



Wilderness, Work Plans, Wolves, and Why We Need You!

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> Cover picture: Low's Lake Carry

Dear PROTECT Members.

The Conservation and Advocacy report covers the major issues that Protect the Adirondacks has worked on and has impacted over the last year. As you can read, we've been busy. We're delighted as an organization that we've been able to manage the transition of our long-time Executive Director, Peter Bauer, in a way that will strengthen our work in the years ahead. As Peter moves into other roles with the organization focusing on research and fundraising, among other things, we're incred-



Chuck Clusen, Chair

ibly fortunate that Claudia Braymer will step up as our new Executive Director.

Claudia brings a lifelong passion for the wild places of the Adirondacks and a long resume of work as an environmental attorney and local government official to this position. We're confident that she will help to continue to build our organization as well as rack up a series of accomplishments in the years ahead. Claudia was co-Counsel for the last decade on our Forever Wild legal victory and there's nobody better to defend this historic decision into the future and ensure that it's fully obeyed and implemented by state agencies. Claudia, along with Peter and Christopher Amato, our Conservation Director and Counsel, who is also a well-respected environmental attorney, make a strong team for PROTECT.

In the past year, positive reforms in Forest Preserve management began to take hold with the implementation of new Work Plans and the release of the new report for road salt pollution mitigation. In the one-step-forward-one-step-backwards state management of the Adirondack Park, we also saw state agencies inexplicably ignore the wetlands protection law and rebuild a road in a Wilderness Area. We're challenging both of these actions in court. Our advocacy in Albany produced dividends for the Adirondacks. We helped boost the state's environmental spending on Adirondack Park priorities and helped to pass legislation to stop wildlife killing contests and for "First Passage" of a new Article 14 constitutional amendment to resolve non-conforming issues at the Mt. Van Hoevenberg Winter Sports complex outside of Lake Placid. We undertook statewide research on the new 30 by 30 law and went to bat for wildlife travel corridors and wolves.

We remain tremendously grateful for the support of our members. We simply could not sustain our efforts to defend forever wild over the last ten years, build a long-term water quality monitoring program over 25 years, and assess and intervene in all of the major issues facing the Adirondack Park without all of you standing by our side. Thank you very much!

— Chuck Clusen, Chair, Board of Directors



New Paths for Protection

2022-2023 was a year of action, change, and reforms.



Conservation and Advocacy Report

Over the last year, Protect the Adirondacks worked to defend the natural resources and rural communities of the Adirondack Park. Much of this work was not in our plan for the year but arose as necessary responses to State agency actions (or inaction), including stopping road building in a Wilderness area, defending wolves in the State, or challenging the approval of a marina expansion that will destroy protected wetlands. Each year, Protect the Adirondacks implements an agenda through advocacy, public education, independent public oversight, research, grassroots organizing, and legal action that enhances protections for the natural resources of the Adirondack Park and helps to build viable communities. However, our careful planning is always changed



Peter Bauer, Executive Director





by unforeseen events that require immediate action. In many ways, this was the story of the last year. More information about all of the issues that follow in this report can be found on our website (www.protectadks.org) in articles, comment letters, reports, and press releases.

The Future is Braymer: One event that was planned and deliberate was the hiring of Claudia Braymer as the new Deputy Director in early 2023. Claudia brings extensive experience as a long-time practicing environmental attorney in Glens Falls where she served as co-Counsel in PROTECT's 10-year-long Forever Wild lawsuit. She was an elected At-Large Supervisor from Glens Falls on the Warren County Board of Supervisors for four terms. Claudia and her husband and two children have hiked and camped widely throughout the Adirondack Park. Claudia's hiring is part of PROTECT's staffing succession plan as the long-time current Executive Director, Peter Bauer, changes his role in the organization. Claudia will take over as the Executive Director in the coming year.



Claudia Braymer, Deputy Director

Successful Forever Wild Lawsuit Spurs Forest Preserve Management Reforms: In many ways, the work of Protect the Adirondacks is like trail building where a bridge is created by arranging steppingstones across a stream. One action builds upon another. This is the





story of our legal action to defend Article 14, Section 1, the "Forever Wild" clause in the State constitution, against state agencies' plans to build a network of super-wide snowmobile trails throughout the Forest Preserve.

