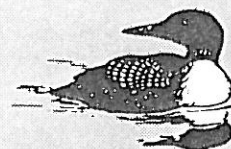




# The Adirondack Council NEWSLETTER



to keep supporters informed of our activities

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## THE FOREST PRESERVE AT AGE 100 Resource Values Multiply With Time

One hundred years of forest preserve protection has seen the preserve take on new meaning to the people of New York State. As landowners, New Yorkers have seen their investment produce values that were not even dreamed of in 1885, while at the same time the values for which the preserve was created also proved their worth.

The principal reason for creating the Adirondack Forest Preserve a century ago was to insure a continuing water supply for downstate users. The decades immediately preceding the preserve's creation witnessed forest devastation from irresponsible clearcutting and rampant fires. State lands were sold for a pittance and then denuded. In other cases state timber was stolen outright with no pretense of first purchasing the land. Nineteenth century visionaries feared that New York City's water supply would be diminished if these practices continued. Wealthy vacationers saw their northwoods retreat becoming a barren land that would soon lose its allure.

Led by the renown Adirondack surveyor, Verplanck Colvin, these interest groups pressured the 1885 legislature into creating a forest preserve to protect the downstate water supply and maintain a haven to which urbanites could flee for rest and relaxation.

In the ensuing one hundred years New Yorkers have recognized that infinitely more values flow from the forest preserve. The most prominent resource values in 1985 include water, wildlife, forests, wilderness, and a wide variety of recreational pursuits.

### Water

Relatively undisturbed forests serve to assure a reliable source of water for the Hudson and St. Lawrence river basins. The closed forest canopy shades the forest floor so that less water is lost from the soils, mosses and litter, which release their water slowly, minimizing flooding while maximizing supply. Dense vegetation holds the soil in place so that, as water is released, little soil is washed away and the brooks and streams are kept clear as they leave the Adirondacks.

Water is indeed the lifeblood of our society. The forest preserve helps insure not only an adequate quantity of that lifeblood but also a quality that is the envy of many other regions.

### Wildlife

As the preserve's forests mature and eventually reach an old-growth condition, the variety of wildlife inhabiting them changes. In general, the number of species diminishes as a forest matures but then increases as an old-growth character is

assumed. More importantly, the wildlife species inhabiting mature and old-growth stands that increasingly typify forest preserve vary from those that characterize the cut over and second growth stands found on much of the intermingled private land. As the forest matures, chestnut-sided warblers, ruffed grouse and deer are likely to be replaced by goshawk, solitary vireos and, hopefully in the near future, moose. Old growth stands of conifers are more likely to harbor the elusive pine marten than are younger forests. The aging stands of timber in the forest preserve produce wildlife that complements that produced on nearby silviculturally managed forests to produce a diversity of species found in few other regions of the nation.

### Forests

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries pioneer stands of aspen and birch, along with second growth stands of pine; birch, beech and sugar maple; elm and red maple; or spruce and fir, characterized the forest preserve. On its one hundredth birthday such forests can still be found, but more common are mature stands and some old growth or over-mature stands. A visitor to such forests is likely to gaze in awe at the increasingly frequent large trees.

Forest preserve protection will result in increasingly larger tracts of true old growth forest. In the northern hardwoods, old growth will result in a mixed age stand where gnarled forest giants predominate but small clearings, resulting from the death of an old tree, are frequent. Such old growth stands are classrooms demonstrating energy and nutrient cycles. They are laboratories that act as control areas for researchers to compare with areas of human disturbance. Their plant and animal diversity and production is high in contrast to the more stagnant mature forests that precede them. They are the forest primeval--a resource and a heritage well worth preserving.

### Wilderness

Wilderness is the premier forest preserve resource. The Adirondack forest preserve contains more wilderness acreage than can be found anywhere east of the Mississippi. The wilderness that characterizes and defines wilderness is what makes the Adirondacks different, making the Park unique in the northeast. The remoteness and lack of motorized access favor such wilderness wildlife species as fisher, marten, loon and moose. It would also favor such species as the wolf, cougar, lynx and wolverine if they were to be reintroduced; a feasible option now that the forests have matured and human access has been restricted.

Wilderness is a distinct resource characterized by a distinct set of values. It is a resource within which natural ecological processes prevail. As a result it offers unlimited educational and scientific values. Wilderness portrays the ethical values of a society while offering the individual an array of psychological and recreational benefits.

