition is needed to realize the full recreational potential of the area. With the exception of one larger tract, most of the needed acquisitions relate to access.



**Jessup River  
Wild Forest**

## Trail improvements, access easements, and acquisition of 2,000 acres would:

- Provide marked trails to Otter Lake, Little Moose Pond, Mill Creek Valley, and Watch Hill;
- Improve access to the Northville-Placid Trail at Piseco and the South Branch of West Canada Creek north of The Floe;
- Provide access to the beautiful, canoeable Fall Stream;
- Maintain tower observation access for the public on Snowy and Pillsbury mountains;
- Provide public access to the Squaw Brook Valley and Porter Mountain.

## Sargent Ponds Wild Forest

Fishing ponds characterize this Wild Forest, which can be reached from Forked Lake Campground or Blue Mountain Lake. Float planes take fishermen and hunters to two small ponds in its interior. Good trails lead to those ponds and to the shores of Raquette Lake on its western boundary. The Marion River connects Raquette and Blue Mountain lakes along the southern boundary. On the eastern edge, private lands encompass two ponds and a key portion of a third. To the west lie Raquette and Forked lakes and the Raquette River — components of the most popular Adirondack Canoe Route.

### **Acquisition of 2,120 acres along NY 30 would:**

- Protect more of South Pond;
- Add tracts surrounding Mud and Minnow ponds;
- Improve parking for and access to the popular Castle Rock trail and make public the trail on the south side of the mountain.

## Blue Mountain Wild Forest

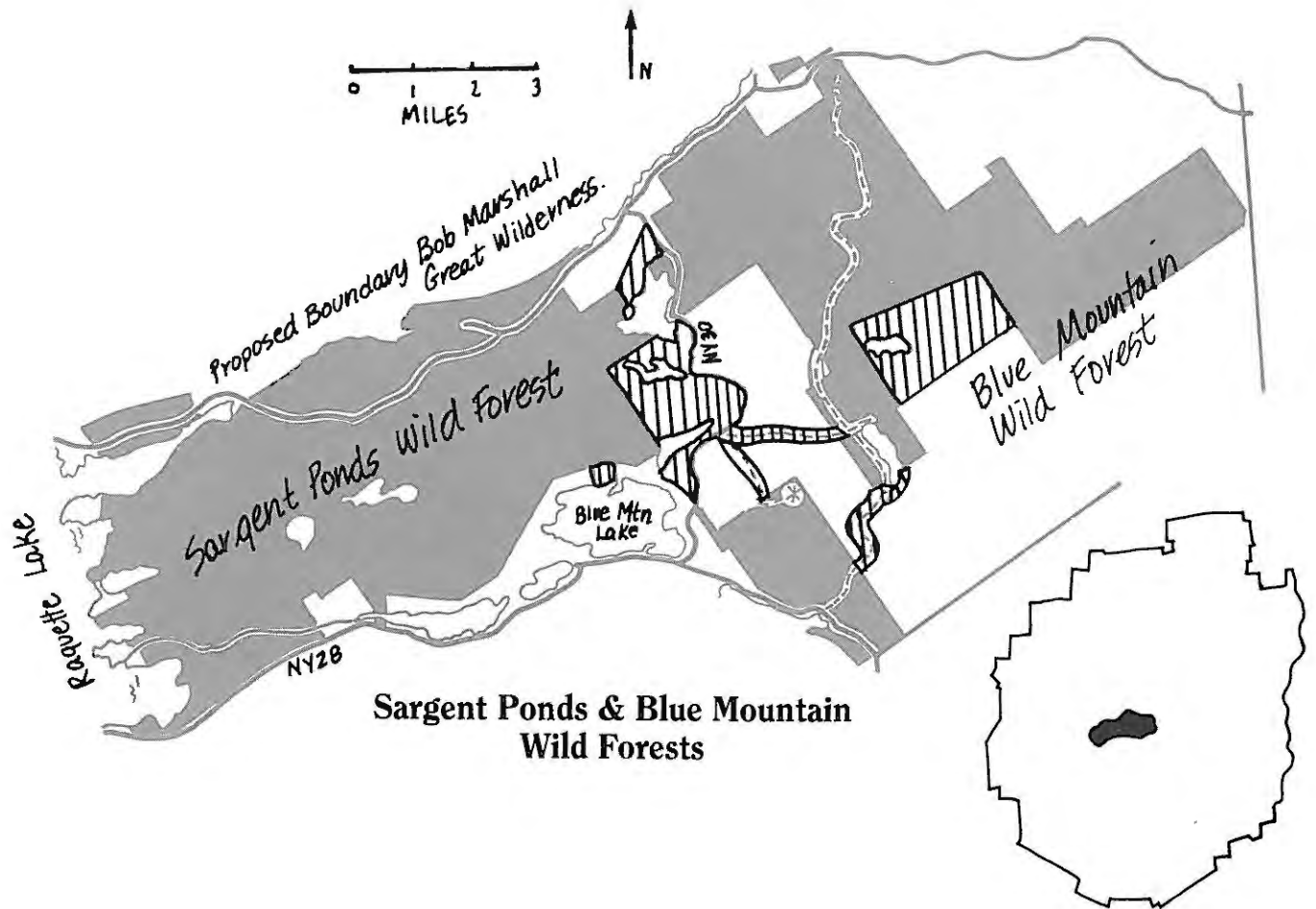
Proximity to NY 30 makes this Wild Forest among the most popular in the park. It is dominated by its namesake mountain and characterized by handsome lakes, which are framed by cliff-faced slopes. But private lands fragment the Wild Forest, posing possible access problems. Much of the interior is owned by a paper company and should continue to produce both sawlogs and timber. Access easements could permit public hunting on these tracts.

### **Easements to protect existing trails and acquisition of two tracts totaling 2,300 acres would:**

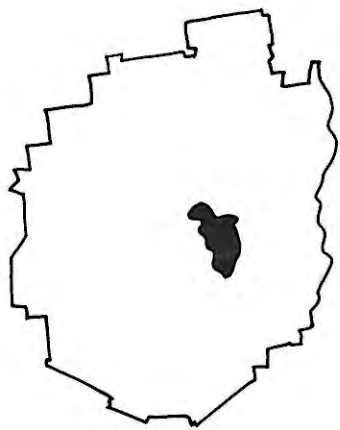
- Protect the Northville-Placid, Blue Mountain, and Tirrell Pond trails;
- Complete state ownership of Tirrell Pond;
- Give the public access to Salmon Pond.



*View of Blue Mountain Lake from Castle Rock*



*High Peaks view from the Boreas in Vanderwhacker Wild Forest*



## Vanderwhacker and Upper Hudson Wild Forests

Vanderwhacker Wild Forest straddles NY 28N. Though the highway is not a major tourist route, there are surprisingly good recreational opportunities tucked along the way. Trails lead to Stony, Center, Hewitt, Rankin, and the two Sherman ponds.

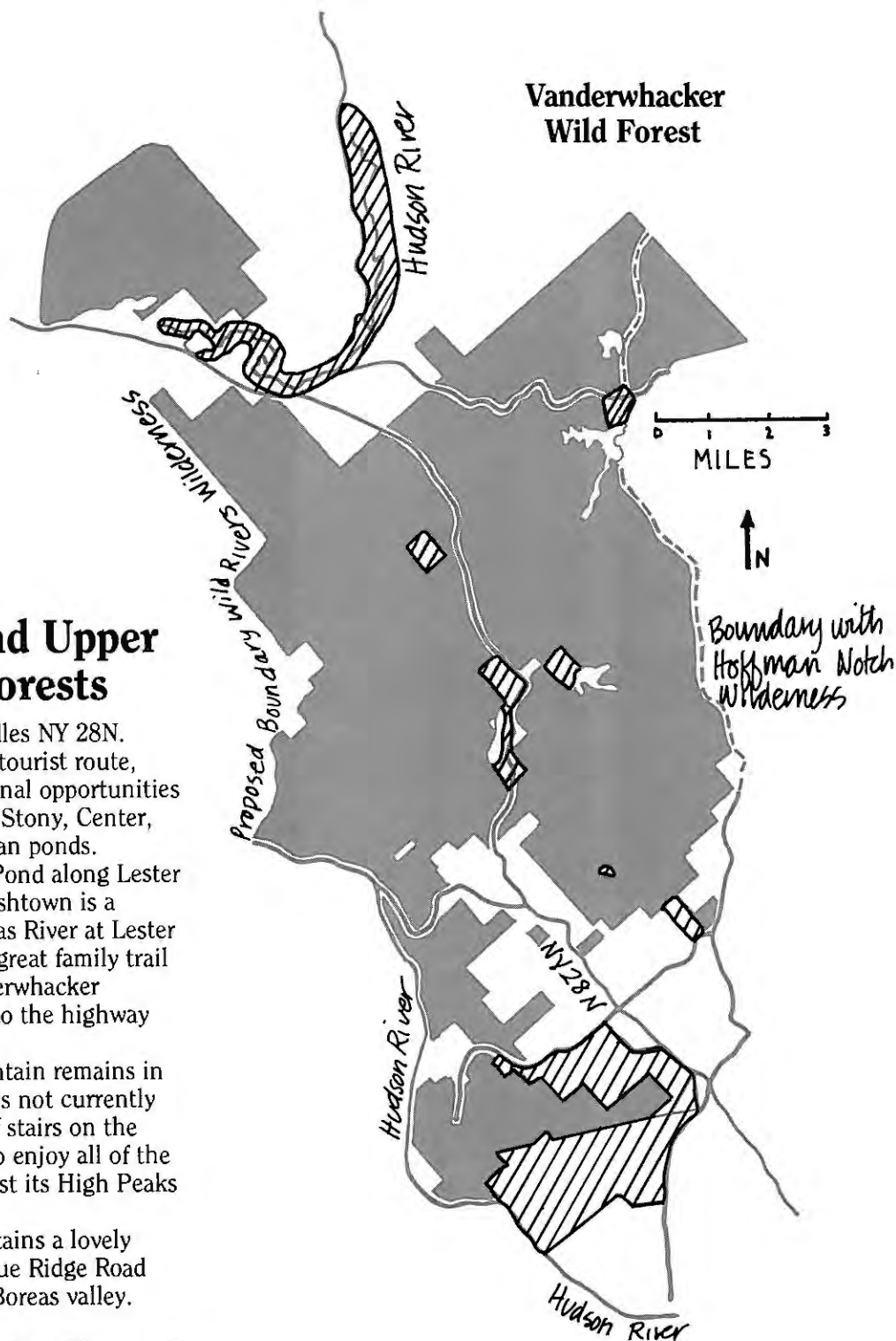
The through route from Cheney Pond along Lester Flow to Minerva Stream north of Irishtown is a delight, although crossing the Boreas River at Lester Dam is impossible in high water. A great family trail leads to the Boreas River near Vanderwhacker Stillwater and back along the river to the highway beside falls and rapids.

