



Board of Directors

November 10, 2020

Charles Clusen
Chair

Hon. Andrew Cuomo
Executive Chamber
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Marilyn DuBois
James McMartin Long
Michael Wilson

Vice-Chairs

RE: The 36,000-Acre Whitney Park must be purchased and added to the public “forever wild” Forest Preserve

Barbara Rottier
Secretary

Dear Governor Cuomo:

David Quinn
Treasurer

The 36,000-acre Whitney Park, in Long Lake in the central Adirondack Park, is up for sale. Whitney Park should be purchased by the state and added to the public Forest Preserve. For more than 50 years, Whitney Park has been the top land protection priority in New York State, listed in the Environmental Protection Fund and in every revision of the New York State Open Space Conservation Plan. These lands have been owned by the Whitney family since the late 19th century. Mary Lou Whitney owned the lands with her deceased husband for over 70 years, until her death in 2019. Her widower, John Hendrickson, has now put these lands up for sale and says he wants to make a deal soon.

Nancy Bernstein
Richard Booth
John Caffry
Andy Coney
Dean Cook
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Robert Glennon
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Sidney Harring
Peter Hornbeck
Dale Jeffers
Mark Lawton
Peter O'Shea
Philip Terrie
Chris Walsh

Whitney Park has 22 lakes and ponds and is the largest undeveloped and privately held tract in the Adirondack Park. It borders the William C. Whitney Wilderness area, part of the public Forest Preserve, on its north side and extensive holdings in the Sargent Pond Wild Forest and Forked Lake State Campground on its eastern and southern borders. Whitney Park is famous for its 22 wild and undeveloped lakes and ponds, with the 6-mile-long Slim Pond, Stony Pond, Salmon Lake, and Little Forked Lake among the most famous. Whitney Park has over 100 miles of undeveloped shoreline, an astounding rarity in today's world. In the 19th century, before the lands were posted for no trespassing, these lakes were part of famous historic canoe routes enjoyed by many.

Peter Bauer
Executive Director

The Forest Preserve in New York is the People's Land. At just over 3 million acres in the Catskill Park and Adirondack Park, the Forest Preserve has grown since its founding in 1885 through a bipartisan and multi-generational commitment in a grand tradition of investment in, and protection of, public lands in New York State. In 1894, the voters of New York supported a State Constitution that explicitly protected the public Forest Preserve as lands “to be forever kept as wild forest.” The forever wild protections in the

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State Constitution have remained unchanged ever since as each generation has acted boldly to make sure that the Forest Preserve grows stronger.

The 2.6-million-acre Adirondack Forest Preserve is the heart and soul of the Adirondack Park. It's what makes the Adirondacks a special and an altogether different place from any other parts of the eastern U.S. Your Administration helped create the third largest Wilderness area east of the Mississippi River, the 275,000-acre High Peaks Wilderness, which is the largest Wilderness in the Adirondack Forest Preserve. Hundreds of places held dear by New Yorkers, like Mount Marcy, Giant Mountain, Lake Lila, the Oswegatchie River, Rogers Rock and the Lake George Islands, among many others too numerous to name, are protected in the Forest Preserve, famous and popular places that New Yorkers depend upon for wild outdoor experiences. These are places that New Yorkers depend upon to remain wild and timeless, places where grandparents can bring grandchildren today to enjoy the same wildness that they enjoyed decades ago.

The vital importance of the Forest Preserve was dramatically illustrated this past summer as the COVID-19 pandemic raged in the U.S. Over the last six months, the High Peaks Wilderness, and most other hiking trails throughout the Adirondack Park, saw unprecedented high public recreational use. In our hour of need, the Forest Preserve was there to shower us with beauty, safety, and emotional relief, at a time when everything else seemed like it was falling apart. The spring, summer and fall of 2020 saw unprecedented high levels of public recreational use on the hiking trails and waterways of our public Forest Preserve in the Adirondacks. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear that we need more Forest Preserve, more wild places for New Yorkers to safely find solace.

