

IT IS TIME FOR THE SPORTSMEN AND WOMEN TO BE HEARD

Many of you may be aware of the public hearings that are being held around the state by the Adirondack Park Agency. These hearings are being held to hear public comments on the eventual classification of the Boreas Ponds Tract (formerly owned by the Finch Pruyn Paper Co and the Nature Conservancy). The classification of the 21,000 Boreas Tract in the central Adirondacks will likely be either Wild Forest, Wilderness, or a combination of both.

The sporting community has been systematically losing access to public properties. Environmental groups, hikers and other people, who have no love for hunters and other sporting groups, have been showing up in force at these hearings. The Adirondack Park Agency Commissioners could very well see the lack of participation by the sporting community in the hearing process as a signal that we don't care how these lands are classified. But we do care and we have to let them know that we care.

If the lands are classified as Wilderness the APA and the DEC might just as well put gates up – which they will do - and hang signs from them that say “Only the young and vigorous need enter.” That certainly will not do much for the North Country economy and is contrary to what both the Governor and DEC Commissioner said would happen. The Governor promised balance; that the property would be managed in a way that would improve the lives of the folks living and working in the Park. The DEC Commissioner said the land would be accessible to all, not just the fit and hardy. Dragging a boat a mile or two is certainly not equitable access for a senior citizen, even one with modest mobility issues.

We are an aging population. We can't hike five to seven or eight miles to hunt or fish. There is an existing network of roads on this property that should remain mostly open. That would equitable access. We've not asking for new roads, we just want to be able the use the ones already in place.

This is an important battle and we all need to do our part to see that the APA gets the message. The so-called “Green Groups” are making their voices heard, we need to do the same.

If you have any questions give me a call. In any event you owe it to yourself to be at the next meeting, to make your views known, to have your voice heard. Tell the Commissioners that you want the lands to be classified as they are in **Alternative 1**.

There will be a public hearing on the plan near Bear Mountain on December 6. It will be held at the Bear Mountain Inn at 3020 Seven Lakes Drive in Tompkins Cove, New York. The hearing begins at 7 PM. Arrive early if you plan to speak.

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