

The Adirondack Council



NEWSLETTER
FEBRUARY 2002



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Dear Friend of the Adirondacks,

I have two predictions for the coming year. First, the Adirondack Park will be center stage for unprecedented activity by state agencies and the federal government. Second, as your watchdog for the Park's natural resources, the Adirondack Council will work to ensure that this is a banner year for Adirondack Park protection and sustainable economic development.

This year, the Adirondack Park Agency will tackle the challenge of adopting new enforcement regulations. An enforcement overhaul is badly needed, as you know from the Council's recent reports. The APA will tackle the tough issue of cell tower construction and location by developing a new Parkwide policy. The Agency will also review plans presented by the Department of Environmental Conservation for the management of dozens of distinct areas of the Forest Preserve. Many of these plans are decades late. Once adopted, they will determine the way each of us enjoys our favorite area of the Forest Preserve for years to come.

Both the APA and the DEC will review permits to apply the chemical Sonar to control invasive Eurasian watermilfoil in Lake George. The fate of this experiment would have an impact on any future requests in the Park for permission to kill non-native aquatic plants with chemicals.

By this spring, the DEC and the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation are slated to deliver their first draft of a comprehensive snowmobile plan for the entire Park. This plan is intended to provide new opportunities for snowmobilers to move safely from community to community. If the plan is carefully prepared, it could expand economic opportunities for the villages and hamlets, while providing unprecedented recreational access in the winter months — without compromising the Park's wild forest character.

Meanwhile, the future of hydroelectric dams on some of the Park's major rivers is being debated, as the owners seek new licenses from the federal government. The licenses determine how the flow of water is regulated. That, in turn, will affect white water recreation, canoeing, fishing opportunities and other recreational access. Because these licenses are good for up to forty years, the Adirondack Council has been an active participant in negotiations on the Raquette, Saranac, Ausable, Sacandaga and Oswegatchie rivers.

In the state Legislature, all 211 seats are up for election. The people of the State of New York will elect a Governor, Comptroller and Attorney General this year. It is also time to redraw the districts from which legislators are elected, which occurs only once every 10 years.

Legislation is needed to guard against timber theft on state lands, to protect loons and other waterfowl from the effects of lead poisoning; to improve the water quality of Adirondack lakes and streams; and, to regulate the siting of hunting cabins in the back country. Finally, the legislature must determine the fate of the Environmental Protection Fund — the so-called "locked box" established in 1993 to ensure that funds were available statewide for environmental capital projects, regardless of the state of the economy.

You can help protect this wonderful Park by becoming a Council member or activist. Our staff will keep you informed on the hot issues and let you know what you can do to help. Together, we can make the Park healthier, wilder and more attractive as a place to live and visit. Together, we can turn a busy year into a great year.

Sincerely,

Bernard C. Melewski
Counsel and Acting Executive Director

On the Cover

The Moose River, as it runs through Lyonsdale, Lewis County, is being made available to the state for addition to the Adirondack Forest Preserve, due to the efforts of the Council and U.S. Sen. Hillary Clinton. The deal would place in public hands up to 3,600 acres of shoreline, wetlands and forest along a five-mile stretch of the river.

Photo by Gary Randorf.

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Our Mission

The Adirondack Council is an 18,000 member, privately funded, not-for-profit organization dedicated to protecting and enhancing the natural and human communities of the Adirondack Park through research, education, advocacy and legal action.

Newsletter design by Sheri Amsel

'I Want to Protect a Million Acres of Open Space' Gov. Pataki Tells State

In his State of the State message in early January, Gov. George E. Pataki made two announcements that should have a far reaching, beneficial impact on the Adirondack Park and its residents.

First, the Governor called for a statewide goal of protecting one million acres of open space lands over the next 10 years. Second, the Governor announced he would expand an existing loan program that is designed to assist small businesses. The \$100-million expansion could allow the state to extend the program so homeowners and farmers could qualify for low-interest loans for water pollution control.

The state would set up a special fund to provide loans to homeowners, farmers and commercial property owners through local banks. The money could be used to install, expand and repair broken or inadequate septic systems. That will prevent the accidental contamination of surface waters (lakes, rivers, etc.) by homes and businesses. Farmers would also qualify for loans to control livestock manure runoff.

The Governor's "million-acre announcement" on open space comes at an awkward time for him and the Legislature. Environmentalists were very pleased with the Governor's goal, but uneasy that he didn't say how he would pay for it. Despite several attempts, the Governor and legislative leaders have failed to come to an agreement on how to spend the state's Environmental Protection Fund.

