



The Adirondack Council NEWSLETTER



to keep supporters informed of our activities

Vol. 4

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CHANGE OF CHAIR

It is with deep regret that Harold Jerry has stepped down as Chairman of The Adirondack Council. His contributions to the Council and the Adirondack Park are gigantic. Harold has energetically raised funds and guided the Council in all of its programs. His keen perceptions, extensive background, and love for the Adirondacks have been a constant source of inspiration and action to achieve a greater and better protected Adirondack Park. Fortunately, Harold will continue to serve on the Council's Board.

The Council's new Chairperson is Frances Beinecke, effective July 14, and the feeling seems to be unanimous that she is a fine choice. Frances has been on the Board for several years. She holds a Masters Degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. She is on the staff of the Natural Resources Defense Council and is Vice-President of The Wilderness Society. Her family has a home in the Adirondacks and she has followed Adirondack Park issues for many years. A Council Board member was heard to comment, "She is a very bright and able young lady and should guide the Council with distinction."



THE LEGISLATURE

The Legislature adjourned in mid-June and is expected to return sometime later in the summer or in early autumn. Their agenda at that time is anticipated to be quite abbreviated and it is doubtful that any Adirondack measures will be considered.

The Legislature is to be commended for its caution in hesitating to pass bills that would threaten the Adirondack Park or weaken the Adirondack Park Agency. Bills that fortunately have *not* made their way through both houses include:

- The "density bonus" bill that would provide for a greater number of structures on shorelines and in highway corridors.

- A measure that would have removed Adirondack Park Agency review of single family dwellings in Resource Management areas.

- A measure that would eliminate the current list of "study rivers" and preclude the future inclusion of any additional Adirondack Park rivers into the State System of Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers.

- A bill that would automatically appoint the Chairman of the Adirondack Park Local Government Review Board as a voting Adirondack Park Agency Commissioner.

- A bill that would limit the service of Adirondack

Park Agency Commissioners to two full terms (8 years).

- A Joint Resolution of the Senate and Assembly (proposed constitutional amendment) that would have provided for selective timber cutting on the Forest Preserve to "improve" habitat for wildlife, primarily white-tailed deer.

- A Joint Resolution of the Senate and Assembly, and in addition a separate bill, both of which would provide for the gathering of dead wood on the Forest Preserve.

Unfortunately, bill A.7683/S.8858, that would have added approximately 100 miles of Adirondack rivers to the State System of Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers, did not pass the Legislature. It is too bad that this measure continues to be opposed primarily as a result of general antipathy to the Adirondack Park Agency. Close scrutiny of the Rivers Act indicates that inclusion of these rivers in the System would pose little hardship to private landowners. This has proven to be the case along hundreds of miles of private shorelines of rivers that have been in the System since 1975. Protection of natural free-flowing Adirondack rivers would benefit everyone in the long-term.

Fortunately, the 100 miles of rivers continue to have "study river" status, which requires Park Agency review of proposed development activities.

All residents of New York State are reminded to please let their local state representatives know their position on this bill. It would be well to send copies of any correspondence on this matter to the Legislative leaders (Senator Anderson, Assemblyman Fink) and the Conservation Committee Chairmen, Senator Eckert and Assemblyman Hinchey. All can be addressed at the Legislative Office Building, Albany, New York 12248.



ADIRONDACK PARK COUNTRYSIDE AND WILDLIFE SERIES

The initial volume in this series of publications on the Natural History of the Adirondack Park is underway due to the securing of a foundation grant by The Adirondack Council and The Adirondack Conservancy. The Council and the Conservancy have retained Michael DiNunzio, terrestrial ecologist and naturalist, to author the series. An illustrator will be selected in the near future. The series will be of a 6 x 9 inch format with an initial volume describing plant and animal communities, including general information on climate, geology and

soils. Subsequent volumes will address such topics as trees and shrubs, wildflowers, birds and mammals. All of the booklets will stress the interrelationships between plants and animals living in distinctive communities characteristic of Adirondack environments. This is one of the projects referred to in the Council's Mid-Year Special Appeal and we hope members will wish to contribute to this project.

MORE ON THE GOLDEN EAGLE

In March, The Adirondack Council corresponded with the Air National Guard to see if prime Golden Eagle habitat in the central Adirondacks could be avoided during training missions. The very much appreciated response follows:

New York Air National Guard
Headquarters 174th Tactical Fighter Wing
Hancock Field, Syracuse, New York 13211

19 April 1980

Dear Mr. Randorf:

I have received your request of 20 March 80 and am pleased to say that we can avoid the sensitive area without detracting from A-10 training. Each of our three flying units has been provided an aeronautical navigation chart identifying the area as a no-fly zone during low level training. As I mentioned on the phone I would appreciate feedback if A-10's are observed in the area. I'll follow up on any sightings to be sure there was a valid reason for the aircraft being there (i.e., navigation error or weather problem).