The Benefits for State Protection of Whitney Park

Protect the Adirondacks has launched a petition drive to sign up people from far and wide to support the purchase of Whitney Park at www.adirondackparkpetition.com. We're working to get as many New Yorkers, and people from beyond, to show their support for the protection of Whitney Park.

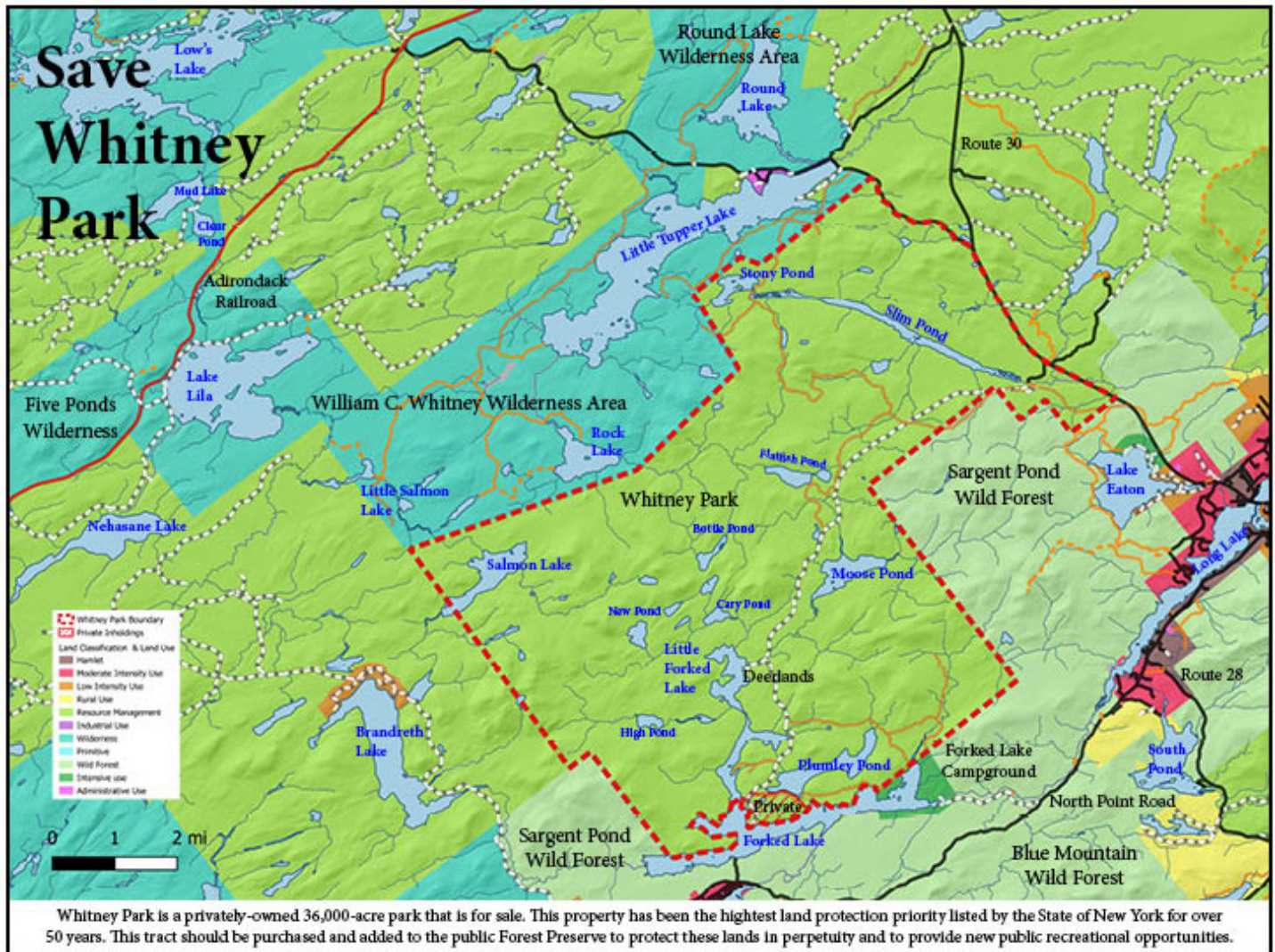
In 1998, Governor George Pataki purchased 14,700 acres around Little Tupper Lake from Mary Lou Whitney. That tract was added to the famous Lake Lila tract, purchased by Governor Hugh Carey in the 1970s, to create the William C. Whitney Wilderness area. Little Tupper Lake has grown to be a very popular canoeing and camping destination over the last 20 years. Whitney Park could be a paddling paradise for people in canoes and kayaks, as well as a popular destination for hiking. Whitney Park has 22 lakes and ponds and over 100 miles of undeveloped shorelines. It is bordered by the William C. Whitney Wilderness Area that includes Lake Lila, Rock Pond, and Little Tupper Lake. The William C. Whitney Wilderness Area could be expanded if Whitney Park was to be purchased. Through navigable channels and portages, these grand lakes could easily be linked to Salmon Lake, Stony Pond, Slim Pond, and other Whitney Park lakes. This purchase would be a huge boom to tourism in Hamilton County and the central Adirondacks.

