

ADIRONDACK COUNCIL

NEWSLETTER / WINTER 1991

Finally, Acid Rain Relief

COUNCIL VICTORY ON CLEAN AIR



Dan Plumley

Dead Red Spruce Stands on Whiteface Mountain

For more than a decade the Adirondack Council has worked to gain passage of federal legislation that would clean the air and, in turn, the acidic rains that fall on Adirondack lakes and forests. That work has finally paid off. On November 15th, President Bush signed into law amendments to the Clean Air Act of 1990 that will curb the destructive impacts of acid rain and allow nature to begin the slow process of healing.

The Council's crusade to stop acid rain began in the late 1970s, when then executive director, Gary Randorf urged Congress to place "a greater focus on curtailing the root cause of the [acid rain] problem...air pollution reaching the Adirondack region from the west..."

In 1979, a letter from the Council to the *New York Times* warned: "When will our society wake up to its environmental priorities and put scrubbers on fossil-fuel fired industries? Ample evidence indicates that it's time for action. Delay will lead to more lifeless waters and other deleterious effects." And it did.

Today, the toll of critically acidified and endangered lakes has risen to over 500 in the Adirondacks – the majority of these fishless, almost lifeless. The delay has taken its toll on forests, too, with stands of high elevation

red spruce trees, like those on Whiteface Mountain, suffering as much as 80% mortality.

The new Clean Air Act includes provisions to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions (a primary acid rain precursor) by 50% nationwide before the turn of the century. This will amount to a 10 million ton reduction in annual sulfur emissions which will substantially reduce fall-out of acidic sulfur compounds on the Adirondacks. Nitrogen oxide emissions, another major contributor to the acid rain problem, will be cut by two to four million tons annually under the new law.

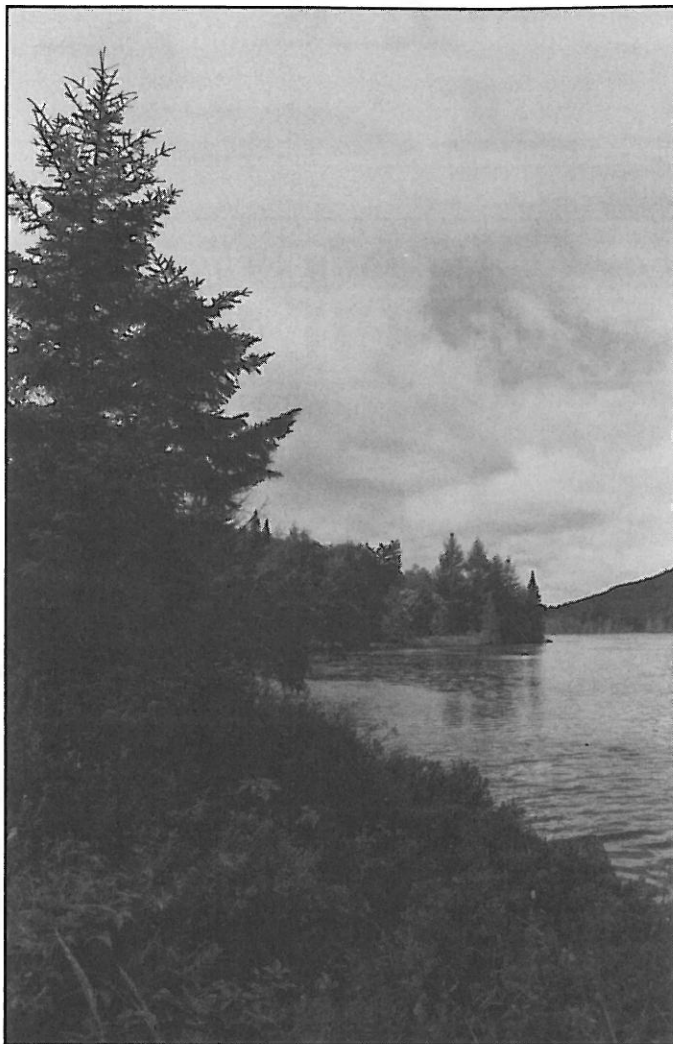
New controls on urban-borne smog and ozone pollution as well as provisions to protect the atmospheric ozone-layer from debilitating chlorofluorocarbon compounds (CFCs) will also help safeguard the Adirondack Park for future generations.

The effectiveness of these new controls will ultimately be determined by the federal government's commitment to enforcement. The Adirondack Council's new role will be to monitor enforcement efforts and take action when needed.