After a 10-year-long legal odyssey, we finally wrapped up this lawsuit in September 2023 when a State Supreme Court Judge in Albany County issued a final Judgment in the case against the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Adirondack Park Agency (APA). The final Judgment declared that "Defendants' [DEC and APA] construction in the Forest Preserve of the Class II Community Connector trails that were planned and approved as of October 15, 2014, violates NY Constitution, article XIV, § 1". The Judgment officially ends the case and orders the State to reimburse PROTECT in the amount of \$32,000 for a portion of the court costs incurred during the case. Glens Falls attorney and PROTECT Board member John Caffry was the lead Counsel on the case and Claudia Braymer was co-Counsel.

Above: Scenes from Class II community connector trail construction. These trails required extensive terrain alterations and grading. On the left: Claudia Braymer at "Adirondack Day" in Albany at the State Capitol.

PROTECT is concerned about the considerable mileage of unconstitutional Class II Community Connector trails that remain open and continue to be maintained and used for snowmobiling as if the Court of Appeals decision had never happened. It is our position that the Court of Appeals decision requires that unconstitutional Class II trails not be maintained and not remain open for snowmobiling. Unfortunately, our calls to close and restore these trails have been rebuffed by the DEC and APA. PROTECT is currently assessing whether a new lawsuit to compel closure of the unconstitutional trails is our only option.

Forest Preserve Management Reforms: PROTECT's win in the Forever Wild case has catalyzed some significant reforms in DEC's management of the Forest Preserve. One tangible reform is that the DEC





was forced to revise its management of recreational trails in the Forest Preserve. To undertake this work, the DEC formed the Forest Preserve Trails Stewardship Working Group comprised of stakeholders in the Adirondack and Catskill Parks from local government, trail building groups, and conservation organizations. PROTECT serves on this committee. The Working Group got off to a slow start in 2022, bogged down by the DEC's refusal to deal honestly with the import and scope of the Forever Wild decision as DEC staff refused to acknowledge the breadth of changes required for its management. It took almost a year for DEC staff to change their tune.

2023 saw the first meaningful product from the Working Group as it worked to help develop new guidance for "Forest Preserve Work Plans," which govern the planning and implementation of management activities such as trail work, bridge construction, campsite and parking lot construction, among other things. Significantly, the new Work Plans focus on ensuring compliance with Article 14.

Above: The Forest Preserve Trails Stewardship Working Group on a field trip. Right: A public informational meeting in Saranac Lake about the Visitor Use Management (VUM) plan development for the central High Peaks Wilderness Area.

The new Forest Preserve Work Plan guidance marks a significant departure from past practice by limiting tree cutting, changes to the terrain, and the overall impacts to natural resources during management activities. A new public review process was also added to ensure transparency and public accountability. All of these changes were enshrined in a new DEC Commissioner's Policy (CP-78) for Forest Preserve Work Plans. Draft Work Plans are now provided for public comment and all final plans are posted on the DEC's website.

The next issue for the Working Group to tackle is revising trail standards. This will involve setting standards for the width of a trail's cleared area, tread width (the surface walked upon), the type of trail construction method, and clearing heights, among other issues.





Each type of trail, whether for hiking, biking, crosscountry skiing, or snowmobiling, will be required to conform to revised standards according to levels of intended and anticipated use. Trails with higher levels of use will require more substantial designs. The development of new trail standards will be a major challenge for state agencies and the Working Group.

Another key development is that the DEC contracted with OTAK, an environmental consulting firm, to develop a Visitor Use Management (VUM) plan for the central High Peaks Wilderness in the Adirondacks and the Kaaterskill Falls area in the Catskills. VUM is a wilderness management methodology that balances visitor use in a wild, natural area while protecting the natural resources and the quality and character of visitor experiences. VUM was developed by the National Park Service and has been widely implemented at many National Parks and National Forests. Protect the Adirondacks is participating in a stakeholder's group to advise the OTAK team on data gathering and the development of its plan for the High Peaks Wilderness.

Use of VUM has long been advocated by PROTECT and the environmental community in the Adirondack Park, and was a central recommendation by the High Peaks Regional Advisory Committee.

Sustainable Trails: In 2022, the new sustainable trail up Mt. Van Hoevenberg was completed. The trail starts at the new Visitor Center at the Mt. Van Hoevenberg Winter Sports Complex and runs 2.5 miles up the northeast flanks of the mountain. The trail took nearly five years to finish but was the first completely constructed sustainable trail in the Forest Preserve. The trail was labor intensive, as trail crews used only hand tools in the long sections in the High Peaks Wilderness Area, though the trail was constructed with machinery where it runs through private lands and Intensive Use areas at the Winter Sports Complex. The trail is anticipated to need minimal maintenance in the years ahead.