### Recreation

The recreational value of the forest preserve has enjoyed perhaps the most dramatic change of all resource values since the preserve's creation. In the early years of the preserve its principal recreational value was to serve as a scenic backdrop, enjoyed by a wealthy few who vacationed in the great northwoods, and as a producer of fish and game for those same few. Today countless thousands of individuals derive recreational pleasure from the preserve through scenic drives, hunting, hiking, fishing, skiing, birdwatching, snowshoeing, picnicking, camping, rock climbing, and canoeing.

## STATE LAND MASTER PLAN TO BE REVISED

The Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan, originally adopted in 1972, classifies all forest preserve lands in the Adirondack Park. The continued protection of our treasured Adirondack wilderness resource is dependent on this document, which has the full force and effect of law. The Adirondack Park Agency plans to review and revise the plan this year. Many interest groups will be pressuring the Agency to allow more motorized use of the forest preserve, a move that we must resist.

The Adirondack Council firmly believes that, since the State Land Master Plan struck a reasonable compromise among competing users of the forest preserve and since the plan has been generally accepted, no major revisions are necessary this year. Approximately half of the forest preserve is reserved for non-motorized use while motorized recreational use is allowed on the remainder, within constraints set forth in the plan.

Although the Council does not believe major revisions are necessary in this forest preserve centennial year, there are some revisions that should be undertaken. The Adirondack Council suggests that:

- There should be no changes in the protection given to designated wilderness. Specifically, no revisions should be made that would further delay the closure of the John Pond and Old Farm Clearing roads in the Siamese Ponds Wilderness.
- The Jay Mountain Primitive Area should be reclassified as wilderness. It has no non-conforming uses and "is of sufficient size and character as to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition" as required. This area was classified "primitive" because it was felt that its 7100 acres were not sufficient to be managed as wilderness. It is interesting to note that more than 60 units of the National Wilderness Preservation System are smaller than the Jay Mountain Primitive Area.
- The Ha-da-ron-dah Wilderness boundary should be extended to bring the entire Pine Creek drainage, upstream from the state boundary, into the Wilderness. The resultant hydrologic divide is--ecologically speaking--a more defensible wilderness boundary than is presently used. This change would not affect any established uses that are not already proposed for

modification by the Department of Environmental Conservation.

- Within the constraints of the state constitution's "forever wild" clause, provision should be made for facilities to better enable handicapped individuals to enjoy the forest preserve in Intensive Use Areas and Wild Forest Areas. Such facilities might include the use of braille on interpretive signs or short boardwalks to the edge of wetlands or ponds. Such facilities must be carefully sited within guidelines set out in the State Land Master Plan.
- The present provision in the plan, which precludes the designation of new primitive areas containing non-conforming uses that cannot be removed within three years, should be deleted from the plan.

The Adirondack Park Agency will be holding hearings on the State Land Master Plan this summer. They have not yet set the dates or locations for such hearings but when they do the Adirondack Council will alert its members. **Meanwhile, we encourage you to write the Agency at Box 99, Ray Brook, New York 12977 and recommend that the Agency make the revisions outlined above.** If you write, ask that your comments be made available to all Agency Commissioners and that you be informed of any hearings to be held in your region. It would also be useful to send copies of your letters to Henry G. Williams, Commissioner, Department of Environmental Conservation, 50 Wolf Road, Albany, New York 12233; your state senator, state assemblyman and the Adirondack Council.

## CELEBRATE THE ADIRONDACK PARK

On May 14, 1985 at 6:45 p.m. (please note the date has changed), the American Museum of Natural History and the Adirondack Council will be presenting an Adirondack Night at the Museum in New York City. This date is particularly significant since it is on the eve of the 100-year anniversary of the establishment of the Adirondack Forest Preserve on May 15, 1885.

To commemorate one hundred years of wilderness protection in the Adirondacks there will be a variety of exhibits and presentations that will focus on fish and wildlife of the region, Adirondack geology, other natural history subjects, and acid rain. Some original artwork on the Adirondacks will be displayed and many Adirondack experts will be on hand.

The main feature of the evening will be a spectacular slide presentation, prepared by Gary Randorf, on the Adirondack Park and Forest Preserve, entitled CELEBRATION OF WILDERNESS. The history, unique wildness, political battles, and diversity and grandeur of the Adirondacks will be highlighted with striking illustrations. Peter Berle, former New York State Assemblyman and Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner, who is an avid outdoorsman and a director of the Adirondack Council, will narrate the presentation. There will be ample opportunity for questions and discussion on any Adirondack subject.