(Highlights of the Council's decade-long campaign against acid rain are presented on page 2)

Over a Decade of Action

- **1978** - The Adirondack Council urges State Department of Environmental Conservation to "focus on the root cause" of acid rain—pollution from the midwest—as opposed to treating impacts via expensive, "band-aid" liming programs.
- **1979-80** - The Council opposes ill-fated plan by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to relax controls on acid precursor-polluting industries in Ohio. EPA plan is turned down.
- **1980** - The Council helps form CANARI (Coalition of Adirondackers to Neutralize Acid Rain Inflow)—representing over 50 organizations from across New York State in favor of a strong Clean Air bill. The Council also joins forces as a member of the National Clean Air Coalition.
- **1982** - Through a grant from the Richard King Mellon Foundation, the Council funds and coordinates an updated assessment of acid rain impacts on the Adirondack Park.
- **1984** - The Council testifies before the U.S. Senate on acid rain control legislation and participates in the national STOP ACID RAIN advocacy program. The Council's Let's Stop Acid Rain brochure is produced and distributed. The Council also backs New York State's Acid Deposition Control Act, which passes and is signed into law by Governor Cuomo.
- **1987** - The Council publishes Beside The Stilled Waters — an illustrated report detailing the impacts of acid rain in the Adirondacks and the urgent need for Congressional action. This is distributed to the entire U.S. Congress and to President Reagan.
- **1988-89** - At the Council's urging, the National Park Service carries out a nationwide interpretive program focused on the acid rain problem. Congressional lobbying effort continues, achieving near-unanimous NY Congressional delegation approval and co-sponsorship on aggressive Clean Air and acid rain control legislation (both House and Senate).
- **1990** - The Council co-directs and helps fund a national clean air advocacy meeting in Washington, D.C., followed by intensive lobbying. House and Senate pass Clean Air legislation. On November 15, 1990, President George Bush signs into law, the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990.



Dan Plumley

Critically acidified Indian Lake. Now the slow healing process can begin.

Council Staffer Appointed

Adirondack Council staffer Dan Plumley has been appointed to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) newly created Acid Rain Advisory Committee. The advisory group will help EPA decide how best to implement new amendments to the Clean Air Act (story on page 1).

For the past five years, Plumley has been among the nation's leading advocates in the fight to curb the destructive impacts of acid rain and was recently praised by New York Congressman Sherwood Boehlert for all his efforts.

The Committee had its first meeting in Washington, D.C. in mid-December. Congratulations Dan!

Emergency Need For Land Funds Created

Exceptionally low voter turnout downstate and widespread concern over the state and national economy proved to be insurmountable hurdles in our efforts to win voter approval of the 21st Century Environmental Quality Bond Act. The loss of the \$1.975 billion bond act, \$800 million of which would have funded statewide land protection projects, has brought Adirondack land preservation to a halt.

And to make matters worse, Governor Cuomo's recent call for a dedicated environmental fund failed to include provisions for land protection. This is the same Governor who proposed and promoted the bond act!

Right now there are no state funds available for land protection of any kind. This includes critical Adirondack purchases that had already been approved and only required money to seal the deals.

A current example of what will be lost is seen the advertisement below from the *Wall Street Journal*, which appeared just days after the bond act defeat. For sale is the magnificent Heurich Estate, a "rare property" that, for reasons described in the ad, has been a key public-acquisition priority. Without bond act funds, the State has no money to protect this or any other critical tract in the Adirondack Park.

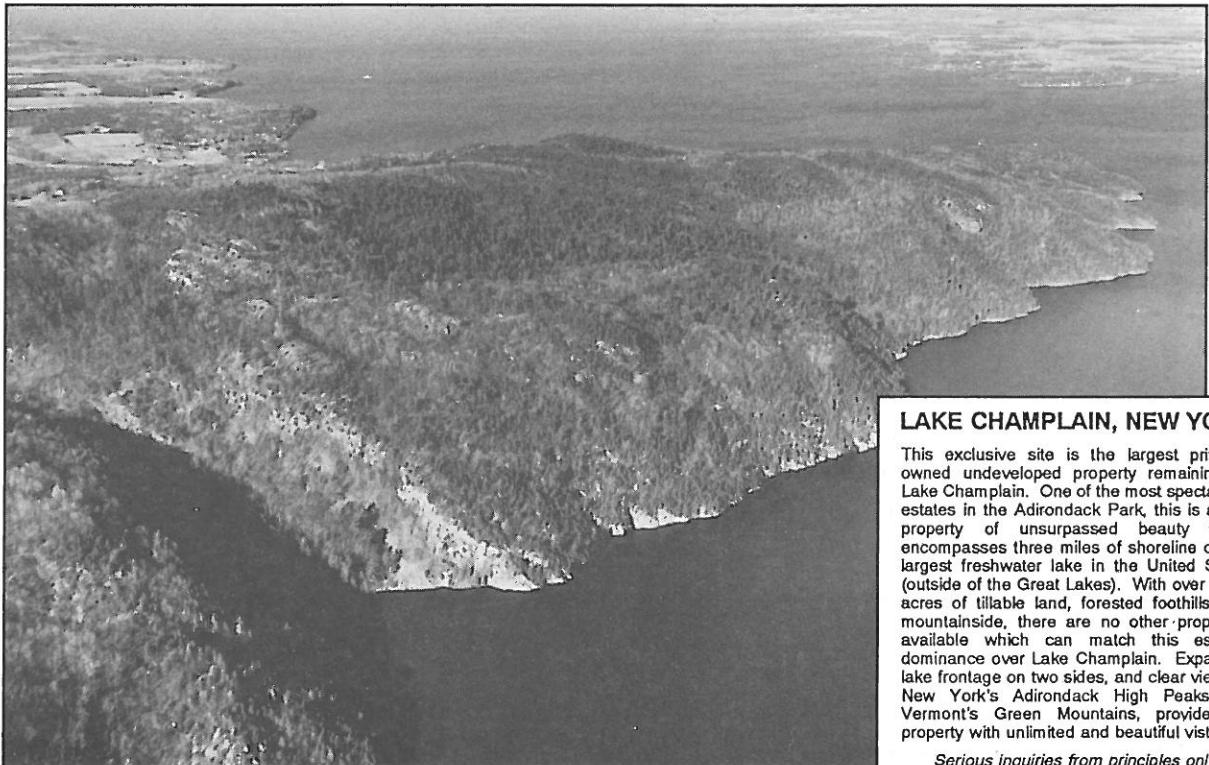
Conservation easements, which have been a boon for land protection and for the struggling timber industry in New York State, are no longer an option. This presents the biggest threat. Much of the park's private open

