



PRESS RELEASE

January 25, 2013

PROTECT Outlines Vision for Forest Preserve Classification of 69,000 Acres of former Finch/TNC Lands to be Purchased by the State

DEC also released its Conceptual Plan for Finch/TNC lands, calling for Wild Forest classification for Essex Chain and limited Wilderness around Boreas Ponds

*PROTECT calls for Wilderness Classification for Essex Chain Lakes
and more Wilderness Around the Boreas Ponds*

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Lake George, NY -- Protect the Adirondacks released its proposals for classification of 69,000 acres of lands that the State of New York is currently purchasing for the Forest Preserve from The Nature Conservancy. These lands are part of former Finch, Pruyn & Company land holdings. In December the state completed its acquisition of the first tract when it finalized purchase of the 18,000 acre Essex Chain Lakes tract. The state plans to purchase the remaining 50,000 acres in three installments over the next four years.

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) just released a conceptual plan of its proposals for how these lands should be officially classified by the Adirondack Park Agency (APA). DEC will soon formally submit its proposal to the APA for the first lands that it has purchased. The APA will classify other lands as it completes purchases.

Attached, are four maps that compare and contrast the PROTECT and DEC classification proposals. Two maps detail proposals for a new Wilderness Area centered on the Upper Hudson River from PROTECT and the DEC. PROTECT has called for a 39,000-acre Wilderness Area that includes the Essex Chain Lakes area, while the DEC has proposed a smaller Wilderness Area that excludes the Essex Chain and classifies that area as Wild Forest. Two other maps focus on proposals for classification around the Boreas Ponds and southern High Peaks area. Here, PROTECT proposes more Wilderness than the DEC, to strengthen protections for Ragged Mountain. DEC and PROTECT both recommend keeping Gulf Brook Road open, removing Boreas Lodge, and making the Boreas Ponds a Wilderness Area, presumably as part of the High Peaks Wilderness.

“We’re pleased that the DEC has outlined its vision for the entire 69,000 acres even though these lands will be purchased in segments over the next four years” said Chuck Clusen, Protect the Adirondacks Chairman.

PROTECT calls for Wilderness Classification for the Upper Hudson River and the Essex Chain Lakes

Last Fall, PROTECT released a proposal for a 39,000-acre new Wilderness Area, roughly half and half of newly purchased lands from the Finch/TNC acquisition and reclassification of existing Wild Forest and Primitive Area lands. “The creation of a new Wilderness Area that centers on 22 miles of the Hudson River would be a tremendous accomplishment for the State of New York” said Clusen. “Wild country and wild rivers grow fewer each year and a new Wilderness area for the Upper Hudson would provide permanent protection for 22 miles of one of the greatest rivers in America.”

The new Upper Hudson Wilderness Area would also include much of the new Essex Chain Lakes lands. “PROTECT envisions a new Wilderness Area that protects the Essex Chain Lakes and Hudson River. Wilderness classification is the best protection to create a motorless lakes system for the Essex Chain Lakes and protect the Hudson River as a wild river” said Peter Bauer, Executive Director of PROTECT.

The new Wilderness Area proposed by PROTECT includes at its core the Essex Chain Lakes, Cedar River and Hudson River, while allowing broad public access. The DEC has proposed a Wild Forest classification for the Essex Chain, which will allow seasonal floatplane access.

“PROTECT’s Wilderness proposal carved out floatplane use on the edge of the Wilderness on 1st and Pine Lakes. We thought this was reasonable and balanced. We oppose floatplane use on Third Lake, in the heart of the Essex Chain, and we believe that the Essex Chain should be motorless and a Wilderness Area. We have no confidence in a Special Management Area to protect the area’s natural resources” said Peter Bauer, Executive Director of Protect the Adirondacks.

PROTECT supports road access from the north for motorless boating on the Essex Chain and location of sites for disabled individuals and families, similar to what the DEC has proposed. “PROTECT also recognizes public interest in access to the Essex Chain Lake for canoe camping and has drawn its Wilderness boundary to provide road access to this area through conservation easement and Wild Forest lands. The northern Wilderness boundary along the Essex Chain Lakes also provides good opportunities for disabled access campsites and recreational experiences. Wild Forest corridors are also proposed to provide access to the Hudson for launching/take-outs as well as emergency services at the north and south ends. These road corridors will also provide access to forest lands for a range of activities” said Peter Bauer.

PROTECT believes this new Wilderness Area will enhance the highly successful Hudson River-Indian River whitewater rafting industry by managing, for the first time, the Hudson River as an integrated resource and by providing much improved day use and camping opportunities through the entire length of the Hudson River Gorge. “An Upper Hudson River Wilderness will protect the whitewater rafting industry over the long-term. This industry has proven to be highly successful as well as sustainable and provides terrific opportunities and wild river experiences for visitors to the Adirondack Park” said Peter Bauer.