The trail up Vanderwhacker Mountain remains in good shape even though the tower is not currently manned. By leaving the lower set of stairs on the tower, the DEC will enable hikers to enjoy all of the mountain's superb views and not just its High Peaks panorama.

The town of North Hudson maintains a lovely picnic area on a knoll beside the Blue Ridge Road overlooking Cheney Pond and the Boreas valley.

### Improved management and a number of important acquisitions totaling 7,480 acres would:

- Add a particularly appealing stretch of Vanderwhacker Brook to the Forest Preserve;
- Protect Hewitt Pond and Balfour Lake from further development and add these tracts to the Forest Preserve should they become available;
- Improve access to the Boreas River, Vanderwhacker Pond, and Wolf Creek;
- Ensure access to the region's snowmobile trail network, in particular junctions north of Irishtown and along Falls Brook;



- Create a wonderful climbers' destination by giving access to Moxham Mountain;
- Protect and add four small ponds and a portion of Hudson River shoreline to the Moxham tract;
- Continue horse and cart access to Newcomb Lake;
- Permit whitewater and stillwater canoeing and fishing on stretches of the upper Hudson from the Tahawus Mine south to NY 28N.





*Only a small part of beautiful Tirrell Pond's shoreline remains privately owned. This important acquisition is typical of those needed in Wild Forest Areas.*

# The North-Central Adirondacks

## Saranac Lakes Wild Forest

The Saranac Lakes Wild Forest is one of the most heavily used in the park. As its name indicates, the focus is water. This is boat and canoe country at its best — long interconnected waterways, chains of ponds with short carries, and mountains rising from beautifully wooded shores. With the St. Regis Canoe Area adjacent and accessible to the north, this Wild Forest attracts so many campers with boats and canoes that many shoreline campsites are showing the effects of overuse.

One of the great public resources of the Adirondack Park is the extensive waterfront on Middle and Lower Saranac lakes, currently preserved in state ownership. Of the larger lakes associated with this Wild Forest, only Upper Saranac and Oseetah have heavily developed, privately-owned shorelines. More than two dozen smaller lakes and ponds lie totally within the Forest Preserve. Unfortunately, existing development on private lakeshores precludes much further public ownership, *but all undeveloped waterfront sites*

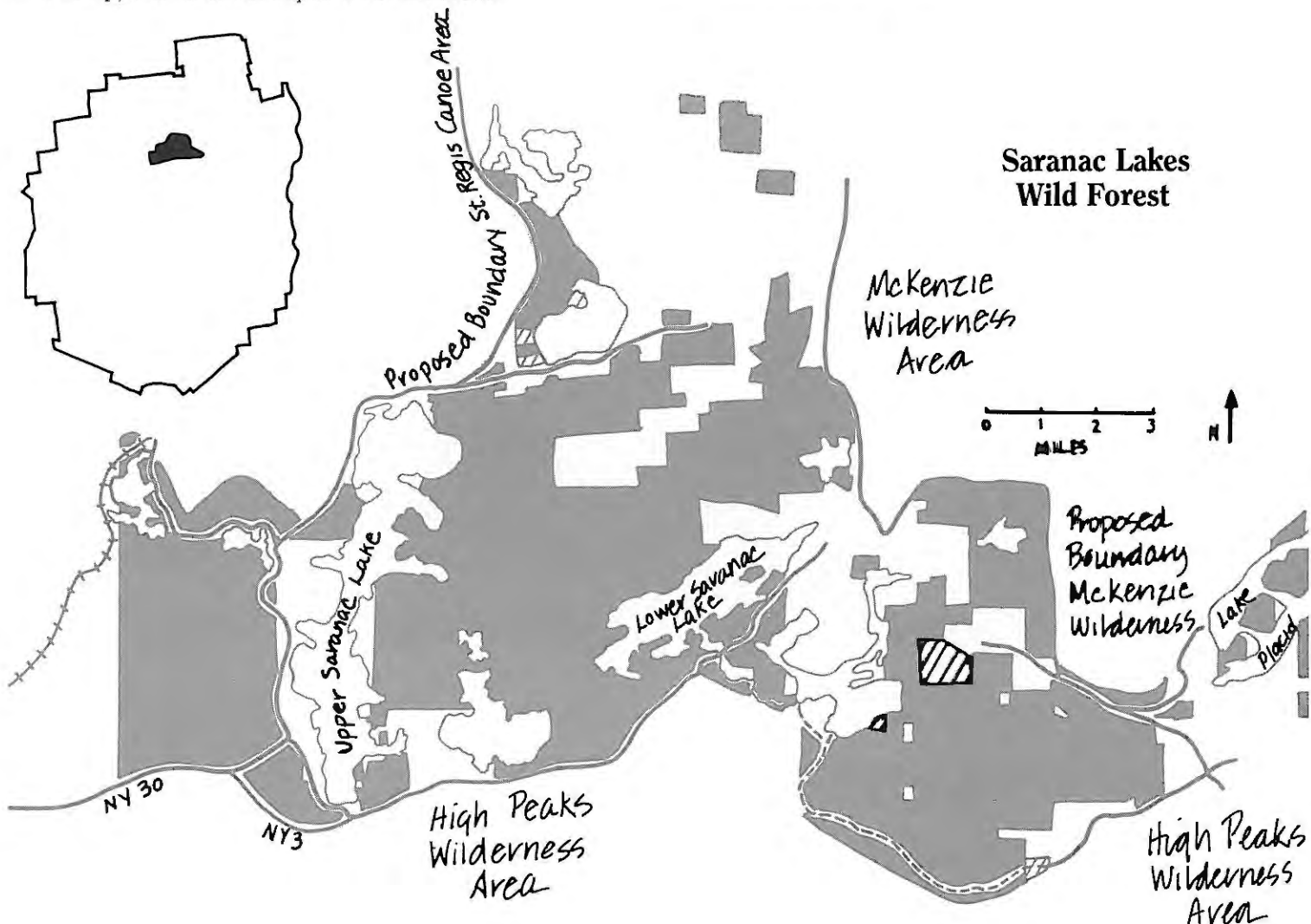
*should be considered candidates for acquisition.*

An excellent new cross-country ski area has been developed west of Wawbeek; the area lends itself to even more ski routes.

The Council has proposed adding part of the Wild Forest north of Rollins Pond to the St. Regis Canoe Area and also recommends that the area south of NY 3 be considered part of a proposed Raquette River Wild Forest.

### Acquisition of 600 acres would:

- Add the remaining privately-owned west shores of Lake Clear to the Forest Preserve;
- Protect public access from Ray Brook to the northeast shores of Oseetah Lake;
- Provide parking and improved access to the snowmobile trail that connects Averyville Road and Oseetah Lake so that it can be added to the Jackrabbit cross-country ski network.

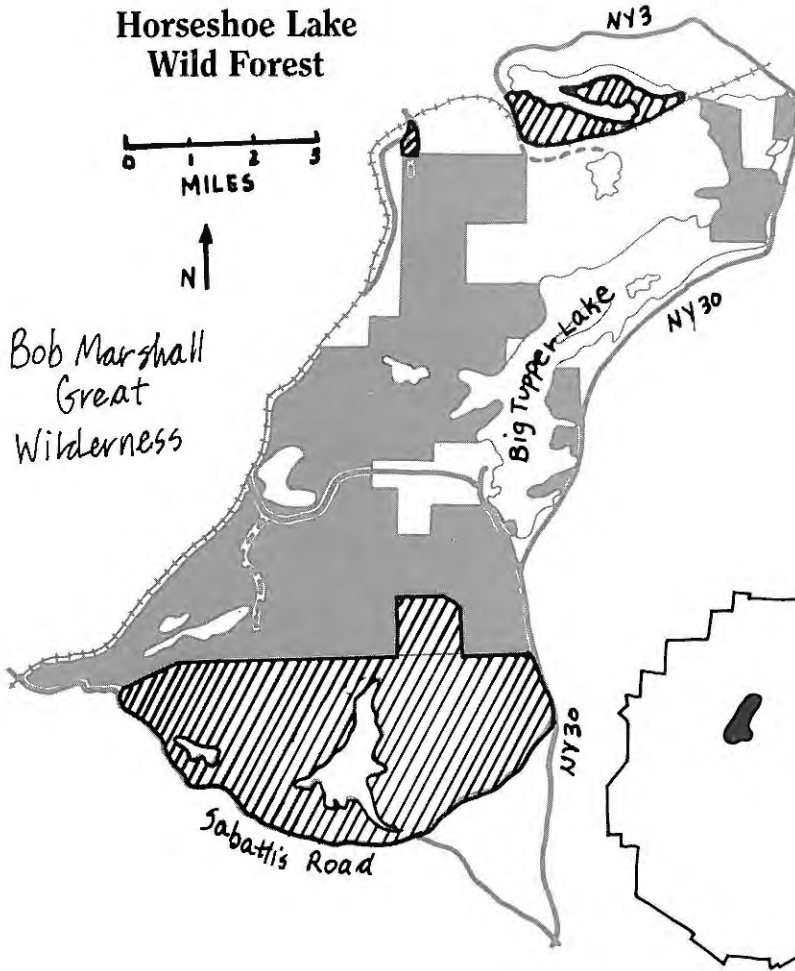


## Horseshoe Lake Wild Forest

0 1 2 3  
MILES



Bob Marshall  
Great  
Wilderness



## Horseshoe Lake Wild Forest

Horseshoe Lake is the nucleus of a Wild Forest devoted to water recreation. The lower Bog River courses through the Wild Forest; paths provide good access to the river.

Additions of ponds in the former Whitney Tract now owned by International Paper Company along with all the land south to Sabatt's Road is essential. Leaving a portion of the road network to make easy canoe access would enhance the area's potential for all kinds of outdoor recreation.

Maintaining small bridges along the New York Central right-of-way will keep open this important recreational corridor. *All undeveloped parcels on the shores of Tupper Lake should be acquired.*

### Acquisition of 10,200 acres would:

- Open to the public several important ponds and interconnected water routes;
- Provide a number of dispersed waterfront campsites on Round Lake;
- Add the shores of Piercefield Flow to the Forest Preserve, thus protecting it from development;
- Open significant tracts to the public for hunting.



## Proposed Raquette River Wild Forest

East of NY 30, south of NY 3, west of the Raquette River, the boundary of the High Peaks Wilderness, and northwest of Long Lake is a large tract of mostly private land that could become one of the park's most accessible recreation areas. It includes Litchfield Park, where numerous ponds could be the focus of an attractive recreation area. And, although Litchfield Park has been heavily logged, its forest stands would quickly recover as part of the Forest Preserve.

