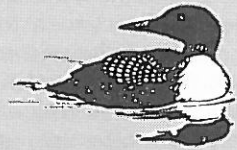




The Adirondack Council NEWSLETTER



to keep supporters informed of our activities

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BOB MARSHALL AND THE FIVE PONDS WILDERNESS

Will New York State Act Swiftly Enough to Achieve the Vision Bob Marshall Expressed 50 Years Ago?

In 1935, the 50th anniversary of the forest preserve, Bob Marshall wrote to then Conservation Commissioner Lithgow Osborne expressing his concern that New York State act to preserve its three last tracts of vast wilderness potential. The areas Bob referred to were all in the Adirondacks: The High Peaks region, the West Canada Lake-Moose River region and the area between Cranberry Lake and Beaver River Flow known today as the Five Ponds area. This plea to Commissioner Osborne was felt to be of such national significance that it was reprinted in its entirety in Volume 1, Issue 1 (September, 1935) of *The Living Wilderness*.

Bob Marshall, a native New Yorker, was undoubtedly the single-most influential person in this nation's wilderness movement. He was a professional resource manager, one of the founders of The Wilderness Society and the author of the original regulations governing the national forest wilderness. His father, noted constitutional lawyer Louis Marshall, played an important role in securing passage of the forever wild clause to the state constitution in 1894. Bob's first wilderness experiences occurred in what is today the Five Ponds Wilderness while he was a student at the SUNY College of Forestry summer camp on Cranberry Lake. The wilderness love kindled in the Five Ponds area not only stayed with Bob throughout his career but grew into a flaming passion. He went on to fight for wilderness preservation from New York to Alaska. Today the one million acre Bob Marshall Wilderness in Montana commemorates this man's boundless energy and dedication to our wilderness resource.

At the time he wrote Commissioner Osborne, Bob Marshall was preparing a nationwide inventory of roadless areas exceeding 300,000 acres in size. This inventory was to be published in *The Living Wilderness* in 1936 and included the three New York areas referred to previously.

The Five Ponds Wilderness Bob Marshall envisioned 50 years ago included approximately 380,000 acres bounded by Cranberry Lake on the north, Stillwater Reservoir and the New York Central Railroad on the southeast and developed portions of Lewis County on the west. It encompassed both forest preserve and private lands. Since that time additional forest preserve has been acquired in the area and much of the private land has been roaded, although not to an irreversible degree. The potential for creating the Adirondack Park's most outstanding wilderness area in accordance with Bob Marshall's vision not only still exists but only awaits state action.

In the years since Bob's plea was communicated to Commissioner Osborne, the state has designated a Five Ponds Wilderness that now includes 92,635 acres, a 14,600 acre Pepperbox wilderness and a 6,000 acre Wilderness Lakes Primitive Area within the original roadless area tract delineated by Bob Marshall. Part of the Lake Lila Primitive Area is also within the "great wilderness" proposal. In addition nearly 20,000 acres of state owned wild forest lands are scattered throughout the area and conservation easements have been acquired on approximately 7,000 acres of private lands.

The Opportunity

All of the above mentioned state forest preserve parcels could be bound together into a compact Five Ponds Wilderness exceeding 160,000 acres if the state were to acquire 13,000 acres held by a single land owner who is anxious to sell this land. Were this acreage purchased and the Five Ponds Wilderness boundary redrawn as shown on page two, Bob Marshall's vision would be substantially fulfilled and the eventual possibility of totally fulfilling it would remain. More importantly, what could well be the greatest wilderness in the Adirondacks would be preserved. This wilderness gem would include 48 miles of three designated Wild and Scenic Rivers, 185 lakes and ponds, a sense of remoteness available nowhere else in the Adirondacks and an unexcelled diversity of ecosystems.

Why hasn't the state acted? Both the funds and the lands are available now. Negotiations for land purchase are often complex, particularly when government regulations and policy are involved. Furthermore the present owner would prefer to sell to private interests. But undoubtedly the biggest single reason is that the vision held by Bob Marshall may not become a reality is that the public has not yet been made aware that the potential exists for achieving a truly great wilderness and has not, therefore, insisted that this potential be seized upon by the state.

A letter from you to Commissioner Henry G. Williams, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, 50 Wolf Road, Albany, NY 12033 respectfully requesting that the Department act swiftly to purchase all the private lands located in Watsons East Triangle in the Town of Webb, Herkimer County, as well as other lands within the proposed Five Ponds Great Wilderness that come on the market, would greatly increase the likelihood that future generations will have the vast Five Ponds Wilderness that they so rightly deserve.

