



PRESS RELEASE

June 20, 2014

## Protect cheers new Controls on Aquatic Invasive Species and other Legislative Actions

*Landmark Aquatic Invasive Species bill approved, APA Commissioner Dick Booth approved, and Utility Task Vehicles expansion bill was rejected*

### **For more information:**

Peter Bauer, Executive Director, Office 518.685.3088, Cell 518.796.0112

### **Landmark Aquatic Invasive Species Control Legislation Approved**

Albany, NY – Protect the Adirondacks worked to pass landmark statewide aquatic invasive species (AIS) control legislation. This legislation aims to prevent the spread AIS by requiring the removal of visible vegetation and animals from boats and related gear, as well as draining areas of the watercraft of all water, when entering and leaving boat launch sites across New York.

A broad coalition supported this legislation including the region's and state's leading environmental groups, Trout Unlimited, the Adirondack Park Local Government Review Board, and many lake associations support passage of legislation. This legislation was sponsored by Barbara Lifton (D-Ithaca) in the Assembly and Senator Thomas O'Mara (R- Chemung County) and will help to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) throughout New York.

“Passage of this legislation will help to focus on prevention and interdiction of aquatic invasive species. This puts New York on track to be proactive to prevent the spread of invasive species rather than simply reactive to try and control new infestations of lakes and ponds,” said Peter Bauer, Executive Director of Protect the Adirondacks.

### **Potentially Highly Damaging UTV Bill Rejected**

Protect the Adirondacks opposed legislation to redefine “all terrain vehicles” to allow use of much heavier, larger, and more environmentally destructive motorized vehicles. This legislation will result in even bigger machines, called Utility Task Vehicles (UTVs), to be used in off-road, wild and natural areas, which will cause extensive environmental damage. This legislation would allow ATVs to be increased in weight from 1,000 to

1,500 pounds and provides a more expansive definition to allow the wider and longer type and design of the vehicles that may be used for the same purposes as current smaller ATVs.

“PROTECT is heartened that the UTV bill was rejected in the Assembly. Passage of this bill would lead to significantly higher rates of environmental destruction and harm to wild areas across New York by all terrain vehicles (ATVs) and UTVs. Currently, ATV riding is poorly regulated and enforced. Trespassing and illegal operation on roads is widespread throughout Long Island and Upstate New York,” said Peter Bauer.

ATVs have been 1- or 2-passenger vehicles. The new type of larger ATV that would be authorized in this legislation is a Utility Task Vehicle (UTV) that can seat 4 people along with a gear compartment. It is much heavier, wider and longer than a standard ATV. As such, the ability to cause damage is greater. One flaw of this bill is that it places no limits on where these motor vehicles can be operated.

PROTECT believes that ATV riding is an intensive, and often environmentally abusive recreational activity, that should be relegated to private parks, such as the sport of motocross racing, and on industrial forestlands where the state has purchased conservation easements, which have an adequate maintained road network.

### **APA’s Lone Green Commissioner Approved for New Term**

Cornell University law professor Dick Booth was also confirmed for a new term as a Commissioner of the Adirondack Park Agency.

“Dick Booth has earned a reputation for his deep thinking and independence on the Adirondack Park Agency Board. These qualities are in short supply at the APA and we’re pleased to see Dick Booth reappointed” 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).

##