



# The Adirondack Council NEWSLETTER



FEBRUARY 1989

## CUOMO ACTS TO PROTECT PARK

Good news for the Adirondack Park!

Governor Mario M. Cuomo has moved vigorously to protect this last great natural sanctuary in the eastern United States through a series of measures called for by the Adirondack Council and announced by the Governor in recent weeks.

At Mr. Cuomo's determined urging, the State succeeded in purchasing fee title and easements on 55,000 acres of former Diamond International forest land from Henry Lassiter, the Georgia speculator/developer who bought the entire 96,000 acres of Diamond's Adirondack holdings last September.

After more than two months of intense negotiations by the Department of Environmental Conservation, Governor Cuomo announced at a press conference on December 28 that the State had bought from Lassiter some 15,000 acres in fee title, along with conservation easements on another 40,000 acres. The fee-title purchase will be added to the publicly-owned, "forever wild" Forest Preserve, while the land under conservation easements may continue in forest production but is permanently protected from development.

The State's action secures land deemed vital by the Adirondack Council for the creation of a Bob Marshall Great Wilderness and a Boreal Heritage Reserve (see pages 4-5).

In his State of the State Message on January 4th, the Governor announced the creation of a study commission to review development trends and preservation opportunities in the park. This could be a major step toward more effective permanent safeguards for the Adirondacks. Conservationists were particularly pleased with the appointment of Peter A.A. Berle as commission chairman and George D. Davis as executive director (see page 2).

The Governor also responded to the Council's call for an anti-speculation tax on quick-turnover land sales by pledging his support for this measure in the 1989 legislative session. The Governor threw his weight behind another Council-supported bill as well — one that would strengthen the shoreline development controls of the Adirondack Park Agency (APA).

Through executive order, the Governor will require that all future road work, sports facilities, and other development projects undertaken by New York State in the Adirondack Park conforms to the same standards required of private developers under the APA Act. The elimination of this "double standard" for public and private entities has been a long-standing goal of the Adirondack Council.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:** Write Governor Mario Cuomo, State Capitol, Albany, NY 12224, and thank him for a job well begun. Please encourage the Governor to keep up the great work . . . to protect another 30,000 acres of the former Diamond tracts . . . and beyond that to move aggressively to save more than one million acres of other private timberlands that are critical to the future of the Adirondacks.



Alan Cedestrom

**GOVERNOR CUOMO** in conversation with Frances Beinecke, a director of the Adirondack Council, at the Council's annual awards dinner in 1986. The Governor was named Outstanding Adirondack Conservationist. The hand on the glass (lower right) belongs to Kim Elliman, the Council's chairman.



# ADIRONDACK COMMISSION LEADERS



Susan Orsiaglio

**PETER A.A. BERLE**

Sarah Davis

**GEORGE D. DAVIS**

*Governor Cuomo has appointed Peter A. A. Berle as chairman and George D. Davis as executive director of a new commission that will study the problems and prospects confronting the Adirondack Park. Berle is president of the National Audubon Society, a former commissioner of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, and a former State Assemblyman. Davis has served as program director for the Adirondack Council, executive director of The Wilderness Society, planning director for the Adirondack Park Agency, and staff ecologist for Governor Nelson Rockefeller's Study Commission on the Future of the Adirondacks.*

## FOUR-STATE FOREST STUDY LAUNCHED



Dan Plumley

**Steve Harper (left), coordinator of the Northern Forest Lands Study, with Chuck Clusen, executive director of the Adirondack Council.**

What's to become of the private forest lands of northern New York State and New England as developers move in and timber owners cash out?

A federal study encouraged by the Adirondack Council will examine the plight of these forest lands and recommend options for protecting them. Authorized by Congress, the study was prompted by the sale of Diamond International's vast timber holdings early last year in Vermont and New Hampshire. Later in 1988, Diamond also sold its entire Adirondack holdings (see update on page 1).

At the Council's urging, New York State's Adirondack timberlands were included in the study, which is being conducted by the U.S. Forest Service under the auspices of a four-state Governors' Task Force on Northern Forest Lands.

Stephen C. Harper, former supervisor of the Green Mountain National Forest, is coordinating the effort.

In sanctioning the study, Congress stressed that "changes in forest land ownership in northern New England and New York are leading to increased subdivisions, development of large tracts, and a loss of traditional economic and recreational uses of these lands."

"Unless prompt action is taken," Congress found, "there may be an irreparable loss of forest resources."



# WOW!

Thanks to all of you for the overwhelming way you've rallied to save the Adirondack Park! Thanks especially to:

- The thousands of members who wrote in response to our action alerts (see pp. 6-10).
- The thousands of new members who joined our cause this past year.
- The many members who renewed their memberships — as the great majority of you have — and the many who increased their membership to a higher dues category.
- Those of you who responded generously to our fund appeals above and beyond membership dues.

Your dues and donations provide us with the essential ammunition in our campaign to save the Adirondacks. Your financial support pays the staff salaries and the mortgage, the cost of action alerts, press releases and other communications. It makes possible our education work with the legislature and our statewide trips to visit newspaper editors and writers.

As you can see from every page of this Newsletter, your participation is really paying off.

Please keep it up. The Adirondack Park needs us now as never before.

## DEVELOPMENT MYTHS DEBUNKED

Don't be deceived. The old argument justifying development of a rural area—the argument endlessly mouthed by developers (and echoed by local officials) that development will broaden the local tax base and solve local unemployment problems—just doesn't stand up to scrutiny.

That's what Richard Catlin, a resident and realtor of Woodstock, Vermont, recently told a meeting of the Speculator Village Planning Board in the south-central Adirondacks. Like many Adirondack communities, Speculator is experiencing unprecedented development pressures.

The idea that growth will lower taxes is one of the "myths" developers use to promote development, Catlin explained. He said that his local chamber of commerce led the fight for development in Woodstock 20 years ago and is now leading the fight against it.

Catlin, who serves on Woodstock's Finance Committee, said Woodstock's population of 1,500 increased about 90 percent in the past 15 years, to about 2,800. But he said taxes have risen 500 percent there in the past 10 years. During the same time, about 200 condominium units have been built.

In contrast, he said, slow-growing communities near Woodstock have had only modest tax increases during the past decade.

"Property taxes are never enough to offset the costs," he explained, referring to the new demand for such services as police protection, paved roads, ambulances, quicker snow plowing and more frequent garbage collection.

Catlin said another myth is that development will enable local youths to find jobs and stay in town. He said land values have gone so high in Woodstock that his son is not able to buy property there.

Catlin claimed that realtors are the only people other than the developer to really make money from development. Builders are often brought in from outside the area, he said, and if local builders do get work it is part of a boom-bust cycle.

"All over Vermont people are finally asking: 'What is it about our quality of life that we want to maintain for the future?'"

That seems like a good question for Adirondack residents, as well.



## BOB MARSHALL GREAT WILDERNESS

# A DREAM MOVES CLOSER TO REALITY

The State's last-minute December purchase of wild-lands and conservation easements from Henry Lassiter, the Atlanta-based land speculator, moves Adirondack conservationists one step closer to realizing a 50-year-old dream — the creation of the largest publicly-owned Wilderness Area in the eastern United States north of the Everglades.

The Council has proposed that 408,777 acres in the western Adirondacks be consolidated and preserved as the Bob Marshall Great Wilderness. Nearly 60 percent of this potential Wilderness is already in public ownership. The remaining tracts can be purchased as they become available from the 22 separate property owners.