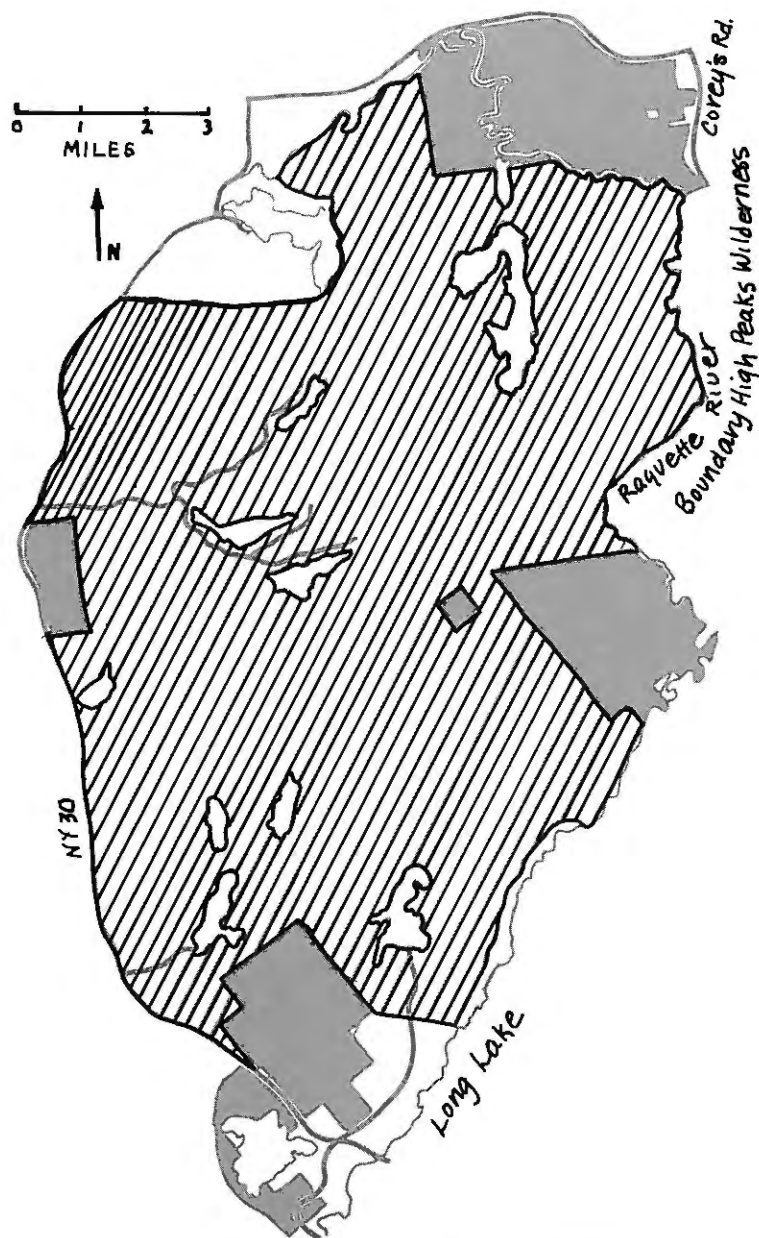
Follensby Pond, historically important as the site of the Philosophers' Camp, lies in the northeast corner of the region. The tract surrounding it is a private preserve that has been managed to protect wildlife, all the waterfronts, and the fish population, which includes some of the largest lake trout in the park. The pond can be reached by canoe from the Raquette River, so its acquisition would add many miles of canoeable water as well as miles of wild shoreline for canoe camping.

Within the proposed Raquette River Wild Forest, there are about 2,000 acres of ponds and lakes, with the two dozen largest ranging in size from 378 acres to about 10 acres. Ponds do characterize the area, but equally important are two other attributes — accessibility and a good road network that would appeal to canoers, campers, fishermen, and hunters.

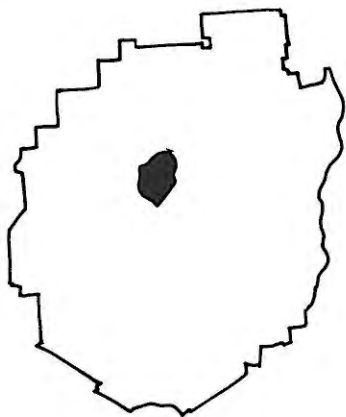
Fee acquisition of all shorelines is essential to putting together this Wild Forest. Combining fee acquisition with easements would permit continued logging on the most valuable timber tracts, while at the same time opening those tracts to hunting and retaining much of the road network that gives the area its accessibility.

### Acquisition by fee or easement of upwards of 60,000 acres would:

- Create a 75,000-acre recreation area, a combination of public lands and private easement lands, with the public domain constituting one of the most attractive Wild Forest areas in the Park — easily accessible by road and boat, with numerous opportunities for camping, fishing, hunting, and boating;
- Incorporate into the Forest Preserve most of the shores of the Raquette River and the following water bodies: Follensby, Jenkins, Long, Mountain, Handsome, Upper and Lower Moose, Hedgehog, First, Second, and Third Anthony ponds, Rock and Mud ponds, and Grampus, Mohegan, and Duck lakes;
- Open to the public some historically important fishing waters.



**Raquette River  
Wild Forest**





# Debar Mountain Wild Forest

The region usually lumped together as the Debar Mountain Wild Forest is so fragmented and spread out that four or more Wild Forests should be broken from it for management purposes — Taylor Pond, Bloomingdale Bog, Vermontville, and Chazy Lake.

Debar Mountain Wild Forest proper is built around three points of interest: the mountain itself, Meacham Lake Campground, and the former Debar Game Management Area where the State tried to reintroduce elk. This is a popular area, so far north that it attracts as many French-speaking Canadians as New Yorkers. It spans several mountains but its most dominant feature is the sand plains that were logged and then succumbed to the early 20th century epidemic of forest fires.

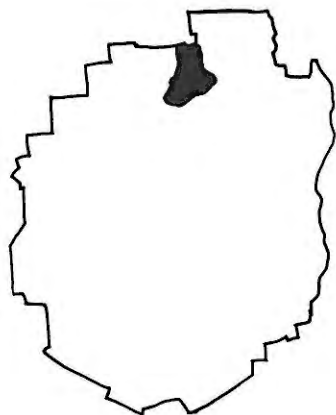
A large measure of the region's recreational potential has already been realized. The mix of public and private lands attracts hunters. Abandoned logging roads have been marked for use by snowmobilers, but the trail network is lightly used, making it desirable to promote some trails for cross-country skiing. There are good camping facilities at Meacham Lake. Nevertheless, the Wild Forest should be extended in several important ways.

Acquisitions in the south should focus on protecting the area around the new Visitor Interpretive Center and preserving this already well-developed recreation area. Most notable are the center's trails that have been hardened for handicapped access.

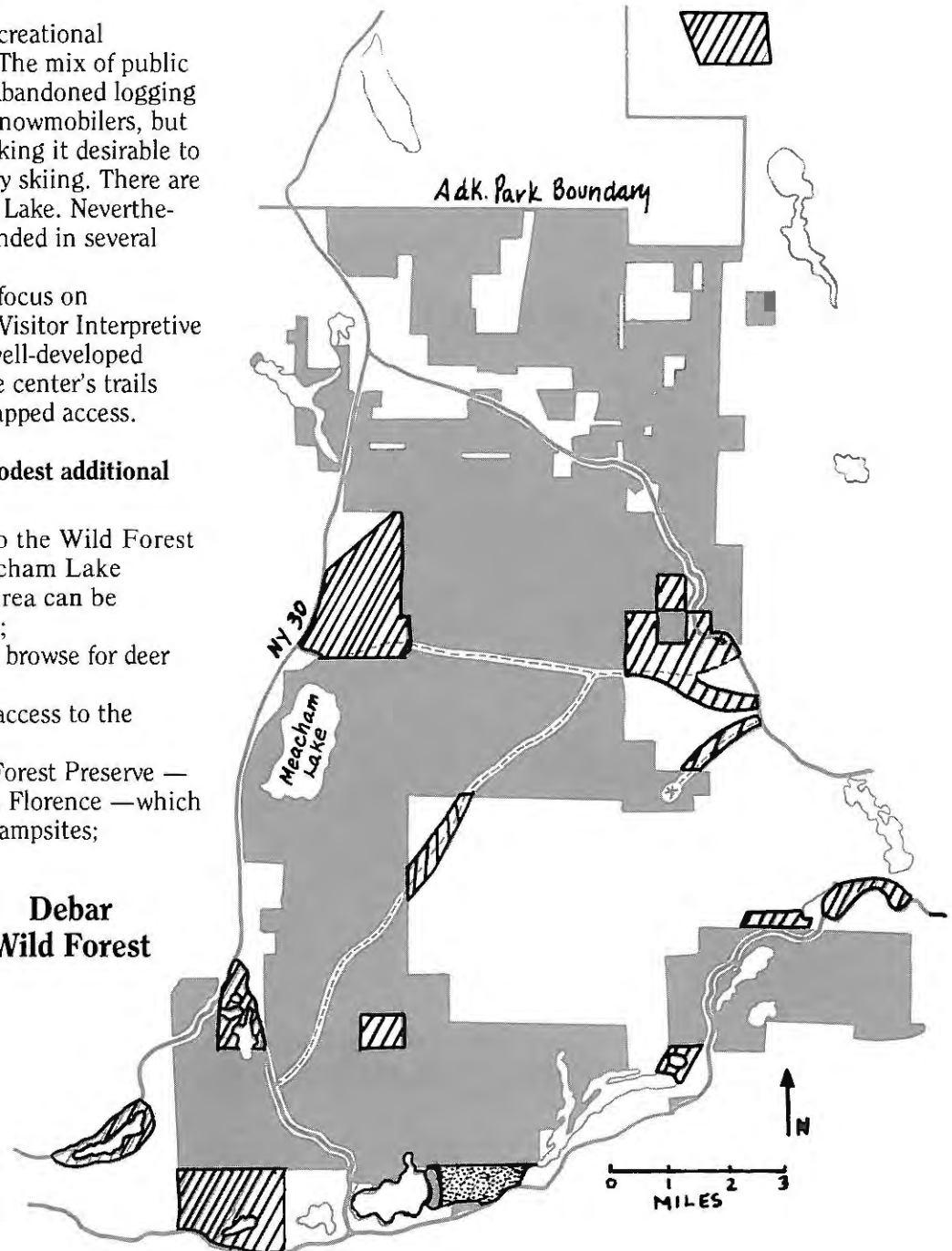
## Acquisition of 7,000 acres and modest additional trail mileage would:

- Add the Hays Brook Valley to the Wild Forest so the snowmobile trail from Meacham Lake through the Game Management Area can be connected to the Hays Brook loop;
- Leave adjacent private lands as browse for deer herds;
- Add Loon Lake Mountain and access to the mountain and its tower;
- Add three water bodies to the Forest Preserve — Clear and Mountain ponds and Lake Florence — which can serve as the locus of dispersed campsites;

- Complete state ownership of the summit of Baldface Mountain and add a trail to this inviting peak;
- Add Follensby Junior Pond and the Forestmere Lakes to the Wild Forest;
- Add a portion of the Paul Smith's tract to the Forest Preserve, permitting state trails in the Black Pond complex and to Jenkins Mountain;
- Add Square Pond and the west shore of Rainbow Narrows to the Forest Preserve, protecting the rest of the important water route;
- Add the tract around Mud Lake and the stretch of the Saranac River along Thatcherville Road to the Forest Preserve for fishing access.