Currently, the EPF is identified in the NYS Open Space Conservation Plan as the sole source of funding for the plan's list of priority projects. The 2001-02 EPF has not yet been approved. As a result, the money is sitting in the dedicated account, but cannot be spent until the Governor and Legislature agree on how.

If the Governor wants to find a million acres deserving of state protection, he won't have to look far beyond the Adirondacks. At six million acres, the Park makes up only 20 percent of the state's land mass. But it contains a much higher percentage of the state's private, unbroken open space.

Most of the Park's large blocks of public land remain incomplete. Some have inholdings of private land that should eventually become state Forest Preserve. Others still need to be rounded out and/or connected to other Wilderness and Wild Forest units. For example, the Council's proposal for a Bob Marshall Great Wilderness in the western Adirondacks would incorporate the Five Ponds, William C. Whitney, Pepperbox and Pigeon Lake Wilderness areas, as well as private land that now lies between them. While more than 70 percent of these lands are now under some form of state protection, there is still much work to do.

A glance at the list of the top 5 private property owners in the Adirondack Park shows more than 500,000 acres of potential conservation easement land, all in the hands of local and multinational timber companies.

International Paper Co. has already agreed to sell 26,500 acres of land to the Nature Conservancy, which, in turn will sell some of that land to the state for addition to the Forest Preserve and protect some with conservation easements.

Overall, International Paper still owns roughly 300,000 acres of the Adirondack Park that are not protected through an easement. These lands are scattered throughout the Adirondack Park.

In the northeastern Adirondacks, Domtar Inc. owns 105,000 acres known as the Sable Highlands. Domtar is seeking a state conservation easement on more than 100,000 acres and is willing to sell some of the land outright to the state for inclusion in the Forest Preserve.

In the western Adirondacks, more than 35,000 contiguous acres of the Whitney Estate remain unprotected in Hamilton County. The family sold 15,000 acres, including Little Tupper Lake, to the state in 1999.

Niagara Mohawk Power Corp. also has agreed to offer 3,600 acres of land along the Moose River to the state.

The Adirondack Council will continue to work with the Governor's office to identify and prioritize the Park's open space protection needs and to secure the funding needed to carry out those plans.



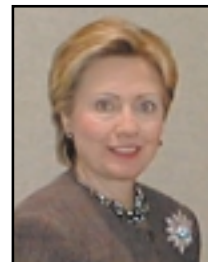
Rock Pond, at the south end of the William C. Whitney Wilderness, in the heart of the Council's proposed Bob Marshall Great Wilderness. This pond was purchased by the state along with Little Tupper Lake in 1999, as part of a 15,000-acre purchase from the Whitney family. To the south lies another 35,000 acres of Whitney land deserving of state protection.

Moose River Purchase Made Possible By Council, Clinton Action

On November 28, the NYS Public Service Commission approved a merger agreement between two power companies that included a provision to offer for sale to the state a five-mile stretch of the Moose River in Lewis County.

The Adirondack Council has been working to make this deal

possible since National Grid announced more than a year ago that it wanted to purchase Niagara Mohawk's holdings. U.S. Senator Hillary Clinton held discussions with National Grid officials about the Moose River property, with the Council's support.



*U.S. Senator
Hillary Clinton*

The land was owned by the Niagara Mohawk Power Corp. of Syracuse, which is merging with British electric power giant National Grid. The new power company will offer the land to the state at market value, which has not yet been determined. The Council will advocate that the entire parcel be purchased for addition to the Adirondack Forest Preserve. The lands are listed as a priority for state acquisition in the NYS Open Space Conservation Plan.

The 3,600-acre parcel includes miles of shoreline on the north and south banks of the river as it passes through the Town of Lyonsdale, on the southwestern edge of the Adirondack Park. The river parcel lies between the Black River Wild Forest and the Ha-De-Ron-Dah Wilderness, but does not abut either. The river is classified as scenic in the state's Wild, Scenic and Recreational River System.



Photo by Gary Randorf

Council to Press for Loon-Saving Law Regulating Small Lead Sinkers

This legislative session, the Adirondack Council will again press for a new law to protect loons and other vulnerable waterfowl from lead poisoning from small fishing sinkers.