This trail is a joy to hike, with a smooth trail tread, gradual increase in elevation, staircases (built with natural materials) where necessary, all of which traverse an intact and scenic trail corridor. The new trail is markedly different from the usual heavily eroded trail in the High Peaks that runs straight up mountain sides and doubles as a stream channel, strewn with rocks and roots, in a wide, degraded corridor with many steep sections. While this new type of sustainable trail is expensive to build, the Mt Van Ho trail will be watched in the years to come to assess the long-term utility and cost-effectiveness given its anticipated high level of use.

The State is now in the third year of work on the new Cascade Mountain Trail that will run four miles from the Visitors Center at the Winter Sports Complex to the summits of Cascade and Porter mountains. This trail is also sustainably designed. While it will follow a longer route to reach the summit of Cascade Mountain, it will be easier for hikers to walk on a trail with an even trail tread, gradual elevation gain, and intact corridor. This trail is expected to open in 2025.

Adirondack Park Lobby Day 2023: As part of our advocacy efforts we, along with other Adirondack organizations, hosted Adirondack Park Environmental





Lobby Day with a dozen other organizations to advocate in the State Legislature for Adirondack Parkspecific needs such as funding for road salt pollution prevention, increasing and diversifying the DEC Forest Rangers, municipal water and sewer upgrade funding, and support for the Timbuctoo Summer Climate and Career Institute and the Adirondack Experience. We also supported funding for the Survey of Climate Change and Adirondack Lakes Ecosystems (SCALE) study and for the Adirondack Watershed Institute. In addition, we advocated for the establishment of an Adirondack Park Affordable Housing Task Force to examine and provide recommendations to address the unique housing challenges facing the Adirondack region. Through these combined efforts over 100 different legislative offices were contacted.

Environmental Protection Fund Lobby Day 2023:

For EPF Lobby Day, we joined over 50 environmental organizations from across New York to advocate for funding of \$400 million for projects that support land acquisition, State and municipal land stewardship,

and invasive species prevention. Each year, PROTECT advocates for the EPF to be funded at the highest possible level in the State budget so that funding can be made available for open space and farmland protection programs, invasive species control, Adirondack wilderness protection and visitor safety, the Visitors Interpretive Centers at SUNY ESF Newcomb Campus and at Paul Smith's College, and the Adirondack Diversity Initiative, among other critical programs.

Clean Water, Clean Air and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act Passed: PROTECT campaigned for passage of this Bond Act in November 2022. This past summer, we attended several of the State's listening sessions that were held to preview how the State plans to distribute the \$4.2 billion available for environmental projects across New York. The Bond Act provides \$2.275 billion in funding for projects that conserve and protect lands and waters in New York State in perpetuity. PROTECT submitted written comments urging the State to use this funding to support the "30 by 30" Act, passed last year, which establishes a goal





to permanently conserve at least thirty percent of the State's lands and inland waters by 2030.

Proposed Article 14 Constitutional Amendments:

There are currently three proposed amendments to the "Forever Wild" clause of the NYS Constitution, two of which PROTECT supports and one that we oppose. PROTECT supports the proposal to retroactively authorize various new facilities, including trails, buildings, water lines, and parking lots, on 323 acres of Forest Preserve lands that are part of the 1,220-acre Mt. Van Hoevenberg Winter Sports Complex near Lake Placid. These lands are managed by the Olympic Regional Development Authority. This amendment is needed to bring this facility into compliance with the Forever Wild clause. The amendment received "First Passage" from both houses of the Legislature in 2023 and will need "Second Passage" in 2025 before it can be submitted for a statewide referendum.

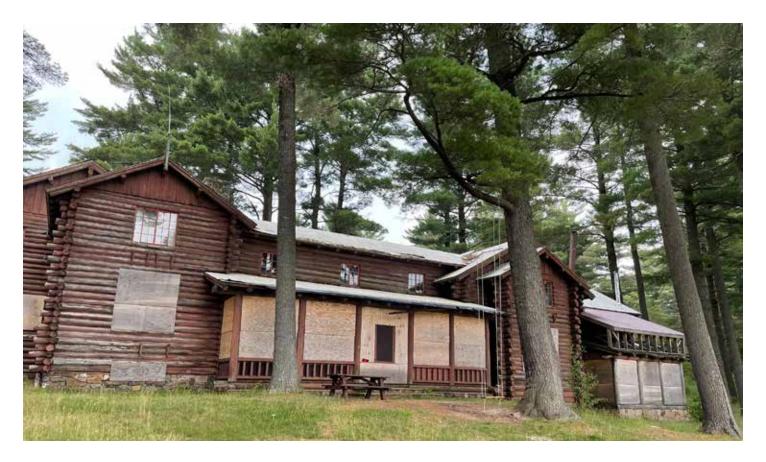
PROTECT supports the proposal to sell 92 acres of the former Camp Gabriels prison compound in Franklin