**Debar  
Wild Forest**



# Bloomington Bog and Vermontville Wild Forests

Bloomington Bog is the heart of this Wild Forest. The alluvial-based, late-stage bog is dotted with hummocks of acid-loving shrubs and surrounded with exceptional stands of black spruce. However, most of this Wild Forest consists of scattered pieces of state land, many without public access.

Without disrupting the pattern of home sites along roadsides, the State can, through acquisition and trail designation, create an important center for recreation.

## Acquisition of 7,920 acres and the construction of short new trails would:

- Place the entire Bloomington Bog in state ownership;
- Complete access to the excellent Jones and Blue

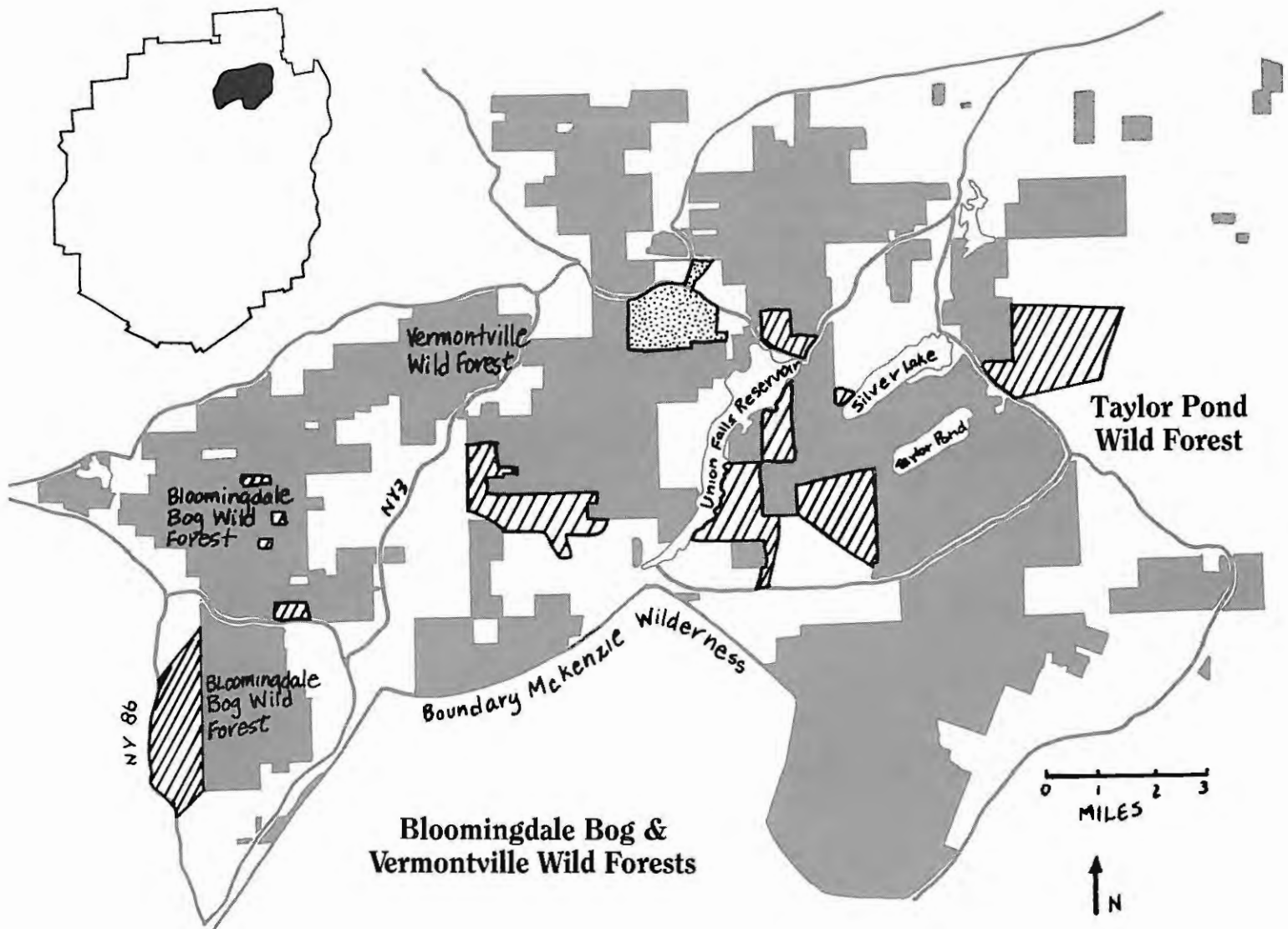
Hill snowmobile trail that is much enjoyed by skiers as well;

- Permit a trail connecting Buck Pond Campground to the summit of Little Haystack, which offers wonderful views;

- Provide marked footpaths to the double summit of Kate Mountain for hikers who enjoy the smaller (but often more rewarding) mountains;

- Maintain bridges on the old Delaware and Hudson Railroad grade that traverses the entire bog between Saranac Lake and Onchiota so that hikers, skiers, snowmobilers, and birdwatchers can enjoy its natural wonders without disturbing the fragile habitat;

- Permit access to patches of state land around Burnt and Keegan hills, near Cold Brook, and east of Vermontville, for hunting, hiking, and camping.





Edythe Robbins

*Lean-to in Taylor Pond Wild Forest*

## Taylor Pond Wild Forest

Taylor Pond Wild Forest with its public campground is the hub of an inviting recreation area. It offers a combination of waterfront camping and fishing, mountains to climb, and trails for snowmobiling.

The campground offers lovely sites along the shore of Taylor Pond. Lean-tos and other campsites are reached by canoe from the campground. A trail marked for snowmobiles encircles the pond; it makes a fine, though occasionally wet, hiking trail. The lake is a public twin to its northern counterpart, Silver Lake, with its private residences.

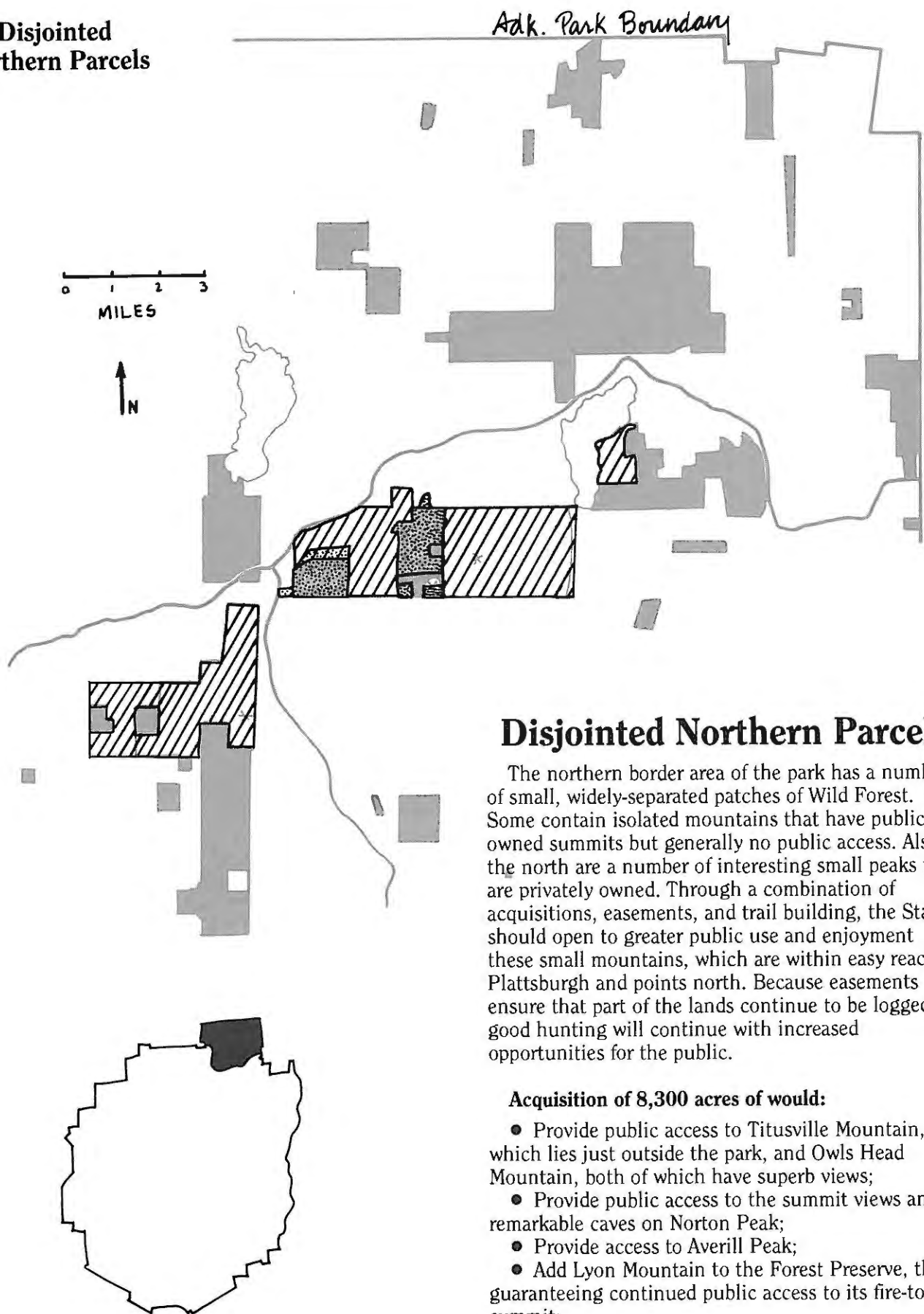
Northwest of Silver Lake, The Nature Conservancy maintains a beautiful boardwalk into an upland bog. Anyone can enjoy this trail and many already use it to discover its natural wonders. The trail is one of those suitable for handicapped use.

Recent acquisitions have enhanced the value of the Wild Forest for all kinds of outdoor activities, but further acquisitions and new trails are desirable.