The idea for amassing a single public reserve from the various undisturbed holdings in this region originated with Bob Marshall, a forester, author, Alaskan explorer, and founder of The Wilderness Society. Marshall was a native New Yorker who acquired his love of wild places during the many summers he spent on Lower Saranac Lake. With his brother, George, and their guide, Herb Clark, he was the first to climb all 46 Adirondack mountains over 4,000 feet.

In 1935-36, Marshall analyzed all U.S. forest areas of 300,000 acres or more which "have not yet been invaded by routes of mechanized transportation." His inventory showed 48 such areas nationwide, including the Cranberry Lake/Beaver River region in the Adirondacks.

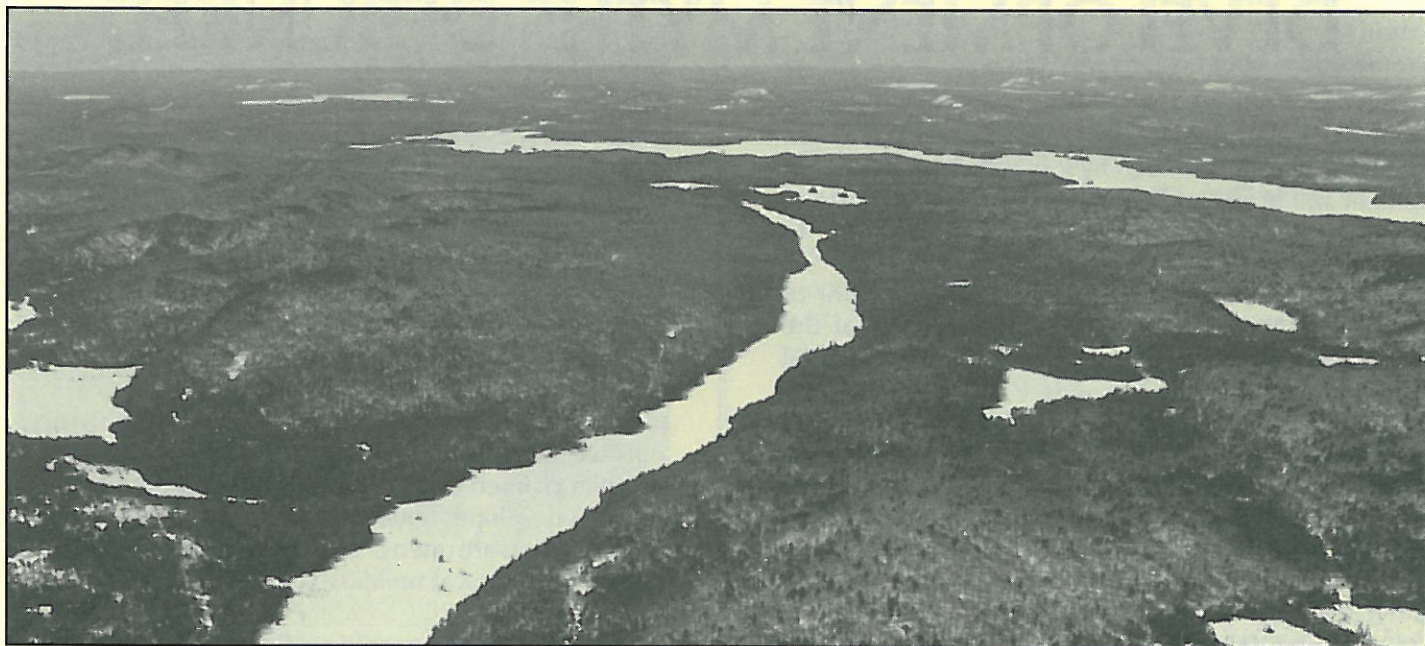
Almost incredibly, more than half-a-century later most

of this same area remains wild and undisturbed — though this could change quickly as development and subdivision pressures increase.

The Council has recommended that much of the region designated by Marshall, and some additional lands as well, be systematically incorporated by the State into the Bob Marshall Great Wilderness. Included would be these public tracts: Five Ponds Wilderness, Pepperbox Wilderness, Pigeon Lake Wilderness, Wilderness Lakes Primitive Area, Lake Lila Primitive Area, Low's Lake Primitive Area, and portions of the Hitchens Pond Primitive Area, along with 55,000 acres of other Forest Preserve lands.

As envisioned by the Adirondack Council, the Bob Marshall Great Wilderness would:

- Encompass 441 lakes and ponds and 71 miles of rivers;
- Provide public access to 172,000 acres of land and water now privately owned and closed to the public;
- Open many miles of canoe routes closed to the public for nearly a century;
- Provide sufficient habitat protection for re-establishing the timber wolf, and maybe even the cougar;
- Comprise the largest protected expanse of forests, mountains and waters in the Northeast where people in pursuit of natural beauty and serenity can escape the speed, noise and smell of the internal combustion engine.

