Dear Members and Friends,

New York citizens are now the proud owners of 29,000 acres of new Forest Preserve in the Adirondack Park. The State of New York recently completed the Champion International Paper Company land acquisition. In addition to the new Forest Preserve, 110,000 acres of privately-owned timberland comes under a state-owned conservation easement. The easement prevents development, provides for recreation and addresses sustainable forestry practices. Starting August 2, the public was able to canoe on stretches of the Oswegatchie, Grass, St. Regis and Deer rivers, which were closed for more than a century. The Adirondack Council worked for years to ensure that the funding and political will were in place to accomplish this historic acquisition.

The Adirondack Council continues to lead the effort to educate the public about the continuing damage caused by acid rain in the Adirondacks and other areas of the country. The Council, with the help of U.S. Senators, Congressman and celebrities, is getting the word out from the Northeast to California that acid rain continues to destroy high elevation lakes and forests. We've been joined in this effort by historic preservation groups which recognize that historic buildings and national monuments are being eroded by acid rain.

This summer DEC Commissioner John P. Cahill gave final approval to the High Peaks Wilderness Unit Management Plan. The plan, which has been under discussion for over twenty years, is designed to deal with overcrowded conditions in popular High Peaks hiking areas, and to bring management of the area into compliance with the State Land Master Plan.

This issue of the Adirondack Council’s newsletter will be widely distributed to residents of and visitors to the Adirondack Park, in addition to the Council’s 18,000 members. For those of you who are not members, I hope that it will serve as an introduction to the work of the Adirondack Council. The Council has been working since 1975 to preserve and protect the natural resources and human communities of New York State’s six-million-acre Adirondack Park.

Sincerely,

Timothy J. Burke
Executive Director

On the Cover

The state's management plan for the High Peaks Wilderness has been under development since 1978. It was completed this summer. The details are outlined on page 8. In this photo, Lake Colden and the Flowed Lands are seen from the summit of Algonquin Peak, the state's second-highest mountain.
Lake Placid Club’s New Lease on Life

View from the patio of the Lake Placid Resort Golf House, where the Adirondack Council held its Annual Meeting and Awards Dinner in July. From the ruins of the former Lake Placid Club, a local business-owner is reviving the best of the club’s amenities without harming Lake Placid’s rural character or scenic vistas. Photo by Gary A. Randorf.

Less Than a Decade After Gleneagles Falters, New Resort Emerging

In May of 1996, Serge Lussi and his family -- owners of the Holiday Inn Sunspree Resort in Lake Placid -- purchased the Lake Placid Club property. The purchase marked both a beginning and an end for what was once the grandest of Adirondack resorts. Built by Melville Dewey, inventor of the Dewey Decimal System, the Lake Placid Club had fallen into disrepair. The majestic hotel on the shores of Mirror Lake was literally falling down, some of its outbuildings destroyed by fires.

Through the years, several plans cropped up to revitalize the old club and restore it to its former glory. Unfortunately, none of them had the funding to get off the ground -- that is, until the late 1980s.

Enter Guinness, the British brewing giant that also is involved with resort development, and United States Fidelity & Guarantee insurance company. The two formed a partnership and began planning a Gleneagles resort for the property, based on the famous Gleneagles golf resort in Scotland. For those who lived in Lake Placid and witnessed the sad decline of the Lake Placid Club, this new partnership appeared to be a savior. But appearances can be deceiving.

The initial plans submitted by the Gleneagles partners to the Town of North Elba and the Adirondack Park Agency proposed 288 new dwelling units to be built on the north side of Route 86 in Lake Placid -- this in addition to the numerous, half-completed and vacant condominiums which dotted the property from a previous failed attempt to resurrect it. A 300-plus room luxury hotel and conference center was also proposed for the first of three phases, further raising local hopes of a revitalized Lake Placid Club. On the south side of Route 86, where there were no buildings and an extensive scenic vista of the High Peaks protected by both the town and the APA, the proposal was to build 142 new dwelling units.

This extensive development would have changed the character of the vista from Lake Placid toward the High Peaks from wild to suburban. And despite local political pressure to gain speedy approval of the project, the Adirondack Council took the position that portions of the development would have severe adverse impacts on the environment, would irreversibly alter a protected scenic vista and would change the character of the entire town; that it was out-of-scale with the small mountain village.