**Acquisition of 4,400 acres and three new trails would:**

- Improve public access to the cliff-faced summits of Duncan and Alderbrook mountains;
- Add the rest of the cliff-faced range of Silver Lake Mountain as well as Potter Mountain to the Forest Preserve, thus protecting nesting sites for hawks and falcons, and offering the public perches from which to watch these soaring birds;
- Improve parking and marking for Catamount Mountain Trail and connect the summit via an abandoned route to the shores of Taylor Pond;
- Designate snowmobile trails and access trails for hunters along the old roads in the recently acquired tract in the Wilmington Range and connect trails between that range and the Stephenson Range;
- Add sites for fishing access along the Saranac River and Union Falls Reservoir;
- Acquire the undeveloped shoreline of Union Falls Reservoir;
- Join the existing snowmobile trails into a network that connects Franklin Falls, Taylor Pond, and the Catamount Mountain area.

## Disjointed Northern Parcels



## Disjointed Northern Parcels

The northern border area of the park has a number of small, widely-separated patches of Wild Forest. Some contain isolated mountains that have publicly-owned summits but generally no public access. Also in the north are a number of interesting small peaks that are privately owned. Through a combination of acquisitions, easements, and trail building, the State should open to greater public use and enjoyment these small mountains, which are within easy reach of Plattsburgh and points north. Because easements will ensure that part of the lands continue to be logged, good hunting will continue with increased opportunities for the public.

### Acquisition of 8,300 acres of would:

- Provide public access to Titusville Mountain, which lies just outside the park, and Owls Head Mountain, both of which have superb views;
- Provide public access to the summit views and remarkable caves on Norton Peak;
- Provide access to Averill Peak;
- Add Lyon Mountain to the Forest Preserve, thus guaranteeing continued public access to its fire-tower summit;
- Increase state ownership of the shores of Chazy Lake and improve public access to the lake.



# The Northwestern Adirondacks

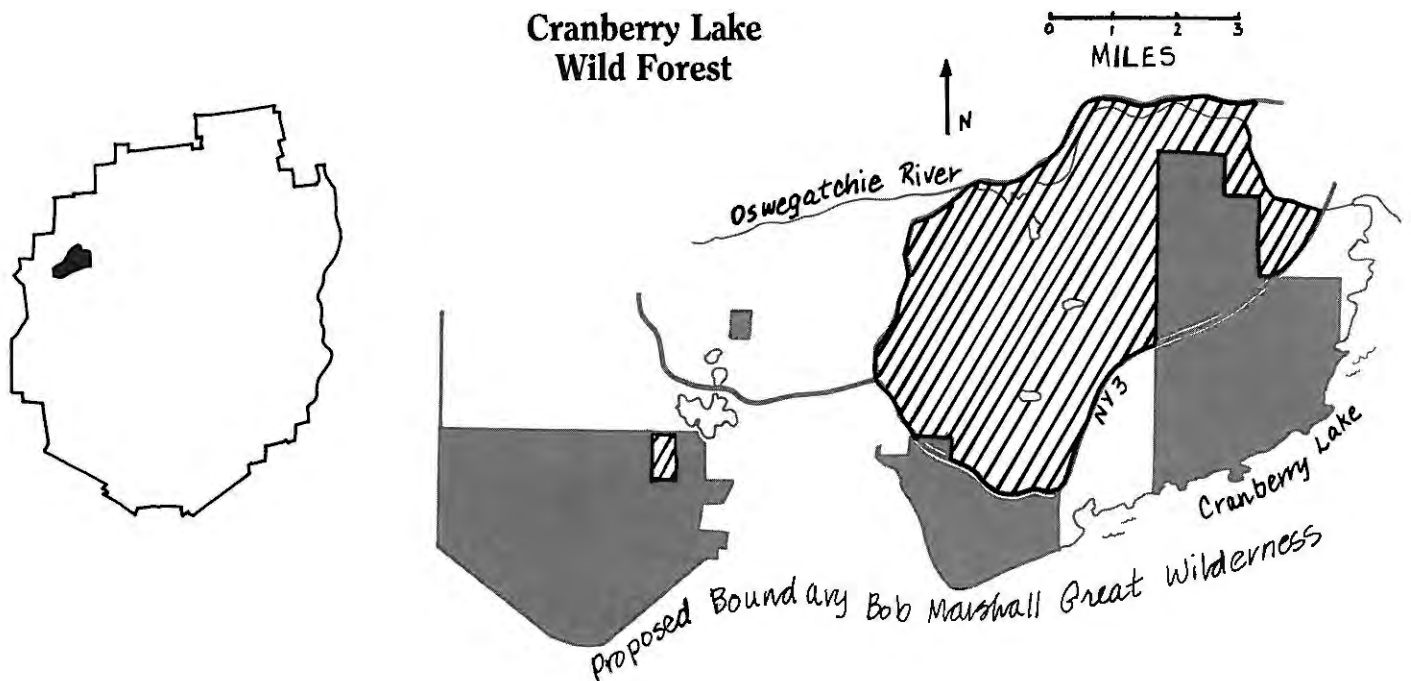
## Cranberry Lake and Tooley Pond Wild Forests

Cranberry Lake Wild Forest is the northern buffer of the Five Ponds Wilderness. It offers waterfront recreation on the many-fingered lake formed by a dam on the Oswegatchie River. A state campground and boat launch sites entice boaters.

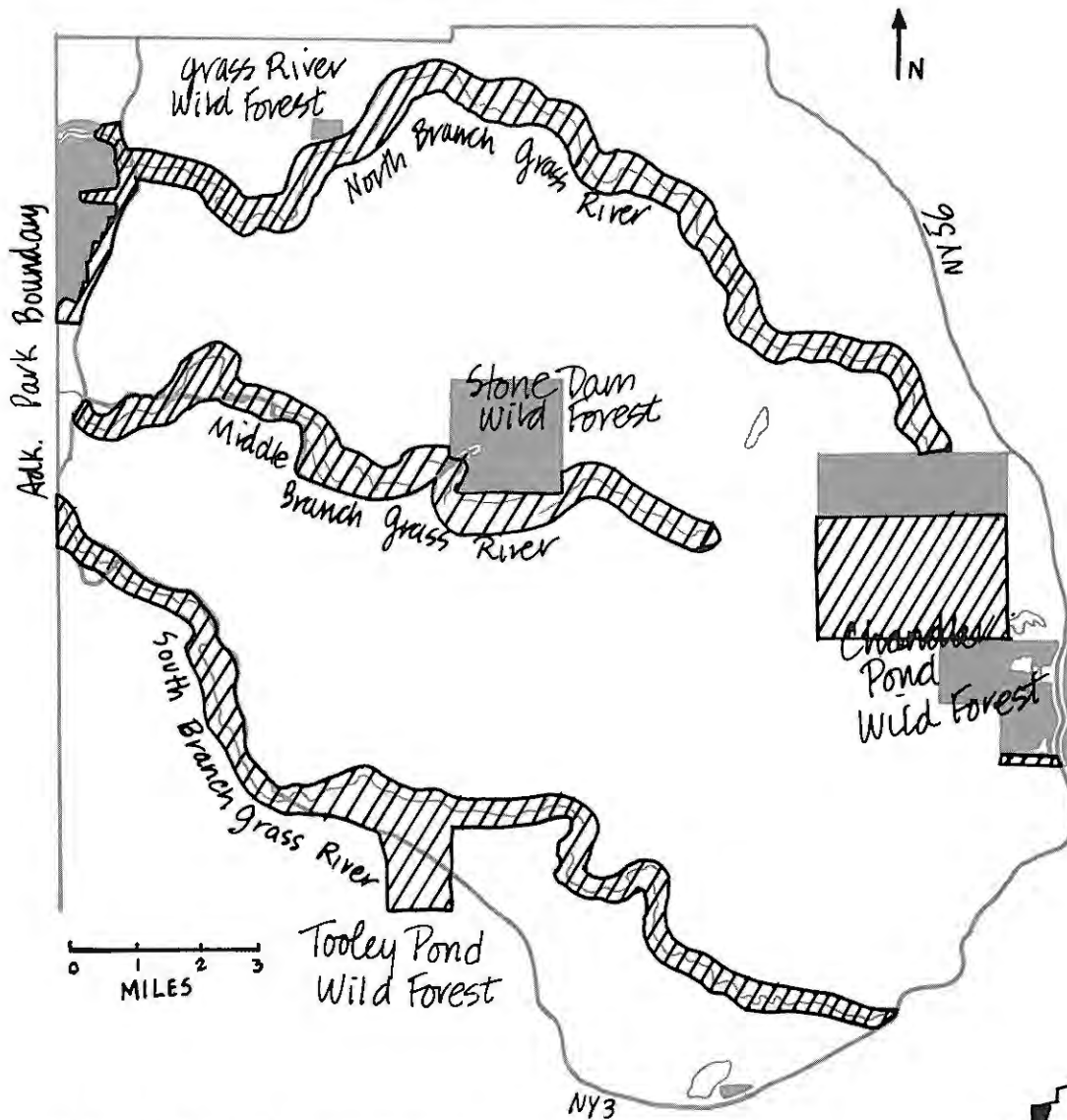
The Council has recommended that the portion of the Wild Forest to the east of Cranberry Lake be added to a proposed Bob Marshall Great Wilderness. To enhance the remaining Wild Forest it is important to focus on acquisitions north of Cranberry Lake around the Chaumont Swamp and along Tooley Pond Road and South Branch of the Grass River.

**Acquisitions of 13,280 acres south of the Oswegatchie and 6,000 acres between Tooley Pond Road and the South Branch of the Grass would:**

- Bring into the public domain the entire Chaumont Swamp and the shores of Chaumont Pond as well as Muskrat, Heath, and Lost ponds;
- Offer new public hunting, fishing, and canoeing opportunities;
- Add much of the land adjacent to Tooley Pond Road with public access to Tooley Pond and Tooley Pond Mountain and the three lovely waterfalls (Rainbow, Flat Rock, and Copper) on the Grass, which are close to the road;
- Provide public access to the whitewater stretches of the Grass River;
- Protect the beautiful forests of the Tooley Pond Road corridor;
- Add the remaining private lands around the Little River so the public can canoe the entire length of that enticing waterway.

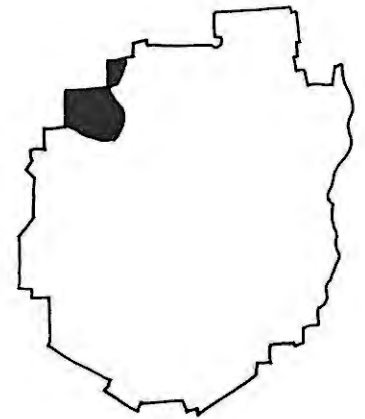


## The Small Northwestern Wild Forests



## The Small Northwestern Wild Forests

Combinations of acquisition and easements will enlarge these four small Wild Forest patches into important recreational areas. Adjoining each are lands that might be opened to the public by easement for hunting. Nearby are some of the outstanding canoeable rivers of the northwestern Adirondacks.