Loons and more than 20 other species of water birds swallow lead sinkers by mistake and are poisoned by them. They ingest sinkers while feeding on small fish that have tackle attached, and eat discarded sinkers when swallowing tiny pebbles to aid in their digestion.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Tufts University Wildlife Clinic estimate that half of all loon deaths result from ingestion of lead sinkers. Sinkers between one tenth of an ounce and half an ounce are the size most likely to cause fatal poisonings. Studies have also shown that even non-fatal doses of lead can still lead to poisoning that makes the birds more vulnerable to predators by harming their organs and nervous systems.

NYS Wildlife Pathologist Ward Stone's necropsies on birds have shown lead to be an important cause of loon

death in New York waters and has written to local newspapers advocating a statewide lead sinker ban. Stone won the Council's 2001 Public Service Award in July.

The Adirondack Council's logo is a mother loon and a chick. For many people, loons have become a symbol of the Adirondack wilderness. Loons are a "species of special concern" in New York, meriting special attention and protection. Habitat loss due to development has already made the loon scarce. Eliminating the use of lead sinkers will significantly improve their survival rate.

Legislation was proposed last session to ban the most lethal lead sinkers, sponsored by Sen. Carl Marcellino, R-Syosset, and Assemblyman Steven Englebright, D-Setauket. The Council will continue to support such legislation.



Illustration by Sheri Ansel

Lack of Environmental Protection Funds Stalls Important Open Space Projects

Despite the dire need to complete several major open space conservation projects in the Adirondack Park, and dozens more statewide, the Legislature and Governor Pataki have failed to come to an agreement on a bill to authorize spending from the \$125-million-plus state Environmental Protection Fund.

The Council is working to persuade the Governor and Legislature to pass the EPF. Farmers and municipalities stand to lose tens of millions of

dollars in grants for clean water, solid waste, safe drinking water, conservation easements and parks, if the EPF is not approved.

The EPF was created in 1993 as a dedicated source of revenue for land acquisition, landfill closure, recycling programs and parks/historic preservation. By providing a “locked box” funding source, the Legislature intentionally shielded the EPF from year-to-year fluctuations in the state’s fiscal condition.

Each year, \$112 million from the Real Estate Transfer Tax is automatically deposited into the EPF. Another \$13 million comes from conservation-theme license plates and under water land leases. The money can only be spent on environmental capital projects that fall into the eligible categories.

However, the Legislature and Governor must agree each year on how the money will be spent. Early in 2001, Governor Pataki’s proposal for the EPF included the salaries of some state employees and a change in the EPF’s structure to avoid itemized expenditures. The Legislature balked.

The Governor would have increased the amount of the EPF to \$150 million to compensate for the fact that funds from the 1996 Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act had run out. The Assembly countered with a \$187-million EPF proposal. The Senate weighed in at \$170 million. But the Governor and Legislature



Round Lake, Hamilton County, one of many acquisition priorities in the Park.

Photo by Gary Randorf

failed to include any of those choices in the “bare bones” budget they passed over the summer.

After the Sept. 11 attacks, the Governor and Legislature failed to include the EPF in the supplemental spending plan, then decided not to come back into session. In mid-December, Assemb. Richard Brodsky, D-Elmsford, made yet another proposal for a \$150-million EPF with the support of the Adirondack Council and other environmental organizations. Brodsky told the press that he had the full support of the Speaker Sheldon Silver, D-Manhattan. But neither house returned to act on it before the end of the year.

The Council will continue to urge the Legislature and Governor to restore the EPF before the end of the fiscal year (March 31).

In January, the Governor proposed a \$125-million EPF for fiscal year 2001-02, plus another \$125-million for fiscal year 2002-03. The Governor’s ‘02-03 proposal added \$23-million in new expenses but did not add new revenue, and called for the removal of \$100-million from the fund. At press time, the Council was seeking swift action on the overdue 2001-02 proposal and will work with the Legislature on the details of the 2002-03 budget.

Online Updates Available on Forest Preserve Mgt. Plans

Check out our website for the latest information on the Draft Unit Management Plans for the Forest Preserve.

The Department of Environmental Conservation is accepting comments on draft Unit Management Plans as they are completed. The Council has dedicated an area on our website to keep members up-to-date on the planning process that is so important to the future of the Adirondack Park.

Please visit our website, see which draft UMPs DEC is working on, learn what the Council’s concerns are, and send comments to DEC about particular areas of the Park.