None of the other military training in northern New York is under my jurisdiction. A review of the airspace in which other training takes place, however, shows that the sensitive area is well situated. Both high speed low level training routes miss the area laterally and the falcon MOA is not available below 6000 feet MSL.

We are pleased that we have an open line of communication with your organization. Balancing environmental concerns with military training needs is not an easy task and we will both profit from a free exchange of ideas.

Again, thanks for your interest.

Michael S. Hall, Major, NYANG
Air Commander

THE ADIRONDACK PARK LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW BOARD

After a period of moderation in which it began to actually serve its mandate to advise and assist the Adirondack Park Agency, the Local Government Review Board has reverted back to its earlier habits of negativism and opposition. This is terribly unfortunate because we suspect this adversarial role will work against the Review Board and preclude positive achievements for Adirondack Park landowners.

This observation results from seeing the Review Board's comments in the media and reading its 1979 Annual Report to the Governor and Legislature. We highly recommend that our readers request a copy of this Report from the Review Board at their new address:

Adirondack Park Local Government Review Board
Tupper Lake, New York 12986

This will allow you to reach your own conclusions. You will find the Report interesting reading.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ACTIVITIES

The past few months being typical, the Executive Director has been involved in a broad array of activities; highlights follow:

- April 2 - Talked to a High School Class at Chester-town School about Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers.
- April 10-13 - Attended conference in Colorado on "Environmental Issues of the 80's" (with some scholarship support). Co-presented a workshop on acid precipitation.
- April 17 - Met as part of the Planning Committee to further refine plans for the 5th Conference on The Adirondacks for Educators.
- April 24 - Met as part of the North Country Heritage Committee to plan for the 100 year anniversary celebration of the Forest preserve.
- April 27 - With representatives of several state environmental organizations, met with Commissioner Robert Flacke and several of his staff of the Department of Environmental Conservation on major programs. The Council followed up with an extensive report containing many recommendations on aspects of state land management in the Adirondack Park.
- April 29 - Met with a group of Essex County people to plan a strategy for saving The Adirondack Train (Amtrak).
- April 30 - Guest speaker on acid precipitation and North Country natural history at meeting of the Lake Placid Garden Club.
- May 6 - Attended Annual Meeting of the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks to report on the current New York State Legislative proposals.
- May 8 - Attended and presented a statement at a public meeting on saving The Adirondack, Amtrak train.
- May 12 - Met with a group at the offices of the Board of Equalization and Assessment to discuss Conservation Easement Legislation.
- May 12 - Met with Senator Ronald Stafford to discuss legislation on Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers.
- May 15 & 16 - Monitored Adirondack Park Agency Meeting.
- May 21 - Gave a slide presentation on Adirondack Natural History to High Peaks Audubon.
- May 22 - Lectured to a class at North Country Community College on the Adirondack Park, Park Agency, and current Park issues.
- May 23 - Met as a member of the New York State Toxics Advisory Review Committee at a day-long meeting on toxics issues.
- June 2 - Lectured to a group of St. Lawrence University students on the issues of private land use planning and control in the Adirondack Park.
- June 10 - Spent afternoon and evening in the field reviewing a proposed project site at Harrisburg Lake (West Stony Creek).
- June 11 - Testified at a public hearing on the Harrisburg Lake Project.
- June 16 - Attended and testified at an Adirondack Park Agency hearing on proposed rules and regulations for freshwater wetlands.

ACID RAIN UPDATE

Stephen Scholle

Recently, The Adirondack Council has received numerous inquiries about acid precipitation. Described below are the major developments in acid rain-related areas since the Council's last article on the subject in the December, 1979 newsletter.

On March 6, President Carter sent a "utility oil back-out" proposal to Congress that calls for reducing utility oil consumption by a million barrels a day by 1990. This would be accomplished by converting coal-capable power plants, predominantly in the east, to coal use. The proposal offers utilities federal grants and loans to help meet the costs of conversion. Burning coal will exacerbate acid precipitation if emissions of sulfur dioxide (SO₂) and nitrous oxides (NO_x) are not properly controlled.

Unfortunately, and despite the objections of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Administration's proposal subsidizes coal conversion without requiring concomitant limits on emissions increases.