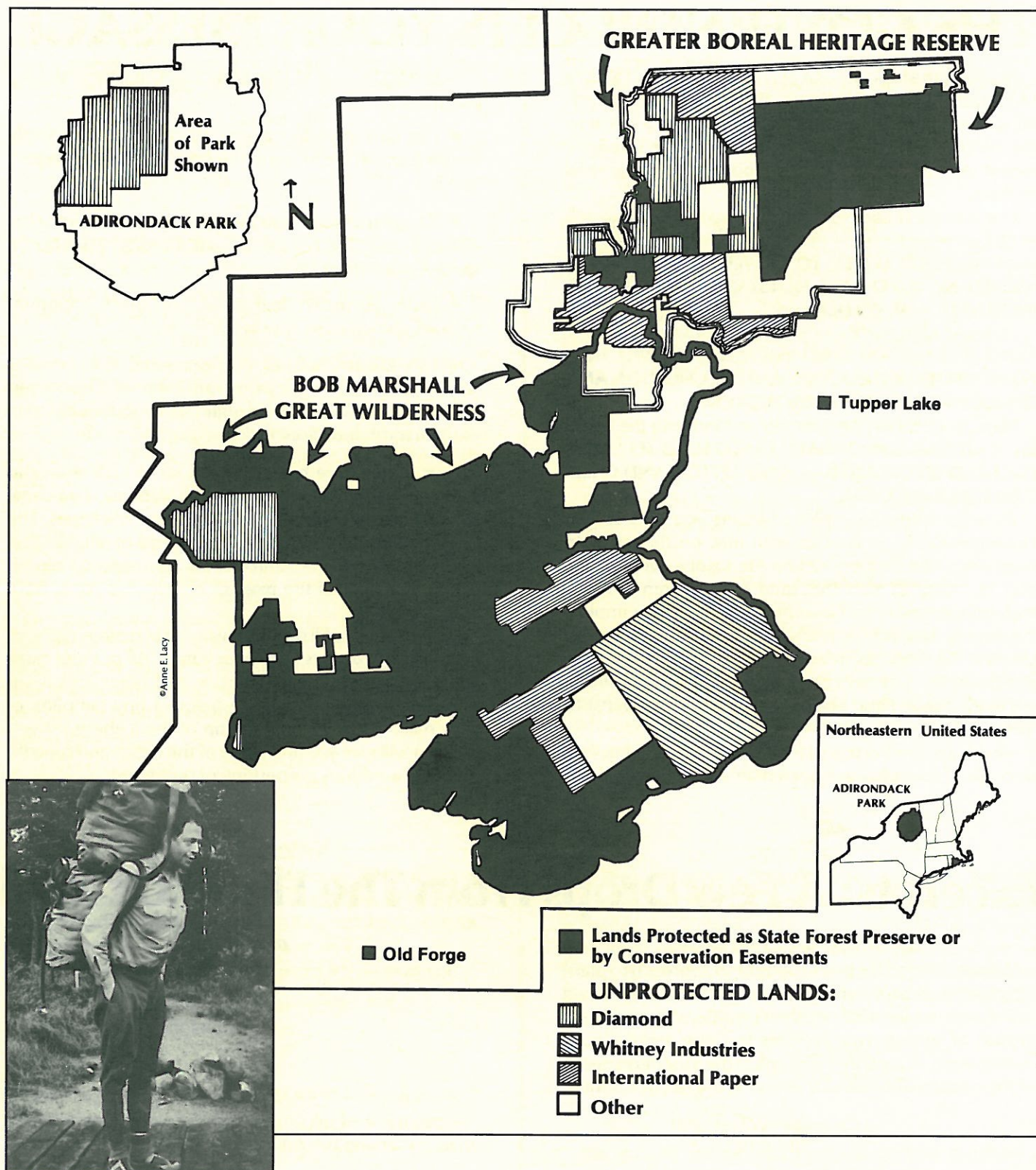


Gary Randorf

*The 50,000-acre Whitney Estate could be the cornerstone of the proposed Bob Marshall Great Wilderness. Closed to the public for many years, the extraordinary network of wilderness waterways on the Whitney lands once formed an integral part of a 110-mile canoe and guideboat circuit,*

*including Slim Pond (left and center) and Little Tupper Lake (at top). A high priority of Adirondack conservationists is the permanent protection of these lands and waterways through public purchase or, at the very least, acquisition of conservation easements.*





**BOB MARSHALL, 1937**

*THE PROPOSED BOB MARSHALL GREAT WILDERNESS fills the left and center of the page, the proposed Boreal Reserve occupies the upper right. Since this map was made in 1988, much of the Diamond land has been protected through State action (see page 1). But many other key private segments could still be sold, subdivided and developed at any time. Vulnerable and vast, the Whitney tract alone covers 50,000 acres of prime forests and waterways.*



# THE GOVERNOR GETS YOUR MESSAGE

Not since the historic public protest against the Panther Mountain Dam proposal in the 1950s have preservationists written so many letters so forcefully about a threat to the Adirondack Park. Your response to the Council's recent Action Alerts has been both spectacular and decisive.

Our first Alert about a timber company's plan to sell 96,000 acres was mailed to you last June. It carried the heading: **YOUR LETTER TO GOVERNOR CUOMO IS NEEDED NOW TO SAVE OUTSTANDING DIAMOND INTERNATIONAL WILDLANDS.**

Our next Alert, mailed in September, began: **WE MUST NOT LET IT HAPPEN HERE! YOUR LETTERS WILL HELP TO HEAD OFF DESTRUCTIVE LAND SPECULATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE ADIRONDACKS.**

Then, in October, we sent you an Alert with the heading: **CRITICAL ADIRONDACK LANDS SOLD TO GEORGIA LAND SPECULATOR — YOUR LETTERS AND CALLS CAN STILL SAVE THEM.**

To judge from the copies of letters you sent us, the Governor has been flooded with mail on this issue. In response to the October Action Alert alone, we estimate that as many as two thousand letters from Council members arrived at the Governor's office—letters imploring, urging, beseeching and demanding that Mr. Cuomo save the Adirondacks from the new wave of speculators and developers. Other conservation groups, with whom we work closely, also added their voices (and pens) to ours.

We are gratified to report that your message has gotten through. The results have been dramatic. For example:

- The State has just saved much of the Diamond land (see page 1).

- The Governor has answered our call for a study commission on the future of the Adirondacks (see pages 1 and 2).

- To curb rampant land speculation, the Governor has also responded to our call for a stiff capital gains tax on quick-turnover land sales.

- Other corrective legislation, and other important land acquisitions, are now in the works.

- The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has hired a Deputy Commissioner who can supervise — and activate — the lagging land-acquisition program in the Adirondack Park (see page 16).

Your letters have come from as far as California and Washington State, from Kentucky, Alabama, Louisiana, Nevada, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho and Michigan. The Governor has heard from many residents of neighboring states for whom the Adirondacks have special significance. The bulk of the mail, of course, has come from New York State.

We could easily fill our annual quota of newsletters with nothing but excerpts from your letters. *All of them make inspiring reading!* Because space and other limitations prevent that, we are printing below a tiny sampling of your mail. While it's only the tip of the iceberg (or volcano), it will give you an inkling of the depth and breadth of an extraordinary outpouring of sentiment.



## Excerpts: A Few Drops From The Flood Of Mail

### THOUGHTFUL APPROACH

What is needed is a more thoughtful approach to planning for the area that will ensure that lakes are maintained in a manner which will keep their beauty . . . that will limit growth of touristy type facilities to those areas already having them . . . and that will look at the long-term needs of the people who live year round in the North Country.

Nancy C. Tigner  
El Cerrito, CA

### SHORTSIGHTED

I am very concerned that our short-sighted values will cause my two daughters and all their generation to wonder how we could have allowed the beauty and integrity of this magnificent park and its wildlife to be destroyed.

Bill Marsh  
Stratford, NY

### BUY NOW!

Buy now — the price will never be cheaper!

Paul and Judy Bohn  
Kinnelon, NJ

### FINEST LEGACY

I can think of no finer legacy for your administration than preserving the Adirondack Park.

William W. Steele  
Bedford Hills, NY

### GOD CREATED

Wilderness is God created and we must preserve it in its natural state for all time and for the generations to come.

Dan Hurwitz  
Holliswood, NY



**GETTING RICHER**

I find it particularly distressing to think that some already-rich Georgians are going to get richer by carving up and developing our precious Adirondacks.

Daniel Way  
Glens Falls, NY

**GREEN LUNGS**

Recently in the excellent journal put out by the Touring Club Italiano I read an article on New York City which referred to Central Park as the "green lungs" (*pulmoni verde*) of the city. I wondered if the writer knew of the larger and even greener lungs of New York State, the Adirondack Park. Recently the Central Park Conservancy has done wonders for the former, but in the North Country in spite of a land acquisition proposal approved by the voters of this state [and] in spite of a state-mandated park with a special agency, the Adirondack Park remains in trouble.

Enid K. Rubin  
New York City

**SELFISH**

Our generation is proving to be the most selfish and least forward planning in the history of this country. Please reverse this trend and save this beautiful tract for your grandchildren and mine. You are our last hope. If ever the use of eminent domain was justified in this state, now is the time.

Niss Ryan  
Larchmont, NY

**PARK JEOPARDIZED**

Sale of such large land tracts to potential developers puts the entire Adirondack Park in jeopardy. I feel that protection of the Park is in the best interest of not only this generation but future generations as well.

Jean C. Bakkom  
Sharon Springs, NY

**LIFELINE**

The Adirondacks have become my life-line to sanity.

Carola Marte  
New York, NY

**TWO STEPS**

I urge you to take two steps: 1) Revitalize the land-acquisition program by the State in the Adirondacks and 2) use all means that you have to prevent the sale of the Diamond holdings to the speculator.