The APA also took a long look at the application, found it lacking in detail, and asked numerous questions in an additional information request. The partnership chose to fight its battle with the APA (and the Council) in the local media rather than to work out a plan that was in keeping with the character of the area. Meanwhile, the companies’ fortunes turned with a downward trend in the real estate market in the late 80s and the plug was ultimately pulled on the Gleneagles resort before a complete application was ever submitted to the APA for review.

The property sat vacant for several years and continued to fall prey to decay and vandalism. The Council, along with some community leaders, came together in a series of meetings to discuss alternative futures for the property.

Enter the Lussi family. Lifelong residents and Lake Placid business people, the Lussis understood the area in a way others who were not from around there could not. The family saw great potential in the golf courses as a vanishing commodity -- old British “links-style” courses that had fairways that were not ringed by houses. They saw the opportunity to build a reasonable number of new houses and renovate some older cottages on the north side of Route 86 within the village rather than sprawling outside of it. The

Continued on Page 5, See Box...
Washington, D.C. Press Conference

On June 16, the Adirondack Council hosted a press conference on acid rain at the U.S. Capitol, joining forces with a U.S. Senator and two Congressmen, as well as historic preservation organizations and groups striving to protect outdoor artworks. The message to the rest of Congress was simple: Pass the Acid Deposition and Ozone Control Act.

Joining the Council at the press conference were U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer and U.S. Reps. Sherwood Boehlert, R-Utica, and John Sweeney, R-Saratoga. Also at the press conference were representatives from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Save Outdoor Sculptures Project, the Washington, D.C., National Audubon Society, Trout Unlimited and Citizens Campaign for the Environment.

The press conference focused on the damage acid rain has done to historic buildings and monuments in the nation's capital. The Adirondack Council is attempting to broaden the coalition of organizations and politicians who are interested in stopping acid rain by showing people from various parts of the nation and various interest groups what they have at stake.

Susan Nichols of Save Outdoor Sculptures captured the attention of the media with her discussion of the damage done each year to priceless works of art, including the Statue of Liberty and any outdoor sculpture made of limestone, marble, copper or bronze. "Acid rain is the leading cause of damage to outdoor statuary today," Ms. Nichols told reporters from the Associated Press, CNN, C-Span and NBC, who had gathered on the lawn overlooking the U.S. Senate at the Capitol.

From the Capitol building itself to the Lincoln and Washington memorials, acid rain destroys the surface of carved limestone and marble by washing away the calcite. Pits develop on the smooth surfaces at the base of the columns. Anyone who brushes across the surface comes away covered with a chalky, white powder.

On copper and bronze objects, sulfur dioxide pollution combines with the copper to form copper-sulfate, which runs down the surface as a liquid. Holes and streaks develop in the metal, while smooth surfaces turn rough.

Whether the damage is done to stone or metal, the loss of fine details and intricate carvings happens much more quickly in acidic precipitation than in untainted rain. The damage is irreversible. Faces become smooth and amorphous. Names, dates and other inscriptions disappear.


The bill calls for an additional 50 percent cut in sulfur dioxide pollution — on top of the 50 percent cut ordered by Congress in 1990, for a total cut of 75 percent below 1990 levels. It also would require a 70 percent reduction in nitrogen oxide pollution (which causes both acid rain and smog) from electric power plants.
Public Service Announcement

Campaign a Ringing Success

Natalie Merchant

In July, the Adirondack Council released nearly 1,000 copies of radio and television public service announcements on the need to stop acid rain. Calls have been streaming into the Council’s Acid Rain Hotline from Florida, California, West Virginia, Rhode Island and the Carolinas, where stations appear to be giving the ads excellent air time.

The voices of musicians Bonnie Raitt and Natalie Merchant are featured in the national campaign.

“New York’s Adirondack Park is the one place in the nation hardest-hit by acid rain, but we are by no means alone in suffering extensive damage. The Adirondack Council has been fighting acid rain in the Adirondacks for two decades. Now we are organizing and funding the national campaign to stop acid rain across America,” said Adirondack Council Executive Director Timothy J. Burke. “We are pleased to have the assistance of the nation’s most respected environmental and historic preservation organizations, who joined us in a New York Times ad calling on Congress for deeper pollution cuts. And we are grateful that Bonnie Raitt and Natalie Merchant are lending their well-known voices to this effort.”

... New Resort Emerging, Continued from Page 3

family decided to purchase the property, formed Placid Gold, LLC, and closed the deal in May 1996.

After several meetings with Adirondack Council staff, the Lussis agreed to submit a master plan to the APA for the entire property, giving the Agency a handle on the type and level of development that would ultimately occur there. They worked closely with staff at the APA in developing their proposal to avoid the pitfalls that befell the previous applicants. And they submitted the plan for Phase 1 of their development—81 single family dwellings (including revitalization of some cottages and new construction) all on the north side of Route 86 within the village.