Time is critical. The owner of these private lands is close to reaching agreement with other private parties for the purchase of three small portions of the large tract. Unfortunately, two of these parcels are located near the very heart of the wilderness Bob Marshall envisioned. If the state does not act promptly and decisively, the integrity of any future expanded Five Ponds Wilderness will be very greatly affected. What more fitting tribute to the memory of Bob Marshall could the state give than to fulfill his vision for the Five Ponds Wilderness in time for the 1985 Forest Preserve Centennial?

FOREST PRESERVE THREATENED AGAIN

In two separate actions, the forest preserve has been threatened; and, in both cases the threat comes from the State of New York. The Adirondack Council issued press releases late last month regarding each of these instances.

Constitutionality of Topridge Sale Questioned

Serious legal questions have been raised regarding New York State's plan to sell Camp Topridge, the elegant estate of Majorie Merriweather Post, located on Spectacle Ponds near the state owned St. Regis Canoe Area in the heart of the Adirondack Park. The estate, which includes scores of buildings, was donated to the state by Mrs. Post in 1974.

At its September board meeting, The Adirondack Council agreed that sale of the entire Topridge parcel would clearly be unconstitutional and subject to legal action. The parcel includes 207 acres, only about one-fourth of which are developed. The remainder is undeveloped wild land ideally suited for addition to the unique St. Regis Canoe Area. Since the land is owned by the state within a forest preserve county, it is subject to the forest preserve restrictions of Article XIV of the state constitution which clearly prohibits the sale of forest preserve.

The Adirondack Council believes the Topridge issue can be resolved in a manner that will preserve the historic buildings while at the same time retaining the undeveloped lands as forest preserve. The state's historic preservation law of 1983 provides a mechanism to accomplish this.

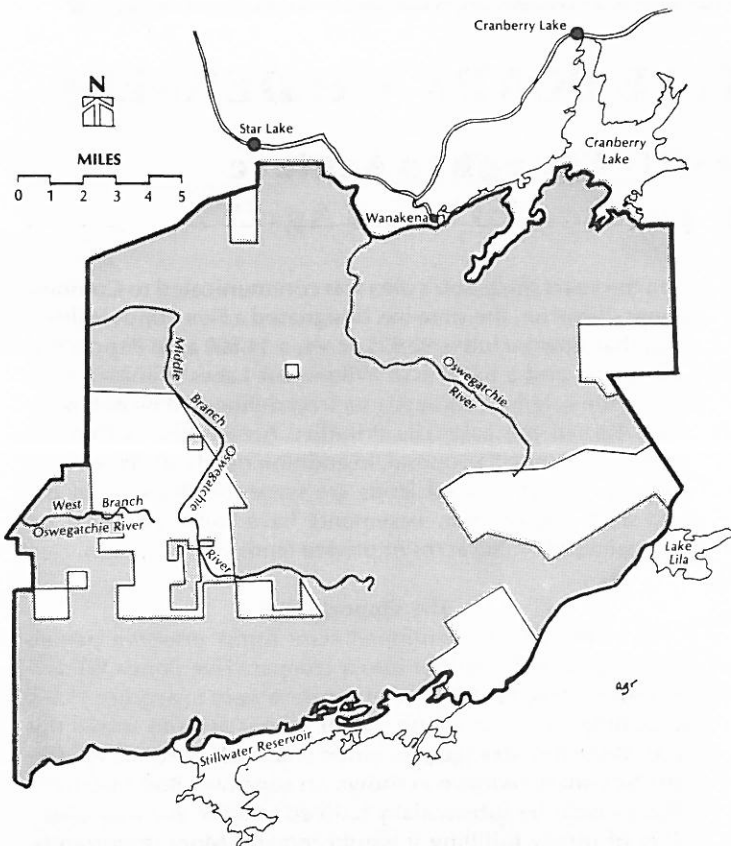
The situation calls for gubernatorial understanding and leadership. The resources involved are of immense value to the people of New York State, and the sale of the property would surely result in prolonged litigation. The Adirondack Council hopes reasonable minds will prevail and litigation will not be necessary.

Tower Proposed in Scenic Area

The Adirondack Council has grave concerns over the recently announced plan by the New York State Police to install a 100 foot tower near Lake George on Black Mountain, a mountain that forms the principal scenic backdrop to one of the most beautiful lakes in the world.

