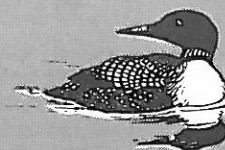




The Adirondack Council NEWSLETTER



to keep supporters informed of our activities

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No. 20

MORE CHEMICAL SPRAYING

The targets of toxic chemical spraying this time are trees and brush instead of blackflies and mosquitoes, yet the risks are the same. In an apparent attempt to catch up on rights-of-way maintenance, Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation has resorted to herbicide spraying under powerlines throughout much of Warren and Essex Counties. The resulting browned-off vegetation is readily visible along many miles of powerlines, often parallel to roadsides. Such spraying is done periodically by the utility company but has been particularly extensive this year.

The Adirondack Council has received numerous telephone calls and letters from concerned individuals, and we share that concern. Outweighing the aesthetic blight, however, is the concern about toxic effects of indiscriminate drenching of miles of powerline corridors with Tordon 101. This chemical was known as Agent White when it was sprayed from U.S. Army helicopters in Vietnam as a defoliant. The active ingredients of Tordon 101 are picloram and 2,4-D. Picloram is highly suspect as a probable carcinogen. Human contact with picloram has caused problems with vision, weakness and fatigue, enlarged livers, respiratory difficulties and kidney damage. 2,4-D is under close scrutiny due to its similarity to the banned 2,4,5-T and the suspicion that it may be contaminated with dioxin, a contaminant proven to cause cancer and miscarriages.

The use of Tordon 101 is vigorously defended by those who use it for agricultural purposes, clearing roadsides of vegetation, and discouraging unwanted species in forests. It is registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). It should be noted, however, that the EPA based its favorable opinion of the herbicide on three cancer research studies. The two firms, or their agents who performed the studies, have, according to *Inquiry* magazine, been cited for falsified data, fabricated test results and questionable test animal identification and record-keeping practices!

Although the jury is still out on Tordon, the basic policy of the regulators on this and many chemicals seems to be "let it be considered innocent until proven guilty". With the great incidence of cancer and other environmentally caused maladies in our society, one would think the policy should be "let it be proven safe before it is used".

The Council has contacted the Department of Environmental Conservation, the Adirondack Park Agency, the Public Service Commission and Niagara Mohawk, expressing alarm over the widespread spraying of Tordon. We intend to aggressively pursue this matter by continuing to monitor herbicide use and investigate the hazards associated with such use. The Council further intends to press for action to implement more stringent standards while at the same time seeking more acceptable alternatives.

The practice of accepting the manufacturer's test results is common with EPA, as they lack either the incentive or the personnel and facilities to conduct their own testing. For this

reason, the Council has called on Niagara Mohawk and the state agencies to rely less heavily on the EPA registration process and to monitor more carefully and restrict the use of Tordon. At a recent meeting with a Public Service Commissioner and the Commission's Director of Environmental Planning, the Council made a plea for the Public Service Commission and the utilities to consider adopting the following policies to accommodate the concerns of other agencies and organizations and to eliminate public outcry:

- Extensive herbicide spraying, whether by aerial or ground application, should generally not be permitted in accessible areas where manual control can be used.
- Buffer areas where no herbicides would be used should be established along public and private roads, water courses and wetlands, and around homes, livestock areas, gardens, barns, and other areas frequented by humans or domestic animals.
- Utilities should provide adequate prior notice to the public of the estimated date of herbicide spraying.
- Landowners should be allowed to perform their own vegetation management of the utility right-of-way across their land with compensation by the utility at a comparable rate.
- Routine monitoring should be performed to identify incidents of spray drift or the spraying of prohibited areas.
- Undergrounding utility lines should be more frequently practiced to reduce maintenance costs and the need for vegetation control as well as to improve the aesthetics of the Park.

The Council has also written the Regional Administrator of EPA expressing concern over the chemical registration process in general and the registration of Tordon 101 in particular. We have emphasized the great need for the registration process to be reliable because EPA's stamp of approval is rarely questioned by the public or regulatory agencies. If EPA is to continue its present practice of often basing registration on data supplied by the manufacturers, data that we argue can be insufficient or skewed, it is imperative that all users and regulators recognize the need to carefully monitor the use and impacts of the chemicals since human health and the environment are at stake. As EPA is being emasculated, and with the deregulation mentality of the federal government, the careful scrutiny of chemical use by everyone involved becomes even more important.

The Council looks forward to that day when herbicides will no longer be looked on as a first line of defense. Much too frequently, the alternative to a dangerous herbicide is to find a new one to replace it, and then the new chemical is later found as harmful as its predecessor. We need, instead, to find less harmful but equally effective means to reduce the use of herbicides.

COUNCIL SCHEDULES PUBLIC MEETINGS

The Adirondack Council is anxious to provide an opportunity for its members to become more involved in the work of the Council and have a chance to meet and visit with Directors and staff. Equally important, the Council believes that public awareness of Adirondack issues and pending threats to the integrity of the Park needs to be dramatically increased. To accomplish these objectives, the Council will be scheduling evening public meetings around the state over the next several months.