Go to: www.adirondackcouncil.org and click on “DEC’s Draft Unit Management Planning”

The Adirondack Council Benefits From Matching Gift Programs

Each year dozens of Adirondack Council members double their personal gifts with matching gifts* through their company giving programs. The Adirondack Council acknowledges with appreciation the matching gifts from the following corporations to the 2000-2001 Annual Fund:

ACE USA
American Express
American International Group
Becton Dickinson
Champion International
Chase Manhattan
Citigroup
Corning, Inc.
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Fleet Bank
General Electric Company
IBM
John Hancock Financial Services, Inc.
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Mobil
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Open Society Institute
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Pfizer, Inc.
Prospect Hill Foundation
Readers Digest
Reuters American, Inc.
The Rockefeller Foundation
SONY
TransAmerica
United Technologies
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**For more information about workplace Matching Gifts, please check with your company's Human Resource department.*

Save this Date...

It's not too early to mark your calendar and make plans to attend the Council's
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING AND AWARDS DINNER...

Saturday, July 13th, 2002
Garnet Hill Lodge – North River, NY
Annual Membership Meeting 1 P.M.
Cocktail Reception and Awards Dinner 5 P.M.

For more information, please contact Elaine at the Council's Elizabethtown office by mail,
or by phone at 877-873-2240 or via e-mail at adkcouncil@aol.com



Membership:

Would you like to encourage friends and family to join the Council? Our strength in advocacy to protect the Adirondack Park comes from our large membership across New York State and the U.S. If you would like us to send membership information to someone, just contact us! We'll do the rest. Call toll free 1-877-873-2400 or email: adkcouncil@aol.com

Each summer, the Council staff enjoys a day at Hewitt Lake, hosted generously by Gus Stewart and the families of the Hewitt Lake Club. Gus, inset right, gave a tour with historical information about the land and buildings adjacent to the lake before serving lunch on the front porch.



Lola and Ray Johnson, left, visited with Council staff, trustees and friends during the annual Lighthouse Party, hosted by Gary Heurich in Essex.



Biking over Norman Ridge in Bloomingdale during a Council bike trip in August.

Council staff spent a sunny November afternoon outside Patagonia's SoHo store in New York City. After visiting with store employees and explaining the Council's work in the Adirondacks, staff visited with members and other people strolling the streets.



Council Invited by Senate to Special Washington Meeting on Acid Rain And Air Pollution Bills; Subsequent Hearings Bode Well for Park

The Adirondack Council was one of only 10 environmental organizations in the United States to be invited to a special air pollution “stakeholder meeting” October 4 and 5 at the request of U.S. Sens. James Jeffords and Bob Smith, the chairman and former chairman of the Senate Committee on the Environment and Public Works.

After the meetings were concluded, the committee held formal hearings on clean air legislation. At those hearings, the electric power industry revealed for the first time that it was willing to make cuts in sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides deep enough to stop the damage acid rain is causing around the nation.

“We were honored to be called to these meetings,” said Adirondack Council Acting Executive Director Bernard C. Melewski. “We were by no means the largest organization invited, but our 25-year fight against acid rain has made us almost synonymous with the cause. The results could not have been better. For the first time in the 30-year debate on acid rain, the electric power industry has finally come around to our way of thinking on emissions cuts.”

Melewski not only participated in the meeting, but also distributed the Council’s film, **ACID RAIN: An Adirondack Tragedy** to every member of the Senate committee. Committee staff also gave a copy to all of the other participants from around the country.

The meeting consisted of 25 representatives from environmental organizations, power companies and trade associations in Washington, D.C. It was originally scheduled for the morning of September 11. That meeting convened long enough for everyone in the room to receive a “position paper” from the other participants, outlining their hopes for new clean air legislation.

From what was handed out at the Sept. 11 meeting, the Council had a pretty good sense of what everyone was hoping to accomplish. The subsequent public hearings were the first public



Acting Executive Director Melewski explains the Council’s newest report at an Albany press conference in November. State of the Park 2001 is the Council’s 20-page annual review of government actions that help or hurt Park protection. Photo by Scott Lorey

confirmation of the power industry’s change of heart.

Their willingness to curb the emissions of acid rain-causing chemicals was a dramatic change in the position. Just two years ago, the same companies that had argued bitterly against emissions cuts aimed at curbing acid rain.

The Council impressed upon the Senate the need for rapid action to stop the destruction acid rain has wrought on the Adirondack Park and the entire East Coast. Melewski made it clear that we weren’t just trying to save lakes and trees, although those alone would be worth the effort. Acid rain strikes at the heart of the Adirondack tourism economy and threatens the health and livelihoods of all Park residents.