The Adirondack Council formally endorsed the Placid Gold application, which was approved at the Agency’s July meeting. Conceptual approval for another 44 multiple family units, all within the village, was also granted.

On May 20, 1999, the Adirondack Council placed this full-page ad in all editions of The New York Times, alerting the nation to the need for immediate Congressional action to stop acid rain. A dozen other organizations added their endorsements to the ad, including all of the Council’s member organizations, a total of six national environmental organizations and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.
An Evenir

The Adirondack Dinner was held in July, where more members and friends gathered to honor those award winners. A Year John P. Call. Environmental Conservation Award, John Skovron. At left, Rotarian Writer George W. Rushing Communicator and Patricia Winterer. Bottom left Barbara Kearns, Education Award recipient W.J. Regent and Gayle Dawson. Below, Heritage member Ron Bennett and Steve Engelhardt, Park Heritage Award recipient Barbara Glaser.
At right, Conservationist of the Year Jerry Zaslow, left, Newcomb School Supt. accepts the Environmental Award on behalf of the school from Council Board Member James Zirpolo, Adirondack Architectural Consensus Award winner Howie Kirschenbaum, left, accepts congratualtions for the Award from Board member Don Zaslow.

All photos by Gary Randorf.
Plan Adopted to Protect High Peaks
Plan Safeguards Water Quality, Habitat & Helps NYSDEC
Better Manage Crush of Visitors in Park’s Busiest Wilderness

The Main Range of the High Peaks Wilderness, as seen from the summit of Gothic Mountain. Photo by Gary Randorf.

This spring, the Adirondack Park Agency voted to approve the High Peaks Wilderness Complex unit management plan (UMP) finalized by the Department of Environmental Conservation two months earlier. But this was no ordinary vote on a routine issue.

Widely hailed as the most contentious, controversial, and problematic plan ever developed by DEC, it was more than a quarter-century in the making, having eluded several attempts at resolution during three previous gubernatorial administrations.

UMPs allow the state to tailor the broad rules contained in the State Land Master Plan to the site-specific conditions of individual Wilderness, Wild Forest, Primitive and Canoe areas. UMPs have been adopted for six other Wilderness areas in the Adirondack Park, but those areas experience much lower levels of use and generally have fewer problems than the 226,435-acre High Peaks unit, which now hosts about 150,000 visitors yearly.

Management problems in the High Peaks led to a politically charged atmosphere that DEC historically found easiest to deal with by continuing the laissez faire policies that had proven to be ineffectual.

The Problems
Meanwhile, uncontrolled access led to severe degradation of the environment, such as stream pollution, loss of sensitive vegetation, and campsite overcrowding, with the associated noise and other effects not conducive to a wilderness experience or to the health of the wilderness ecosystem. And a set of non-conforming uses, such as the Marcy Dam Ranger Station and the South Meadows Road, remained in place, despite a legal mandate to close them by December, 1975, which was then extended to March, 1987.

Determined to break the impasse that had thwarted his predecessors, Governor Pataki directed DEC Commissioner Cahill to move forward with the High Peaks plan.

Hearings were held on a draft plan in the fall of 1995, which implemented the thrust of a 1992 report by a citizen advisory committee, of which the Adirondack Council was an active member. It took another three-and-one-half years of consultations, redrafting, and hand-wringing hesitation before a plan was finalized this past March. The result is not a perfect plan, but it does meet the requirements of the State Land Master Plan, and has the Adirondack Council’s support.

Basic Elements of the Plan
Key features of the High Peaks Wilderness UMP include banning camping above 4,000 feet to protect sensitive alpine vegetation, limiting camping in heavily used areas, banning campfires and bottles, and limiting the number of campers in large groups. All non-conforming uses must be phased out within the five-year life of the plan. Some actions recommended in the plan can be taken immediately, while others must wait for other actions to occur in sequence.

Within the heavily-used South Meadows-Marcy Dam-Flowed Lands corridor, and between 3,500 and 4,000 feet elevation, camping will be allowed only at designated campsites. Camping along the South Meadows Road will be available only by permit, and motorized access to campsites along that road will not include parking, following construction of a new state parking lot at the road’s intersection with the Adirondack Loj Road. Within the five-year life of the plan, the South Meadows Road will be closed to motorized traffic altogether, and the Marcy Dam Ranger Station will be removed, having been replaced by a visitor service facility in the new 100-car parking lot.

