



More working forests proposed in Adirondacks

Adding to open space

By Graham Cox

Several new areas have been proposed for addition to the state open space conservation list in the Adirondack Park, building on the areas identified in the last decade by the two open space committees that cover DEC regions five and six.

In the eastern counties, the region five open space committee recommended adding two areas of working forest to the conservation easement purchase list. These are the Cedarlands boy scout camp, 5,500 acres on the west shore of Long Lake, and the Boeselager Forest, more than 5,500 acres in two parcels and including a 16-mile railroad bed, all in the towns of Dannemora and Saranac in the northeast part of the region.

The region five committee also suggested a new funding category in the acquisition process that would allow purchase of easements to complete more trails for a variety of motorized and non-motorized uses. The committee proposed that the state complete a park-wide plan for more long distance trails, including extensions of national trails going



John McKeith

The last major piece of Adirondack property bought by the state DEC was this Champion property, which includes this blueberry meadow surrounded by spruce forest along the Northern Flow rivers of Franklin County.

east-west and north-south through the park. But they also want to be sure there is adequate maintenance and policing along these trails to protect neighboring land-owners.

The region six committee, covering the western edge of the park, has proposed adding several thousand acres of the Bog River flow, which straddles

the two regional jurisdictions to the state open space conservation list.

Discussed, but not yet added to the region five list, were proposals to add the Battenkill in Washington County and several thousand acres of wetlands in Saratoga County, outside but on the southern edge of the Adirondack Park.

Open space committees in most of

the DEC and state parks regions have completed their revised open space conservation recommendations and sent them to their Albany offices. These will be incorporated into a new draft this fall, and public meetings are planned for winter. A final plan will then be prepared and sent to Governor George E. Pataki and the state legislature for approval later in 2001.

Audubon ecologists end second summer of research in Adirondacks, Catskills

By Mitschka Hartley

In an ongoing effort to understand how wildlife communities are affected by various methods and intensities of forest management, National Audubon Society of New York State researchers spent a summer in the woods. This was the second summer researchers worked in the Adirondack Mountains and research efforts were expanded this year to include the Catskills.

The research plan was partly designed to understand how the 1998 ice-storm (and subsequent salvage-logging) affected wildlife communities. Two areas within the Adirondacks were studied. Ten sites from Old Forge to Newcomb (25 acres each) in the Central Adirondacks, where there was no significant damage from the ice-storm were compared to 18 areas (also 25 acres each) in the northern Adirondacks, where ice-storm damage was severe.

Each area included two "control areas," that had not been harvested in at least 75 years and eight sites that had been harvested with varying intensity. Within the northern area, eight areas which had been logged prior to the ice-storm were compared to eight areas logged after the storm.

The Catskills project was initiated to compare relationships and recommendations between the Adirondacks and similar New York state forest types. The project included two old-growth controls and ten harvested stands, ranging from large clear cuts to light selection cuts. Comprehensive surveys of breeding songbirds, salamanders and frogs, carrion beetles, and forest structure and vegetation

were completed at all 40 sites.

Both years of data will be analyzed to increase understanding of the affects of logging on wildlife in northern hardwood stands. Based on the results, private landowners will be asked to incorporate wildlife values into land management priorities and practices. Participating landowners were an essential part of the process and are greatly appreciated by National Audubon Society of New York State. It is hoped that they and others will continue to cooperate with ongoing research.



NASNY

Spring Pond Bog Preserve, a 1,400-acre peatland and conifer forest complex near Tupper Lake, is an Important Bird Area. It is home to Spruce Grouse, Three-toed Woodpecker, Black-backed Woodpecker, Boreal Chickadee and Palm Warblers.

NYC gets new land in the Catskill watersheds

By Graham Cox

New York City has increased its land holdings for water protection by more than 50 percent since the city, state and towns in the Catskill and Westchester watersheds signed the historic Watershed Agreement in January 1997.

Through the summer months, the city completed or moved forward on purchase deals for more than 25,000 acres in the Catskill/Delaware systems. The city has also bought 529 acres in the Croton system.

New York City Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Joel Miehle Sr. said that 16,745 acres of the latest purchases are in high priority areas around Ashokan, Rondout and West Branch reservoirs, and also include 6,140 acres in Putnam County. More than 350 landowners on a 'willing seller' basis are involved. The city has also bought 4,300 acres in Pepacton basin, 2,500 acres in Schoharie basin and 950 acres in Cannonsville basin.

The city, prior to 1997, owned 85,000 acres (7 percent) in the upstate watersheds. The city's 19 reservoirs and three controlled lakes cover 40,000 acres, leaving about 45,000 acres as protective buffer lands in the watersheds. The city pays property taxes on its lands and has now agreed to open much more of it to fishing, hiking and hunting.

The city, state and towns made this agreement to protect water quality, thereby heading off a multi-billion dollar expense to build and operate a new water treatment plant. The agreement also provides money for new sewage treatment plants, farm and forest land management and for purchasing critical land parcels or easements.