space land is owned by the timber industry. Tough economic times could force companies to sell or develop land in order to remain solvent. From either a land protection or land development perspective, the first property to go on the block would likely be the choicest – pristine waterfront.

To head off such a fate, the Adirondack Council is vigorously working on the problem from two angles—finding an alternative funding source to at least cover acquisitions already approved, and calling for development restrictions that, unlike current regulations, truly protect private shorelines, road corridors and backcountry.

Given the current fiscal climate, neither of these will be easy to achieve. It will take a concerted effort from all groups and individuals concerned about the kind of Adirondack Park we pass on to our children and grandchildren.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Let your state senator and assemblymember know that a funding source for the protection of Adirondack lands and waterways must be established soon – before our last opportunities become lost opportunities. Also be sure to emphasize that in the absence of protection funds, stronger development regulations and more effective zoning requirements must be adopted in this legislative session. **WRITE:** Senator _____, LOB, Albany, NY 12247 and Assemblymember _____, LOB, Albany, NY 12248.



Gary Randorf

**FOR SALE: THE MAGNIFICENT
HEURICH ESTATE ON LAKE CHAMPLAIN**

LAKE CHAMPLAIN, NEW YORK

This exclusive site is the largest privately owned undeveloped property remaining on Lake Champlain. One of the most spectacular estates in the Adirondack Park, this is a rare property of unsurpassed beauty which encompasses three miles of shoreline on the largest freshwater lake in the United States (outside of the Great Lakes). With over 2,200 acres of tillable land, forested foothills, and mountainside, there are no other properties available which can match this estate's dominance over Lake Champlain. Expansive lake frontage on two sides, and clear views of New York's Adirondack High Peaks and Vermont's Green Mountains, provide this property with unlimited and beautiful vistas.

Serious inquiries from principles only.
**SPLIT ROCK FARM, 1111 34th Street, NW
Washington, D.C., 20007**

Backcountry Break-up

"The pace of land sales and the break-up of large parcels suggest that the final shape of the Adirondack Park will be determined before this century is over."

-Governor Cuomo's Adirondack Commission

Evidence for the break-up of large private landholdings in the Adirondacks isn't hard to find. The following examples come from the Adirondack Park Agency (APA), parkwide project review authority. And these are just the tip of the iceberg. Better controls on backcountry and shoreline development and new state funds for land acquisition are urgently needed if we expect to keep the unique open space character of the Adirondack Park intact beyond the year 2000.

• Adirondack Mountain Properties Unlimited: A proposed subdivision of 1,190 acres with over a mile of undeveloped shoreline on the western shore of Tupper Lake. The property is surrounded by state-owned Forest Preserve.

• Butler Lake Associates: This proposed 23 - lot subdivision of a 506 acre tract around Butler Lake will completely fragment the shoreline.

• Moose Pond Investors: A 56 - lot subdivision of 3,800 acres northwest of Long Lake around Upper and Lower Moose Ponds.