On the left is a picture of construction of the new sustainable trail up Cascade Mountain. Above shows scenes from Adirondack Park Environmental Lobby Day. A group shot at the top. Lower pictures are Claudia Braymer and Assemblymember Matt Simpson, Senator Pete Harckham, the Chair of the Senate Committee on Environmental Conservation, and Peter Bauer.

County. Over 200 acres of undeveloped Forest Preserve lands surrounding the prison complex have been reclassified as Wild Forest in the Forest Preserve. This amendment is necessary to legally allow the State to remove the 92-acre prison complex area, which includes approximately two dozen buildings, from the Forest Preserve and sell the property for reuse. The property proposed for sale has no important open space, natural resources, or public recreational value.

PROTECT opposes a bill to privatize six acres of Forest Preserve lands on the shore of Debar Pond in a transfer to a private institution. These lands are currently owned by the People of the State of New York,





and have significant open space, natural resource, and public recreational value because they provide unfettered public access to one of the most remote and scenic water bodies in the Adirondack Park. PROTECT supports keeping this land in the Forest Preserve so that visitors can enjoy a wild lake experience similar to Lake Lila in the William C. Whitney Wilderness Area. We believe that Debar Lodge and other buildings should be removed, and the site restored to wild forest. PROTECT opposes this proposed constitutional amendment because it will create a private inholding by selling these lands and creating an exclusive compound. This is a bad deal for New Yorkers and for the Forest Preserve. Please sign our petition to "Save Debar Pond" at SaveDebarPond.org.

Stop Wildlife Killing Contests: PROTECT worked to help pass a bill, sponsored by Senator Timothy Kennedy and Assembly Conservation Committee Chair Deborah Glick, that makes it unlawful for any person to organize, sponsor, conduct, promote or participate in wildlife killing contests in New York. Wildlife kill-

Above is Debar Lodge in a state is disrepair. PROTECT believes this building should be removed. Pictured on the right is Assembly Environmental Conservation Chair Deborah Glick presiding over a committee meeting.

ing contests, often involving coyotes, foxes, squirrels, or other fur bearers, offer prizes for the largest animal killed or the most animals killed in a certain period of time. Now, Governor Kathy Hochul needs to sign the bill for New York to join nine other states that have banned these unethical wildlife killing contests.

Going to Bat for Wildlife Travel Corridors: There is a push nationally to construct new wildlife crossings over or under roads and highways. Wildlife crossings are structures, such as overpass bridges, underpass tunnels, culverts and directional fencing, that enable wildlife to safely cross roads and other barriers. The Biden Administration has made \$350 million dollars available for wildlife crossings through the bipartisan Infrastructure Law. PROTECT advocated for the passage of a New York bill that directs the NYS Depart-





ment of Transportation (DOT) to identify sites where wildlife crossings are most needed to increase public safety and improve habitat connectivity. The bill would also direct DOT to create a priority list of wildlife crossing projects where federal funds could be used.

Protecting New York's Wolves: The confirmed killing of a wild wolf near Cooperstown in December 2021 highlighted the failure by DEC to ensure that wolves, which are protected by federal and New York State endangered species law, are adequately safeguarded. Wolves have migrated to New York State, and will continue to come here, migrating through the Northeast from breeding populations in Canada and the Great Lakes. The distance between suitable wolf habitat in the Northeast and established gray wolf populations in Canada is relatively short. Large, self-sustaining populations of wolves exist in Algonquin Provincial Park and Southern Quebec. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, wolves can range up to 1,000 square miles in pursuit of prey, and studies have indicated that core habitats in the Northeast are well within the

dispersal capability of established wolf populations in Canada. In fact, there is evidence that wolf dispersal into the Northeast has been happening for years and is likely to continue.

After years of decline, gray wolves are now re-established or recolonizing in at least 11 other states. The same population rebound is possible in New York, which DEC acknowledges contains significant suitable habitat for wolves, including 6,000 square miles of suitable habitat in the Adirondack Park. PROTECT is working with the Northeast Wolf Recovery Alliance to advocate for more proactive measures by federal and state agencies to protect wolves migrating into the northeastern United States and eastern Canada in order to foster their natural recovery.