F.E. Werner  
Pittsburgh, PA

**PALTRY PRICE**

It would be a terrible shame to let this property slip away, especially with a paltry asking price of \$193 per acre. It makes one wonder how sharp our State decision-makers are to allow such a deal to slip away.

Richard A. Ferro  
Greene, NY

**SITTING ON MONEY**

The monies from the Environmental Quality Bond Act are there. Sitting on them serves no one. To fail to purchase these boreal lands, and especially the lands including the Middle Branch of the Oswegatchie, is tantamount to leaving the Tuolumne River out of Yosemite, or Lamar Valley out of Yellowstone.

Mark B. Epstein  
Binghamton, NY

**DISGRACEFUL**

It is disgraceful that this magnificent Adirondack Park should be so at the mercy of private developers.

Janet C. Williams  
Port Washington, NY

**FUTURE GENERATIONS**

We owe it to future generations to preserve this wilderness heritage so they may see at least some small part of the original beauty of our country before it is desecrated with roads, motels, townhouses and condominiums and their accompanying pollution.

Louis F. Eckam  
Scotia, NY

**DISTRESSED**

In the past fourteen months I have visited the Adirondack Park four times. . . Each time I have been impressed with the beauty of the land and the chance to find wilderness areas for solitude and contemplation so close to home. As an officer of the New York City Group of the Sierra Club . . . I am deeply distressed by the effects that commercial development could have on the park."

Madeleine Shapiro  
New York, NY

**REVIVE PROGRAM**

We ask you to give top priority to reviving the State's land acquisition program in the Adirondacks. Less than 1% of the acquisition funds provided by the 1986 bond act have been spent in the Adirondacks. In the meantime developers are rushing to beat the State in buying valuable key private tracts that should be preserved for the people.

Adrienne Karis, Director  
Mohawk Valley Hiking Club  
Scotia, NY



**MAN OF VISION**

You are a man with vision and sound values. I'm sure you see the wisdom and logic in investing in the Adirondack park — a rich, precious treasure for all mankind.

Peter R. Mitchell  
Rochester, NY

**HELP!**

Please rescue the Adirondacks . . . from private investors! We NEED this land for our progeny.

Helen T. Morehouse  
Riverdale, NY

**GREATEST ATTRACTION**

As residents of neighboring Connecticut, we and many of our friends visit the park to experience the natural beauty and lack of development. We believe the lack of development is in fact the park's greatest attraction.

David G. Casagrande  
Donna L. Gayer  
Wethersfield, CT

**THINK PARK**

We need to protect the Adirondack Park *as a whole*.

Delphine R. Dougherty  
Tallahassee, FL

**DON'T COMPROMISE**

The example that New York has set in steadfastly preserving park and wilderness land over the past century, in a fashion unique among the 50 states, should not now be tarnished or compromised.

Bruce T. Wallace  
Ann Arbor, MI

**FOREVER BENEFICIAL**

I believe that such an action [State acquisition of the Diamond lands] will be forever beneficial to the people of New York State and the many millions in future years who will visit the Adirondack Mountains.

G. Ralph Smith  
Westwego, LA

**NOW!**

If New York State has money for land acquisition let's spend it. NOW!

Robert R. Cammann  
Baldwin, NY

**NO IMPROVEMENT**

I have yet to see a development that improved its environment.

Daniel N. Adams, Jr.  
West Redding, CT

**QUICK SALES**

As a child, I was very fortunate to have a cabin on Lake George . . . From that experience my career blossomed as a children's book author/illustrator on environmental issues, writing on the subject of mainland Australia, Tasmania and Africa. Now I see a great threat in the Adirondack Park. Everywhere there is development. It is not the type of development that serves the land but rather a selfish, fast paced quick sale. . . . Maybe my next book should be on the disappearing wilderness of upstate New York?

Joyce Powzyk  
New York, NY

**ADIRONDACK VACATION**

I suggest that you don boots and comfortable clothes; take a vacation from your busy desk for a couple of days and experience what thousands upon thousands enjoy each year. You would then realize how important it is to secure these lands for everyone's pleasure . . . not just a greedy few.

Mary G. Herzer  
Cranberry Lake, NY

**WILDERNESS ISLANDS**

The concept of the "Forever Wild" Adirondack Park is wonderful but the reality is that much land is in private hands and ripe for exploitation. Research has shown that "islands" of wilderness surrounded by development do not thrive and maintain species diversity.

Walter W. Bishop, III

**IRREPLACEABLE**

This is stupidity. The people of New York voted to spend money on land acquisition. The money is there. The opportunities are there. Spend the money. Money is replaceable. Wilderness is not.

Jerry Wiley  
Delmar, NY

**CAN'T COMPETE**

Environmentally compatible uses of private lands in the Park such as farming and forestry cannot compete with well-financed corporate speculators such as the "Patten Land Company" and "Properties of America."

Robert J. Hammerslag  
Whallonsburgh, NY

**OUTRAGE**

It is an outrage to allow a French company [Diamond] and a Georgia company [Lassiter] to control the destiny of such large tracts of land in *our* beautiful Adirondack Mountains.

Henry E. Gabriels  
Clifton Park, NY



## DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

*People are beginning to realize that New York State's response to the Adirondack Park will not keep for them a park as they envision it. But I do not give up on New York State because in all the recurrent Adirondack crises there is one comforting theme: whether it's taking Forever Wild out of the statute books and firmly embedding it in the State Constitution, voting down Gooley [a dam proposed for the upper Hudson River] or pressing the Legislature to pass the Adirondack Park Agency Act, the story of New York State's efforts to preserve the great Adirondack Park is a grass-roots, democracy-works, government-by-the-people story. They get mad. They get fed up. They coalesce. They get government to act.*

Robert C. Glennon  
Executive Director, Adirondack Park Agency

### LATE AND GREAT

Let us act now to preserve this great Adirondack Park for all to enjoy so it does not have to be talked about as the Late Great Adirondack Park.

The Heilmans  
Brant Lake, NY

### NEVER A MISTAKE

A mistake in terms of too much preservation now is never a mistake in the future.

Marilyn Neulieb  
Theresa, NY

### TAKE IT

Take the land [the Diamond tracts] by eminent domain if necessary, but don't sit by and let that much of the Adirondacks fall prey to developers!

Edythe H. Jarvis  
Southport, CT

### CUOMO'S LEADERSHIP

I urge you to support the call of the Adirondack Council for a one-year moratorium on all large developments while a crucially necessary study is undertaken . . . This and future generations will say "if it hadn't been for Governor Cuomo's leadership these recreational and spiritual resources would have been lost."

Celine Karraker  
Redding Ridge, CT

### ECOSYSTEM APPROACH

As a biologist, fisherman and avid Adirondack mountain explorer, I believe that we should make all attempts possible to preserve as much of the contiguous Adirondack ecosystem in its natural, undeveloped state.

Chip Devereaux  
Binghamton, NY

### VICTIM OF SUCCESS

Unfortunately, the Adirondacks have become victims of their own success. As more people discover the beauty of this land, more want a piece of it, and so more jewels are looted from the crown.

Kathleen Matlby Parrish  
Huntsville, AL

### UNIQUE

I have been to 28 foreign countries of Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and North, South and Central America . . . I believe I can attest that the Adirondacks are unique in the world, not just in the USA.