• Heurich Property: A 2,254 - acre parcel with over three miles of undeveloped shoreline on Lake Champlain. The property was recently advertised for sale in the *Wall Street Journal*. (see page 3)

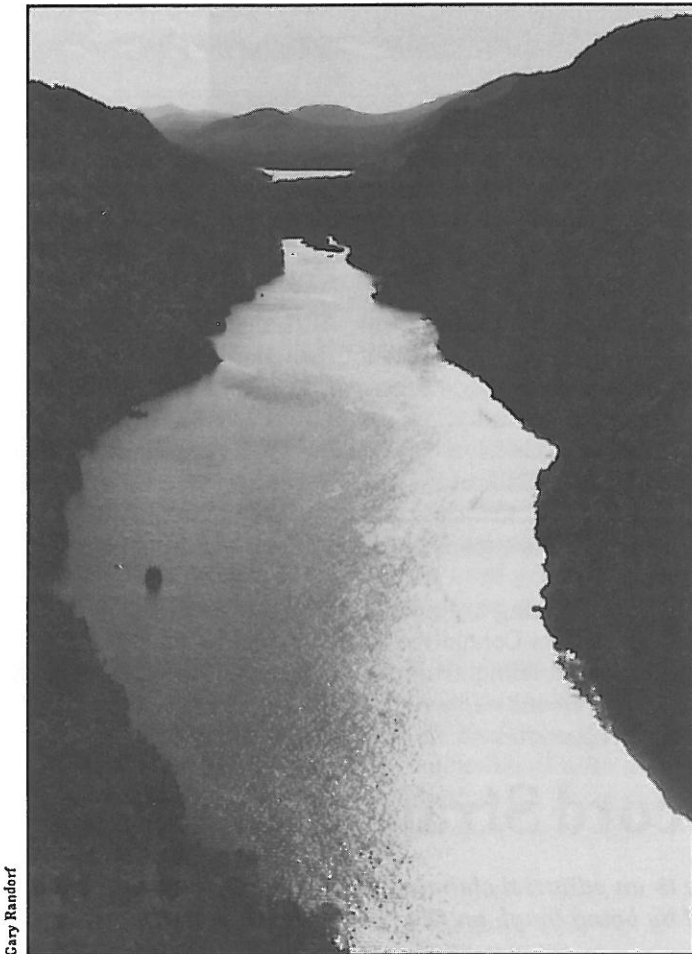


177 acres of unspoiled wilderness, one mile of undisturbed lake frontage and two small islands. Owner has cleared an ideal site, provided electric service with backup 30 kilowatt generator. Also included is a 2,000 sq. ft. Alpine Log building package.

\$695,000

FORKED LAKE. This ad from a recent issue of Adirondack Life magazine features part of the original Whitney Estate, a critical preservation priority. Without new funds for Adirondack land protection, the only ones competing for this and other private unspoiled wilderness areas are land speculators and developers.

Governor Signs Common Law Easement Bill



Lower Ausable Lake

Years of work to enhance the desirability of conservation easements has finally paid off. After a five year struggle in the state legislature, the Adirondack Council won fair tax treatment for several large landowners within the Adirondack Park who had granted the State of New York conservation easements before this important land protection tool had been legislatively "fine-tuned". Through the purchase of development rights, conservation easements provide protection of private open space without requiring outright purchase.

The new legislation, sponsored by Assemblyman Maurice Hinchey and Senator Charles Cook (A.2425a, S.1603-a), clarifies property tax treatment of "common law" easements acquired by the state before the state conservation ease-

ment program (Article 49 of the Real Property Tax Law) became law in 1983.

One such easement, familiar to anyone who has hiked the High Peaks, is the magnificent Adirondack Mountain Reserve which encircles the Ausable lakes (pictured above). After negotiating this easement in 1978, grantors became embroiled in a court battle over the assessed value of the property. Because certain property rights had been given up, the landowners contended that taxes on the property should be lowered accordingly. Unfortunately, the courts did not agree, but the fight continued.

A key provision of the 1983 state easement program calls for payments in lieu of taxes (PILOTS) by the state to localities within the Adirondack and Catskill parks. The amount paid depends on the extent to which an easement reduces the development potential and, hence, the taxable value of a property. The PILOTS program was repeatedly cited as justification for similar state payments, and simultaneous tax relief, on lands protected by "common law" easements.

As local taxes continued to rise, the inequity in the 1983 cutoff for state assistance became increasingly apparent to affected landowners. Working closely with those landowners, the Adirondack Council coordinated a successful legislative campaign on their behalf in 1990.

At the same time, the Council convinced the Governor's Division of Budget to introduce legislation which would streamline procedures used by the state in negotiating conservation easements (A.9404/S.7004).

The Adirondack Council was able to work with the Governor's office and legislators, including North Country Senator Ronald Stafford, to speed the passage of both bills. Together, these two pieces of legislation provide security and predictability for landowners who hold or wish to hold easements with the State. Ironically, now that the "bugs" in the easement process have finally been fixed, the State is without money to work with private landowners eager to negotiate conservation easements on thousands of Adirondack acres.

APA Rejects Gleneagles Gambit



GLENEAGLES SITE; SCENIC VISTA OR SECOND - HOME SUBDIVISION?

