



PRESS RELEASE

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## **PROTECT calls for State to study the feasibility of reintroducing the wolf and cougar**

*Draft New York "Wildlife Action Plan" contains nothing for big carnivores*

*New York's draft Wildlife Action Plan is currently in public hearing until July 17th*

### **For more information:**

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Protect the Adirondacks has called upon the Department of Environmental Conservation to study the reintroduction of wolves and cougars as part of its new Wildlife Action Plan. The draft Wildlife Action Plan lists 366 wildlife species in New York and states that 167 are species of "High Priority." New York's last Wildlife Action Plan was finalized in 2006. Federal law requires state plans to be updated every 10 years.

"While we applaud the DEC for completion of the new Wildlife Action Plan, we're disappointed that the plan contains nothing about possible reintroductions of big carnivores, such as wolves and cougars, to the Adirondack Park and New York. These carnivores once roamed far and wide across the Adirondacks and New York and the DEC should study the feasibility of their reintroduction," said Peter Bauer, Executive Director of Protect the Adirondacks.

The DEC released a draft plan this spring and is taking public comments until July 17<sup>th</sup>. Public comments can be sent to the DEC via email at [SWAPcomments@dec.ny.gov](mailto:SWAPcomments@dec.ny.gov).

The eastern gray wolf and cougars flourished across New York for centuries but were eliminated by hunting and bounties in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. While individual wolves and cougars have been documented periodically in the Adirondack Park, usually lone males from the Great Lakes states and Canada, there has not been a resident population for nearly 150 years.

"We cannot rely on natural recolonization for cougars from the west. Aggressive hunting seasons are starting to reduce the overall populations and it's unrealistic to think that enough males and females will reach the Adirondacks to establish a viable

population,” said Peter Bauer. “Wolves are also highly unlikely to recolonize a viable breeding population in the Adirondacks. Given the tremendous success at reintroducing wolves to Yellowstone national park, New York leaders should take a hard look at reintroduction of wolves to the Adirondack Park.”

The Adirondack Park has long lacked top carnivores. While coyotes have helped to fill this void they do not replace these long absent top carnivores. New York’s Wildlife Action Plan should evaluate habitat viability for these carnivores and make a full assessment about their conservation status and trends within the state, the northeast region, and beyond.

“New York needs to begin planning for the return of large carnivores. They’re a historic part of the landscape and their return would be a great success story about ecological restoration. The 2015 Wildlife Action Plan is the best place to start the long journey for the return of these top carnivores,” said Peter Bauer.

### **Protect the Adirondacks**

Protect the Adirondacks 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](http://www.protectadks.org).

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