For decades, Whitney Park has received major tax breaks through its enrollment in the Forest Tax Law Program Section 480 (The Fischer Act). These tax breaks are borne by the taxpayers in the Town of Long Lake and Hamilton County, with slight compensation from the state. State purchase of these lands for



Stony Pond and Slim Pond at the north end of Whitney Park. These ponds were part of historic canoe routes used widely in the 19th century.

36,000 Acre Whitney Park in Long Lake in the Central Adirondack Park



Whitney Park, 36,000 acre tract in the central Adirondack Park, has been the top land protection priority for New York State for 50 years. The tract contains 22 lakes and ponds, over 100 miles of undeveloped shoreline, and was a vital pathway for historic canoe routes through the Adirondacks in the 19th century.

These lands were listed as a priority in the first Environmental Protection Fund, created in 1994. These lands have been listed in every revision of the New York State Open Space Conservation Plan.

the Forest Preserve would produce substantially greater tax revenues for local governments through state laws requiring payment of local taxes on Forest Preserve lands.

Whitney Park will also protect important habitat and fisheries. These lands are a safety deposit box of wild aquatic ecosystems. The sheer quantity of lakes, ponds, wetlands, and streams show its importance. It's vital that these habitats not be lost to development, but are protected in perpetuity.

There is no better long-term program for helping New York meet its carbon reduction targets than by helping large intact forests to grow and age. There is nothing better than a mature and old growth forest for sequestering carbon. The Forest Preserve today, after 125 years of concerted efforts at protection, has abundant mature and old growth forests. The purchase of Whitney Park would assist the state's carbon reduction efforts. The tract has continuous high forest canopy, poised for massive carbon sequestration if purchased and managed as forever wild in the Forest Preserve.

New York's Past Governors Have All Met the Moment and Protected the Forest Preserve

The Forest Preserve has been upheld, protected, managed and expanded through bold action by New York's Governors, many of who have acted decisively since 1895, in times of budget shortfalls, world wars, and economic depressions and recessions. Thankfully, short-sighted thinking was resisted by past Governors who acted boldly to protect the Adirondacks during their terms in office. Governor Charles Evans Hughes purchased Mount Marcy, Redfield, Allen, and Skylight mountains and Lake George islands. Imagine today if the state's highest mountain was privately owned. Governor Al Smith bought Lake Colden and Avalanche Lake, which for many is the heart of the High Peaks. Thankfully Governor Thomas Dewey did not listen to the naysayers when he bought islands and long stretches of wild shoreline on Lake George during the height of World War II.

Governor Nelson Rockefeller bought more than 50,000 acres in the Moose River Plains during the Vietnam War era. The millions who have camped on the Cedar River-Limekiln Lake Road or snowmobiled there for 50 years are pretty happy that these lands belong to the people.