## Grass River Wild Forest

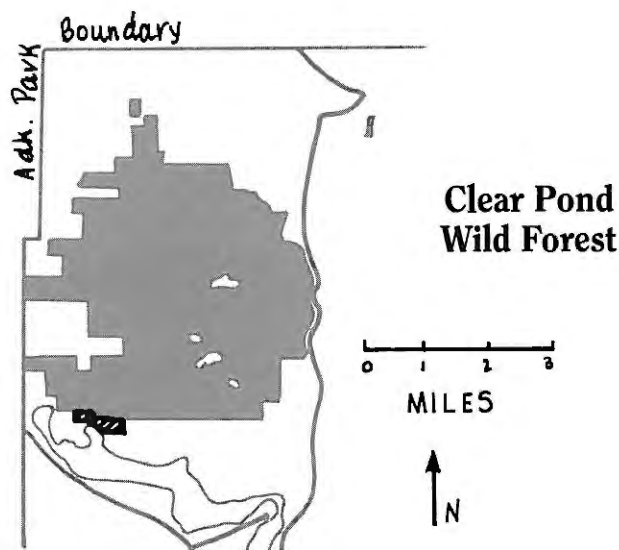
The Grass River Wild Forest exists mostly in the dreams of recreationists. The State owns only a tiny portion of the Grass watershed, primarily a small, recently-acquired tract that includes beautiful Lampson Falls near the boundary of the park. Most shorelines of all three branches are privately-owned and posted.

Creating a recreation area with walkways along the Main Branch of the Grass near Lampson Falls is a wonderful idea the State has brought to fruition with short trails on both sides of the river. Intimate views of a series of cascades make these among the most beautiful river trails in the Adirondacks.

At the northern edge of the tract, another short trail reaches Harper Falls on the North Branch of the Grass.

### **Acquisition of or easements on 4,000 acres along the Middle and North Branches of the Grass would:**

- Extend the Wild Forest surrounding Lampson Falls to the south along the Grass, so that waterfront trails could be extended south toward Degrass for fishing, canoeing, and picnicking;
- Add the Boyd Pond Parcel, currently owned by the Indian Trail Club, to provide additional waterfront camping which could be managed as a primitive campground;
- Permit canoeing on some of the best flatwater stretches in the park.



## Stone Dam Wild Forest

This isolated 2,100-acre tract of Wild Forest has over a mile of frontage on the Grass River. A public right-of-way reaches a block of state land at Stone Dam on the upper Middle Branch of the Grass. Stone Dam Wild Forest is mainly the province of hunters. This small block of Wild Forest will grow in importance for both hunters and canoers as adjacent lands are acquired by easement.

### **A 50-acre acquisition would:**

- Assure access to the Wild Forest along the 2.6-mile jeep road that leads to it.

## Chandler Pond Wild Forest

This relatively small parcel, about 6,000 acres, has boreal (spruce-fir) forests and wetlands. It straddles the Raquette River near Jamestown Falls and is adjacent to Seveys Bog. Because it harbors one of the largest deer wintering yards in the Adirondacks, any management decisions for the parcel should be predicated on its protection.

### **A 4,000-acre acquisition would:**

- Add the beautiful Seveys Bog to the Forest Preserve;
- Add the entire parcel currently managed as a Fish and Wildlife Management Area and provide access to it for hunting and cross-country skiing;
- Join and improve access to the Church Pond isolated parcel.

## Clear Pond Wild Forest

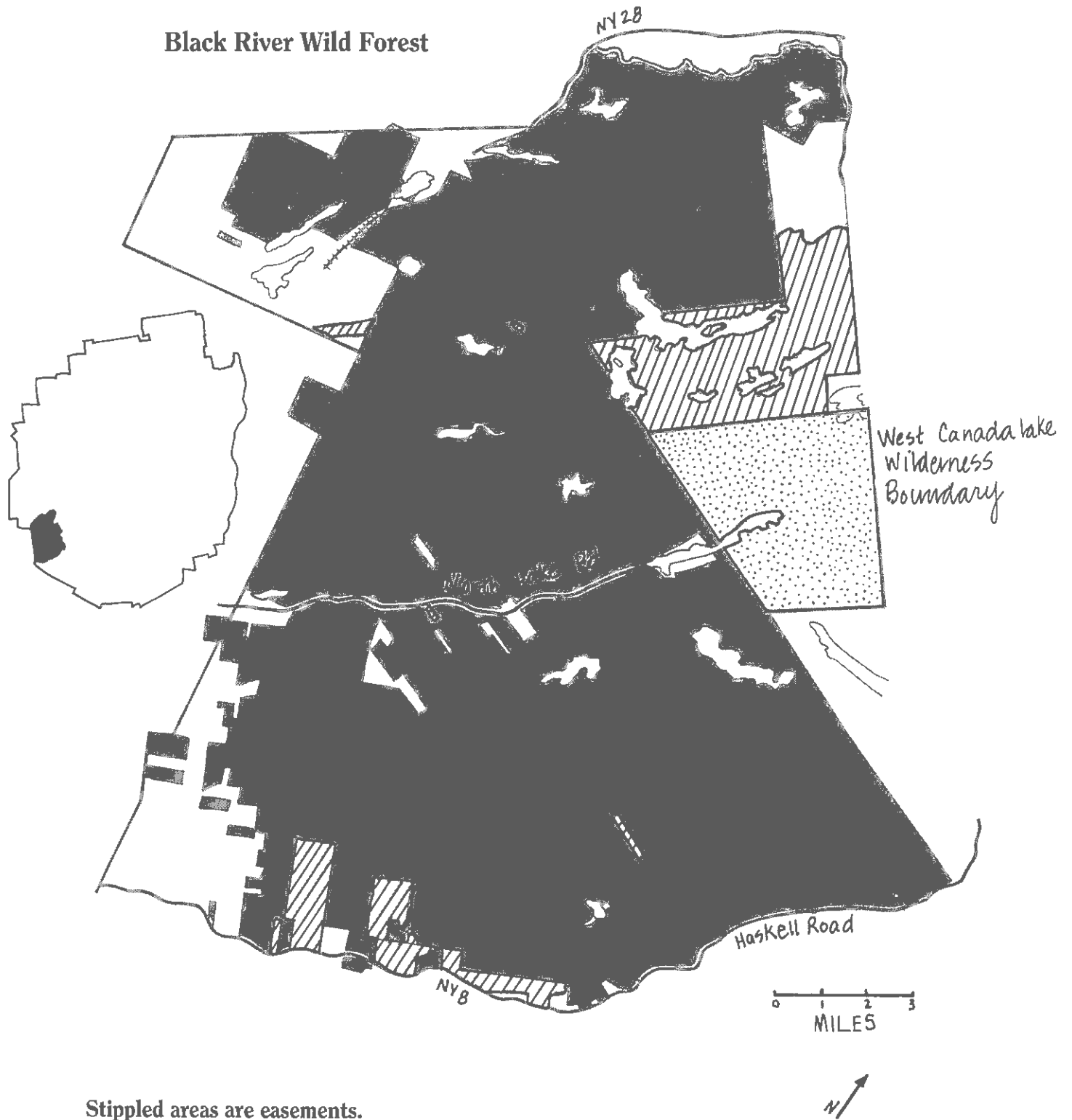
A fairly small block of state land, less than 10,000 acres, in the northwestern corner of the park south of Potsdam, surrounds the former Clear Pond Boy Scout Camp. Four small ponds dot the area, all connected by trails originally built by the scouts. The State maintains a snowmobile trail across the property from the access road to a private road leading south to Rainbow Falls Reservoir on the Raquette.

### **Acquisition of 140 acres would:**

- Permit through trails to Rainbow Falls Reservoir.

# The Western Adirondacks

## Black River Wild Forest





# Black River Wild Forest

Black River Wild Forest, with over 121,000 acres, is one of the largest Wild Forests in the Adirondack Park. It abuts the park's southwest border and encompasses the gentle western foothills that recede gradually from the central mountain dome.

Major trailheads at Nicks Lake Campground in the north, McKeever, Bear Creek Road, and points along North Lake Road branch out into a network of long, generally level routes connecting a number of interior ponds. In the northern portion of the Wild Forest, hiking trails lead to every waterfall and pond. Some of the trails follow old roads, others have been cut expressly for hikers, and most are well-maintained. Attractively sited lean-tos dot the region.

Large maps at the major trailheads show the routes of both hiking and snowmobile trails. Fishermen and hunters walk the same routes. Use is light and a true wilderness experience can be enjoyed throughout the region.

But there is one glaring problem: vehicular use is destroying several important routes. The Council's recommendations for acquisition and management focus on solving this problem.

The southern portion is bounded by Haskell Road, NY 8, and the Black River. Access is a problem along the southern boundary, but this explains only in part why the recreational potential of the southern portion of the Black River Wild Forest has not been as fully realized as it has been in the northern portion. Better management is also needed.

The State recently acquired recreation rights to the J.P. Lewis Tract, which surrounds North Lake. This