Come join in this celebration, which should appeal to anyone who has enjoyed or wishes to experience the wonder and splendor of the Adirondacks. It will be a time to reflect on this great area of wild country and discuss its future.

There will not be an admission charge for Adirondack Council members but complimentary tickets should be requested from:

Adirondack Program  
Membership Office  
The American Museum of Natural History  
Central Park West at 79th Street  
New York, New York 10024

For those who are not members of the Council or the Museum there will be a charge of \$3.00.

A preview of CELEBRATION OF WILDNESS, narrated by Gary Randorf, will be presented in the Buffalo area on Monday, May 13. The Niagara Frontier Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club will host this program at the North Presbyterian Church, 300 North Forest Road, Williamsville. A business meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m., followed by the slide presentation.

For Rochester area members CELEBRATION OF WILDNESS will be presented in cooperation with the Rochester Museum and Science Center and the Center for Environmental Information. This will take place in the main building of the Museum and Science Center, 657 East Avenue on Sunday, May 19 at 2:00 p.m.

The Adirondack Council is also trying to arrange programs in Syracuse and Albany. In addition, the Council expects to make this program available as a slide/tape presentation to organizations on request.

## LAND TRUST ACCEPTS FIRST GIFTS

Thanks to Frank Untermeyer of Brant Lake, New York and Chicago, two parcels of land near Brant Lake in the southeastern part of the Park will be preserved forever. Mr. Untermeyer was instrumental in arranging a gift to the Adirondack Land Trust of a 91 acre parcel that forms part of the scenic backdrop of Brant Lake. The Trust will, in turn, give the parcel to the state for addition to the Adirondack Forest Preserve--thus insuring that it will remain "forever wild". Mr. Untermeyer is now giving the Adirondack Land Trust a conservation easement on a 190 acre parcel that includes all of pristine Streeter Pond and approximately two-thirds of the Streeter Pond watershed. This

easement provides that no development will ever take place on this property nor will the timber be harvested. In effect, this land too will be "forever wild".

Mr. Untermeyer deserves the thanks of all New Yorkers for insuring that 281 acres of the Adirondack Park will be kept in a natural condition. The Adirondack Land Trust is also to be congratulated for successfully negotiating its first acquisition of land and its first conservation easement. **If you have property in the Adirondack Park or the surrounding counties and you are interested in retaining the land but also insuring its preservation, you should contact the Adirondack Land Trust at Box D-2, Elizabethtown, NY 12932 (telephone 518-873-9239).**

## ALBANY WATCH

Governor Cuomo's proposed budget includes \$200,000 for the Adirondack Park Agency to undertake site selection and planning for an Adirondack Park Visitor Interpretive Center. This is very good news and lawmakers should be encouraged to keep it in the budget.

Governor Cuomo has also introduced a package of bills that would greatly improve the ability of the Department of Environmental Conservation to enforce environmental laws. The Legislature needs encouragement to support these measures as well, as laws inadequately enforced are little better than no laws at all.

A bill strongly supported by the Adirondack Council, the so-called "State Agency" bill or "Dual Standard" bill, A. 2548, was unanimously reported out of the Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee to the Ways and Means Committee on March 5. A Senate sponsor is still being sought. This bill would subject projects proposed in the Adirondack Park by state agencies to the same approval procedures as are presently the case for privately sponsored projects. Since the state has been the biggest developer in the Adirondacks in recent years, this is a bill whose time has come. State Senators in particular need to be encouraged to get behind the measure.

**Letters of support are needed to urge legislators to take action on proposed legislation that has been around for years adding approximately 100 miles of Adirondack rivers to the State System of Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers.** Several

## THANK YOU!

The generosity of our members responding to our NEWSLETTER appeal for contributions to the newly established Adirondack Council Endowment Fund has been most gratifying. In addition to individual contributions, we recently received a significant contribution from the **Adirondack North Woodsmen**, an environmental group that believes deeply in the preservation of the Adirondack Park and relies heavily on the Council to keep them informed of impending threats to either the forest preserve or Park and to use its clout to protect the Adirondacks for everyone. Perhaps your organization also appreciates the Council's vigilance and would consider a donation to the Council's Endowment Fund. The Adirondack North Woodsmen held a special fund raising event to enable them to contribute. Would your organization consider doing likewise?

