



PRESS RELEASE

March 20, 2018

Governor signs classification to create over 25,000 acres of new Wilderness lands in Adirondack Park, including Boreas Ponds

Governor's signature concludes state's purchase and classification of over 69,000 acres Forest Preserve state acquired 2012-2016.

With a stroke of the pen, Governor Cuomo created over 25,000 acres of new Wilderness

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Governor Cuomo today signed the recommendations of the Adirondack Park Agency to approve officially classify over 50,000 acres of newly purchased Forest Preserve lands. The state classified over 25,000 acres as Wilderness and another 26,000 acres as Wild Forest. "The High Peaks Wilderness was expanded by 25,000 acres today. That's a historic accomplishment. With a stroke of his pen, the Governor created 25,000 acres of new Wilderness in the Adirondack Park. That does not happen every day and is something to celebrate," said Peter Bauer, Executive Director of Protect the Adirondacks.

It's important to put into perspective the accomplishment of adding over 25,000 acres of new Wilderness lands. Over the past 50 years, growth in Wilderness lands has been around 168,000 acres and Wild Forest has grown by around 159,000 acres in the Adirondack Forest Preserve.

The APA's decision caps a process that started with the state's acquisition of 69,000 acres of the former Finch, Pruyn & Company lands from 2012-2016, purchased from The Nature Conservancy. Public uses on these newly classified lands will be determined through Unit Management Plans (UMPs). The Wilderness lands around the Boreas Ponds will be added to the High Peaks Wilderness and the Wild Forest lands will be added to the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest area. Both UMPs are expected to be revised in the summer of 2018.

This classification creates an opportunity to combine the High Peaks Wilderness Area and Dix Mountain Wilderness Area into one grand Wilderness area over 280,000 acres in size. If the state does this, it would be the third largest Wilderness area east of the

Mississippi River, behind the 1 million acre Everglades Wilderness and the 350,000 acres Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia.

Protect the Adirondacks

Protect the Adirondacks, Inc. (PROTECT) is a privately funded, IRS-approved not-for-profit organization dedicated to the protection of the 6-million-acre Adirondack Park in northern New York. PROTECT was formed through the merger of the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks and the Residents' Committee to Protect the Adirondacks in 2009. PROTECT pursues its mission to protect the Adirondack Park and defend the public "forever wild" Forest Preserve through citizen advocacy, grassroots organizing, education, research, and legal action. PROTECT is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. PROTECT maintains an office in Lake George. For more information see www.protectadks.org.

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