H.B. Bullard  
Guilford, CT

### WILD PLACES

This quote I read recently — "The wild places are where we began and when they are lost, so are we" — has prompted me to write about my concern over the heightened real estate sales activity in the Adirondacks.

Mrs. Roy Mitchell  
New Hartford, NY

### TRUE VALUE

The value of these lands to New York State and the general public far exceeds their value as homesites and developed tracts.

James W. Weidenman  
Syosset, NY

### TERRIBLE DAMAGE

In my home state of Idaho, I have seen what terrible damage can result when formerly pristine wilderness came into the hands of land speculators. I urge you to prevent this from happening in the Adirondack Park.

Alan C. Gregory  
Plattsburgh AFB, NY



**IRREPLACEABLE**

Although I no longer live in New York State, much of my heart remains in the Adirondacks. They are irreplaceable. Their wildness **MUST** be preserved.

Mary Ellen Bernhardt  
Denver, CO

**IF WE DON'T, WHO WILL?**

If we do not take action now to preserve the natural wilderness of the Adirondack Park, who will? And what will be left if we don't? I shudder at the thought.

Frank Leggio  
Roslyn Harbor, NY

**ETHICAL ISSUE**

As a citizen of this state I appreciate your positions on issues that have strong ethical dimensions, as this one does.

Peter H. Lee  
Ballston Spa, NY

**FOR ALL PEOPLE**

To the Adirondack Council:

Membership in your organization has led me to believe that of all the many groups working to protect and enlarge the Adirondack Forest Preserve yours is the most thorough and most effective. My husband and I agree with all of your land acquisition proposals. We have lived just outside Potsdam, NY, for the past seven years and have come to know and love the Adirondack Mountains.

Please continue in your untiring efforts. Hopefully, man's impact will not be permitted to ruin this beautiful area and it will be preserved for *all* time for *all* people.

Carolyn M. Kaczka  
Hannawa Falls, NY

**FOR THE GOOD OF THE EARTH**

To the Adirondack Council:

Enclosed are membership renewal dues. We support many environmental groups — you are first on our list.

Two of our camping days in the Park this summer were spent on the bit of state land at Raquette Lake. So we thank you, just from that small experience, in your battle to acquire more of the beauty of the Adirondacks for the good of the earth and the pleasure of its people.

William and Betty Gregory  
East Rockaway, NY

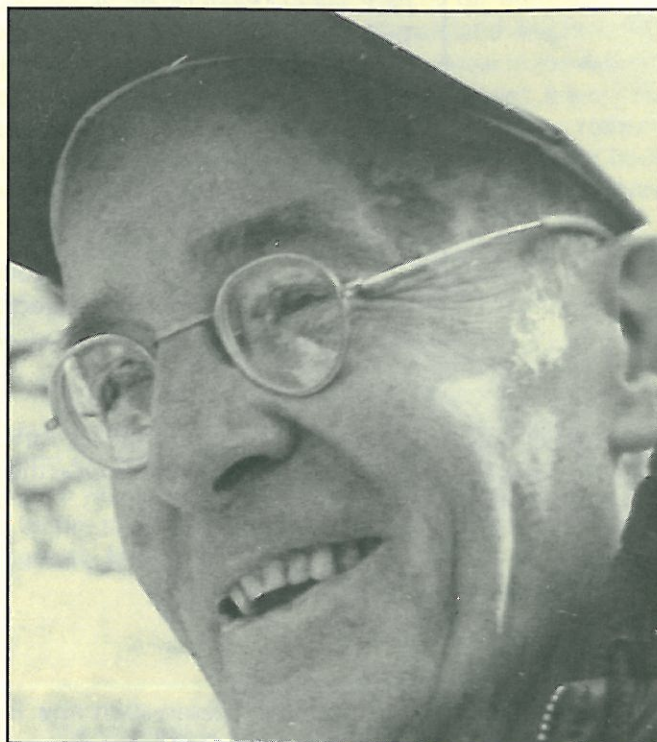
**MORE NEEDED**

Dear Adirondack Council:

I've just returned from five days of canoeing on the Bog River via the recently acquired State land access. It was fantastic. We must preserve more such areas and access corridors, and to help support your efforts to accomplish these goals, here is a financial contribution.

Eric Leskorec  
Gansevoort, NY

## JAMIESON TO CUOMO: REOPEN CANOE ROUTES



Dear Governor Cuomo:

As writer of a canoeing guide to the Adirondacks [ADIRONDACK CANOE WATERS: NORTH FLOW], I represent the interests of public recreation in the park. In the northwestern sector 20 navigable rivers and streams are wholly or partly closed to public access and passage, although this is the best region of the park for river cruising. . .

A directive from your office is important in an emergency like this. Many of us have concluded that the Department of Environmental Conservation is inclined to favor private over public interests in the park, in its endless delays, its refusal ever to use the power of eminent domain, and historically in its failure, under common-law prescription, to keep all Adirondack waterways open to navigation, as they were from the arrival of the first tourists in 1840 to about 1890. . .

Paul Jamieson  
Canton, NY

**SPEED LIMITS UN-AMERICAN**

Dear Mr. Clusen:

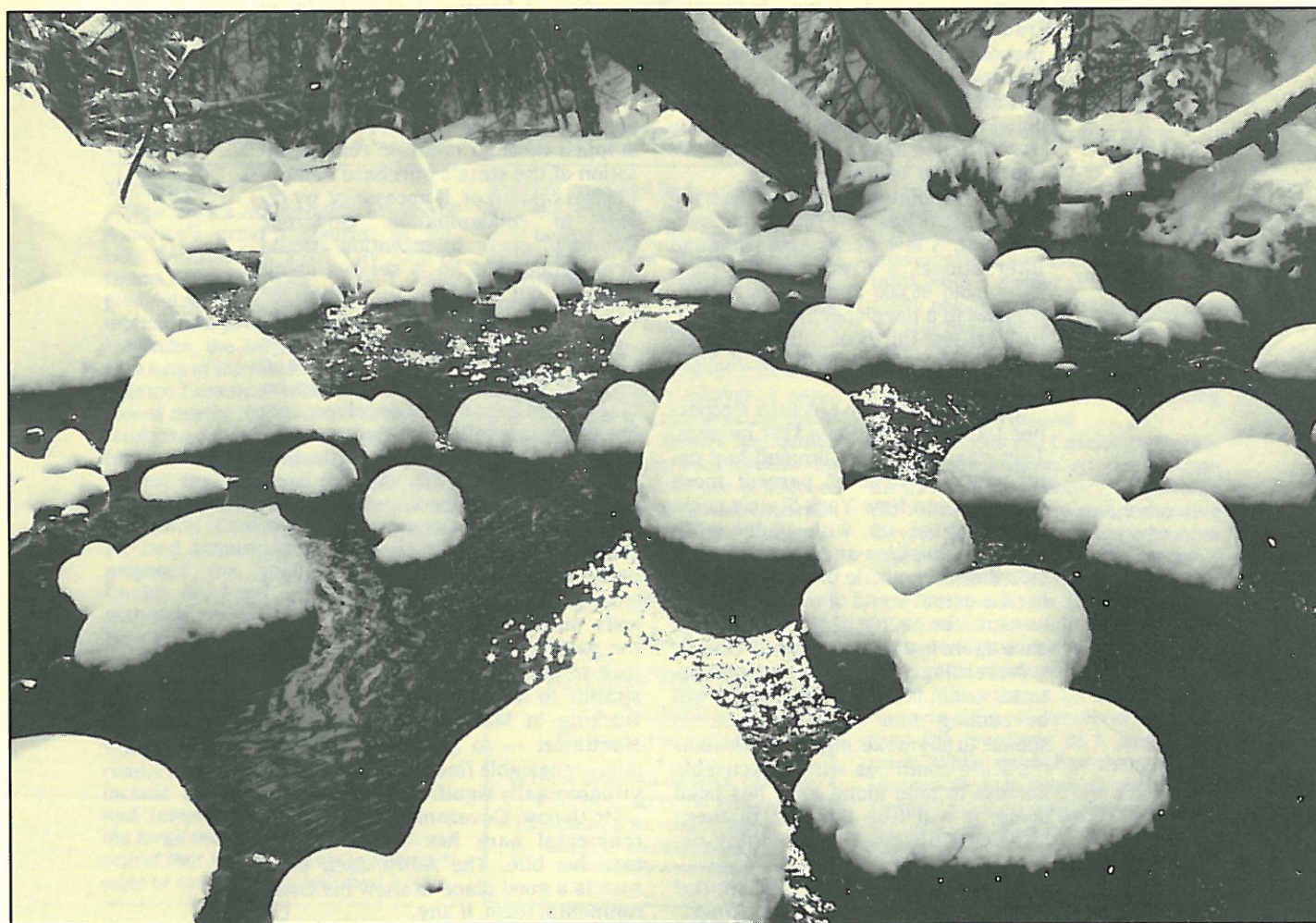
On the issue of speed limits being set for boats on Lake George [a step the Council advocates], where I used to spend much time canoeing until the lake became overrun, I am dead set against setting speed limits. It's un-American. I believe that all boats should be allowed to go as fast as they want to — but on one condition. The lake should be limited to non-motorized boats!

