



PRESS RELEASE
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Praise for Governor Hochul advancing the addition of the 36,000-acre Whitney Park to the Forest Preserve

Governor Kathy Hochul signals that the State is seeking to purchase the 36,000-acre tract in the heart of the Adirondack Park to add it to the “forever wild” Forest Preserve

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Protect the Adirondacks is today announcing its support for news breaking today from Adirondack Explorer. The Adirondack Explorer today published an article [online](#) detailing that Governor Kathy Hochul sent a letter to the Trustees of the estate that currently owns Whitney Park and the prospective buyer of that property, Todd Interests, a Texas-based development company.

“This is tremendous news and we are thrilled to hear about Governor Hochul’s movement toward adding this highest priority, critical and sizeable tract of land to the Adirondack Forest Preserve,” said Claudia Brayer, executive director of Protect the Adirondacks.

The 36,000-acre Whitney Park property was put on the market for sale earlier this year and through a potential sale, this pristine acreage is threatened with development. The tract has been at the top of the State’s land protection list for decades. Whitney Park includes 22 lakes and ponds, and over 100 miles of undeveloped shorelines. The tract has important natural habitat and is the missing link for re-establishing historic canoe routes that traversed the property.

Protect the Adirondacks has been calling on Governor Kathy Hochul and Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Amanda Lefton to add the 36,000-acre Whitney Park property to the Adirondack Forest Preserve.

Protect the Adirondacks Board Chair Charles Clusen said, “Governor Hochul’s letter marks meaningful progress toward ensuring that this important land remains in the public trust for generations of New Yorkers to come. This parcel is within the nation’s most significant part of

the Northwoods wilderness and contains vulnerable ecosystems, habitat for wildlife, forest and recreational wild resources that need protection by the State of the New York as Forest Preserve”.

Whitney Park is currently owned by a Trust set up by the Estate of John Hendrickson. Mr. Hendrickson, the husband of Mary Lou Whitney, died unexpectedly in 2024. Although Mr. Hendrickson had expressed concern about potential State management of the lands, Protect the Adirondacks believes that the late owner’s concerns can be satisfactorily addressed through careful stewardship of the lands by DEC pursuant to the forever wild protections set forth in the New York State Constitution.

The Trust is currently negotiating to sell these lands to a resort developer from Texas, Todd Industries. Todd Industries Chairman Shawn Todd has also had discussions with State officials about protecting more than 32,000 acres of Whitney Park. If the State steps in as a purchaser of Whitney Park, that 32,000 acres of land could be added to the State-owned Forest Preserve.

The protection of Whitney Park’s natural resources and the opportunities for public recreation it affords are critical for the future of the Adirondack Park. In the late 1990s, then Governor George Pataki purchased 15,000 acres around Little Tupper Lake from Mary Lou Whitney. Adding Whitney Park to the Forest Preserve offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity to expand the existing William C. Whitney Wilderness Area and would be a lasting legacy of Governor Hochul’s administration.

Protect the Adirondacks

Protect the Adirondacks is an IRS-approved non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and stewardship of the 6-million-acre Adirondack Park. Our mission is to protect the Adirondack Park’s wild character for current and future generations. PROTECT pursues this mission through a combination of advocacy, grassroots organizing, independent public oversight, research, water quality monitoring, education, and legal action. Protect the Adirondacks was formed in 2009 as the result of a merger between two long-standing environmental conservation groups in the Adirondack Park, the Resident’s Committee to Protect the Adirondacks (est. 1991) and the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks (est. 1901). Protect the Adirondacks is managed by a 21-member Board of Directors of Adirondack leaders with expertise in environmental law, local government, Adirondack environmental and cultural history, state agency management, and small business. Protect the Adirondacks maintains an office in a 100% energy efficient, solar-and wind-powered office in Johnsburg in the central Adirondacks. For more information see www.protectadks.org.

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