The need for a wilderness-wide reservation system will be evaluated by a group formed to monitor implementa-
The fate of several important parcels of Adirondack Park land now owned by the State of New York and totaling more than 45,000 acres will be decided over the coming months. Although the state owns the lands and they are protected as “forever wild” Forest Preserve, the important decision of how they will be managed and what types of uses will occur on them has not yet been made.

The lands include the William C. Whitney Area (14,872 acres), Lake Lila Primitive Area (7,215 acres), Watson’s East Triangle/Lassiter (23,017 acres in the western part of the Park) and Alice Brook (2,015 acres just south of Star Lake). All of these tracts are included in the Adirondack Council’s proposed Bob Marshall Great Wilderness.

The William C. Whitney Area is the centerpiece of the Council’s proposed 408,000-acre roadless wilderness where once-native species like the moose may again find an Adirondack home. It is identified in Volumes 1 & 2 of the Council’s 2020 VISION series (the Council’s formal plan for completing the Forest Preserve) for its biological diversity and wilderness values. This area should be given the highest level of resource protection by the State of New York with a Wilderness designation, as requested by the former owner.

The Lake Lila Primitive Area shares one mile of its boundary with the William C. Whitney Area. The Lake Lila area, which also abuts the Five Ponds Wilderness Area, was previously classified “Primitive” by the state because a pre-existing road would not allow for a Wilderness classification.

A railroad right-of-way also divides the parcel along the west end of the lake. This area also appears in Volumes 1 & 2 of 2020 VISION.

Watson’s East Triangle adjoins the Five Ponds and Pepperbox Wilderness Areas in the western part of the Park. The area has been awaiting state classification for more than a decade. There are several private inholdings in this area with roads accessing them. This area appears in Volumes 1 & 2 of 2020 VISION and should be classified as Wilderness, with Primitive corridors for access to private lands.

The Alice Brook area, formerly part of the Oswegatchie Primitive Area, was classified Wilderness in 1979. The proposal now from the Department of Environmental Conservation is to reclassify this area to Wild Forest to allow for snowmobiling. The purpose of a Primitive designation is to allow for a gradual “phase out” of non-conforming uses, like roads and motorized use trails, so that an area can eventually be classified as Wilderness or Canoe. This area appears in Volumes 1 & 2 of 2020 VISION and is properly classified Wilderness now.

The Adirondack Council
Council Elects New Chairman

Three New Board Members Also Chosen at Annual Meeting

The Adirondack Council held its annual meeting on Saturday, July 10, 1999 at the Golf House of the Lake Placid Resort in Lake Placid.

John L. Ernst of Manhattan and Elk Lake completed his four-year tenure as Chairman of the Board of the Adirondack Council. Board and staff presented John with a handcrafted canoe paddle made by David Kavner of Pisces Paddles in Keene, NY, in appreciation for his service. John Ernst continues as a board member of the Adirondack Council.

David Skovron of Falls Village, Ct. and Long Lake, NY was elected Chairman of the Board at the board meeting immediately following the annual meeting. Skovron has been a member of the board of the Council since 1990 and recently served as Vice-Chairman and Co-Chair of the Fundraising Committee. “It is an honor to be chosen as Chairman of the Adirondack Council. The board, staff and members of the Council will continue to work together to make the Adirondack Council the most effective advocacy organization working to protect the Adirondack Park that we all cherish,” said Skovron.

Members at the annual meeting also elected three new board members for the Council: Bob Hall of Huntington, NY and Osgood Pond; Brian Ruder of Scarsdale, NY and Silver Lake and Etienne Boillot of South Salem, NY and Blue Mountain Lake joined twenty-six other Council board members. The membership also adopted a resolution thanking Cecil Wray for his service on the board of the Adirondack Council. Wray recently stepped down when he became a member of the Adirondack Park Agency.

The Adirondack Council’s annual meeting provides an opportunity for members, board and staff to discuss the issues that the Council has been working on over the past year as well as upcoming challenges.
New Commissioners at Park Agency

In the most recent round of Adirondack Park Agency appointments, two long-serving commissioners were replaced and one long-time vacancy was filled.

Gov. George E. Pataki appointed three attorneys, filling a need for legal expertise on the board of commissioners. However, one vacancy (for a Park resident) still exists and two commissioners continue to serve on expired terms.

