



PRESS RELEASE

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New Adirondack Park Report Misrepresents Park Trends

*Report sponsors should have released a draft for review
since public funds helped pay for its production*

*Report fails to provide essential context resulting
in unfounded or distorted conclusions*

For more information:

Peter Bauer, Executive Director, Office 518.685.3088, Cell 518.796.0112

Lake George, NY – The Adirondack Park Regional Assessment Project (APRAP) has released a 5-year update to its 2009 study. The new report “The Adirondack Park: Seeking Balance” provides information on state land protection, Park demographics, school district enrollment data, and the status of emergency services in Adirondack communities. Protect the Adirondacks has reviewed the new report and finds that it fails to provide important national context to population trends, fails to provide important state context to school population trends, fails to provide data on housing and building construction along with land protection data, and fails to provide any economic that connects population loss to economics.

“It’s too bad that this report wasn’t released in a draft form for public comment. Considering that public funds helped pay for this report there should have been a public draft. As it stands now this report is misleading because it presents the Adirondack Park in a vacuum and fails to look at important state and national trends for rural America,” said Peter Bauer, Executive Director of Protect the Adirondacks.

“The report frames the problem as caused by land protection and environmental controls. It’s a misdiagnosis of the problem that runs the risk of mobilizing Park leaders to pursue the wrong solutions,” said Peter Bauer.

PROTECT finds the report weak in the following three areas.

1. No national context for demographic trends:

- The report failed to provide any information about widespread population loss across rural America.

- The report failed to provide any information about the aging rates of rural America. See a chart provided by PROTECT that lists 25 other regions in the U.S., ranging in size from 780,000 acres to over 27 million acres, with median ages as old or older than the Adirondack Park. See data [here](#).
- The report failed to provide a national context for demographics of the Adirondacks. The Adirondack Park is an overwhelmingly white population, like rural America. The white population in the U.S. is by definition an older population. Today, for the first time in U.S. history half of all births are minorities, while over 80% of Americans over 65 years or age are white. Areas with overwhelmingly white populations are experiencing rapid aging and population declines, and will continue to experience these trends for the next few decades. The Adirondacks is no different than other rural areas in the U.S.

The report shows that the Adirondack Park population experienced a loss from 2000-2010, but fails to provide long-term data about the Park's steady rise in population since 1950. The report makes long-term population projections, but fails to provide any national context to these projections for other rural areas across the U.S.

See factual links [here](#) and [here](#).

2. No data on built environment:

- The report features data about state land protection efforts for Forest Preserve and conservation easement acquisition, but fails to provide any data about development rates in the Adirondacks.

The report provides good information on state land protection. But it should also look at the levels of development in the Park and the economic value of this development. Previous studies have found development occurring at a rate of 850-1,000 new buildings annually across the Adirondacks.

3. No state context on school populations:

- PROTECT notes that across New York State, there has been a loss of over 120,000 students since 2005-06, with only 80 of 675 school districts in New York gaining students or remaining stable. See data [here](#).

While PROTECT recognizes the very real challenges of rural Adirondack school districts, it's important to see these as part of the challenges of school districts across New York State.

“The APRAP update is a deeply flawed document that frames that the Adirondack Park's challenges as unique to the Park and caused by environmental controls. This is a disservice to public debate and undermines their purported goals of trying to find ‘balance.’ It's really too bad that this group did not release this information in a draft for public comment and input and that it was not more inclusive in its research,” 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.

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