Melewski thanked Senator Jeffords for keeping his committee, and the nation, focused on this important domestic issue.

Acid Rain Video, Poster, Booklet Package Still Available Free to Schools, Libraries

The Adirondack Council’s three-part acid rain education package is still available to schools and libraries for free by calling the Council’s toll-free Acid Rain Hotline at 1-800-842-PARK.

To date, the Council has distributed more than 1,500 copies of our mini-documentary *Acid Rain: An Adirondack Tragedy*. Every public library system in the state has enough copies for each of its branches to lend. Any teacher in Clinton, Essex or Franklin counties can get a copy through their school library system.

After reading the article in our summer 2001 newsletter, more than 100 schools and libraries across the Northeast took advantage of the opportunity to receive the Council’s video, plus the Council’s full-color booklet and classroom poster.

Thanks to the efforts of U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer, D-NY, and Congressman John McHugh, R-Watertown, the video has now been distributed to every member of Congress. Thanks to the American Environmental Review series, the program played on Public Broadcasting System stations around the country, starting in November 2000. Funding for the film was generously provided by the Rivendell Foundation.



PSC Approves Draft Plan For Safe Pollution Allowance Sales

The NYS Public Service Commission has released a draft “model covenant” for power companies to use as a guideline for selling pollution allowances without adding to the Adirondack Park’s acid rain problems.

The PSC’s new model was designed to help power companies comply with a state law that prevents them from profiting from pollution allowance sales to companies whose smokestacks cause acid rain here. Each allowance is worth the right to emit one ton of sulfur dioxide, a chief component of acid rain.

Since New York’s air pollution laws are far stricter than federal laws, New York companies can’t use all of the federal pollution allowances they receive each year.

Companies with leftover allowances are free to sell them to other companies that need them to meet federal standards. When New York leftover allowances are sold to the Midwest, the pollution lands on New York anyway. This negates some of the benefit of New York’s stricter acid rain laws. **In the summer of 2000, a new state law required New York power companies to**

keep their leftover federal pollution allowances out of the hands of Midwest polluters.

While the PSC has no authority to prevent sales of allowances to other states, it can demand that our power companies make prudent decisions regarding their assets. So, rather than banning the sale to Midwest companies, the law imposes a fine if allowances issued to a New York company are ever used by an upwind company. Each allowance carries a serial number for tracking purposes. The fine is equal to the amount the buyer paid to the New York company for the allowance. The Adirondack Council was a strong advocate for the creation of this new law — the first of its kind in the nation.

Today, any company that simply sells its allowances to the highest bidder runs a significant risk. Even if the bidder is not from the Midwest, the allowances could be resold to, and used by, a Midwest company. That would trigger a fine from state regulators. The best way to avoid a penalty, the PSC points out, is to sell them only under a contract. Such a contract would prohibit the use of the allowances by any company located in one of the 14 states upwind of New York. Disputes would be ironed out by New York courts.

KeySpan (formerly the Long Island Lighting Co.) pioneered this idea when it agreed to the first such contract on its own three years ago. Lilco’s allowance sales to the Midwest had caused great alarm in the Legislature. The company agreed in 1999 to avoid such sales in the future. The PSC used KeySpan’s contracts as the blueprint for the new “model covenant.”

Once a model covenant is approved, New York power companies will be able to emulate it and safely sell their leftover allowances. The public will be assured that no New York power plant can profit from an allowance sale that would harm New York’s environment.

The Council will work with the PSC to ensure that the covenant it approves protects the natural resources of the Adirondack Park.



Photo by Gary Randorf

A Model Cooperative Project

This well-crafted interpretive kiosk on State Route 8 in the Herkimer County hamlet of Nobleboro was built as a joint project of the Department of Environmental Conservation, the Adirondack Park Agency and Department of Transportation. Constructed of natural, local materials, the kiosk points out local features in the Forest Preserve around West Canada Creek and gives visitors a quick lesson on the habitats of the southwestern Adirondack Park.

Photo by Gary Randorf



APA Delays Chemical Experiment in Lake George

After months of public hearings and private negotiations, the Adirondack Council, Lake George Park Commission and the staff of the Adirondack Park Agency signed an agreement this winter that would minimize the risks associated with an experimental plan to use a chemical herbicide to kill Eurasian milfoil in Lake George.