In the 1970s, Governor Hugh Carey and DEC Commissioner Peter A. A. Berle bought Lake Lila and Armstrong Mountain, Basin, Blake, Colvin, Dial, Gothics, Haystack, Saddleback, Saw Teeth, Upper Wolf Jaw, Lower Wolf Jaw, and Noonmark mountains. Anyone who has hiked the Great Range in the central High Peaks or gazed upon this mountain range in wonder from any number of High Peaks is pretty happy that these mountains are part of the Forest Preserve. Anybody who has camped at Lake Lila is thrilled that these lands are Forest Preserve.

Thankfully, Mario Cuomo bought Low's Lake, happily paddled by hundreds of thousands since, and the Watson's East Triangle, which protected great forests and provided greater public access to the South Branch of the Oswegatchie River, Pepperbox Wilderness, and Five Ponds Wilderness area. Thankfully, Mario Cuomo bought the Remsen to Lake Placid Rail Line in the 1980s, which today is being re-created as a public recreation-way. Fortunately, George Pataki did not listen to naysayers when he bought Little Tupper Lake, Round Lake, the South Branch of the Grasse River, Lyon Mountain, and Madawaska Flow, among many other places, enjoyed by hundreds of thousands in the last two decades.



Salmon Lake is the crown jewel of Whitney Park. This tract is connected via portages and navigable channels to the lakes and ponds on the William C. Whitney Wilderness Area.

Your Administration completed the final part of the acquisition of the 164,000 acres of the Finch, Pruyn and Company lands purchase, which started with the Nature Conservancy purchase at the end of the Pataki Administration. Governor David Paterson purchased a 95,000-acre conservation easement on a portion of the Finch lands in 2010. Your administration completed the purchase of 69,000 acres of the Finch lands for the Forest Preserve, lands including the Indian River, Blue Ledges on Hudson River, Essex Chain of Lakes, Boreas Ponds, flanks of Santanoni Mountain and Allen Mountain, White Lily Pond, among many other destinations. Protection of these lands is a great credit to your vision for the state.

Now you are faced with the enormous challenge of guiding NYS through the COVID-19 pandemic and at the same time presented with an unprecedented opportunity. Whitney Park, in its entirety, is available to be added to the Forest Preserve. You must not let the current challenges prevent you from seizing this tremendous opportunity which, in all likelihood, will not happen again. We at Protect the Adirondacks urge you to act boldly, confidently and to look forward to the future. As we have seen this year, New Yorkers crave wild and unspoiled places where the beauty, and the coherence of, nature soothes troubled souls.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Protect the Adirondacks, please accept our gratitude for the opportunity to express our thoughts and concerns on the importance of protecting Whitney Park.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Peter Bauer", with a stylized, flowing script.

Peter Bauer
Executive Director

CC: M. DeRossa, Executive Chamber
A. Lefton, Executive Chamber
B. Rice, Executive Chamber
M. Phillips, Executive Chamber
B. Seggos, NYSDEC
J. Drabicki, NYSDEC
K. Petronis, NYSDEC
R. Davies, NYSDEC
J. Zalewski, NYSDEC
R. Daley, NYSDEC
D. Boyajian, NYSDEC

Comments from Whitney Park Petition Signers

Protect the Adirondacks is collecting signatures and comments from people across the Adirondacks, New York, and beyond who support state purchase of Whitney Park and to add these vital lands to the public Forest Preserve. We will continue to send in their comments as we urge you and your administration to take action to protect the 36,000-acre Whitney Park by adding these land to the Forest Preserve. We urge you to act boldly to enhance and preserve the People's Land.

Here are 50 comments written by people who have signed our petition urging Governor Cuomo and the State of New York to purchase Whitney Park. This is a small sample of the total number of people who have made comments, which grows every day. A full list will be sent to you in the months ahead, but here are comments that show the flavor of people who support protecting Whitney Park.