A recent attempt by Gleneagles' lawyers to skirt comprehensive review of the massive Lake Placid development failed, thanks to action taken by the Adirondack Council.

The Lake Placid Resort Partnership, developers for the project, had tried to escape Adirondack Park Agency (APA) review of five components to the development scheme—namely its golf courses, downhill ski center, skeet shooting range, riding stables, and boathouse. The partnership claimed that these facilities existed prior to the Gleneagles proposal and therefore were not subject to review by the state's parkwide zoning authority.

Calling this attempt to segment the project the "salami approach" to avoiding APA jurisdiction, the Council successfully argued that "all five contested components

are integral to the Gleneagles proposal."

In a written protest to the APA, the Council implored the Agency not to concede jurisdiction on any facet of the project, stating: "When a house is jurisdictional, its garage, guest house and boathouse are also reviewed. When a subdivision is jurisdictional, its roads, parks, and utilities are also reviewed. Excluding review of the five questioned activities would only facilitate approval of the project at the expense of sound environmental planning."

After hearing arguments from both sides, the APA Legal Affairs Committee turned down the partnership's request for relinquishing its jurisdiction on all but one of the five amenities, the Mt. Whitney Ski Area, miles from the project site.

Setting the Record Straight

Editors Note: The letter below was written in response to an editorial claiming that the Adirondack Council and Adirondack Park Agency are destroying Lake Placid by being tough on Gleneagles developers.

Partnership has only itself to blame

To the editor:

We read with interest your editorial of November 28 which attempts to blame the woes of the Lake Placid Resort Partnership on others including the Adirondack Council. Your charge that "preservationists from the public and private sector" (namely the Adirondack Park Agency and the Adirondack Council) are hurting the application of the Gleneagles project, is undeserved and inaccurate.

The truth is the Lake Placid Resort Partnership's troubles are, and have been, largely of its own making.

Nearly two years ago, Adirondack Park Agency officials met

with the resort partnership and detailed exactly what information was needed to gain a complete application. The partnership has received "priority" status from Agency staff ever since.

Despite the red carpet treatment, the resort partnership's application made public in late 1989 failed to answer many of the most important questions laid down well in advance by the APA. The partnership has not done its homework.

Over the past year the partnership has chosen to complicate the process instead of providing answers to crucial questions. By ignoring the existing deed covenants that protect the open space

resources of the golf courses, the Gleneagles partnership severely impeded its own progress. By attempting to break the project into segments, the partnership created community-wide doubts as to its commitment to rebuild the hotel — the one piece of the development that has broad-based support and could provide the surest economic benefit to Lake Placid.

Consequently, if the Gleneagles project is "in jeopardy" as your editorial submits, the resort partnership has only itself to blame.

Sincerely,
Bernard C. Melewski
Executive Director
Adirondack Council
Elizabethtown

Position on Commission Report Articulated

The Adirondack Council has recently adopted the following platform as a response to the Open Space Protection Plan of Governor Cuomo's Adirondack Commission. The Commission's full report contained 245 recommendations on such diverse topics as open space protection, park administration, and new community development initiatives. While the Adirondack Council cannot endorse all of the recommendations and finds that others require modification, the Council conceptually supports the report and concurs with the Commission that the need for action is urgent.

The open space protection policies of the Adirondack Council are based on the following principles:

- A. *The wild forest, water, wildlife, aesthetic and cultural resources of the Adirondack Park, its biological diversity, and its open space character are of statewide, national, and international significance.*
- B. *The park's open space is now and should continue to consist of both public and private lands. The publicly owned Forest Preserve "shall be forever kept as wild forest lands," as the state constitution requires, while the private lands presently classified as Resource Management and Rural Use should be used primarily for forest management, agriculture, and open space recreation.*
- C. *Land use planning and regulation within the Park should take into consideration the housing, social, educational, health, and economic needs of residents, which are consistent with the preservation of sensitive natural areas, productive forests and farms, and the open space character of the park.*

Toward these ends the Adirondack Council supports the goals and objectives of Governor Cuomo's Commission on the Adirondacks in the Twenty-First Century. Specifically:

- 1. The Adirondack Council supports the goal of adding approximately 655,000 acres in fee to the Forest Preserve, as recommended by the Commission.
- 2. Fee acquisition of lands identified by the Commission for addition to the Forest Preserve should be deferred in the case of productive agricultural or forest lands currently dedicated or suitable for dedication to sound management. In such cases, the Council favors the acquisition by the State or private land trusts of conservation easements. Such easements in all instances need not require restrictions on the owner other than the forfeiture of development rights. In light of the Environmental Quality Bond Act defeat, the Council urges state establishment of a dedicated funding source to secure fee and easement acquisition of those lands

identified by the Commission. In the case of lands already protected by conservation easements compatible with the open space protection of the Adirondack Park, fee acquisition by the State should be deferred until such time as the lands are offered for sale.

