

**ADIRONDACK COUNCIL LAUDS STATE CONSERVATION DEAL TO PRESERVE
COMMERCIAL FORESTS, JOBS & CREATE NEW RECREATIONAL OPTIONS**
*New Agreement with Nature Conservancy for 90,000 acres of Former Finch, Pruyn & Co.
Timberlands Helps Economy and Environment at the Same Time, Good Use of Enviro Fund*

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ALBANY, N.Y. – The Adirondack Park’s largest environmental organization today offered praise to the Paterson Administration for using unspent money from the Environmental Protection Fund to complete a project that will boost the Adirondack Park’s economy while preventing the break-up of large timberland tracts in more than 30 Adirondack towns. Click to [view map](#) and [more information](#).

“This agreement is an outstanding use of the state’s Environmental Protection Fund to protect local timber industry jobs, provide a boost to the winter recreation economy and help protect the forests at the same time,” said Brian L. Houseal, Executive Director of the Adirondack Council. “It is no secret that we have been critical of Governor Paterson’s treatment of the EPF over the past couple of years. But in this case, he has earned our praise and gratitude for a job well done. He said last summer that he intended to complete this deal and he has kept his word.”

Under the agreement the state has purchased the development rights to the 90,000 acres, as well as some of the recreational rights on those lands. The timber-cutting rights will remain in the hands of a commercial timber company, which will harvest the trees in a sustainable manner, under state supervision. Private-sector employment remains unaffected by the agreement, while the state’s purchase of recreational rights will open new trails in dozens of local communities. Many of those trails will be snowmobile trails, providing new connections between communities that had long been sought by local officials and winter tourism advocates. Since they are on private lands, they can be wider and smoother than snowmobile routes on state Forest Preserve lands, which must manage like foot trails.

“By opening these new, public riding opportunities on private, commercial forest lands, some of the more controversial snowmobile trails on public lands can be rerouted or eliminated,” said Houseal. “This public-private partnership is what the Adirondack Park Snowmobile Plan envisioned when it was finalized in 2006.”

Houseal explained that the ecological health of the commercial forests will be safeguarded by keeping the forests from becoming fragmented by subdivision and development, and by limits on the amount of timber that can be cut in a given year. The agreement also preserves The Nature Conservancy’s promise to provide pulp wood to the former Finch paper mill in Glens Falls for at least the next 20 years.

Second Half of Finch Deal Still Requires Action

In addition to today’s announcement, Houseal called on incoming Gov. Andrew Cuomo to complete the second-half of the Finch/Nature Conservancy conservation agreement, which will place more than 50,000 acres of biologically rich forests lands into “forever wild” state ownership as Forest Preserve. Most of these lands and waters are located in the High Peaks region of the park, near the headwaters of the Hudson River. Those lands include Boreas Ponds, the Hudson River Gorge, Blue Ledges, and the Essex Chain of Lakes.

These new public lands would never be subjected to logging or development, which is banned by the Forever Wild clause of the NYS Constitution. That clause has protected public lands in the Adirondack Park since its ratification by the voters following the 1894 Constitutional Convention.

The Adirondack Council has proposed the creation of a Wild Rivers Wilderness on a portion of these lands, where the Hudson, Rock, Indian, Cedar and Boreas rivers combine to provide a landscape of incomparable natural beauty, a broad diversity of plants and animals and a wide array of the best whitewater and flat-water paddling in the United States. The lands and waters would also be open to public hiking, hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation. Most of it should become wilderness, where motorized travel is not allowed.

Environmental Fund Needs Attention

The Council also called on the Governor and Legislature to restore funding to the Environmental Protection Fund, which has seen almost \$500 million of its resources diverted to budget balancing, non-environmental uses in the past seven years. The fund was due to reach \$300 million annually by 2011, but dropped to less than \$150 million in the FY2010-11 budget.

The Adirondack Council is a privately funded, not-for-profit organization dedicated to ensuring the ecological integrity and wild character of New York's six-million-acre Adirondack Park.

The Council carries out its mission through research, education, advocacy and legal action. The Adirondack Council does not accept government grants or taxpayer-supported donations of any kind. The Council has members in all 50 United States.