New legislation is proposed that requires all coyotes taken by hunters or trappers to be tagged (as is currently done with other fur/game species) and directs DEC to collect DNA samples of any coyote weighing more than 50 pounds (an indicator that the animal may actually be a wolf). The bill would also require DEC to report to the Governor and Legislature on the status of wolves in the State and modify its hunting and trapping training curriculum to include educational information concerning the presence of wolves and legal protections in New York.

Long-Term Water Quality Monitoring Turns 26 Years Old: 2023 saw the successful completion of the 26th year of the Adirondack Lake Assessment Program (ALAP). ALAP is a partnership between PROTECT and the Adirondack Watershed Institute at Paul Smith's College. ALAP was started in 1998 with three objectives: 1) to collect long-term water quality data on individual lakes and ponds in the Adirondack Park; 2) to provide long-term trend data on individual lakes and ponds for local residents, lake associations, property owners and local governments to help organize water quality protection efforts; and 3) to assemble a profile of water quality conditions across the Adirondacks. ALAP was designed as a cost-effective program based on trained volunteers and scientific analysis and has grown into one of the best long-term citizen science programs in the eastern U.S. ALAP data was





pivotal for providing the scientific data and to making the public case for reducing road salt pollution in the Adirondacks.

Fighting Road Salt Pollution: At the end of the summer in 2023, the State released the much anticipated, and much delayed, Adirondack Road Salt Reduction Task Force final report, which documents pollution of lakes and residential wells along heavily salted road corridors. The report makes clear that the science is not disputed about road salt pollution and relies heavily on ALAP data. The report identifies options for experiments and pilot studies to use less salt, employ substitutes, and use new types of equipment or techniques in winter road management and de-icing. The report was delivered to the Governor and the Legislature. The State's follow-up has yet to be determined but PROTECT will advocate for some kind of State commission or leadership body to oversee implementation of the report. We are also examining legislation for road salt reduction/phase out in the new legislative session.



Christopher Amato, Conservation Director and Counsel

30 by 30: PROTECT's recent report 20% in 2023: An Assessment of the New York State 30 by 30 Act outlines the challenges New Yorkers face with the new "30 by 30" law that aims to protect 30% of New York's lands





On the left is a shot of snowplows salting and plowing the on the Adirondack Northway. Above: Claudia Braymer and Chris Amato measure a 25-foot-wide area on a section of road regraded and rebuilt by the DEC in the southern High Peaks Wilderness Area.

and inland waters by 2030. Our research shows that we're at 20%, with approximately 6.2 million acres of protected lands out of over 31 million acres within New York State. The Forest Preserve in the Adirondacks and Catskills make up about half of New York's protected land base, affirming once again the importance of these lands. PROTECT is working to make sure that the State's 30 by 30 goals are central to plans to revise the Open Space Conservation Plan. We also believe that open space conservation plays a critical role in the state's Climate Action Plan that guides greenhouse gas emission reductions.

Defending Wilderness: In January, PROTECT filed a lawsuit against the DEC, challenging its reconstruction of a former logging road in the High Peaks Wilderness

Complex. The road had previously been reclaimed and rewilded by DEC pursuant to an approved Work Plan, which called for removing bridges and culverts and constructing a series of pits and mounds in the road corridor to recreate a natural forest landscape and accelerate forest regrowth. The proactive reclamation and rewilding work plan was a significant improvement over past DEC practice of leaving roads in Wilderness areas to eventually revegetate—a process that takes decades.

In the fall of 2021, DEC re-entered the road corridor and began using heavy machinery, including a bulldozer and excavator, to destroy and remove the previously constructed pits and mounds. To facilitate this work, DEC reconstructed nearly one mile of the former logging road by grading and flattening the road corridor, removing boulders, and installing a new bridge and culvert. All of this work was done in violation of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan, which prohibits the construction of roads in Wilderness areas for any purpose.





Above is beautiful White Lake in the western Adirondacks. On the right is an area of wetlands unprotected on Lower Saranac Lake.

Defending Wetlands: In August, PROTECT filed a lawsuit against the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) challenging the APA's approval of a major expansion of a commercial marina on Lower Saranac Lake. The proposed expansion will make the marina the largest in the Adirondack Park. Although the proposed expansion will occur in and over thousands of square feet of protected wetlands, the APA approved the project without requiring a wetland permit—reversing eight years of prior APA determinations that the proposed expansion cannot proceed without a wetland permit. The lawsuit also challenges the APA's failure to require a variance for a multitude of new structures in the lake that do not meet the shoreline setback restrictions and challenges the APA's granting of a variance for shoreline structures even though the applicant did not meet the regulatory criteria for a variance.