"Dear Governor, You are doing such a great job with the management of Covid, and we appreciate all the work you can do to protect NYS' woods and wildlife. These are precious resources that may be rare in the future. New York is a beautiful place to live, let's protect its natural beauty and resources."
-- Joanna Porreca, Beacon

"This property is the like the High Peaks - central and essential to the Park." – Richard Cunningham, Troy, NY

"Protecting the Adirondacks is necessary for the health and welfare of future generations of New Yorkers and visitors." – Donna Sickler, Brant Lake, NY

"Dear Governor Cuomo, I know that this is a very chaotic time during your administration dealing with COVID-19 pandemic, which you have done an amazing job at comparing to where New York now stands in comparison to other states! Thank you for keeping us safe. However, I want to bring to your attention to the importance of the state obtaining the Whitney Peak area. As a local New Yorker, the Adirondacks have been an outdoor haven of escape and freedom during these trying pandemic days. As the season has progressed the importance of preserving as much of this area as we can has become increasingly clear to me. The great wild outdoors has provided a place for all New Yorkers to explore, enjoy and remain distanced during these trying times. Given the opportunity to gain a large area of that back for public use would greatly add to the value of this region in keeping people happy and healthy. Please consider the potential this area could have on all New Yorkers and our ongoing goals to protect the environment around us. Thank you for your time." – Rachel Raley, Glens Falls, NY

"The Whitneys were responsible stewards of this estate when was held by their family for decades. The is an opportunity for NYS to assume stewardship for the benefit of millions of New Yorkers for centuries." – Martin Manjak, Albany, NY

"Our wilderness matters. Our planet matters. Public service must prevail over private greed. Thank you for doing the right thing." – Jessica Niccoll, Brooklyn, NY

"Dear Governor Cuomo, Our state, country and entire planet has to conserve what little wild places

we have left. We need wilderness not more development and country homes for the wealthy few. We must protect our forests, air and water. What we have can never be replaced. There would be no second chance once it's destroyed or developed. As Henry David Thoreau said 'In wilderness is the preservation of the world'. Please try to acquire the Whitney Land as Forever Wild for NYS, and the earth. Protecting the environment is our biggest and most important concern. Thank you." -- Mary Jane Stefan, Schenectady, NY

"Please help save our last wild areas!! Please help leave a legacy for future generations and help preserve the trees that will help provide the world with oxygen!!" Heather Kaese, Mission Viejo, CA

"This is a crucial moment for protecting the wilderness nature of the Adirondacks -- this is a huge opportunity. Please don't let it slip by -- it will never come back again." -- Barry Oreck, Brooklyn, NY

"This is an important piece of land that is contiguous with a beautiful tract of park land around Little Tupper Lake. This part of the park is used by many for canoeing, fishing, hiking and biking. And it provides access to Lake Lila, one of the most beautiful lakes in the Adirondack Park. Please seriously consider adding this tract of land to the park." Mary Haviland, Long Lake, NY

"I was introduced to the beauty of the Adirondacks in college by friends from Beaver Falls, NY and helped lead a canoe camping trip there with a church youth group. I was hooked and have returned numerous times, including about 15 years going to Covewood Lodge on Big Moose Lake with my godson's family and regular visits to my wife's school friends who have a cabin on North Lake. New York is lucky that earlier generations had the foresight to create the Adirondack Park and to push for the goal of forever wild. Please continue to expand this legacy by purchasing the Whitney Park area. Thank you." -- William Harkin, Arlington, VA

"Purchasing Whitney Park is vital to the future of the forest preserve especially considering the growing numbers of park users." -- Michael Peters, Niskayuna, NY

"I grew up spending summers at my grandparents' camp in Coreys, near Tupper Lake. We often assisted campers with canoes who needed to make a phone call or required some transportation. Such memories are still fresh in my mind all these years later, and experiences for those loving the beauty of the Adirondacks should be preserved for generations to come. Thank you." -- Barbara Luhn, Clarksville, GA

"This is a 'MUST DO' addition to the Adirondacks Park concept and PLEASE make the whole piece a NO MOTORS/ENGINES haven!!" -- Charles Moore, Fayetteville, NY