However, the Adirondack Park Agency board of commissioners ruled in January that it did not have enough testimony to rule on the proposal and sent the entire matter back to the public hearing phase. The delay virtually guarantees the treatment will not be performed in 2002, since the hearing is expected to take months and the most effective time for treatment is late April or early May.

The applicants must also receive a permit from the Department of Environmental Conservation before receiving final permission to proceed with the experiment.

Eurasian milfoil is not native to the lake, but was brought here by one or more careless boaters. Milfoil can aggressively colonize lakes where conditions are right for its growth and overtake native species. While milfoil has been present in Lake George since 1985 or earlier, it only finds suitable habitat on eight percent of the lake bottom. Currently, it occupies less than three percent of the lake bottom.

Non-Toxic Controls Working

Milfoil has not spread further because the LGPC has done a good job of controlling it with mechanical harvesting, hand pulling and lake-bottom mats. In some places, it even appears to have disappeared on its own. This year, LGPC asked for permission from the APA to experiment with high doses of fluoridone (brand name: Sonar) in four bays.

Sonar was approved for use in the United States in 1986. It was banned in New York until 1995. It has never been used in an Adirondack lake.

State regulators seemed prepared to go along with the LGPC's plan. The Office of General Services was a co-applicant for the permit. The Department of State awarded the LGPC a grant to undertake the project.

The Council's board of directors has adopted a policy stating that chemical pesticides should be used only as a last resort to control exotic species, after all other less toxic methods have failed. The Council brought up reasonable scientific and public safety issues during preparations for the APA's hearing. The Council worked independently to ensure that its concerns over the loss of sensitive, native species and the potential contamination of drinking water were addressed — regardless of when, or if, the project is ever undertaken.

The Council argued that the original plan proposed by the

LGPC was dangerous to native plants and could have contaminated tap water. The Park Agency unanimously agreed with the Council that the application could not be approved as proposed. The APA's commissioners sent the matter to a public hearing. Before the APA's hearings could get underway, the LGPC approached the Council seeking a settlement.

The Settlement

Unlike the original plan proposed by the LGPC last spring, the negotiated plan would be undertaken in only two of the four proposed areas, eliminating most of the risk to drinking water and rare native plant communities. Only Moonlight Bay and Paradise Bay will be treated. Those two sites account for one seventh of the acreage of the original plan (from 36 acres down to 5). The original plan called for dumping high doses of Sonar into all four sites, while only containing the chemical in three of the four (with curtains that run from the surface to the bottom of the lake). In at least one case, the curtains were to be notched to allow boaters to travel in and out of the treatment zone. That would have allowed the chemical to reach other parts of the lake rather easily.

Instead, Moonlight and Paradise would be curtained off completely. In one location, very low doses will be used for a longer period of time. The second site will receive slightly higher doses. Neither site abuts developed areas or water intakes. Neither has high concentrations of native, protected plants.

Rejected Settlement Had Scientific Benefits

Ultimately, the Council agreed to a plan that would have yielded information that can be used to determine the usefulness of Sonar and the potential side effects in Lake George. Rather than constant reapplication of the chemical with no follow-up studies, the results will be carefully monitored over a five-year period. Hand harvesting would be used to control remaining milfoil plants in the years following treatment. The data must be peer reviewed by scientific experts and published.



Photos by John Sheehan

Paradise Bay on Lake George in August 2001 is one of two sites still under construction for chemical herbicide treatment to kill "dense beds" of milfoil. Clearly, weed growth has not affected tourism.

— Randorf Photo Book on Adirondack Park Due to be Released to Stores Soon —

The Adirondack Council is pleased to announce that staff member Gary Randorf's long-awaited illustrated history of the Adirondack Park is about to be released by a major publishing house.

The Council's first staff member and executive director, Randorf has been with the organization for a quarter of a century. His amazing talents for Adirondack landscape and nature photography have won him acclaim in art and publishing circles around the globe. In 1992, Eastman-Kodak featured exclusively his work for a major gallery and traveling exhibit on the 100th Anniversary of the Adirondack Park.

As one reader keenly observed, Gary Randorf has, in his book *THE ADIRONDACKS: Wild Island of Hope*, accomplished a first: a beautiful picture book of 100 photos, which tells the whole story of the Adirondack Park as well.