Irwin Gooen  
Oneonta, NY





Gary Randorf



Gary Randorf



# The New York Times

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1988

## Adirondack S.O.S.

By John B. Oakes

**N**ew York State's greatest environmental and recreational resource, the Adirondack Park, is in danger. If Governor Cuomo wants to redeem his environmental record, now is the time to halt the park's steady slide into piecemeal suburbanization.

The Adirondack Park, largest in the United States outside of Alaska, was established in northern New York a century ago to protect the ecological values of the region. Today's land boom is steadily eroding them.

More than 50 percent of the park's six million acres (three times the size of Yellowstone) is still in private hands, including huge individual tracts spread across miles of pristine mountains, forests and lakes. The threatened breakup of much of this incomparable area into building lots could result in greater devastation to the park than last summer's fires will ever bring to Yellowstone.

The speculators' war against the Adirondacks has now reached a critical point. A few weeks ago, Diamond International, a French-owned company, sold 96,000 acres of park timberland to a developer from Georgia. At least two-thirds of this tract is essential to preserving the ecological integrity of the park.

The price paid by Lassiter Properties Inc. of Atlanta was \$177 an acre. This was less than Diamond had demanded but some 15 percent more per acre than New York State's negotiators came up with under antiquated acquisition and appraisal policies that make little or no allowance for the actual trend of the market. As a result, the people of New York have once again lost out to the subdividers.

Increasingly now, large private estates within the park boundaries will be coming onto the market in response to skyrocketing land values. If the state continues with inexcusable laxness to plod along as it has been doing, it will lose the best of these large private estates, inevitably de-

stroying the quality of adjacent protected areas.

Here is where Governor Cuomo comes in. He has the funds available. He has the legal means to keep these critical lands out of the hands of speculators. He has support within the region as well as outside it, spearheaded by the Adirondack Council.

Of the \$250 million made available for environmental purchases under the 1986 Environmental Quality Bond Act, less than 1 percent has yet been spent for land acquisition within the park. Not one cent has been spent on conservation easements, which are usually more economical, always less drastic and frequently more satisfactory to local farmers or residents than outright state takeover of their property. Easements can serve the purpose of keeping intact the rural character of an area while permitting productive economic use to continue, including forestry and farming.

The Diamond-Lassiter closing is scheduled for December. It can be stopped through creative reinterpretation of the state's purchase and appraisal system or, if necessary, by resort to condemnation. Governor Cuomo's open intervention would give notice that he is serious about carrying out the mandate of the 1986 act. But he should go further.

He could follow the recent example of New Jersey's Governor Kean and propose a one-year moratorium on large-scale speculative developments in environmentally sensitive areas.

He could work for strengthening the Adirondack Park Agency Act, which has loopholes wide enough to drive a bulldozer through — and several have already been driven. He could support revision of the park's zoning plan, which potentially permits another half million homes in the park. He could push the Legislature to enact a land-transfer tax — similar to the ones now successfully working in Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket — to provide a continuously renewable financial base for environmentally significant purchases.

Up to now, Governor Cuomo's environmental bark has been sharper than his bite. The Adirondack land rush is a good place to show his environmental teeth, if any. □

John B. Oakes is former Editorial Page Editor of The New York Times.



# THE POWER OF THE PRESS

Along with a timely outpouring of letters to public officials and lawmakers, publicity has always been a powerful tool of conservationists.

Over a century ago, the *New York Times* called for the creation of an Adirondack Park. In the 1970s, editorials in almost every major newspaper in New York State urged enactment of the Adirondack Park Agency zoning plan and a Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System that now gives extra protection to 1200 miles of Adirondack rivers and streams.

In 1986, the State's newspapers urged Governor Cuomo to include \$250 million for land acquisition in the Environmental Quality Bond Act. More recently, the press has called attention to the mounting development pressure on the Adirondacks, and editorial writers from Niagra Falls to Staten Island have urged the Governor to save the Diamond lands and other vulnerable private tracts that hold the key to the future of the Adirondack Park.

A case in point is the essay by John Oakes ("Adirondack SOS"), reprinted on the opposite page as it appeared recently in the *New York Times*. Soon afterward, the letter below from Governor Cuomo appeared on the *Times* editorial page. In it, the Governor makes clear his commitment to preserving the Adirondacks.

The Adirondack Council works closely with editorial writers and news reporters throughout the State, keeping them informed of the threats to the park and the opportunities to permanently preserve this unique natural treasure. A sample of some recent press coverage appears on pages 14-15.



*New York Times*

*Nov. 17, 1988*

## New York Is Acting Now to Protect Vast Adirondack Legacy

To the Editor:

New York's Adirondacks are one of America's great treasures, as witness "Adirondack S.O.S." by John B. Oakes (Op-Ed, Oct. 29). I have pledged my administration to the protection and preservation of the Adirondacks, the largest wilderness region east of the Mississippi River.

Since I assumed office, we have acquired nearly 100,000 acres in the Adirondacks, more than 14,900 acres with funds provided by the 1986 Environmental Quality Bond Act. We have nearly tripled the Department of Environmental Conservation's personnel for land acquisition. We successfully proposed the 1986 Environmental Quality Bond Act, which provides us with new resources to carry forward New York's bipartisan mandate to expand and preserve the unique ecological character of the Adirondacks.

The recent acquisition of 96,000

acres of parkland by Lassiter Properties Inc. may be the harbinger of a new period in the history of the Adirondacks, an era of unbridled land speculation and unwarranted development that may threaten the unique open space and wilderness character of the region. In confronting this challenge, we must be able to compete in today's real estate market. I agree that we need a more creative interpretation of the state's antiquated purchase and appraisal system for land acquisition if we are to succeed in this volatile real estate market. Such a process is already under way.