PROTECT’s Wilderness proposal can be accomplished in 2013. It contains no public roads or large private land inholdings.

PROTECT calls for more Wilderness lands around Boreas Ponds

PROTECT supports the DEC's proposal to classify the Boreas Ponds as Wilderness and tear down the Boreas Lodge. PROTECT supports maintaining the Gulf Brook Road to provide access to the Boreas Ponds as well as access to extensive forest lands. "PROTECT believes that the Gulf Brook Road should be the border between Wild Forest and Wilderness. PROTECT would like to see the Ragged Mountain tract classified as Wilderness as well" said Peter Bauer.

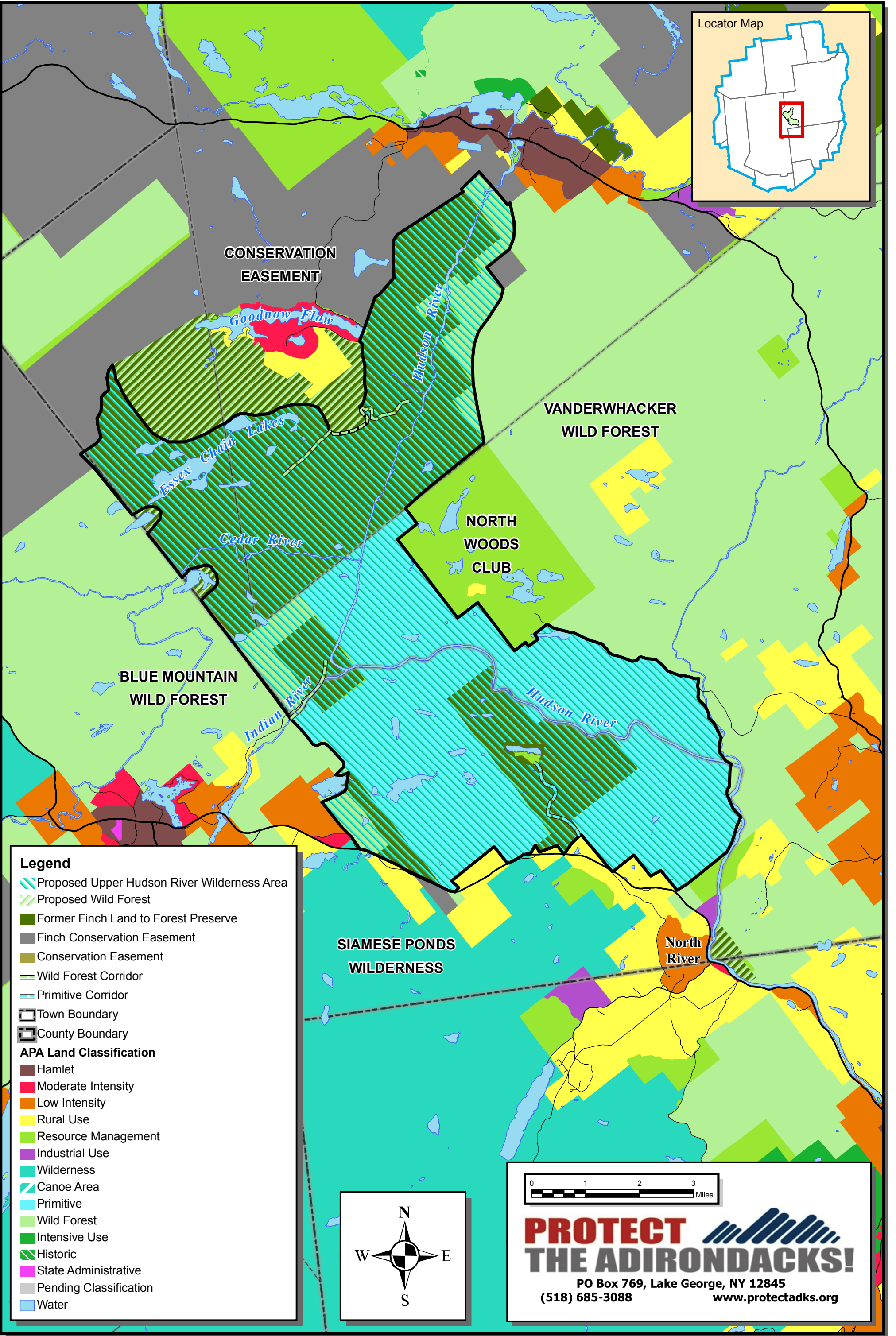
All of the maps and materials referenced in this press release are posted on the PROTECT website (www.protectadks.org).