These meetings will include a slide show, presentations on the forest preserve, the Park's private lands, and the Park's river, lake, forest and wildlife resources. Opportunities will be provided for both group and individual discussion time.

Four meetings have been scheduled to date. Be sure to mark them on your calendar. They are:

BUFFALO

Monday, October 25, 7:30 p.m.
North Presbyterian Church
300 North Forest Road
Williamsville

ROCHESTER

Tuesday, October 26, 7:30 p.m.
Building 8, Room 200
Monroe County Community College
1000 East Henrietta Road

HAUPPAUGE, Long Island

Tuesday, January 11, 7:30 p.m.
Legislative Auditorium
Suffolk County Office Building
Veterans Memorial Highway

HEMPSTEAD, Long Island

Wednesday, January 12, 7:30 p.m.
Town Hall Pavillion
Corner of Front & Washington Streets

We encourage members in these areas to talk up these meetings with your friends and encourage attendance. Ask your local environmental group, garden club or other organization to co-sponsor the meeting in your vicinity. You can assist us in announcing the meeting by contacting local media -newspapers, radio stations, and groups that print club bulletins and newsletters are often glad to help. Let us know of your efforts so we can back them up. And, of course, plan on attending yourself and bringing a friend or two.

Members in other areas of the state who would like to help arrange similar future programs for their areas should contact us so we can discuss arrangements and dates. Remember, to encourage more interest in protecting the Adirondacks will take active member involvement. We on the Board and staff are here to serve you. We look forward to seeing you and working with you.

GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES AND ADIRONDACK ISSUES

In late July The Adirondack Council sent each of the four gubernatorial candidates a questionnaire on issues we felt were important to our membership. We asked for replies by August 25 in the hope that a special report could be sent to our members before the primary election. Despite numerous fol-

low-up requests, none of the candidates were able to meet this deadline. Nor have the candidates to be on the November ballot been able to respond in time for this Newsletter. The Council did, however, recently receive a response from Mayor Koch. That response is available from our office.

The Adirondack Council cannot and does not endorse any candidate, however, we believe it is important that you, the citizens of New York, ask your gubernatorial candidates questions such as:

- If elected governor, would you vigorously oppose any amendment that would alter the "forever wild" provision (Article XIV Section 1) of the State Constitution (i.e., "the lands of the state, now owned or hereafter acquired, constituting the forest preserve as now fixed by law, shall be forever kept as wild forest lands...")?
- If elected governor, would you support a strong, bipartisan, independent Adirondack Park Agency and oppose any legislative weakening of the Adirondack Park Agency Act?
- If elected governor, would you support the same Adirondack Park Agency membership composition as now required by law (i.e., 3 state officials, 5 Park residents, 3 state residents from outside the Park)?
- As governor you would have the power to make appointments to the Adirondack Park Agency. In fact, in your first year your appointments would constitute a majority on the Agency. If elected governor, what qualifications would you seek when making appointments to the Adirondack Park Agency?
- If elected governor, would you support inclusion of the Adirondack Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System so long as no federal management or no incursion on state prerogatives is involved?
- If elected governor, would you support a visitor information program for the Adirondack Park, including visitor interpretation centers and signing of natural landmarks visible from the highways, as part of a state forest preserve centennial (1985) and Park centennial (1992) program?



CLEARCUTTING REGULATIONS APPROVED BY APA

At its September meeting, the Adirondack Park Agency unanimously adopted regulations clarifying the Agency's review of the clearcutting of forests. The controversial clearcutting regulations, that will take effect in October, have been a source of debate since the fall of 1979.

After a heated round of hearings in the spring of this year, the APA appointed an ad hoc committee to further study the situation and needs. This committee was comprised of Agency members with advisors representing the forest products industry and environmental groups, including The Adirondack Council.

Once the committee and its advisors sat around a table together, considerable accord was reached, and the APA was able to adopt clearcutting rules that provide:

- A workable definition of clearcutting that includes both larger trees and regeneration; and,
- A method to aggregate clearcut areas of eight acres or more in arriving at the 25 acre threshold if such areas are not separated by an uncut buffer strip of at least 300 feet.

Determination of the Agency's jurisdictional threshold for clearcutting in wetlands will be deferred until May 1, 1983, at which time a permit will be required for the clearcutting of more than three acres within a freshwater wetland. Until that time, forested wetlands will be treated the same as other forested areas.

New clearcutting guidelines and suggested practices will be set forth in a handbook, rather than in the regulations themselves. This will necessitate careful monitoring by The Adirondack Council and others to insure the adequacy of the guidelines and suggested practices as well as their application.

The revised regulations are available from the Adirondack Park Agency, P.O. Box 99, Ray Brook, New York 12977. The handbook is not yet available, but we will inform you when it is.