I recently met with State Comptroller Ned Regan to discuss precisely this problem, and as a result of our conversation we are today at the table with Lassiter Properties, actively negotiating the acquisition of a substantial portion of these 96,000 acres. If progress is not made soon, I will intervene more directly to assure that the state's interest in preserving these lands is realized.

A few weeks ago I decided to establish a Commission on the Adirondacks in the 21st Century, to examine the Adirondacks in a comprehensive way, to suggest what needs to be done to preserve this magnificent legacy.

More than 100 years ago, a group of New Yorkers wrote into law the simple truth that we could no longer hope to survive if we went on destroying the natural surroundings that support us all. They taught us that we must learn to think of ourselves as more than the creatures of a single moment. While much has changed, one immutable fact remains unchanged. Despite our technological proficiency, we are still dependent on an ecosystem that is fragile and interconnected.

(Gov.) MARIO M. CUOMO  
Albany, Nov. 2, 1988



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*The Times welcomes letters from readers. Letters for publication must include the writer's name, address and telephone number. Because of the large volume of mail received, we regret that we are unable to acknowledge or to return unpublished letters.*



# Adirondack Council Unveils Land Plan

WATER TOWN TIMES

James Albany Bureau

ALBANY — An Adirondack land acquisition plan that would cost about \$50 million has been

servation Bond Act. "It's not something that's a wild visionary dream."

He emphasized the council is not asking outright purchase of all land. When forestry

Lake Placid off Route 73 as being essential establishing a High Peaks vista.

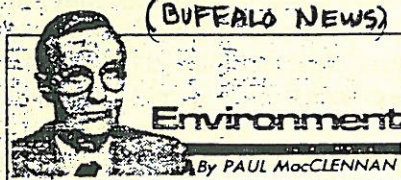
Staten Island Sunday Advance the state p the Gra St. R

## A Bold Plan for the Adirondacks

## Saving the Adirondack

If you asked New Yorkers to name the state's most valuable natural resource, most people would assert that staving off development in the Adirondacks is the only way to save

Adirondack Council is warning today "Forever Wild" protection of the 6 million-acre forest preserve may be "forever" unless New Yorkers act soon. Leaders propose a bold program to transform Adirondack Preserve into the second largest state park in the nation, a \$300 million investment to insure that the park remains a largely wilderness area for generations to come, as we enjoy, the



(BUFFALO NEWS)

Environment

By PAUL MacCLENAN

Beamish, a long-time Adirondack activist with the Audubon Society until he was in Buffalo last week to spell out the

could be created to protect public lands from unsightly private development across a property line.

overnight, but current zoning its valuation of 125,000 acres in coming years. The council's anniversary of the park's creation is a time to carry this legacy

will be those who grab, others will wait. But many plain about losing land among those living in the Adirondacks. In Western New York, the value of having our heritage in a

here is a tremendous state leader. Park Agency and the region a major acquires hard work as into the effort. honoring New En-

will have a major expected to be a state of the State New York's com- dreds of toxic waste ficial, an environ-

## Panel To Study Sales of Land In Adirondacks

### Cuomo To Name Commission

By John F. Sheehan  
Times Staff Writer

RAY BROOK — Gov. Mario M. Cuomo is expected to appoint a special study commission to explore land sales in the Adirondack Park within the several weeks, according to the governor and the Adirondack Park Agency.

"We talk it and make decisions as to

on it very soon," said APA Executive Director Robert C. Glennon. "I have heard about it, but there have been no specifics about the makeup of the commission or the reporting date."

The study was called for this summer by the Adirondack Council, an environmental watchdog group based in Elizabethtown.

SCHENECTADY GAZETTE

## THE BUFFALO NEWS Act Fast in Adirondack

THANKS to the Environmental Bond Act passed by voters last November, there is now more money for acquiring more of the private property within the Adirondack Park. The state needs to move fast, however, to put it

has picked up many tracts and purchased them to limit development. But there is also a part of developers' Tunner Lake shoreline

In Our Opinion (SYRACUSE HERALD-AMERICAN)

## ADIRONDACKS:

Perhaps never in its history has the pristine, primitive environment of the Adirondack Park been more threatened than it is today. Yet, seldom in its history

Our opinion Staten Island

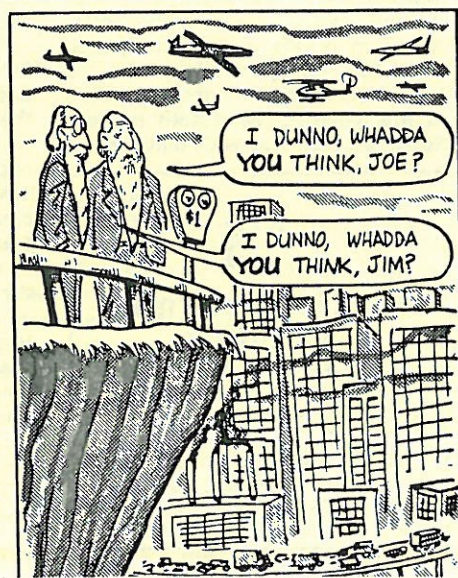
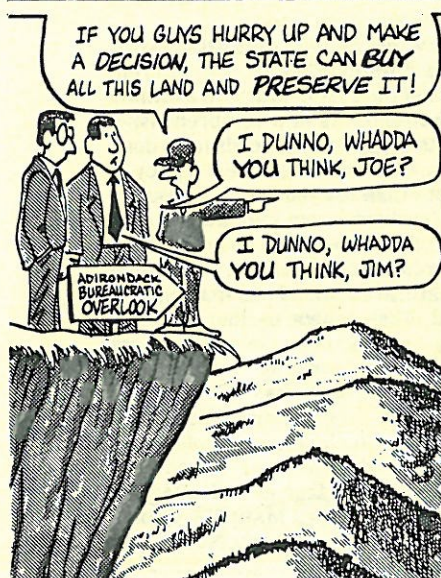
## Saving the Adirondack

The population/development boom along the Northeast Corridor has made suburbs swell and rural areas vanish at an alarming rate. All this has coincided with a boom market and weekend retreats in the "country" consequent rush by developers for

The Adirondack Park in upstate New York is a perfect example of a remote critical point in its history because

Developers have been snatching up land in the park for condominium projects. Many large areas of wild land for years by prominent families as now becoming available as heirs, in the wild, find whopping offers

Last month, 96,000 acres of Adirondack land was purchased by a Georgia land speculator





# Council Lobbies Against Development

(CLARE PLACID NEWS)

## Current Danger to Backcountry Greater Than in Early 1970s, They Say

BY RON LANDFRIED

Development in the Adirondack Park is a greater threat to the future of the region than it was in the early 1970s, when the park was first established. Some key Adirondack Park officials warn that the current danger to the backcountry is greater than it was in the early 1970s.

THE TIMES UNION

### Adirondack opportunity

Two years ago New Yorkers approved \$250 million in bonds to purchase wilderness lands statewide. How much has been spent so far? Only \$2.1 million, or less than 1 percent.

The slow pace of purchases marks a disturbing repetition of state practices with previous environmental bond monies. Now, however, the state has an opportunity to purchase 66,000 acres of

land. As a result, they don't reflect other realities of the marketplace.