"The Adirondack region was overrun with tourists this summer and the summer traffic has been increasing generally over the years resulting in significant wear and tear in many areas. There are extremely few motorless lakes to camp and paddle on and we need more to accommodate the increased usage." -- Valerie Bayley, Piercefild, NY

"This area has environmental, recreational, and historic value for New York State and beyond. It is a

top land priority. It needs to be saved.” -- Phyllis Thompson, Tupper Lake, NY

“I know we’re broke due to the pandemic but we must come up with money for this Mr. Governor. We need to protect as much as possible or our grandkid’s future will be bleak. It looks bleak as it is but with less wilderness it will be worse. Thank you!” Charlie Stehlin, Cohoes, NY

“With what is happening in Washington and how the current administration simply ignores the value of preserved land, we need to have every acre of potential “forever wild” land purchased for the generations to come. Adding this valuable property to the largest national/state park in the lower 49 states would be an incredible gift to our state. Please make sure this remains a preserved public property for all to use.” – Stephen Koch, Hyde Park, NY

“The only way for a regular person like me to enjoy access to any of these lands (affordably) is through public ownership. I’m retired, I’m staying in this state, I love this state.” -- Kathryn Maguire, Watervliet, NY

“Public access to the Adirondack Park can and should lead to the understanding of how important it is to preserve and protect this unique wilderness for all . I grew up with the Park in my backyard and now cherish my time there from my seasonal cabin - even though I now live in the mighty little state of Vermont. I want everyone to know and feel how special the Adirondack Park is.” Carol Little, Hartland, VT

“Governor, your past support has increased overwhelming interest in the high peaks where more than 200 people a day reach the summit of Mt. Marcy each summer day; overusing the trail compromising fragile plants. Through encouragement we can distribute use to other areas of the park. Obtaining this property will afford us an opportunity to create a viable option for our residents to explore another remote area of our State nurturing their appreciation for the natural world around us. If we can touch and feel the earth, our linkage to stewardship, a concern for clean water, a need for alternative energy, global warming is integral to the survival of humanity. Thank you for your partnership in this important work.” – Mark Rutkowski, Walworth, NY

“Please use your influence to help John Hendrickson understand how important the Whitney lands are to the Adirondack Park.” – Kathryn Stanczyk, Saratoga Springs, NY

“The Adirondack State Park is the most important park in the United States and a monument to the foresight of New York. Now, in the face of ecological pressures such as climate change, intact wilderness is more important than ever. Adding the Whitney tract to the preserve would be an amazing legacy for the Cuomo Administration.” – Anne Petermann, Randolph, NY

“The Adirondacks are a very special place in NY. It is essential for the planet that we preserve it just the way it is.” – Nancy Agen, Utica, NY

“Governor please see to it that Whitney Park is added to protected forest preserve for the people to enjoy forever. Thank you.” -- Harold Stata, Waterford, NY

“The economic and ecological imperatives for saving Whitney Park are clear. Not only will it pay rich

dividends in ecological services and clean air, pure water, climate change resiliency, and habitat, but it will also provide myriad long-term economic benefits including bolstering the outdoor recreation industry (\$1.5 billion annually, NY 21st Congressional District) and ensuring a sustainable timber industry for generations to come. Saving Whitney Park will accrue benefit for all New Yorkers . Please act today! Thank you.” – Charles Kline, Bala Cynwyd, NY

“As a native New Yorker I come back here several times a year it would be a shame to lose this beautiful area.” – Steve Black, Topsfields, MA

“There is no need for development in this area. The long term consequences will be costly and irreversible. Keep this area forever wild.” – Karen Rudar, Brantingham, NY

“Once wilderness is gone, it is gone forever. Please protect it.” – Henrietta Foster, Pittsford, NY

“The Adirondack Park is a treasure - please jump on this opportunity to add the Whitney parcel to it!” – Lynn Hervey, Utica, NY