Protect the Adirondacks

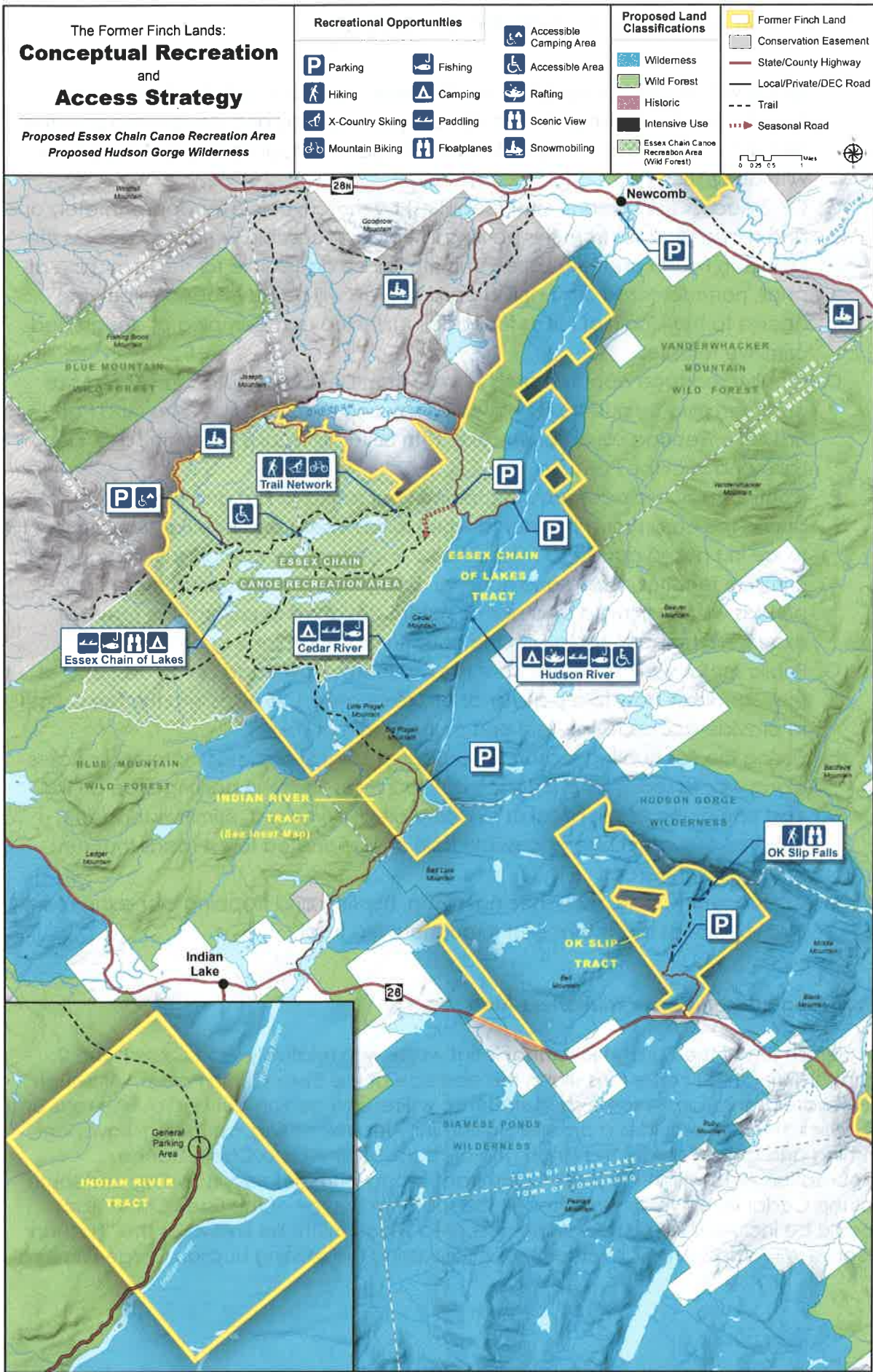
Protect the Adirondacks is a privately funded, IRS-approved not-for-profit organization dedicated to the protection of the 6-million-acre Adirondack Park in northern New York. PROTECT was formed through the merger of the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks and the Residents' Committee to Protect the Adirondacks in 2009. PROTECT pursues its mission through citizen advocacy, grassroots organizing, education, research, and legal action. PROTECT is guided by a volunteer Board of Directors. PROTECT maintains an office in Lake George. For more information see www.protectadks.org.

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Proposed New 39,000 Acre Upper Hudson River Wilderness Area



Map 2



Recommendations for Additions to High Peaks Wilderness Area