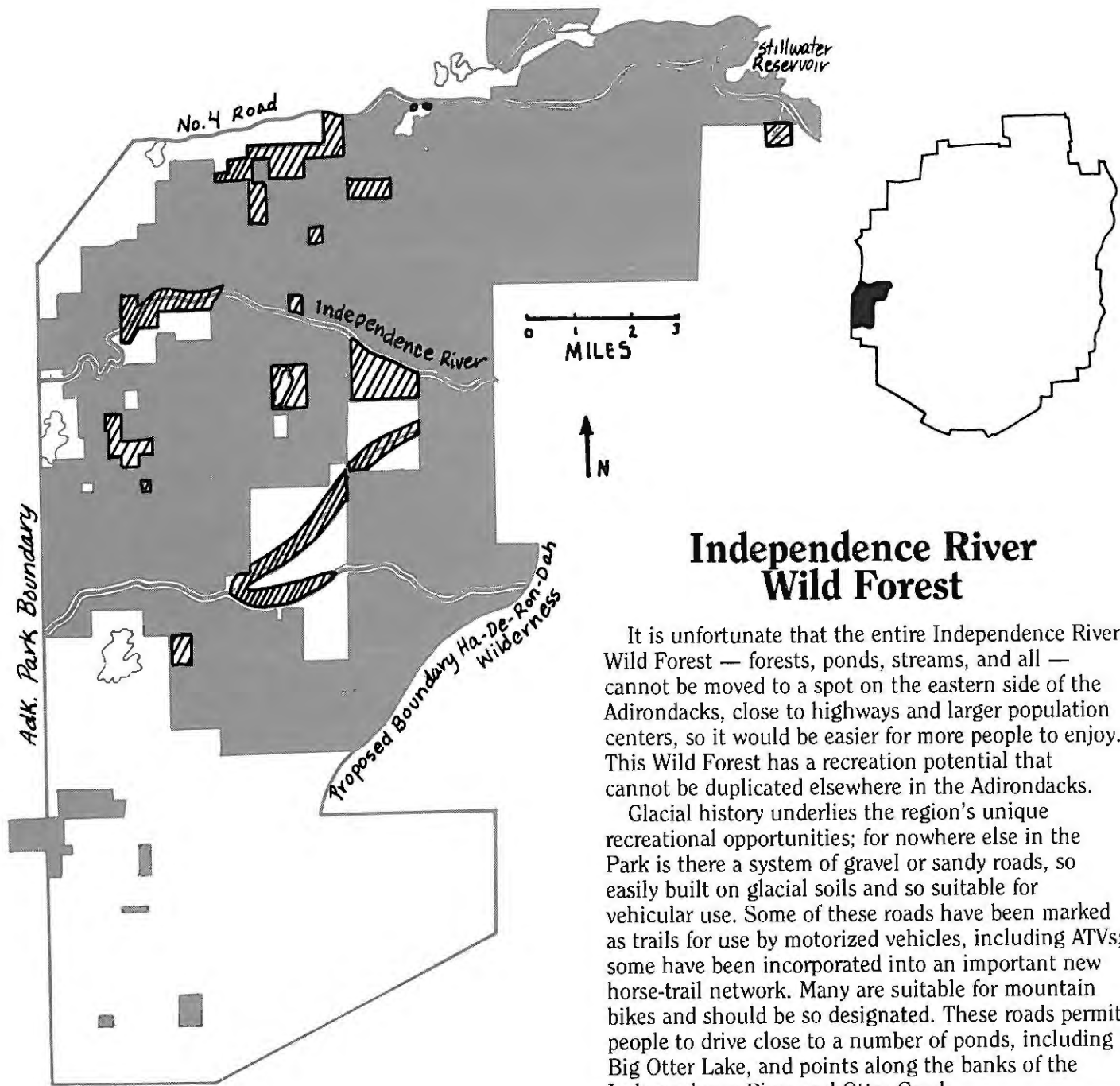
important easement greatly enhances the Wild Forest, linking it to numerous logging roads and fishing streams, as well as Ice Caves Valley and Canachagala Mountain. Equally important for future recreation are the Adirondack League Club lands between the South Branch of the Moose and the J.P. Lewis Tract, extending east to the new boundary of the West Canada Wilderness as proposed by Council. The League Club property encompasses the most beautiful chain of canoeable lakes in the western Adirondacks.

**A combination of trail building, control of vehicular access, easements, and acquisition of 12,560 acres would:**

- Limit development on the Adirondack League Club property south of the South Branch of the Moose by easements, acquire the remaining privately owned shoreline of Woodhull and Sand Lakes, and acquire the Bisby Chain Lakes should the portion of the tract containing them be offered for sale;
- Restrict motorized use on the old road that parallels the McKeever truck trail to snowmobiles only;
- Complete acquisition of private land around Gull Lake and along Bear Creek, thus preventing the destruction of trails by off-road vehicles;
- Eliminate the inholding on Mill Creek;
- Give public access to the Black River Flume;
- Provide a good hiking trail to Salmon Lake with a loop to South Lake;
- Provide access to a lookout north of NY 8;
- Improve access from NY 8.



*Nelson Lake in Black River Wild Forest*



## Independence River Wild Forest

## Independence River Wild Forest

It is unfortunate that the entire Independence River Wild Forest — forests, ponds, streams, and all — cannot be moved to a spot on the eastern side of the Adirondacks, close to highways and larger population centers, so it would be easier for more people to enjoy. This Wild Forest has a recreation potential that cannot be duplicated elsewhere in the Adirondacks.

Glacial history underlies the region's unique recreational opportunities; for nowhere else in the Park is there a system of gravel or sandy roads, so easily built on glacial soils and so suitable for vehicular use. Some of these roads have been marked as trails for use by motorized vehicles, including ATVs; some have been incorporated into an important new horse-trail network. Many are suitable for mountain bikes and should be so designated. These roads permit people to drive close to a number of ponds, including Big Otter Lake, and points along the banks of the Independence River and Otter Creek.

With all this variety of recreation, it is amazing how much of the area remains truly wild. Wonderful foot trails follow the Independence River. Gleasmans Falls is an enticing and remote destination for hikers. Shingle Mill Falls on Otter Creek is reached by a lovely short trail. A number of these short trails to ponds, bogs, and waterfalls are candidates for hardening, which would permit handicapped access, including the trails to Long and Evies ponds as well as Shingle Mills Falls.

The unit management plan for this Wild Forest recommends constructing several new parking areas, closing some trails and limiting kinds of use on others, and building new foot trails. It is a plan that will benefit a broad spectrum of recreational interests, for nowhere else in the park can you reach so many

beautiful lakes and ponds as easily as here. Remote camping spots can accommodate many more than now use the area.

The plan recommends a fairly high implementation budget; but most of the work is needed. It may seem expensive to repair and improve bridges, but the cost is not high considering the many miles of vehicular access provided. Nowhere else in the Forest Preserve can roads be maintained so easily or with such little damage to the surrounding terrain. In recognizing the need some people have to drive to ponds and campsites, the unit management plan, which incorporates important parts of the road network, provides a valuable public service.

**Acquisition of 2,000 acres would:**

- Complete the acquisitions recommended by the unit management plan;
- Add the remaining private tracts along the south shore of the Independence River to the Forest Preserve;
- Continue access to Stillwater Mountain and its tower;
- Ensure public access through private lands on the Big Otter Lake jeep trail and the road north to the Mount Tom Tract;
- Allow hardening of one or more trails for handicapped access.



*Moss Lake Outlet Ridge in Fulton Chain Wild Forest*

Lee M. Brenning

# Fulton Chain Wild Forest

The low, mountainous ridges north of the Fulton Chain attract hordes of hikers comparable to the flotillas of canoes whose paddlers are drawn to the lake chain itself. NY 28 from Thendara to Raquette Lake weaves between the lakes and mountains, a busy road with numerous motels and tourist attractions. But even though private lands surround most of the waterways and highways, public access is good.

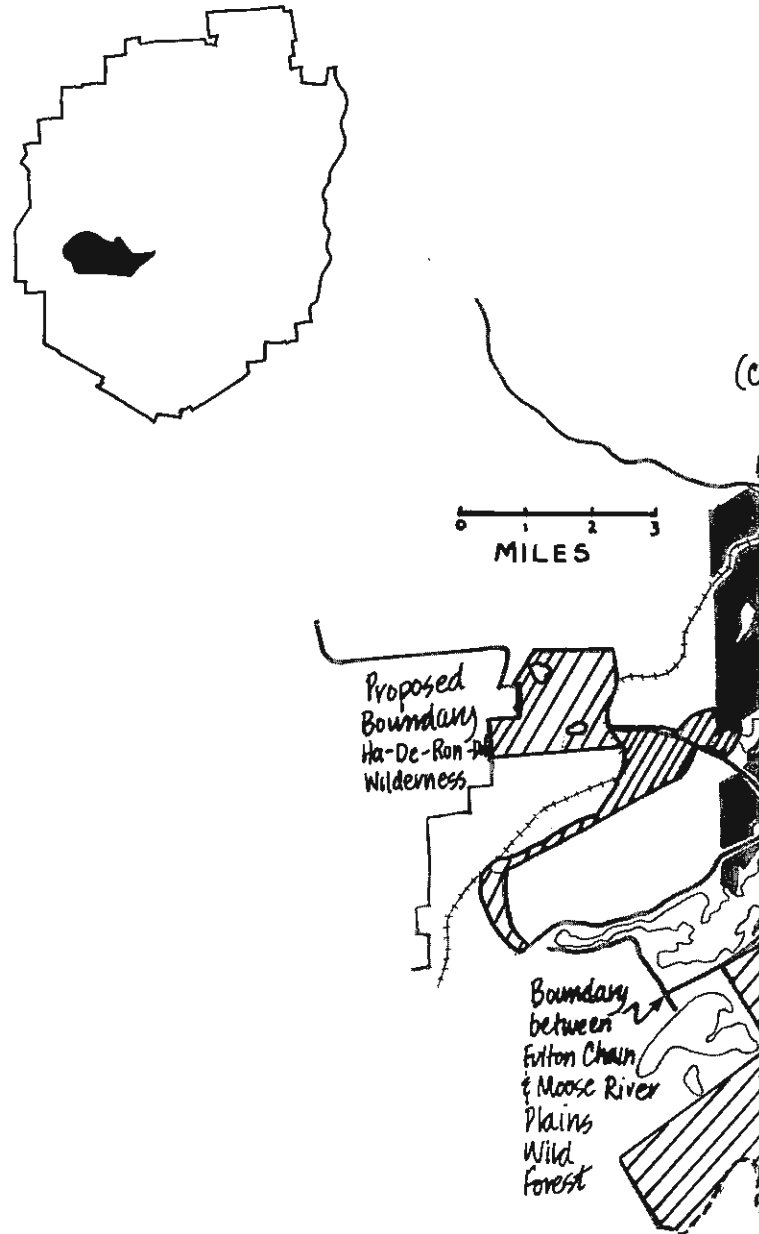
Many family-oriented trails lead up the most accessible mountains; notable are the Bald-Rondaxe Trail, one of the best short trails in the Adirondacks, and the Vista Trail with its chain of outlooks north of Fourth Lake. Trails to Moss, Bubbs, Sis, and Cary lakes are short and easy. Longer snowmobile trails connect Old Forge with Safford Pond and Big Moose Road. Rocky Mountain's short trail leads to surprisingly good views. The circuit of trails on Black Bear Mountain offers hikers several rewarding loops.

By building good trails that capitalize on existing public access, the State has gone a long way toward minimizing conflict between public and private lands use, thus preserving a healthy ownership mix in an area where recreation is an important economic stimulus. However, a few important acquisitions are needed to protect access to existing routes and to enhance the public recreation value. *All undeveloped lakefront tracts in the Fulton Chain should be acquired.* An easement should be obtained to limit further development on Adirondack League Club property south and east of Moose Lake.

## Acquisitions of more than 14,720 acres would:

- Provide public access to the Adirondack League Club lands north of the South Branch of the Moose River should those lands become available for public purchase;
- Provide access for canoeing along the North Branch of the Moose River;
- Connect the southern end of the trail to Safford Pond with the network near Rondaxe Lake;
- Protect from development the Dart Lake YMCA tract and actively pursue it as an addition to the Forest Preserve should it become available for public purchase;
- Increase the number of campsites along the Fulton Chain;
- Provide public access to the cluster of small ponds (Big Independence, Clear, Little Safford, Gibbs, Round, Big Diamond) between the New York Central Railroad and Ha-de-ron-dah Wilderness;
- Create loop trails for skiers, snowmobilers, and hikers that connect with the all-important trunk trail along the railroad corridor;

- Guarantee public access to the Uncas railroad bed west of Raquette Lake. That bed provides a two-mile raised walkway ideal for birding and nature study through a boreal swamp and bog that ranks in importance with the famous Ferd's Bog in the Pigeon Lake Wilderness. This walkway could be hardened and improved for handicapped access without impact on the swamp.





