



PRESS RELEASE

August 8, 2014

## PROTECT cheers DEC's plans to withdraw the draft Essex Chain Complex Unit Management Plan

*The DEC draft plan violated the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Act, state agency regulations, and allowed motor vehicles to access the heart of the motorless Essex Chain Lakes area*

**For more information:**

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Lake George, NY – Protect the Adirondacks applauds a decision announced today by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to pull back its draft Essex Chain Complex Unit Management Plan (ECCUMP). This plan was deeply flawed and included a number of proposals that openly violated state laws and existing regulations.

The lands in question center on the Essex Chain Lakes, which were purchased by Governor Cuomo as new Forest Preserve lands in 2012. These lands were subject to an extensive public hearing in the summer of 2013. In December 2013, the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) officially recommended a “Primitive” classification, which was approved by Governor Cuomo. This action also created a controversial Wild Forest corridor between the Primitive Area and a new 23,500-acre Hudson Gorge Wilderness area.

“The public comments that the DEC received were a clear vote of no-confidence in the DEC’s proposals for management of the Essex Chain Lakes area. The DEC proposals violated the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Act and violated state regulations for natural resource protection,” said Peter Bauer. “The DEC needs to go back to the drawing board and develop a plan that complies with state law and protects these extraordinary natural resources of the Essex Chain Lakes, Hudson and Cedar Rivers.”

The DEC released a draft temporary ECCUMP in May. The DEC closed the public hearing on the draft ECCUMP at the end of July. PROTECT submitted public comments in July that widely detailed the problems with the draft ECCUMP. Specific objections include:

1. The draft ECCUMP violated the NYS Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Act with proposals for maintaining former logging roads as new public motor vehicle roads.
2. The draft ECCUMP violated the NYS Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Act as well as DEC and APA regulations with proposals to construct a new bridge over the Cedar River.
3. The draft ECCUMP violated the NYS Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Act as well as DEC and APA regulations with proposals to retain the Polaris bridge over the Hudson River.
4. The draft ECCUMP undermined a “motorless” Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area by proposing a motor vehicle road to the heart of the Essex Chain on Fifth Lake.
5. The draft ECCUMP failed to include numerous required studies and analyses that are standard components of a UMP.
6. The draft ECCUMP failed to include required cost estimates and schedules that are standard components of a UMP.
7. For the first time in Forest Preserve management a draft UMP recommended creating campsites reserved only for floatplane users or campers flown in by floatplane.
8. The draft ECCUMP was sharply at odds with the direction the APA provided for the DEC during the December 2013 Forest Preserve classification recommendation for the Essex Chain Lakes area that was signed by Governor Cuomo.

“The Essex Chain Lakes area is a magnificent wild area, but to date the state’s management has been meager. We need to the state to elevate its game and to focus on management actions that obey existing laws and protect natural resources and wild areas of the forever wild Forest Preserve,” 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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