**All Endowment Fund contributions are tax deductible and will be matched dollar for dollar by the Natural Heritage Trust.** If you haven't already contributed, won't you please send a contribution to the Adirondack Council Endowment Fund today? Let's ensure the long range future of the Adirondack Council. Threats to the Adirondacks will never end; we must ensure that the Council will always be here to derail future threats.

I wish to support the continued work of The Adirondack Council by my enclosed tax-deductible contribution to the Council's endowment fund. I understand that this contribution will be matched by a grant from the Natural Heritage Trust.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

STREET OR POST OFFICE: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Return to: The Adirondack Council, Endowment Fund, P.O. Box D-2, Elizabethtown, New York 12932

lawmakers have tried to make this a local Adirondack issue. The Council takes exception to this, these rivers are a state resource whose protection should be of interest to all of the state's citizenry and their representatives.

The proposed first passage of several constitutional amendments that would take a bite out of the forest preserve have once again surfaced. Everyone who supports the forest preserve as "forever wild" should once again let their representatives know that cutting forest preserve trees for so-called "habitat improvement" (S. 1057, A. 1490), allowing the establishment of forest preserve management areas (S. 341, A. 467), or allowing the gathering of dead timber from state lands including the forest preserve (S. 343, A. 396), are unwarranted and unsound proposals.

Finally, there is a measure (S. 885/A. 1306) proposed that would strip the Adirondack Park Agency of jurisdiction to regulate pesticide applications. This is quite discouraging as the Agency is the only regulator in the Adirondacks that has been both responsive and responsible in carefully reviewing pesticide programs that have been casually and indiscriminantly carried out for many years. **Please urge your legislators to oppose this bill and also let them know your views on other legislation described above. Write:**

Assembly Member \_\_\_\_\_  
Legislative Office Building  
Albany, New York 12248

Senator \_\_\_\_\_  
Legislative Office Building  
Albany, New York 12247

## LOW LEVEL MILITARY FLIGHTS

Many of our members have expressed concern, aggravation or outrage when the peace and quiet of their Adirondack wilderness experience was shattered by the roar of jet engines as a military aircraft buzzed them at tree-top level. Although both the United States Air Force and the Air National Guard use Adirondack air space for training, they are not supposed to undertake low-level flights over designated wilderness. If your wilderness trip is marred by the roar of military aircraft, please note the time, date and location and, if possible, the general direction of travel, type of aircraft or any visible markings; then send this information to Tom Monroe, Regional Director, Department of Environmental Conservation, Ray

Brook, New York 12977. Mr. Monroe will pass this information on to the Air Force or Air National Guard so appropriate action may be taken.

## LOON SURVEY PROJECT

Nearly 100 more lakes were surveyed for loon activity in 1984 than in 1983 as a result of the combined efforts of The Adirondack Council, National Audubon Society and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Four hundred and thirteen lakes were visited in the 1984 survey season.

Since the Adirondack Loon Preservation Project (ALPP) was initiated by the Council in 1982, volunteer observers have helped to survey 61% of the 1058 water bodies located in 14 northern New York counties that were determined large enough to potentially support the common loon. This year the Return a Gift to Wildlife fund enabled DEC to hire teams of biologists to conduct field surveys. Their data, along with information from scores of ALPP volunteer observers, resulted in recording 483 adult loons and 128 chicks on 227 lakes.

The ALPP hopes to complete the survey of the remaining 410 water bodies within the next two observation seasons. Many of these lakes are remote and some may present access problems due to private ownership. All of the 14 counties have unsurveyed lakes, so if you would like to assist with the loon project contact one of the following individuals and find out where your help is most needed: Anita Davis, The Adirondack Council, P.O. Box D-2, Elizabethtown, NY 12932; Nan Chadwick, National Audubon Society, 282 Delaware Avenue, Delmar, NY 12054.

## LATE DEVELOPMENTS

As we were going to press, the Adirondack Council was undertaking two important actions to preserve threatened Adirondack wilderness. The Council is acting to intervene in a recently initiated lawsuit that, under the pretense of aiding the handicapped, would open Adirondack wilderness to motor vehicles and aircraft. The Council has also been admitted as a full party to an administrative hearing on a state proposal to erect a 140 foot tower and a 39 foot windmill on a mountain top inholding in the Silver Lake Wilderness.



### The Adirondack Council

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

April 1985

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

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A copy of the last financial report filed with the New York Department of State may be obtained by writing: New York Department of State, Office of Charities Registration, Albany, NY 12231 or The Adirondack Council.

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