Expected to be released this spring by Johns Hopkins University Press, the book includes a history (*Paths in the Forest* and *A Forest Forever*), a concise natural history (*A Sense of Place*), an update on acid rain and other menaces, and a thought-provoking chapter on the future of the Park (*Will the Forest be Unbroken?*).

One of the joys of this book is that in all the chapters, the author has interspersed journeys and contemplations that entice the reader to want to put on his or her own boots or cross country skis and head out the back door to the Adirondack woods. The technique holds the full interest and enthusiasm of the reader while allowing the author to convey the serious thoughts and historical perspectives necessary to fully understand and appreciate the Park.



— Members/Activists Needed —



Illustration by Sheri Amsel

Now more than ever, the Adirondack Council needs your help. We need people who are willing to get involved and make a difference on important issues facing the Adirondack Park. We need people like you, who want to write letters or make phone calls to policy makers in the Park, in Albany and in Washington. We need people willing to attend public hearings and speak out on behalf of Park protection.

How can you get involved? Join the Adirondack Council's Activist Network today. As a member and an activist you'll receive Action Alerts in the mail or via email, on hot topics that require immediate attention. Whatever method you prefer, we'll keep you informed on how you can help.

Just call us, send us a note or email us today to become an activist. It's as easy as that.

Already an activist? The Adirondack Council is trying to gather activists' and members' email addresses in order to contact you more quickly and efficiently. Please email us today (adkcouncil@aol.com) so we can add your email address to our database. Thank you.

— In Memorium —

The Adirondack Council and the Adirondacks lost a good friend in Dr. David Jones Fant III who passed away on August 16, 2001. Together with his wife Gloria, he exemplified community stewardship through his efforts to preserve community spaces and natural habitats in the town of Speculator and throughout the Adirondacks. The Council awarded the Fants the Park Stewardship Award in 1997. We offer our condolences to Gloria Fant and we will miss David's passionate advocacy and generosity.

Council Members' Voices Heard In Crucial DEC & APA Hearings

Adirondack Council members and staff made their views known at three separate rounds of public hearings last fall on topics as diverse as cell towers, open space preservation and public land management.

Open Space Plan

Across the state in mid-November, Council members participated in hearings on the future of the state's land acquisition program. In hearings on the NYS Open Space Conservation Plan, Council members urged the state to acquire the newly available 3,600-acre Moose River parcel in Lewis County (see cover story) and to follow through on the other high priorities already identified in the Adirondack Park portion of the plan.

Most importantly, Council members told state officials that the plan was only a stack of paper without the funds to carry it out. They called on the Governor and Legislature to come to an agreement on how to spend the \$125-million-plus Environmental Protection Fund and move forward with acquisitions.

Bog River Management Plan

At hearings inside the Park and the Albany suburb of Guilderland, Council members told the Department of Environmental Conservation that the Unit Management Plan for the Bog River/Lows Lake complex (in St. Lawrence and Hamilton counties) should require the immediate elimination of float planes from the area. DEC's current plan calls for a phase-out over five years.

Council members also objected to the addition of snowmobile trails in the plan that cross private lands in the Round Lake area. They correctly noted that DEC does not have the authority to include private lands in official Forest Preserve plans. They noted that approving such a plan would usurp the Adirondack Park Agency's authority to classify the area as Primitive or Wilderness, if some of the lands were purchased for the Forest Preserve.

They asked that the proposed trail be removed from the draft UMP and added later, only if it is approved as part of the yet-to-be-completed DEC plan for a Parkwide snowmobile network.



APA cell tower hearing in Colonie.

Photo by Scott Lorey.

Communications Towers

At two hearings in the Park, as well as hearings in the Albany suburb of Colonie and in Syracuse, Council members told the Adirondack Park Agency that its draft policy on communications towers was flawed. Council members and staff pointed out that the consultant chosen to develop the APA's plan is a leading consultant to the cell phone industry in the Adirondacks.

The new policy not only encourages the proliferation of towers along roadsides and in the backcountry, but assumes that the service is needed throughout the Park. Those who testified told the APA that cell phone coverage might be easy to conceal in hamlets and villages, but prominent towers throughout the Park's rural landscape would only harm scenic views and degrade the Park's ability to draw tourists. They urged the APA to seek advice from other regional land-use regulatory boards around the country, who could "peer review" the policy and suggest changes to protect the Park's priceless scenery.

On Jan 11, APA voted to delay its decision for another month. **The Council expresses its sincere thanks to those who attended these hearings and submitted written comments to the APA and DEC.**

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