“We are frequent visitors to the Adirondacks. We find the area of Hamilton County especially nice. It would be disappointing to see development of Whitney Park ... one of our favorite places to visit.” -- Mary Pobiegló, Essex Junction, VT

“We need to do everything in our power to preserve unspoiled tracts of land. This is one of the largest that will ever come to market in New York State. Do the right thing.” – Thomas Winner, Brooklyn, NY

“The pandemic has revealed the depth of New Yorkers’ desire to be out in the wild. We don’t have enough places for people to go, or staff to care for the outdoors. Please prioritize outdoor recreation going forward.” – Susan Weber, Albany, NY

“Please take steps to preserve this valuable tract. Once gone, they will never be reclaimed as part of New York’s forest system.” – Frank Coppa, Rensselaer, NY

“Please save Whitney Park and buy it. Our children and future generations of children will thank you for this.” – Paula Tucker, Broadalbin, NY

“I have loved the Adirondacks since I was a child growing up in Rochester, NY in the 1950/60s. Although I live in Virginia now, I often visit friends in the Adirondacks and have enjoyed canoe camping there. What a treasure the Park is! And how wonderful that New York State has an opportunity to protect even more of the area by acquiring the Whitney Park parcel. I am sure that the State budget is very strapped with the COVID crisis, but please do not lose this once in a lifetime opportunity!” – Margaret McKelvey, Arlington, VA

“Preserving the Adirondacks is a mental health issue particularly in these trying times. Many times getting out on Adirondack waters has helped me stay sane and healthy. Buying Whitney Park must be done.” – Lee Roney, Webster, NY

"Please buy this property , this is the only way it can remain forever wild. Natural beauty that should never be disrupted by the likes of a real estate investor who wants to build. Once this land is gone it will be gone forever. Please on behalf of all New Yorkers represent this land with good intention." – Tracy Noisseau, Schenectady, NY

"The Adirondacks are sacred and must be protected at all cost. Whitney Park is part of this and must be added to the Adirondack forest preserve to maintain the wild forest for everyone." – Marilyn Sargent, Edinburgh, NY

"We truly cannot afford to let this chance to protect the Whitney parcel pass by. It is critical to our efforts to preserve open space in the face of development pressure and to harbor our sensitive natural resources." – Karen Ross, Lebanon Springs, NY

"Very few opportunities are available to save such a valuable piece of land in the Adirondacks. Let us all get behind this purchase and have our grandchildren be able to enjoy this beautiful property, as we will." – Jack Koch, Greenwich, CT

"Please purchase the Whitney property and open up these Adirondack lands for all the public to cherish forever." Gerald Byrne, Brank Lake, NY

"State purchase of these lands will complete one of the most extensive paddling areas in the United States. This is an opportunity not to be missed!" —Donald Kelly, Old Forge, NY

"Show us your environmentalist chops! Kayaking has gotten a huge boost of interest during COVID, give NYer's a wonderful new waterfilled woods to explore." — Anne Doeblor, Buffalo, NY

"This is an opportunity to breathe hope and joy into our lives after you have taken away our jobs and destroyed our businesses - it is a way to restore the future for millions of us." -- Dr. Ellen K. Utley, Tupper Lake, NY

"A jewel that must be saved for the people of New York State!" – William Berner, Amsterdam NY

"We are past owners of Rock Island in Tupper Lake and long-time residents of Brant Lake. We have spent years advocating for the protection of and the addition to the lands of the Adirondack Park. The addition of the Whitney Park lands to the Adirondack Park is an opportunity that must not be lost." – Robert and Leslie Harrison, Point Arena, CA

"Please make this a part of your legacy, Gov. Cuomo. We're counting on you." Heather Sullivan-Catlin, Potsdam, NY

"This tract would allow people to enter the Western Adirondacks, from the East side, thereby, increasing business for the local towns that so need and want more tourist business." -- Edward W Reese, Camillus, NY

"Please, for your grandchildren and your great-grandchildren, save this precious land for eternity!" – Beth Maher, North River, NY