The Department of Environmental Conservation has advised the State Police that a permit can be granted for the tower. This advice flies in the face of the "forever wild" provisions of the New York State constitution. Approval also violates the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan and an agreement between the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Adirondack Park Agency that no development will take place on forest preserve parcels in the Adirondacks prior to the adoption of a unit management plan. The Council is very concerned about the aesthetic impact the tower will have on this magnificent scenic resource as well as the apparent violations of the constitution and state policy.

Both the Council and the Lake George Association have announced that they will monitor this proposal, and if it is not subjected to public scrutiny and brought within the confines of the constitution and existing state policy, appropriate action will be taken.



PROPOSED FIVE PONDS GREAT WILDERNESS

The essence of Bob Marshall's Five Ponds Great Wilderness vision could be created in time for the 1985 Forest Preserve Centennial. Existing forest preserve in the area (shaded)—which includes the Five Ponds and Pepperbox Wildernesses, all of the Wilderness Lakes and Buck Pond Road Primitive Areas, a portion of the Lake Lila Primitive Area, and scattered parcels of the Oswegatchie Wild Forest Area—makes up 82% of the proposed great wilderness. Of the area in private ownership, 23% is protected by restrictive conservation easements and 53% is presently or soon will be for sale. Since the State Department of Environmental Conservation has adequate funds available from the Environmental Quality Bond Act for the purchase of the lands now for sale, it is entirely conceivable that a Five Ponds Great Wilderness could be established during the Forest Preserve Centennial as a fitting tribute to Bob Marshall and an everlasting legacy to future generations of New Yorkers.



THE REWARDS OF ACCOMMODATION

In his first six months as chairman of the Adirondack Park Agency, Woody Cole has spent much of his time listening to the concerns of some local residents and local government officials within the Adirondack Park. Mr. Cole is a compassionate, sincere man who very much desires to put an end to the sometimes bitter controversies regarding the Adirondack Park Agency and the law it enforces.

Unfortunately, Mr. Cole has been soundly rebuffed by the most vocal critics of the Agency and its work. Three Adirondack counties, Hamilton, Fulton and Washington, have "seceded" from the Adirondack Park Agency--a legally meaningless but symbolic gesture. The Adirondack Park Local Government Review Board, created by the state legislature as part of the Adirondack Park Agency Act to assist the Agency in carrying out its work, has openly pressured local government units in the Park to refuse to undertake the local planning efforts encouraged by the Agency Act. It is ironic to note that such planning would result in the transfer of much of the Agency regulation back to local decision makers. In addition, the Review Board has contacted several Catskill counties and, by greatly exaggerating the possibility of a state land "take over" in the Catskills, tried to convince these counties to join with the Review Board in seeking the abolishment of the Adirondack Park Agency.

Those of us honestly concerned with both the natural and the human resources of the Adirondack Park can only hope that more Adirondack residents will accept Mr. Cole's sincerity and rebuke those individuals and local officials who have been acting so irresponsibly. The vast majority of Adirondackers are concerned individuals who care about preserving the beauty and the character of the Adirondack Park. It is time for these individuals to rise up against the intimidating tactics of those who would denigrate the Park for personal gain, media attention and perceived local political importance.



RANDORF RETURNS TO COUNCIL STAFF

After a much deserved leave of absence, Gary Randorf has returned to his position as executive director of The Adirondack Council. During his year's leave Gary spent a great deal of his time visiting interpretive centers at both state and national parks, forests and similar reserves. He hopes to make valuable use of this experience in urging New York State to initiate a visitor interpretation program for the Adirondack Park. In addition to Council general administrative work and promoting visitor centers, Gary will focus on the Council's education and legislative programs. Acid rain, pesticides and toxic waste will be among the specific issues requiring his attention.

George Davis, who has served as executive director during Gary's leave, will remain with the Council as a program consultant in addition to serving as the executive director of the newly formed Adirondack Land Trust. George's primary Council duties will include monitoring state agency actions in the Park and editing the Council's NEWSLETTER, State of the Park and other reports. He will focus particular attention on forest preserve policies as we enter the centennial year of the forest preserve.



THE PERFECT HOLIDAY GIFT

ADIRONDACK WILDCODE: The Natural History of the Adirondack Park, recently published by the Council and the Adirondack Conservancy, makes an ideal gift for anyone interested in the Adirondacks. This 160 page book is richly illustrated with over 100 original paintings and drawings. Orders placed now will be filled in plenty of time for the holidays, so send your check today to AC Wildguide, P.O. Box 188, Elizabethtown, New York 12932. Discount prices for members are: Hardbound \$20.85 and paperback \$16.20 (includes shipping and handling).