# Moose River Plains Wild Forest

The Moose River Plains Wild Forest is the most complete and in ways the best managed recreation area of all the Wild Forests. It is a vast tract stretching from the Cedar River Flow on the east to Limekiln Lake near Inlet on the west. The Council has proposed that the southern boundary be the Moose River, which is still quite close to the West Canada Lakes Wilderness. In the north, the tract touches the Limekiln Lake Campground. The northern boundary is NY 28 east of Inlet to Raquette Lake.

The area encompasses more than two dozen lakes and ponds and beautiful stretches of the Red River and the South Branch of the Moose River. The natural plains and previously logged lands attract a great variety and quantity of wildlife. Recent state acquisitions (the Bear Pond Tract and International Paper Company tracts near Cellar Pond and Little Moose Lake) have virtually completed public ownership of the Plains.

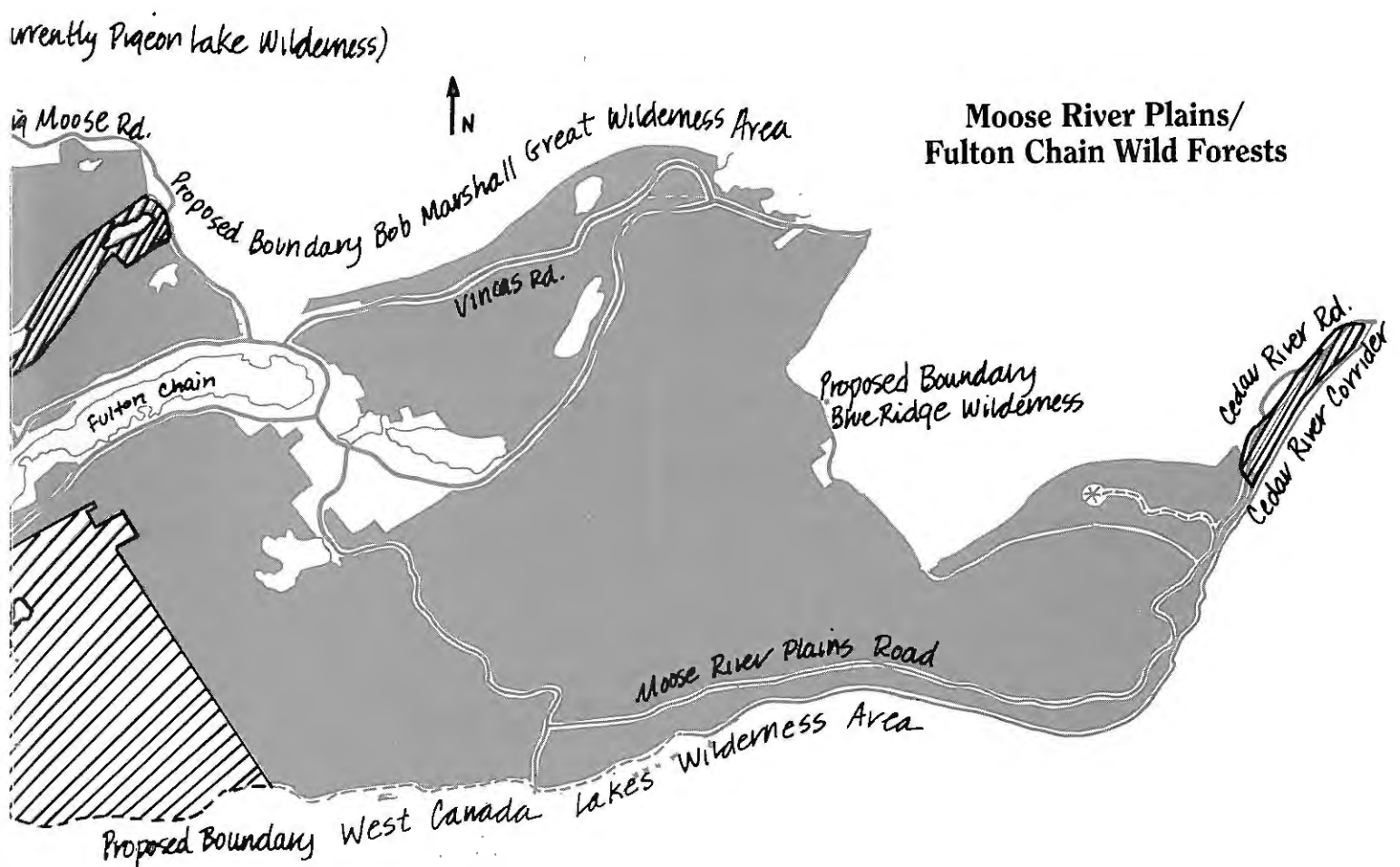
Numerous campsites lie along the road that crosses the Plains, connecting Limekiln and Cedar River gates. A number of short trails lead from the road to streams and ponds. The region is among the most accessible in the park for hunters, campers, fishermen, and snowmobilers.

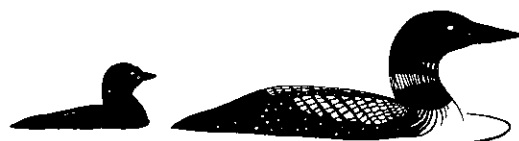
The trails to several ponds in the Plains are sand-based and smooth. Several could be hardened for handicapped use, among them the long trail to Mitchell Ponds or shorter trails to Lost or Icehouse ponds.

Only one small purchase by the State is needed to fulfill the recreational capacity of this remarkable area.

**An access easement along a 200-acre corridor on the Cedar River would:**

- Provide a carry around waterfalls so that whitewater canoeists could run the Cedar River from the Flow to the Hudson, a distance of about 18 miles.





## ***The Adirondack Council***

Founded in 1975, the Adirondack Council is dedicated to preserving and enhancing the Adirondack Park through public education, advocacy, and legal action when necessary. The Council is funded entirely by membership and private foundations. Membership information is available from the Council at Box D-2, Elizabethtown, New York, 12932.

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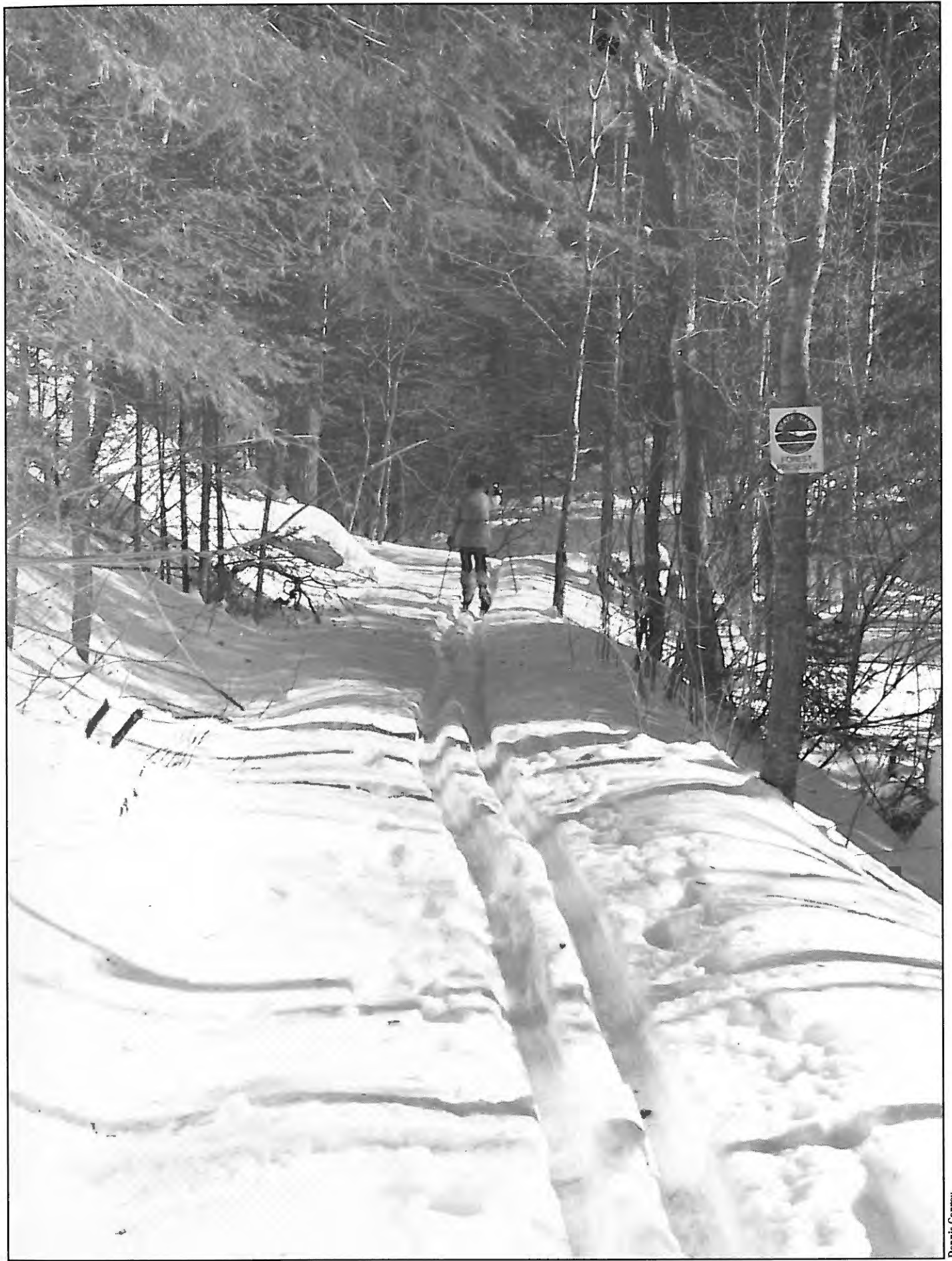
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## **2020 VISION**

### **Fulfilling the Promise of the Adirondack Park**

2020 VISION is a series of reports setting forth a vision for the Adirondack Park of the year 2020 and beyond. Subjects include biological diversity, wilderness and wild forest (the two main categories of Adirondack Forest Preserve), lakes and lakeshores, recreational road and river corridors, economics, and park management. Emerging from these studies will be a specific and comprehensive plan for the Adirondack Park. If implemented by the State, the plan will guarantee the preservation and ecological integrity of this superb natural resource.



Dennis Conroy





*The Adirondack Council*

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