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Adirondack Council says things are getting better

Annual 'State of the Park' released

#Elizabethtown — Things are getting better within the Blue Line.

#The Adirondack Council released its annual "State of the Park" report the week of Oct. 3, with thumbs pointing upward throughout the 20-page report.

#“We complain for a living, generally,” joked Adirondack Council Communications Director John Sheehan. “But, there is less and less to complain about year by year. The park is getting healthier, there have been hopeful signs with some of the things that are being done by local governments, and we hope that all of the upward economic trends continue.”

#Sheehan said that the annual report is a chance for the Council to “take stock” in what is working in the park and what needs improvement, along with recognizing those who have contributed to the region’s health in the “Tip of the Hat” section.

#“As a larger group, we feel we have a responsibility to point out when others are doing good things,” Sheehan said. “Most non-profits would not want to give credit to others for things because they feel they are competing for the same grant funding, but we want to give the credit to those who are doing good things.”

#The report praises the efforts of Gov. Andrew Cuomo in his first year in office in terms of several appointments and keeping the Environmental Protection Fund level for the 2011-12 fiscal year.

#“He has appointed some really great people to some really key positions,” Sheehan said, pointing to Joe Martens as commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation and Rose Harvey as commissioner of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

#However, Sheehan said that the Council was concerned about lingering appointments that need to be made on the Adirondack Park Agency’s Board of Commissioners.

#“He has not paid enough attention to the expired terms on the APA board,” Sheehan said. “We are concerned that he might not want to make the appointment in fearing a conflict in the Senate and these are posts that need to be filled.”

#The report also gives a “thumbs down” to all three levels of state government when it comes to a law for guiding permitting for new electric power plants that specifically prohibits the APA

from conducting formal reviews of the projects for facilities producing 25 megawatts of power or more.

#“The big concern is whether the APA will have a say over these plants,” Sheehan said. “We are worried that the park will not be represented in any permitting and development process. You have a major power line that is coming through the Adirondacks, two major wind projects and a small-scale biomass plant that could be coming down at some point. We hope that the APA will have some level of participation other than as Joe Citizen.”

#Overall, the report gives over 55 thumbs up and about 20 thumbs down in areas such as federal government, state government, DEC, APA, judiciary and local government.

#Sheehan said that there is little mention of one of the biggest topics in the park, the Adirondack Club and Resort in Tupper Lake because they base their report on finalized decisions in those areas.

#“The main thing is that we thought the hearings about ACR had been refereed very fairly,” Sheehan said. “We were able to express our concerns, and the developer was able to get his points across.”

#A digital copy of the “State of the Park” 2011 report by the Adirondack Council can be found online at www.adirondackcouncil.org.