

**Adirondack Council Policy for  
Sustainable Forestry in the Adirondack Park  
Approved: 2/04/16**

The Adirondack Park is home to one of the greatest concentrations of unfragmented temperate forests left in the world. Excessive and unsustainable timber harvesting on the periphery of the Park a century ago was in many ways responsible for the formation of the Park. The story of the Park's forests over the past century has been one of restoration and regrowth through a unique combination of public stewardship of the forever wild Forest Preserve lands and private conservation, including the often sustainable management of working forest lands.

More recent changes, such as shift in ownership patterns of large working forest tracts, outdated or inadequate regulatory requirements, invasive species, climate change, and the rise of conservation easements, among others, pose unique challenges that will have far reaching impacts on the ecological, aesthetic, and economic future of Adirondack forests. Given these challenges, the Adirondack Council endorses Adirondack Park private lands policies that incentivize and support the following principles:

- 1) Safeguard ecological and aesthetic benefits of forests:  
The Adirondack Council recognizes that our region's unfragmented temperate forests are globally unique, include remnant old growth tracts and need to be safeguarded for both their ecological and aesthetic values.
- 2) Support sustainable forestry, biodiversity, and wildlife:  
The Adirondack Council supports sustainable forestry practices that are based on the most current and widely accepted science. These practices need to fundamentally ensure that Adirondack forests remain healthy, ecologically intact, and rich in biodiversity and wildlife habitat. The sustainability of these practices must be evaluated at both the landscape and tract scale.
- 3) Promote incentives for sustainable forestry:  
The Adirondack Council will work to identify and promote innovative and state-of-the-art incentives that encourage sustainable forestry practices on a regional scale that provide a direct environmental and economic stimulus for Adirondack communities.
- 4) Foster stakeholder engagement and community involvement:  
The Adirondack Council believes that the state should engage all stakeholders across the public and private sectors regarding state policies on forestry and state-held conservation easements to advance the best sustainable forestry practices as a component of the community-based decision making process.
- 5) Recognize the role of forestry in the Adirondacks:  
The Adirondack Council acknowledges that good stewardship of privately owned working forest land is an important historic, cultural, economic, and ecological element of the Adirondack Park.

In general, progressive forest practices must support a strong and healthy local forest economy while maintaining the ecological integrity and wild character of the Park. Robust regulatory oversight and public agency engagement is necessary to guard against adverse ecological and aesthetic impacts. Efforts to acknowledge and promote working forests as an important part of the cultural heritage of the Park shall support, when appropriate, unique private-public projects that provide direct economic benefits to Adirondack landowners and communities.

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For example, the Adirondack Council shall:

- Work to secure funding for acquisition of conservation easements on private land to ensure the long-term availability of working forest lands within the Park.
- Develop mechanisms to ensure that harvest rates Park-wide do not exceed sustainable levels.
- Ensure that third party certification schemes encourage beneficial, regionally focused forestry practices and are not seen as a replacement for formal State regulations that protect public goods such as watershed services and aesthetic values.
- Support and work towards the development of updated best management practice (BMP) guidelines for forestry within the Park.
- Advocate that all long term strategies for sustainable forestry should address issues including invasive species, climate change resiliency and mitigation, pests and pathogens, aesthetic impacts, ensuring adequate regeneration, and impacts on endangered and threatened species and aquatic resources.
- Support forest biomass energy as a limited component of a renewable energy portfolio for the region, and as a market for low-grade wood.
- Encourage local sale of harvested high-grade timber and the development of businesses within the Park to convert such timber into valuable products.