In this case, the state may be losing out on a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. The acreage in question is prime land that is sure to attract generous offers from developers. Indeed, Diamond recently sold 89,000 acres of forest in Vermont and New Hampshire to a consortium of real estate developers

### In our opinion

## Adirondacks: (NIAGARA GAZETTE)

### Turning back the bulldozers

New York state's six million-acre Adirondack Park — the biggest park in the contiguous United States — is facing new threats from developers and land speculators.

And a new report by a park preservation group blames the state Senate's Republican majority for legislation aimed at

camping, long a hallmark of the Adirondacks, are also in the block."

In its 1988 "Report Card on the Adirondack Council's efforts to protect the park," the group's judgment, Gov. Cuomo earned a B, the

## Newsday EDITORIALS

### Albany Must Not Let Adirondack Acres Slip Away

At four times the size of Yellowstone, New York's Adirondack Park is a priceless mixture of towering mountains, deep forests and sparkling lakes. But unlike Yellowstone, it's also a mixture of public and private lands.

Less than half is actually in public ownership, part of the "forever wild" state forest preserve. That makes the park extremely vul-

nerable to the effects of development.

One glaring example of state inactivity — or rather its reluctance to pay what it considers too steep a price for the land — was the recent sale of 96,000 acres belonging to Diamond International, a timber company, to Lassiter Properties Inc., a Georgia-based land speculator and development firm

most attention, other large parcels have gone or will soon go on the market. It's true that land values are rising in the Adirondacks as elsewhere and asking prices may seem high, but unless the state offers realistic prices, the developers will take over. That's not what the people of New York intended when they voted to spend \$250 million to acquire environmental

ROSEMARY ROBINSON, REGIONAL EDITOR 470-2200

(SYRACUSE) THE POST-STANDARD

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1988

## Conservation Group Says Adirondacks in Jeopardy

By JANIS BARTH  
ELIZABETHTOWN — A conservation group said Thursday the state must move quickly and aggressively to protect the Adirondack Park or risk losing the last remaining wilderness in the Northeast.

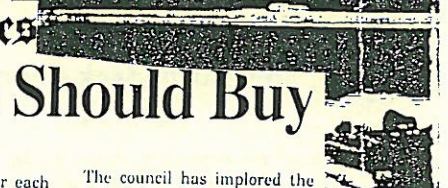
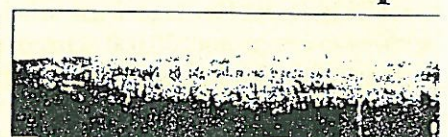
The 9,000-member Adirondack Council said the current wave of real estate development and speculation poses the single greatest threat to the future of the six-million-acre park. If the Adirondacks are to be saved, the council warned, the state

must be particularly vulnerable to the effects of development, said Richard Beamish, director of communications for the council. Less than half the park is state-owned forest preserve, constitutionally protected as "forever wild." The remainder is privately owned lands that is intertwined with the public holdings in an erratic quilt pattern of ownership.

As developers unloosed back into the park, "the cre-

least one-quarter of its 1988 acquisition funds, roughly \$62.5 million, to purchase additional forest preserve lands. Of the \$250 million set aside in a 1985 bond act for the acquisition of public lands, only \$2.1 million has been spent so far in the Adirondacks.

The council also renewed its call for a



The council has implored the state to take quick action on purchasing part or all of the land within the next several years.

The council's wishes may very well come true, said William G. of majority

## Watertown Daily Times Watchdogs List Land State Should Buy

By John F. Sheehan  
Times Staff Writer

The Adirondack Council, the environmental watchdog, has identified 218,420 acres of Adirondack Park land that should be preserved

across the Raquette River, and northward along the eastern edge of the Carry Falls Reservoir and along the top of the Nature Conservancy lands.

cific conservation plans for each piece of land identified.

The lands are needed for preservation of vistas, recreational areas, moose, spruce, grouse, rare woodpeckers, quaking bogs, insect-eat-

The council has implored the state to take quick action on purchasing part or all of the land within the next several years.

The council's wishes may very well come true, said William G. of majority

## State rated a failure in protection of wilderness

### Adirondack Council warns of development threat.

F is a positive thing," Grant said.

The council, a coalition of five groups, also criticized the state Environmental Conservation Department for failing to purchase 96,000 acres of wilderness sold this year to Lassiter Properties Inc., a Georgia-based developer.

Council spokesman Dick Beamish said EnCon has been offered several Adirondack tracts because it has not

selling price of \$177 an acre. The state had bid \$145 an acre.

Marsh said EnCon bought 15,000 acres in the park this year and is trying to buy several other large parcels. He also said the state recently streamlined its land-acquisition procedure.

The council gave EnCon an "incomplete" grade pending the outcome of the Lassiter negotiations.

squashing legislation by North Country senators that would open the Adirondacks to more development.

● Olympic Regional Development Authority: D. The council blasted ORDA for damaging a branch of the Ausable River and destroying a stream through careless construction of a parking lot.

Beamish said the state must act quickly to buy wild lands before they are purchased by developers. He wants the state to earmark for the Adirondacks a fourth of the \$250 million in land-acquisition bonds approved two years ago by the voters.



## FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Your bequest of money or property will give long-term sustenance to the Adirondack Council in its intensifying battle to preserve the Park's beauty and serenity, its wildness and wildlife, against the commercial forces that would "improve" and "develop" the last great natural sanctuary in the north-eastern United States.

For further information about making a bequest, please contact Lynne Poteau, Adirondack Council, Box D-2, Elizabethtown, NY 12932. Tel. 518-873-2240.



## KEY SLOT FILLED

Robert O. Binnewies has been appointed Deputy Commissioner for Lands and Forests of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. This is the one position, vacant since 1987, that can provide needed direction and impetus to the State's land-acquisition program in the Adirondacks.

"Somebody at the top has to ride herd on the program," said Chuck Clusen, the Council's executive director. "Somebody has got to go out and negotiate with the big Adirondack landowners. And somebody has got to mandate a coordinated and focused effort so the State can compete with the commercial land hustlers."

Binnewies, 51, has been superintendent of Yosemite National Park in California and the chief ranger at Acadia National Park in Maine. He served as vice president of the National Audubon Society and as executive director of the Maine Coast Heritage Trust, where he worked with landowners to protect 30,000 acres of prime coastland.

"He seems like the perfect man for the job," Clusen observed.

## STAFF STRENGTHENED

Eric J. Siy, pictured below with his dog, Samson, has joined the program staff of the Adirondack Council. An environmental educator, guideboat builder and avid outdoorsman, Eric will be much involved in spreading the Council's preservation message far and wide — to the press, public officials, legislators and general public.

He is a 1988 graduate of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies (Master's) and a 1982 graduate of the State University College of New York at Plattsburgh (Bachelor's). In between he served as a technician for the Department of Environmental Conservation, consultant for the Adirondack Park Agency, and employee of the famed Hathaway Boat Shop in Saranac Lake Village, where he assisted Carl Hathaway in restoring and building traditional Adirondack guide boats and wooden canoes.



Alexandra Siy

ERIC AND SAMSON SIY



### The Adirondack Council

Box D-2, Elizabethtown, NY 12932  
(518) 873-2240



*A coalition of the National Audubon Society; The Wilderness Society; Natural Resources Defense Council; Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks; National Parks and Conservation Association; and other concerned organizations and individuals.*

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