Although APA's Chairman, Ted Ruzow, favored a ban on the use of herbicides, he did not prevail. It is hoped that in its review process the Agency carefully scrutinizes any herbicide use proposed in conjunction with clearcutting or other projects under the Agency's jurisdiction. Tordon 101 (see lead article in this Newsletter) and other toxic chemicals are widely used by the timber industry in many parts of the United States, and more widespread clearcutting here, particularly when site conversion is an objective, may well lead to broader use of such hazardous chemicals.



LOON PRESERVATION PROJECT

To many, the eerie call of the loon is the most thrilling and distinctive symbol of Adirondack wilderness. With financial assistance from the National Audubon Society and the North American Loon Fund, the Adirondack Council has undertaken a new project to help insure that future generations are not deprived of the opportunity to hear this magnificent bird.

The 1982 phase of the Council's Adirondack Loon Preservation Project will build the foundation for a longer term project by: (1) documenting historical nesting records and observations in the Adirondack Park; (2) increasing public awareness of the shrinking loon population in the Adirondack Park; (3) identifying critical loon nesting habitats; (4) establishing a network of volunteers to observe and protect loon nesting areas in future years; (5) developing a process to compare loon observation records and changing lake acidity; and (6) providing a coordinating link among the scientific, landowner, general public and state and federal government communities.

Other citizen organized loon preservation projects exist in Maine, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Vermont, Wisconsin and Ontario. In addition, Dr. Judith W. McIntyre of Syracuse University's Utica College conducts a "Project Loon Watch" through a network of volunteers in northern New York. Dr. McIntyre is recognized as one of the world's leading authorities on loons. The Council's project is designed to complement Dr. McIntyre's research.

If you are interested in loons and helping insure their place in the Adirondack Park of the future, you can assist our loon preservation project in a number of ways. First, we need to develop a network of volunteers who spend considerable time near Adirondack lakes during May, June and July and who can report loon sightings to us. If you, or perhaps your lake association, would like to become involved in this type of assistance please write George Davis at the Council's office. Second, the project will need your financial support if it is to continue. It is anticipated that every dollar sent to The Adirondack Council and earmarked for the loon preservation project will be matched by further grants from the North American Loon Fund. Finally, we will soon be sending you a catalog for quality loon related gifts. The profits from purchases made from this catalog will go to the Adirondack Loon Preservation Project.

STATE OF THE PARK REPORT UPCOMING

Wild Wings Foundation has funded the preparation of a "State of the Park - 1982" report to be prepared by George Davis. The Adirondack Council has agreed to edit and distribute this report which we hope will become an annual evaluation of the Park. Members should receive a copy in November.

The report will briefly evaluate the present state of the Park using indicators that can also be used in future years so that trends can be perceived. It will then summarize government actions, or inactions, that have either positively or negatively influenced the Park over the last year. Finally, it will project what can be expected for the Park if such actions and inactions become trends.

We look forward to comments from our members on this report.



WILDERNESS '84 — A CONFERENCE

The Adirondack Council has agreed to co-sponsor Wilderness '84, the sixteenth national wilderness conference sponsored by the Sierra Club. George Davis, the Council's program consultant and former executive director of The Wilderness Society, will represent the Council on the conference steering committee.

The conference will be held August 25-28, 1984 at Silver Bay on Lake George. The year and the Adirondack location are particularly significant. 1984 will be the twentieth anniversary of the Wilderness Act, which established the National Wilderness Preservation System. This milestone federal legislation was drafted in the Adirondacks by Howard Zahniser. The conference will also be the first of many celebrations to commemorate the 1985 centennial anniversary of the forest preserve.

On Sunday, October 17, 1982, the Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter will hold a fundraiser at the Adirondack Loj to benefit the Wilderness '84 Conference. There will be a day of hikes, walks, interesting food and drink and good company at the lodge at Heart Lake. For tickets and more information on hikes and walks planned during the day, contact Marilyn M. DuBois, Wilderness '84 Conference Director, Sierra Club, 196 Morton Avenue, Albany, N.Y. 12202 (518/462-9812).



STUDENT INTERN PROGRAM

Over the past few years The Adirondack Council has contracted student interns from Yale, Suffolk and Antioch Universities for studies of acid rain, property taxation and forestry associations. A student intern program is an excellent way for non-profit organizations such as the Council to stretch their budget dollar, accomplish special projects and provide a valuable educational experience for students.

The Council hopes to institutionalize an intern program to provide continuity among related projects and to even out our workload. To successfully accomplish this we need your assistance. If any of you know of universities with intern programs requiring minimal employer expense, and programs in ecology, environmental law, natural history, resource economics or related fields, please let us know.

Although intern programs are relatively inexpensive, some funding is necessary. As previously reported, we have established a Mary Prime Memorial Fund to help cover costs of our intern program. What more fitting tribute could there be to this sensitive and generous lady than youth working diligently on those Adirondack issues so close to her heart.

*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.

The Adirondack Council is funded solely through private contributions and grants.

If you are not yet a contributor, please consider lending us your financial support. Send contributions to the address at right. Please make checks payable to: The Adirondack Council.

*Contributions are tax deductible

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The Adirondack Council

Box D-2, Elizabethtown, NY 12932

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

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