Defending Public Participation: PROTECT and its co-petitioner, the Adirondack White Lake Association, have appealed a decision from Supreme Court, Oneida County, dismissing a lawsuit challenging the

APA's approval of a major new mine in the White Lake residential community in the Town of Forestport. APA approved the project without holding an adjudicatory hearing, despite the fact that more than 3,000 comments were submitted opposing the project. In addition, the APA ignored numerous comments that identified significant deficiencies in the applicant's evaluation of noise and water quality impacts.

Long Overdue Carrying Capacity Studies Needed: In October, PROTECT sent a letter to DEC demanding that it carry out its obligation pursuant to the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan and the Unit Management Plan (UMP) for the Saranac Lake Wild Forest (SLWF) to complete a carrying capacity study for water bodies in the SLWF. The letter points out that the Master Plan and the SLWF UMP impose a non-discretionary duty on DEC to undertake and complete





a carrying capacity study. The study is necessary to evaluate the environmental and social impacts of visitor overuse of these water bodies and is particularly crucial in light of the APA's recent approval of a major commercial marina expansion on Lower Saranac Lake and a pending application for expansion of another commercial marina on Upper Saranac Lake.

PROTECT Opposes Major Subdivision for Luxury Housing: PROTECT continues to monitor a proposal for a major subdivision in the Town of Jay that is comprised of 120 lots, including up to 20 townhomes, each 1,800 square feet in size; up to 60 villas, each 3,500 square feet in size; up to 18 estates, each 6,500 square feet in size; up to 6 mansions, each 10,000 square feet in size; and a hotel, restaurant and spa. PROTECT continues to urge the APA to require the applicant to collect critical baseline natural resource data for the project site, comply with conservation design principles, and to include a greenhouse gas emission (GHG) analysis as required by the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA).

New York's Climate Action Plan: PROTECT continues to advocate for APA and DEC to incorporate an assessment of GHG emissions for major projects as required by the CLCPA. To that end, PROTECT has sent letters to both agencies urging them to assess upstream and downstream GHG emissions associated with the major subdivision proposal in Jay and the Barton Mines expansion project in Johnsburg. Despite the fact that both are major projects that will increase GHG emissions, neither DEC nor APA have yet required or performed the GHG analysis required under the CLCPA.

PROTECT also advocates for implementation and funding of the state's Climate Action Plan to meet targets of GHG emission reductions by 2030 and 2050. While the State has a plan for reductions it has no viable plan for how to meet the costs of transition to a fossil fuel free future. PROTECT continues to push, with many other organizations and New Yorkers, for action by the Governor and State Legislature to meet our immense climate challenges.

Adirondack Community Vitality and Viability:

The chief issue facing many Adirondack communities is housing for full-time residents. The majority of residential buildings in the Adirondacks are used as vacation homes by seasonal landowners and a large share of the rental market has gone towards short-term rentals, rather than long-term. PROTECT advocated for an Adirondack Park Affordable Housing Task Force in early 2023, but that effort was overshadowed by Governor Hochul's affordable housing initiatives in her budget proposal. Hochul's unsuccessful New York Housing Compact sought to build over 800,000 new housing units across the state. This program failed because it required communities to commit to specific levels of new housing. The needs and stresses for housing vary greatly across the state and the Adirondack Park. We need local solutions for housing projects, but the key ingredient is greater funding to help catalyze projects. This issue will remain a focus for PROTECT in the years ahead.

Priorities for 2024: Many of the big challenges highlighted above will carry over to 2024, but every year new challenges emerge that we did not anticipate.





PROTECT stands ready to meet every unexpected contingency even as we plan for the best ways to enhance long-term protections for the Forest Preserve and Adirondack Park.

In 2024, PROTECT will advocate throughout the annual state budget process to ensure that vital programs are funded in the Environmental Protection Fund for land protection, invasive species control, Forest Preserve Stewardship, new carrying capacity studies for Adirondack lakes, and support for important Adirondack institutions and initiatives such as the Adirondack Diversity Initiative and Visitor Interpretive Centers, among others. We'll push for new state legislation to protect wildlife travel corridors and wolves and make sure that new Article 14 amendments are only undertaken where absolutely necessary and where they provide a clear public benefit.