3. State acquisitions of lands identified by the Commission for addition to the Forest Preserve should be from willing sellers at fair market value. The Adirondack Council would not support the use of eminent domain to achieve the recommended goal of the Commission except in rare instances where, as the Commission stated:

- * *the landowner is willing to sell but the eminent domain process is needed to clear title or to determine the sale price;*

- * *park resources and values are imminently threatened [emphasis added] by development;*

- * *it is necessary to obtain access to significant [emphasis added] inaccessible public land after reasonable efforts to negotiate access have been made.*

4. With respect to the majority of open spaces not proposed for state acquisition and identified as working landscapes, scenic areas (including vistas and viewsheds) and open spaces of statewide significance, the Adirondack Council supports the application of exclusive use zoning and encourages the voluntary use of conservation easements. In the case of working landscapes, only structures related to agriculture or forestry should be allowed. In the case of scenic areas including vistas and viewsheds) not included in working landscape zones, any and all development should be subject to performance and siting standards, as well as measures of preserving such areas.

5. The Adirondack Council supports the Commission's recommendation that all shorelines and private lands bordering public roadways should be designated as critical environmental areas in all land-use categories except hamlets and that specific performance standards (eg. setbacks and natural screening) along the lines recommended by the Commission should be adopted to protect and preserve the environmental and scenic qualities of shorelines and public road corridors.

Classic Canoe Routes May Reopen

Adirondack waterways have always played a vital role in the economy of the North Country. For many years, the logging industry was dependent on free flowing waterways to transport logs from deep within the wilderness to mill and market. The state legislature, on occasion, acted to protect access to these "public highways". As the use of waterways for the transportation of lumber declined, adjacent landowners began to exercise more domain over the public rivers and streams that ran through their properties. Without the prodding of the forest industry, the Legislature lost interest.

Today, as the navigable waterways of the Adirondacks provide recreation and access to the backcountry, and tourism is recognized as a vital part of the Adirondack economy, we are faced with a curious result. Hundreds of miles of classic waterway travel routes have been closed by private property owners adjacent to the rivers while at the same time demand for access has never been greater. Recent events may reopen these classic canoe routes.

Courts Historically Support Public Right

Over the years, private landowners have challenged the right of the State to ensure public passage on navigable waterways. The State's highest court, the Court of Appeals, has consistently upheld what it declared to be the "common law right of passage on navigable waterways". This body of court decisions had received scant notice until the spring of 1990. For the first time, a careful legal analysis on the issue was prepared by Professor John Humbach, an associate dean of the Pace University Law School, and published in the Pace University Law Journal.

Bill Moves Thru Legislature

While the accuracy of Humbach's conclusions has yet to be tested in the courts, the impact of the study has already been felt in the public policy arena. For the first time, state legislation to reaffirm and codify the common law right of passage passed the State Assembly this past June. The legislation, sponsored by Assemblyman William Hoyt and Senator John Sheffer, both of the Buffalo area, also moved through the Senate Committee system, but was not taken up by the Senate before they recessed for the year.

Most landowners along these canoe routes either deny that a legal right of passage exists, or feel that reopening the routes now would deprive them of the quiet enjoyment of their property. The Adirondack Council supports the public right of passage on navigable waterways, but is sympathetic to the plight of these landowners, private and corporate.

In Albany last session, the Adirondack Council worked diligently with legislators to provide certain protections to property owners without compromising public common law rights. As a result, the 1990 legislation provided liability protection for landowners should canoeists be injured, exempted certain ponds and tributaries that are key to fisheries research and development, and gave landowners the authority to designate portages around stream obstacles in a

manner that would be least disruptive to their property.

