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## Campaign touts wild lands communities

WESTERN ADIRONDACKS: Council promotes tourism in 408,000 acres it wants state to take over, manage

By MARTHA ELLEN, TIMES STAFF WRITER

The Adirondack Council has launched a collaborative campaign to promote gateway communities in the western Adirondacks that are part of a proposed wild lands complex it wants the state to adopt.

The council has urged the state since 1988 to consolidate the management of 408,000 acres that would make up the complex.

"We have included the whole 400,000 acres in our wish list for purchase by the state but that may take generations," said John F. Sheehan, Adirondack Council director of communications. "There are a number of large family estates we don't expect to change hands any time soon. There's also a community, Beaver River, that we don't expect to go anywhere soon. We don't want that to go away. We don't expect the rail line going through there to go away."

But the council would like the state to manage the area for its commonalties.

"Cranberry Lake and Inlet are about 50 miles apart and they don't necessarily see themselves as having a connection, but it would be a spectacular paddle to go from one place to the next," Mr. Sheehan said. "Each of these places has individual plans for trails and connective waterways that are distinct from one another."

To raise awareness about the concept and to boost tourism in the two dozen communities that surround the proposed complex, the council is distributing a free map of the area's virtues. The map was unveiled at a news conference Wednesday in Old Forge. Along with the Adirondack Council, the event was attended by Webb Supervisor Robert Moore and representatives from community groups, the Adirondack Park Agency and the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

The promotion could bring attention to a part of the park that is underutilized. The map includes information on Fine, Star Lake, Newton Falls, Oswegatchie, Cranberry Lake, Childwold and Piercefield, among others.

"I think our concern is the High Peaks gets overused," Mr. Sheehan said. "The park is so big that Old Forge or Inlet having to advertise itself as Adirondack doesn't fix a location in people's minds."

Clifton Supervisor Robert L. Snider said he did not know enough about the promotion to decide the level of his support but said too limited management of the Adirondacks turns some people away.

"I'm not against it," he said of the proposal, "but I think it's restricted enough as it is. If you're not young and physically fit, you can't get in there anyway."

The state might consider a different kind of option, he said.

"For the health of the Adirondacks, there's other ways," he said. "They could sell off some state land to pay off their debt."