We will monitor and intervene where necessary to help build an ambitious land protection agenda by the State and local governments to fulfill the 30 by 30 Above is an image of a portion of the proposed luxury development in the Town of Jay. This development requires square footage minimums for various buildings and will be predominantly vacation homes. On the right is a view of Forest Preserve lands in the High Peaks Wilderness Area.

goals. We will also work to take the recommendations from the recent final report of the Adirondack Road Salt Reduction Task Force and turn them into action items to experiment with less salt use, new technologies, or salt substitutes for winter road maintenance. We will advocate during the state budget process to fund the implementation of New York's Climate Action Plan and for a new forest protection program that focuses on long-term carbon storage.

Throughout 2024, PROTECT will continue work to uphold Adirondack Park environmental laws and bring legal challenges where necessary. We will defend public participation and organizational transparency of state agencies during their review of private land development projects, and we will actively intervene to





usher in new reforms to the management of the Forest Preserve built on natural resource protection and transparency and accountability in management actions. We will continue to monitor compliance by DEC and APA with Article 14, statutory requirements, and the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan. We will work to build community viability by advocating for municipal infrastructure funding, community planning funding, and affordable housing programs.

Sound information is critical to the debate over the future of the Adirondacks. Good science leads to good public policy. We regularly publish articles and webposts on public policy matters on our website (www. protectadks.org) and at the *Adirondack Almanack* and *New York Almanac*. PROTECT remains dedicated to bringing sound, reliable information that is scientifically verified to the public though programs like long-term water quality monitoring through the Adirondack Lake Assessment Program (ALAP).

Another effort to bring sound information to the

public is our analysis of long-term population and economic trends in the Adirondack Park and across other communities in Rural America. The US Census will release new economic data 2018-2022 at the end of 2023. This data will allow us to complete an update of our *Adirondack Park and Rural America* report for long-term trends 1970 to 2020 and short-term trends 2010 to 2020. This study looks at a variety of leading economic and population indicators. This updated report will be completed in early 2024.

Throughout all of this work, the members of Protect the Adirondacks are our lifeblood. Your financial support and membership, letters, public comments at hearings, and volunteerism is what drives our work and builds a record of success year after year for helping to keep the Adirondack Park a vital, wild, and beautiful oasis.

Thank you for playing a vital role in the work of Protect the Adirondacks. Your support helps with this important work every step of the way.





Adirondack Lake Assessment Program Completed its 26th Year in 2023

Gull Pond

The Adirondack Park
Lake Assessment Program
(ALAP) is a partnership
between Paul Smith's College Adirondack Watershed
Institute and Protect the
Adirondacks. 2023 marked
the 26th season of water
quality monitoring. ALAP
has grown into one of the
best long-term citizen science programs of its kind in
New York and the eastern
United States.

The annual report for all ALAP lakes is available on the ALAP website: www. adklakes.org. Here's a list of 77 lakes studied in 2023:

Amber Lake Arbutus Pond Austin Pond Big Moose Lake Blue Mountain Lake Brandreth Lake **Butternut Pond** Canada Lake Caroga Lake (East) Caroga Lake (West) Catlin Lake Chateaugay Lake (Lower) Chateaugay Lake (Upper) Chazy Lake Clear Pond Cranberry Lake Deer Lake Eagle Lake Eli Pond Elk Lake **Everest Lake** Fern Lake Frank Pond Friends Lake Garnet Lake Green Lake

Augur Lake

Hidden Lake Highlands Lake Hoel Pond Indian Lake (Franklin Cty) Irving Pond Iordan Lake Kiwassa Lake Lake Adirondack Lake Clear Lake Colby Lake of the Pines Lake Titus Lens Lake Little Long Lake Little Simon Pond Long Lake Long Pond Loon Lake (Franklin Cty) Loon Lake (Warren Cty) Lower Saranac Lake Middle Saranac Lake Mink Pond Moody Pond

Mountain View Lake Osgood Pond Oseetah Lake Otter Pond Paradox Lake Pine Lake Pleasant Lake Ragged Lake Raquette Lake Rich Lake Rondaxe Lake Silver Lake Simon Pond Star Lake Stony Creek Ponds Thirteenth Lake Tripp Lake Trout Lake Tupper Lake Twitchell Lake West Lake White Lake Windover Lake Wolf Lake Zack Pond

Moss Lake



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* Deceased at time of publication.

Thank you very much!