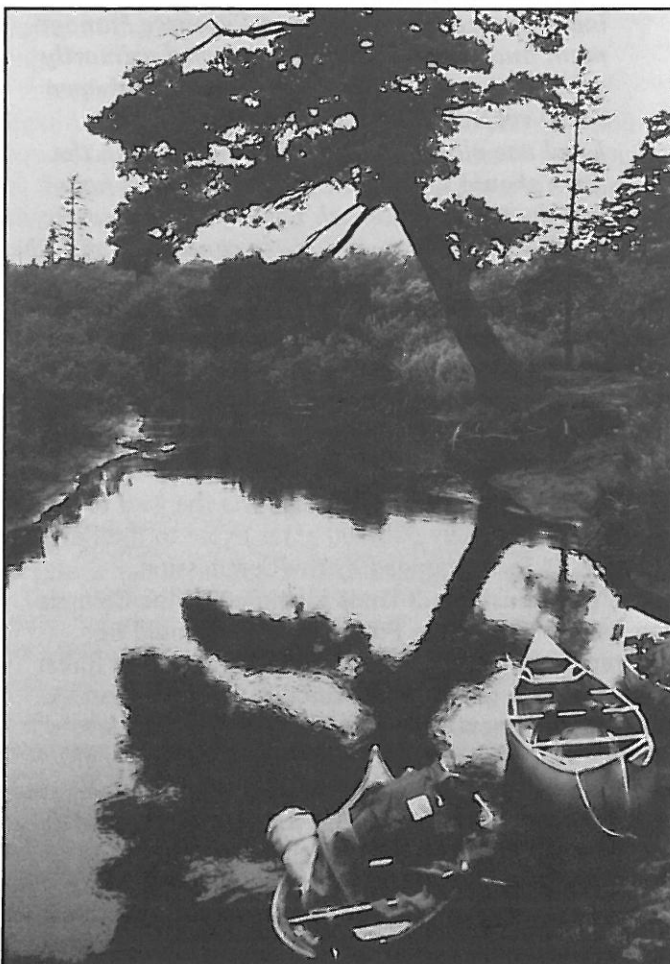
The navigable rivers bill will be reintroduced in the 1991 legislative session, but the die may already be cast.

DEC Adopts Favorable Policy

Until recently, forest rangers and conservation officers have assisted landowners in prosecuting "Trespassers" canoeing through their lands. But last October, the General Counsel for the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) advised law enforcement officials statewide, including DEC's own enforcement staff, that if a traveler enters and exits the water via public land, the traveler has every right under the common law of the State to free passage.

Sierra Club Will Test Rivers

The Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club has already announced that its members plan to run several rivers this spring that have formerly been considered private. Sierra Club representatives are confident that, if necessary, the Court of Appeals will once again affirm the public right of passage.



Gary Randorf

Randorf To Write Book

After serving as executive director for 11 of the last 13 years, Gary Randorf has stepped down from the post to devote more time to his book, *The Adirondacks: Wild Island of Hope*. In words and photographs, Gary's book will chronicle the ongoing struggle to preserve the Adirondack Park. It should be on bookstore shelves everywhere in time for the park centennial in 1992. While the search for a successor continues, Bernard C. Melewski, Legal Counsel, is filling Gary's shoes. A new executive director should be in place by March.

Under Gary's direction, the Council has been a major force in the fight to halt the destructive impacts of acid rain in the Adirondacks. And for the last decade, Gary has been the leading Adirondack spokesman for restraint in the use of chemical pesticides against blackflies, gypsy moths and Eurasian watermilfoil in Lake George.

Gary will continue to work part-time for the Council as Senior Counselor, assisting with educational programs and fund raising.



Becky Richardson

Gary Randorf speaking to members at the Council's annual meeting last summer.

Membership Survey Findings Revealing

Council members have more at stake in the Adirondack Park than friends or foes might think.

Thirty percent of the Adirondack Council's members own property and pay taxes within the park, according to the Council's recently completed membership survey.

The survey revealed that six percent of the Council's 18,500 members are year-round residents of the Adirondack Park, with an additional 17% residing in the Adirondacks seasonally. Seventy-five percent of the Council's members are New York State residents.

Of greatest concern to those surveyed is the rapid pace of subdivision and commercial development in the park. Acid precipitation (see success story on page 1) and the loss of wildlife habitat are also key concerns of Council members.

Surveyed members highlighted the need for more state funds to protect privately owned land in the Adirondacks. This need has become even more urgent in light of the Environmental Bond Act's recent defeat (see story on page 3).

An overwhelming majority of Council members (84%) feel the organization's most important action should be to lobby state government for legislation that truly protects the Adirondack Park. Recognizing this need, the Council has expanded its legislative program.

Findings from this survey will help the Adirondack Council continue to be the most responsive and resourceful advocacy group working on behalf of the Adirondack Park. Thank you for your participation and support.

Guest Commentary



Gary Randorf

PAUL SCHAEFER

Paul Schaefer is a living legend in the cause to preserve the Adirondack Park. Last year's recipient of the distinguished Calder Award for achievement in bridging environmental and economic concerns, and author of *Defending the Wilderness* (Syracuse University Press, 1989), Paul Schaefer has devoted his life to safeguarding the Adirondack Park for future generations. He served on the Adirondack Council's Board of Directors from July 1980 to July 1990. Paul Schaefer's essay provides inspiration and frank advice for all those who care deeply about the Adirondacks.

An Adirondack Priority

An urgent need exists for a coalition of sportsmen, preservationists, labor unions, garden and service clubs and others—people from all walks of life—dedicated to the protection of Adirondack backcountry, primarily through conservation easements.

With the demise of the 1990 Environmental Quality Bond Act and the current fiscal condition of the State, such action, however important to the viability of the timber industry and the economic health of the Adirondack region, will be difficult. But the uniqueness of the Adirondack Park depends largely on getting key tracts of undeveloped timber company land under the joint control of its private owners who will keep the lands in productive forest management, and the State, which will protect these lands for the public good.