DOUBLE YOUR MONEY!

The Adirondack Council has been granted a marvelous opportunity to create an endowment fund that will help ensure financial stability for the organization's future. The Natural Heritage Trust, through the National Audubon Society, has agreed to match every dollar the Council raises for an endowment fund, up to a maximum of \$26,000. The endowment fund will be invested and the proceeds from it will be used to supplement the Council's operating budget.

We encourage all members interested in assuring that the Council remain the principal protector of the Adirondack Park to contribute as much as possible to this new endowment fund. Please clearly mark your contributions "Endowment Fund" so that they will be doubled by the Natural Heritage Trust's grant. Contributions may be sent with the following form.

THE ADIRONDACK COUNCIL ENDOWMENT FUND Special Contribution

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 _____

* Contributors of \$100 or more will receive the beautiful and informative ADIRONDACK WILDCODE.

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

ACID RAIN: THE SMOKESTACK IS THE "SMOKING GUN"

The Council has been granted permission to reprint a portion of Dr. Gene E. Likens' above titled article that appeared in the July/August 1984 issue of *Garden* magazine. We regret that space limitations prohibit us from including this excellent article in its entirety.

The Political Dimension

There are of course many scientific uncertainties about acid rain, and more research is needed to better understand the complex ecological effects on aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, but such uncertainty is not unusual in dealing with complex scientific questions.

Overall, our understanding is both incomplete and imperfect, but taken collectively, the data represent a convincing case that industrial emissions of sulfur and nitrogen oxides are deposited on the landscape as acids hundreds of miles from where they originated, and are doing significant damage to natural ecosystems.

The President's own Acid Rain Peer Review Panel said last June, "The overall scientific understanding of the various aspects of acidic precipitation is incomplete at the present time and will continue to have major uncertainties well into the future." The panel went on to say, "Recommendations based on imperfect data run the risk of being in error; *recommendations for inaction pending collection of all the desirable data entail even greater risk of damage*" (italics added). The panel said that "additional steps should be taken now which will result in meaningful reductions in the emissions of sulfur compounds into the atmosphere."

These same conclusions have been reached in two recent reports by the National Academy of Sciences and in numerous other scientific publications.

I was part of a scientific team that made a presentation to the President and cabinet council in September at the request of EPA administrator William Ruckelshaus. There was no lack of consensus in our group about the seriousness of the acid rain problem or about the need for action. There has been appreciable scientific input at the highest political levels.

Nevertheless, President Reagan in his State of the Union message in January indicated clearly that the administration does not intend to implement any regulatory policy to deal

with acid deposition for two more years—he called instead for more research. In February, EPA administrator Ruckelshaus reiterated the Reagan position by testifying before the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works that "on the basis of the current state of scientific knowledge, the Administration is not prepared to recommend additional sulfur oxide controls."

It is totally misleading to state that more scientific research is required before any regulatory program can be advanced to address the serious problem of acid deposition. But solving the acid rain problem creates another problem—an economic one. It would cost a great deal of money to clean up the air pollution: Reliable estimates are on the order of \$4 to \$5 billion a year.

The high cost of cleanup explains why acid rain is such an intractable political issue. The Midwest is not eager to pay for damage done in the East. The eastern U.S. is not eager to pay for damage done to its natural resources by pollutants originating in some other place.

The cost of cleaning up air pollution is large, but our natural resources are extremely valuable and often irreplaceable. **The overall benefits of protecting our lakes and streams and our forests and soils are many times larger than the costs of controlling air pollution.** The economic impact of continuing to allow damage to natural ecosystems from acid deposition and other air pollutants will eventually reverberate loudly through the concrete canyons of Wall Street. Now it is up to the politicians to take action, and they should do so promptly.

Dr. Likens is director of the Institute of Ecosystem Studies at the Mary Flagler Cary Arboretum, The New York Botanical Garden, Millbrook, New York.

STOP ACID RAIN-Postcard Campaign

The Adirondack Council is joining the National Clean Air Coalition and other environmental groups in the STOP ACID RAIN postcard campaign. **Please sign and return the enclosed postcard so that it may be presented with thousands of others to President Reagan and Congress.** Huge numbers of postcards will demonstrate the level of public support and commitment to STOP ACID RAIN. Also, your name will be recorded by the Coalition so that you can be contacted later when public support is needed to urge cosponsors or votes for an acid rain bill.



The Adirondack Council

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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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