Former Adirondack Council Board member Cecil Wray, an attorney who resides in New York City, was appointed to an out-of-Park seat. Wray is a 1959 grad of Yale Law School, is “of counsel” to a Manhattan law firm, and has been an adjunct professor at New York Law School the past three years. He is a 25-year visitor to the Adirondacks and has a home in Keene. Wray resigned from the Council’s board of directors when he was confirmed as an APA commissioner by the State Senate.

James T. Townsend, an attorney from Rochester, replaced out-of-Park member Eleanor Brown of Schenectady, whose term had expired.

Townsend, a partner in the firm of Remington, Gifford, Williams & Colicchio, specializes in corporate, business and real estate matters. He has served as counsel to the Monroe County Industrial Development Agency for two decades. He is an avid Adirondack enthusiast, outdoorsman and hiker.

William H. Kissell, a Lake Placid attorney, replaced Barbara Sweet of Newcomb. Kissell currently has a private law practice in Lake Placid and serves as counsel to the Lake Placid Board of Trustees. He worked as general counsel to the 1980 Olympic Games from 1978-1982 and as special counsel to the Olympic Regional Development Authority. He was also general counsel at the APA in 1972, and has written several articles on the state Forest Preserve that have appeared in a number of legal journals.

The governor also reappointed Katherine O. Roberts of Garrison and APA Chairman Richard Lefebvre of Caroga Lake to new terms. Commissioner Frank Mezzano, who is a town supervisor in Lake Pleasant, and Commissioner James Frenette, a Tupper Lake resident, continue to serve on expired terms.

Legislature Approves New Money for Stewardship of State Lands

The State Legislature has approved new money for the future stewardship of state facilities in the Adirondack Park. Both houses of the legislature have agreed to fund Governor George Pataki’s proposal from the state Environmental Protection Fund, a dedicated state fund which annually receives millions of dollars from the state real estate transfer tax.

The much needed funds will go to improve and repair Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) facilities such as boat launches, campgrounds, parking areas, interpretive signage, boardwalks and trails.

Funds will also be available to assist in the development and management of the state’s newly acquired lands, such as the Whitney and Champion purchases to improve both the quality and the safety of visitor experiences.

The Adirondack Council was a strong supporter of both the need for additional funds and the proposal from the Governor, which will provide an annual source of funding to both the DEC and the Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

Stewardship plan would benefit hikers. Photo Gary Randorf.

The Adirondack Council
Join the Adirondack Council Today

Founded in 1975, the Adirondack Council is a private, not-for-profit organization dedicated to protecting and enhancing the natural and human communities of the Adirondack Park through research, education, advocacy and legal action.

The Council receives moral and financial support from its more than 18,000 members and from private foundations. The Council’s national and regional member organizations include the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks, Citizens Campaign for the Environment, National Audubon Society, National Parks and Conservation Association, Natural Resources Defense Council and The Wilderness Society, with a combined membership of more than 1.4 million.

Adirondack Council memberships begin at $25. Membership benefits include regular newsletters, special reports such as this one, action alerts and the opportunity to play an active role in protecting the Park’s future.

... And Help Stop Acid Rain

By calling the Adirondack Council’s Acid Rain Hotline (1-800-842-PARK) or mailing us the coupon below, a $50 donation will keep one ton of acid-rain-causing air pollution from coming out of the smokestacks that pollute our Park. A Council membership is included. We’ll retire one sulfur dioxide pollution allowance (currently trading at $200 each) and send a Clean Air Certificate to commemorate the gift.

Sign Me Up!

You can count on me to protect our nation’s magnificent Adirondack Park for future generations. Enclosed is my special gift to save endangered wildlife and preserve irreplaceable habitat in this priceless American resource:

☐ $500  ☐ $250  ☐ $100  ☐ $50  ☐ $25  ☐ Other $ __________

* For your gift of $25 or more, you’ll receive full membership in The Adirondack Council — plus your FREE deluxe 160-page Adirondack Wildguide or poster/map!
** For each gift of $50, you will permanently retire one ton of acid rain-causing sulfur pollution.

Please send: ______ Adirondack Wildguide ______ Council Poster/Map ______ Clean Air Certificate(s)
_________________________ Nothing - use entire gift for the Council’s work

VISA/MC # __________________ Expire ______ Phone # (_____) _______

Name ____________________________
Street ____________________________
City __________________ State ______ Zip ______

A copy of the latest financial report filed with the NYS and Department of State may be obtained by writing NYS Department of State, Office of Charities Registration, Albany, NY, 12232 or The Adirondack Council. The official registration and financial information of The Adirondack Council, Inc. may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

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The Adirondack Council