



PRESS RELEASE

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## Adirondack Park Agency on the right track for State Land Master Plan Reform

*PROTECT advocated for an APA-controlled process based on wide-ranging stakeholder participation, transparency and public disclosure.*

### **For more information:**

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Lake George, NY – Protect the Adirondacks applauds actions by the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) to conduct a new public process to gather input and ideas from stakeholders and the public about policy revisions of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (SLMP). PROTECT had urged the APA in recent months to manage SLMP reform through an open and transparent process.

“PROTECT applauds the APA’s decision to manage SLMP reform through an open and transparent public process. This will allow all who care about the Forest Preserve to participate and will facilitate an open flow of information,” said Peter Bauer, PROTECT Executive Director.

In December 2013, as part of its classification of the Essex Chain Primitive area and other Forest Preserve lands, the APA committed to examine two SLMP revision issues: 1) the requirement for natural materials for bridges, which impacts the creation of a possible new bridge over the Cedar River and the retention of the Polaris Bridge over the Hudson River; 2) use of mountainbikes in Primitive Areas as mountainbiking currently is only allowed in Wild Forest areas.

The APA will schedule public hearings this fall to gather public input on these issues as well as any other issues regarding the SLMP.

Each time the APA classifies new Forest Preserve lands it technically revises the SLMP. The APA most recently made formal classifications of Forest Preserve lands in 2013. The APA has classified new Forest Preserve lands six times since 2000. Yet, there have been no policy changes to the SLMP for more than 25 years, since the 1987 SLMP revision. The SLMP was adopted in 1972 and revised with policy changes in 1979. Since 1972, there have been just two policy revisions to the SLMP.

“There is intense interest in policy revisions for the SLMP. There have been no policy changes to the SLMP for more than 25 years and many are clamoring for major changes. On balance the SLMP has successfully enacted a very durable and effective management for the Forest Preserve,” said Peter Bauer.

The goal ahead will be to make sure that the APA actually conducts this process in an open and transparent manner. PROTECT the Adirondacks was disappointed in recent APA actions where public comments were ignored. Last summer, the APA approved an amendment to the Jay Mountain Wilderness area Unit Management Plan. 4,000 public comments opposed the APA’s actions, yet the APA approved the controversial amendment. Public comments ran 4-1 in support of a Wilderness classification for the Essex Chain Lakes area, yet the APA approved a weaker land protection classification and allowed a motorized corridor through the heart of the area.

### **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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