

My wife Jeannie and I have come to Forever Wild Days for years and it's always inspiring to be with so many people who care deeply about the Adirondack Park and who are committed to protecting it.

So it's a special honor to be given this recognition today. And it's even more special to be sharing the day with the Marshall family who have figured so prominently in the cause of wilderness preservation through the generations.

The Explorer is here in force today and I'd like to recognize our crew. Many of you know them already. Our board chair Charlotte Hall is here as are board members Tim Thompson, and Lynne Poteau, who some of you will remember from her days working with the Council. Bob Worth, whose leadership guided the Explorer from the start.

Our staff is here as well: Phil Brown, Betsy Dirnberger, Andreas Mowka and Michael Armstrong. These are the people who deserve the credit for the work you honor today.

And of course the man whose vision brought the Explorer to life 16 years ago: our founder Dick Beamish. He had the brilliant idea of creating a publication to show people how to enjoy the Park and use that as a way to draw them into crucial policy discussions.

As I say, I always feel that I am with kindred spirits at this Council event. We have so many beliefs and values in common. One thing, I think, lies at the heart of what each of our

organizations does. And that's the knowledge that we cannot afford to get complacent. With all the work that has led us to this historic accomplishment of a rich and still growing Forever Wild Forest Preserve, we can't take anything for granted. The Adirondacks remain vulnerable and we each in our own way have the mission of remaining always alert to those forces that could still undermine all the good that's been done.

With every major development proposal, every piece of legislation that touches on the Adirondacks, every proposed constitutional amendment that would revise Article 14, there is the potential (not always the reality of course but the potential) to weaken those protections that were so long in the making.

So what do we do? We work to ensure that New Yorkers know the details of these proposals and understand their ramifications for future preservation.

The Explorer works to fulfill this mission journalistically. We believe that by spreading understanding of what's so special about this Park and also those things that could threaten its future we build a community of informed citizens who stand ready to protect the Adirondacks for all time. Similarly, the Council exists to educate the public and the state's policy makers about the urgent need for protection in many areas.

We may not agree on every particular in every instance but in our common missions I think we all aspire to be Bob Marshall's "Spirited people who will fight for the freedom of the

wilderness.” That’s where Marshall placed his hope for the future and we have to work to live up to that.

It’s a great privilege to be able to work for such a goal and great good fortune to be able to share that effort with all of you.

Thank you once again for all you do and thank you for this recognition.