



PRESS RELEASE
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Adirondack Park Agency Requires Adjudicatory Hearing for Proposed Weapons Firing Range

*This is the first adjudicatory hearing required by
Adirondack Park Agency Board since 2007*

For more information, call Protect the Adirondacks:

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In a first since 2007, the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) Board is requiring an adjudicatory hearing for a proposed project to be sited on private lands within the Adirondack Park. An application by Unconventional Concepts, Inc. (UCI) was submitted to APA seeking approval to construct and operate a weapons firing range on a 197-acre parcel of land in the Town of Lewis (Essex County) classified as Rural Use on the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan Map.

The proposed project involves the firing of a 155mm howitzer cannon up to 30 times per year over a five-year period. UCI proposes to fire this excessively loud artillery in close proximity to scores of private residences, within 350 feet of the Taylor Pond Wild Forest, and in close proximity to the Jay Mountain Wilderness, and the Hurricane Mountain Wilderness. UCI intends to use Big Church Mountain as a “backstop” for capturing the artillery shells fired by the howitzer. The site of the proposed firing range is a few miles from the Jay Mountain and Hurricane Mountain Wilderness Areas.

“A weapons firing range has no place in the Adirondack Park,” said Claudia Braymer, Executive Director of Protect the Adirondacks!, Inc. “The Agency Board needs to hold an adjudicatory hearing so that this proposed project can be denied on the basis of its significant adverse impacts on the natural and human communities of the Adirondacks.”

The Order adopted by the APA Board states that three issues need to be considered at the hearing, summarized as follows:

1. Whether the proposed howitzer firing range is compatible with the Adirondack Park;
2. Whether the proposed howitzer firing range is a compatible use within the Rural Use land area classification; and

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3. Whether the proposed howitzer firing range would have an undue adverse impact upon the natural, scenic, ecological, wildlife, recreational or open space resources of the Adirondack Park.

We urged the APA Board to identify as an issue for adjudication the applicant's claim that this project is essential for the national security of the United States. Having this issue examined during the hearing will allow the APA Board to inquire further into UCI's claims about the need for this project. The Board did not add this as an issue but we will seek to pursue this during the hearing.

"We commend APA staff for recommending that this proposed project go to an adjudicatory hearing. We are gratified that staff listened to local residents and conservation organizations, all of whom have expressed serious concerns about siting an artillery firing range in the Adirondack Park. We look forward to the Agency requiring the full and heightened scrutiny that this project deserves," said Christopher Amato, Conservation Director and Counsel of Protect the Adirondacks!, Inc.

More information is available here: <https://www.protectadks.org/adirondack-park-agency-releases-draft-order-to-send-controversial-weapons-firing-range-to-an-adjudicatory-hearing/>

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 and @ProtectAdkPark.

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