

WNBZ
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Environmentalists say developer did inadequate wildlife survey

State Adirondack Park Agency hearings continued on the Adirondack Club & Resort earlier this week, with contentious debate over whether developers diligently considered impacts to wildlife.

Environmental groups charged that the LA Group failed to do an adequate wildlife survey for the large-scale resort project proposed for Tupper Lake.

Protect the Adirondacks attorney John Caffry was among those who argued that the development group ignored APA wildlife biologists assigned to help conduct the survey.

The LA Group maintains that it conducted an adequate survey on its own and determined that impacts to wildlife were minimal.

At one point during Wednesday's testimony, Caffry asked the LA Group's Kevin Frank to read an email he sent to a real estate agent.

In the letter, he referred to an APA staff member's questions as "BS comments one of the APA 'greenies' had in their additional information [request]."

John Sheehan is spokesman for the Adirondack Council, one of the Adirondack Park's largest and most influential environmental organizations. He says the LA Group's record suggests an unwillingness to cooperate with the APA.

"The applicant from day one has been insisting that he has an environmentally benign project when we know it's the biggest project ever proposed in the Adirondack Park," Sheehan said. "And they've been trying to beat up anybody that has the nerve to criticize the project by saying, 'if it doesn't hurt the environment and it's going to help the economy, what's wrong with you?'"

Tom Ulasewicz is the LA Group's attorney. He has insisted that the criticisms from green groups are an unwarranted attempt to tie up the project in red tape.

-George Earl, 6-24-11