



PRESS RELEASE

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## Gooley Club buildings on Third Lake of the Essex Chain should be torn down

*2013 purchase of the Essex Chain Lakes included agreement that set a schedule for the removal of the Gooley Club buildings*

*The Department of Environmental Conservation needs to state publicly that it will not retain more than a dozen buildings of the Gooley Club*

**For more information:**

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Protect the Adirondacks calls upon the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to publicly state that more than a dozen buildings of the “Inner Gooley Club” on Third Lake, deep in the heart of the Essex Chain Lakes, will be removed as scheduled. Under the state’s agreement to purchase the Essex Chain Lakes lands in 2013, the Gooley Club buildings are scheduled to be dismantled this fall. When the state purchased these lands in 2013, it extended the hunting club leases of the Gooley Club and other clubs around the Essex Chain Lakes by five years, through the summer of 2018. Since that time, historic preservation advocates and local government leaders have called for the Gooley Club complex to be preserved. The DEC has been strangely silent.

“The state should not change its plans and should ensure that these buildings are removed. The DEC needs to come out publicly and state that the Gooley Club buildings are going to be removed,” said Peter Bauer, executive director of Protect the Adirondacks.

The campaign to save the Gooley Club is being led by historic preservation advocates, who argue that the club is one of the best representations of Adirondack hunting club and camp culture. They argue that the public should be able to visit and experience a hunting club as some form of living museum. In an effort to save the Gooley Club, they nominated the site to the National Register of Historic Places.

Unfortunately, now that historic preservation groups and local government leaders are calling for the club to be preserved, the State of New York, especially leaders at the Department of Environmental Conservation, including Commissioner Basil Seggos, have all gone silent. The state needs to hold to its original agreement and remove these

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buildings and restore the forests and shoreline of Third Lake.

“The effort to save the Gooley Club, which now sits on Forest Preserve lands, misses a very basic point about the club’s history. It existed as an integral cultural component of industrial and intensively logged timberlands. This club was not about wilderness, nor was it about minimizing the human footprint with a carry-it-in and carry-it-out Forest Preserve culture. This club relied upon motor vehicles, which club members used as part of their hunts and to maintain the camp. They powered their kitchens, generators, lights, and hot showers with propane tanks, which they transported with motor vehicles. The preservation and interpretation of these clubs on the forever wild Forest Preserve lands makes no sense,” said Peter Bauer.

Across the Adirondack Park today, there are hundreds of active hunting camps that share the values of the Gooley Club. Many own their own lands, others lease lands like the Gooley Club did. Many are on conservation easement lands, where they can remain in perpetuity. Many of these active clubs have older buildings that merit nomination to the National Historic Register. “Many of private hunting clubs are thriving with active memberships throughout the Adirondacks. Unfortunately, historic preservation groups have made no effort to research and protect these buildings and their historic values, but only look to preserve buildings on the Forest Preserve, where they do not belong,” said Peter Bauer.

The Cuomo Administration has provided a policy opening for advocates hoping to keep the Gooley Club through its decisions to retain two buildings on the Forest Preserve in recent state purchases. The state is keeping the farmhouse overlooking the Hudson River on Chain Lakes Road in the Blue Mountain Wild Forest and the 4 Corners cabin on the Boreas Tract in the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest. Though the state has decided to retain these buildings, it has not said how they will be used or the costs of maintaining them.

“The state needs to hold firm. It must publicly state that the Gooley Club buildings will be removed as scheduled and ensure their removal this fall,” said Peter Bauer.

The only lawful way that the State of New York can keep buildings on the Forest Preserve is to use them for administrative purposes, such as caretaker’s cabins or outposts, such as the cabin at Lake Colden, or to use them as State Administrative buildings, such as the Whitney Headquarters, on Little Tupper Lake. State law prohibits the use of buildings on the Forest Preserve for any kind of public lodging.

### **Protect the Adirondacks**

Protect the Adirondacks, Inc. (PROTECT) 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).