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The best investment you can make in Adirondack Park conservation and environmental protection



Raquette River

Adirondack 500 is group of dedicated donors who commit to an annual contribution at the level of their choice to support the important work of Protect the Adirondacks. Adirondack 500 donors pledge to give annually at levels of \$250 to \$10,000.

Financial support for Protect the Adirondacks is one of the best investments a donor can make in conservation and environmental protections for the Adirondack Park. Protect the Adirondacks has won big victories that have wrought major changes and long-lasting reforms to protect its natural resources and improve the management of the Adirondack Park and the Forever Wild Forest Preserve.

For more information on the Adirondack 500 program call (518) 251-2700 or email us at info@protectadks.org. We're happy to talk with you about how to structure your gift and we have volunteer financial advisors ready to help with advice on donations. Thank you very much!



2022-2023 Financial Summary

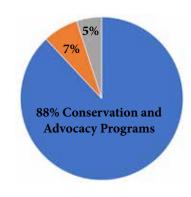
Assets	2022-23	2021-22
Cash	\$67,781	\$164,242
Cash (Designated)	60,000	26,864
Cash (Temporarily Restricted)	50,192	75,987
Cash (Permanently Restricted)	42,660	42,660
Investments - Board Designated	35,348	32,528
Investments - Unrestricted	300,831	282,285
Investments - Permanently Restricted	494,611	485,174
Property (Adirondack Research Library)	450,000	450,000
Property (Headquarters/Furnishings)	207,211	214,351
Total Assets	\$1,708,634	\$1,774,091

Revenues	2022-23	2021-22
Contributions & Grants	\$248,161	\$466,212
Dues & Fees	59,365	67,822
Investment Income	14,902	13,301
Realized Gain (Loss) on Investments	0	(5,274)
Unrealized Gain (Loss) on Investments	18,859	(96,929)
Event Income	0	0
In-Kind Donations	0	18,470
Program Services	30,500	16,060
Miscellaneous	0	855
Total Income	\$371,787	\$480,517

Program, Administrative & Fundraising Expenses	2022-23	2021-22
Program Expenses	(88%) \$389,683	(82%) \$302,323
Administrative Expenses	(5%) \$22,605	(5%) \$19,519
Fundraising Expenses	(7%) \$30,140	(13%) \$49,001
Total Expenses	\$442,428	\$370,843

Expenses	2022-23	2021-22
Salaries	\$239,951	\$172,457
Payroll Expenses & Benefits	25,434	29,071
Contracted Services	1,543	2,631
Insurance	2,073	3,269
Occupancy Costs (Headquarters main.)	13,825	10,340
Supplies	5,136	2,998
Printing	31,348	16,156
Postage	5,522	5,614
Conferences & Events	3,883	347
Bank Charges	2,526	1,713
Advertising	1,750	5,325
Dues & Subscriptions	990	800
Legal Defense	16,426	25,609
Professional Fees & Services	9,775	9,595
Travel	7,990	5,526
Website, Software, Technology Services	21,742	16,246
Investment Fees	0	0
Program Expense	45,374	55,951
Miscellaneous		
Depreciation and Amortization	7,140	7,195
Total Expenses	\$442,428	\$370,843

2022-23 Total Resource Allocation



Administration 5% Fundraising 7% Programs 88%

Protect the Adirondacks is the recipient of the "Gold" level Guidestar seal for organizational transparency.



Notes

Protect the Adirondacks' fiscal year runs from July 1 - June 30th.

An independent audit was prepared by Cusack & Company in Latham, New York.

All information reported in this summary is also available in PROTECT's

NYS CHAR 500 and Federal 990 filed with the NYS Attorney General.

The Adirondack Research Library (\$450,000) is on permanent loan to the Kelly Adirondack Center of Union College in Niskayuna, NY, and PROTECT's headquarters (\$207,211) is located in Johnsburg, NY.



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Join the Forever Wild Legacy Group

The Forever Wild Endowment Fund ensures that the grassroots organizing, advocacy, research, independent public oversight, legal defense, and other vital work of Protect the Adirondacks is sustained for decades to come.

The Forever Wild Endowment Fund is managed in two funds. One is administered by the Board of Directors of Protect the Adirondacks, in partnership with professional financial advisors. A second Endowment Fund is held with the Adirondack Foundation. Both funds are managed for long-term growth, and the income supports PROTECT's programs based on an annual allocation. No matter how one chooses to make a gift, you can direct your gift to support the Forever Wild Endowment Fund. The Forever Wild Legacy Group are people who

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