By doing so, wildlife will have improved food supplies and the priceless open space character of the park will be preserved.

Beginning in 1944 over the issue of National Lead Co.'s pollution of the upper Hudson River, a coalition strikingly similar to the one needed today won the battle to halt construction of the Higley Mountain and Panther Mountain dams on the South Branch of the Moose River. That victory required more than ten years of hard work.

Four years into the struggle, public opinion caused the creation of a Joint Legislative Committee on River Regulation.

Four years later, a constitutional amendment was approved mandating that all proposed reservoirs to

regulate the flow of streams would require approval of two legislatures and a referendum by the people. This victory knocked out thirty more proposals for impoundments. Meanwhile, the Higley Mountain, Panther Mountain, Piseco, Luzerne, Salmon River, Gooley and other dams were debated and defeated.

During all of these struggles the sportsmen, notably the New York State Conservation Council, the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks, the Izaak Walton League, the Adirondack Mountain Club, the Forest Preserve Association and a host of other groups joined hands in the effort. This was prior to creation of the Adirondack Council in 1975.

Continued on page 11



Paul Schaefer

Moose River Plains; saved from ruin by Paul Schaefer and his coalition more than 40 years ago.

Commentary Continued

Thanks to the combined efforts of all these groups, protection and enhancement of the Adirondack and Catskill parks became such a public issue that in 1951, the Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources was created. This gave way to the Temporary Study Commission on the Future of the Adirondacks and later, the Adirondack Park Agency.

After 30 years of continuous hard work for both the Adirondack and Catskill parks, many things have happened that were no more than fond dreams in 1944. Wilderness regions were established, Wild Forest areas enlarged, the first conservation easements purchased, the existing highway system improved, both parks expanded, and several proposed closed cabin colonies on public Forest Preserve lands defeated.

As a result of the battles to save rivers and lakes from inundation, our finest winter deer yarding grounds were protected, the lowland cradles of wildlife on tens of thousands of acres permanently preserved. And a more than twelve hundred mile Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System was established.

All these things happened, and much more, because people from all walks of life got together and made such landmark achievements possible.

Today's primary threat to the park's integrity isn't dams, it's dollars—there are none. At a time of ceaseless pressure to develop the private woodlands of the Adirondacks, never has the need for land-protection funds been so great.

This is not the first time that money was needed for the park at a time of state fiscal difficulty. Is it not possible for private interests concerned with the Adirondacks to move into the present vacuum? In the 1950s, a lumber company gave 35,000 acres to the State, including two of the 46 high peaks. The centerpiece of Lake George, Dome Island, was bought by individuals and given to the Nature Conservancy. Others have done likewise.

This is not a time for pessimism. It is time to rebuild a coalition with a long history of success—a coalition that can agree on one specific issue of critical importance to the Adirondacks, its people and the people of the State—preservation of the park's century-old backcountry legacy.

Only together will we succeed in protecting the Adirondack Park for yet another hundred years.

Adirondack Council Brings Global Perspective To Adirondack Issues

Last October the Adirondack Council marked the expansion of its public education and policy research programs by hosting a conference entitled "Managing Growth and Development in Unique Natural Settings". Held at the Silver Bay Association Center on the shores of Lake George in the Adirondack Mountains, the two-day conference focused on applying a global perspective to some of the challenges and opportunities facing Adirondack decision makers in the decade ahead. More than 100 people participated in the conference, including state and local officials, town and county planning and zoning board members, land use planning professionals, and representatives from the Council's Board, staff, and general membership. Experts shared information concerning the effects of growth and development in unique, natural settings and explored ways in which they have dealt with the need to define and protect sensitive open landscapes and community resources.

Using examples from other natural areas, a panel of seven experts from communities across the country and around the world discussed their experiences and responded to questions from the audience and fellow panel members.

The keynote speaker was the Honorable Richard D. Lamm, former governor of Colorado and currently Director of the Center for Public Policy and Contemporary Issues at the University of Denver. He was accompanied by a brace of land use experts from the Adirondack Park, throughout the U.S. and overseas. Through discussion and debate, participants began a productive dialogue regarding options available to State policy makers and Adirondackers as they make decisions that will guide future growth within the region. The conference provided information, expertise, and concepts vital in helping to achieve and maintain a balance between the need to protect the natural character of the Park's environment and the social, cultural, and economic needs of its residents and visitors. We intend to continue our involvement as facilitators of this planning process.

Any member interested in obtaining a free copy of the conference proceedings should write to the Council office in Elizabethtown. Contributions would be appreciated to help defray our publication and mailing costs. *The Adirondack Council gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the Underhill Foundation, which helped make this conference possible.*



Gary Randorf

LAKE COUNTRY; THE WHITNEY ESTATE



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