Two pieces of legislation are involved in the coal conversion program. One, S.2470, has already passed the Senate. The other, H.R.6930 has yet to be marked-up for review by committee in the House of Representatives. S.2470 is a disappointment with regard to acid precipitation. Even though converting to coal and scrubbing power plants would cost less than burning oil, the Senate soundly defeated amendments aimed at reducing SO₂ emissions from converted power plants.

It is disappointing to note that Senator Moynihan voted with the majority and Senator Javits did not vote. Although the two New York Senators along with Senator Heinz (R-PA) did consider offering a substitute amendment of their own, it would have done nothing to mitigate emissions from converted power plants in the northeast.

Eighty-eight units at 38 power plants are targeted for conversion in S.2470. The increase in SO₂ emissions in the northeast from these conversions would total between 350,000 and 400,000 tons per year and the NO_x emissions would increase by 200,000 tons per year. The increase in SO₂ alone would wipe out two-thirds of what has been gained in the northeast since the State Implementation Plans (SIPS) became effective in 1972. About 40 per cent of that increase would come from New York where SO₂ emissions limits are over 9 times more liberal for coal than they are for oil. At this writing, however, EPA intends to allow Con Edison to burn high sulfur oil at three power plants, despite the objections of New Jersey and Connecticut's environmental commissioners.

The best hope of curtailing the higher SO₂ emissions from coal conversion is the House of Representatives, where acid rain amendments are expected to have a better chance than they had in the Senate. It would be helpful to write your congressman immediately urging strong SO₂ emissions limitations be included in H.R. 6930.

On another coal-related matter, the Council has been monitoring the progress of a possible EPA relaxation of Ohio's State Implementation Plan for two Cleveland power plants. This situation can be divided into two parts, one, a general relaxation of the State's SIP, and two, the relaxation granted in June 1979 to two power plants, East Lake and Avon Lake, which together spew out 350,000 tons of SO₂ per year. EPA has not ruled on a general relaxation of Ohio's SIP as yet. If it does relax the SIP, Pennsylvania, New York, Massachusetts and New Hampshire stand ready to sue.

The Avon Lake and East Lake situation has been mitigated to some extent, though not to our satisfaction. In its final ruling, EPA said that for the next year East Lake could emit 5.64 pounds of SO₂ per million BTUs of heat generated, down from 6.58 pounds last year. The Avon Lake plant would be allowed to emit 4.1 pounds per million BTUs, down from a proposed 6.9 pounds.

However, EPA might further cut emissions limits in 1981 if the utility can't demonstrate that the current height of the plants' smokestacks is needed to bar high pollutant concentrations at ground level around the plant. If the tests don't justify the stack heights, the SO₂ limit could drop to 3.04 pounds at East Lake and 3.43 at Avon Lake.

EPA has decided to re-evaluate its policy of granting stack height "credits." Credits are the raised pollution limits granted utilities if their smokestacks are built high enough to disperse pollutants. The agency now will force utilities to prove that their stack heights are needed to cut local pollution. Although EPA's new policy will help mitigate SO₂ emissions, they are still considerably more generous in the case of East Lake and Avon Lake than the original limits of one pound of SO₂ per million BTUs.

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and New York's Commissioner of Environmental Conservation, Robert Flacke, have both pointed out several steps that EPA could take now with its existing authority under the Clean Air Act to improve the acid rain problem. Some of these steps include:

1. Emissions limits and technology standards for existing sources of sulfates and nitrates as addressed under Section 111D of the Clean Air Act.
2. Mandatory coal washing.
3. Nationwide emissions monitoring.
4. Penalty regulations for major polluters.
5. Effective national ambient air quality standards for fine particles (such as sulfates and nitrates).
6. Air quality monitoring that will ensure attainment of national ambient air quality standards.
7. Regulations to safeguard visibility.

The problem EPA faces, according to its Administrator, Douglas Costle, is that the Clean Air Act comes up for review in 1981. Mr. Costle is worried that the whole act may be gutted by Congress. He feels that the Agency must balance the desires of industry with environmental needs if stiff opposition is to be headed off and the Clean Air Act is to be saved.

Mr. Costle wants the support of the public in order to demonstrate the authority to deal with acid rain. It is incumbent on those who desire clean air and an end to acid precipitation that we let our representatives know our feelings about these subjects.

For further information on these issues and related matters write to:

The National Clean Air Coalition
530 7th Street, SE
Washington, D.C. 20003
(202) 543-0305

The Coalition is coordinating a national task force on acid rain that grew out of the Toronto Action Seminar on Acid Precipitation last November. They also publish a newsletter that comes out periodically with up-to-date information, called *ACID RAINWATCH*.

*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 Sierra Club, Atlantic Chapter; 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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