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THE ADIRONDACK PARK STATE LAND MASTER PLAN

ORIGINS AND CURRENT STATUS

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THE ADIRONDACK PARK STATE LAND MASTER PLANORIGINS AND CURRENT STATUSINTRODUCTION

This paper describes the development of the management policies contained in the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan and the current management status and classification of State Land within the Adirondack Park. The basic principles for managing the Forest Preserve were not new in 1972 when the Master Plan was approved by Governor Rockefeller but had evolved over a 20 year period.

The creation of the Forest Preserve and providing a Constitutional mandate that it "forever be kept as wild forest lands" was and remains the most significant policy statement concerning State Land in the Adirondack Park. While the history of Forest Preserve is important, the focus here is on the articulation of a coherent management policy within the broad framework of Article XIV. The paper begins with the debate over the proper use and management of the Forest Preserve in the Conservationist from November 1951 through June 1952, and continues with the policy development and Wilderness designation by the Joint Legislative Commission on Natural Resources (JLCNR) and the Temporary Study Commission (TSC).

To a great extent, the Master Plan represents a refinement of the work done by the JLCNR and the TSC. Since 1972, the Adirondack Park Agency and the Department of Environmental Conservation have progressed cautiously and deliberately toward the implementation of a management system developed through compromise and public consensus.

A. The Conservationist Debate 1951-52

The origins of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan begin with the debate over the proper use and management of the Adirondack Forest Preserve in 1951, at the height of the controversy over the Panther Mountain and Higley Mountain impoundments on the South Branch of the Moose River and one year after the big blowdown of November 25, 1950. The Attorney General had determined that the removal of dead trees to reduce the fire hazard to the Preserve would not violate Article XIV of the New York State Constitution, and by the Fall of 1952 the salvage operation was well underway.

The October-November 1951 issue of the Conservationist carried an editorial putting forth the proposition that the management policy (principally the prohibition against cutting) for the Forest Preserve as set forth in Article XIV of the Constitution was written long ago and should be periodically reviewed.<sup>1</sup> As custodians of the Preserve, the Conservation Department viewed it as its duty to determine if the policy was still in the best interest of the people. To begin this investigation, the editor posed four questions.

1. If our objective is the preservation of our forests, are forests best preserved by prohibiting cutting?
2. What is meant by "forever wild"? Does it suggest an abundance of birds and animals, and, if so, does our present management policy promote that objective?
3. Under this policy, are we making the most of the potential recreational values of the Forest Preserve?
4. How does the present management policy, as prescribed by our constitution, contribute to the economic needs of State and Nation?<sup>2</sup>

In the following issue of the Conservationist (December-January 1952), the Conservation Department gave its answers to the four questions. E. W. Littlefield, Superintendent, Forest Management, answered the first. The answer depends on what is to be preserved; "the undisturbed forest environment" or a particular type of "tree community or forest type". He concluded if we want to preserve "primitive character of the Forest Preserve forever, we should stick to our guns" but if we want to "preserve the woods themselves in a condition of optimum health and vigor, we had best get in there with the axe and chainsaw and the sooner the better". He went on to suggest that areas of true wilderness or areas necessary to protect watersheds or which had outstanding aesthetic value should be kept as wilderness, and that cutting in other areas would not impair<sup>3</sup> the recreational potential or scenic beauty of the preserve.

Robert W. Dorrow, Supervisor of Game Research, and Arthur W. Holweg, Supervisor of Game Management, addressed the wildlife issue. They argued that the State has a responsibility to

promote and maintain an abundance of wildlife on the Forest Preserve lands. They pointed out that virgin forests are not "a great wildlife reservoir"; that the present management policy would not promote and maintain an abundance of wildlife, especially game species. Private lands within the 'blue line' were poorly managed for game and the Forest Preserve represented "by far the largest area in which the State can guarantee future generations an opportunity to hunt". They suggested game management practice could be incorporated in a forest management strategy for the Forest Preserve.

Clayton B. Seagears, Director of Conservation Education and William Mulholland, Superintendent of Camps and Trails, were emphatic that their answer to question 3 was NO. They reasoned that since Article XIV made no provision for recreation "by far the most important use to which the Forest Preserve can be put", most existing facilities including trails, lean-tos and campsites were of questionable legality. This situation could only have occurred through an oversight or by the lack of foresight concerning the growth of outdoor recreation by the drafters of Article XIV sixty years earlier. They pointed out that while the Forest Preserve was within a four-hour drive of one-seventh of the Nation's population, only a "chosen few actually can enter". This limited use was due to the physical or psychological inability of most people to use the facilities then available. Users needed tent platforms, shelters with blankets and cooking utensils, canoe portages with trenches and pushcarts and the like.

They concluded that to rectify this situation, Article XIV "must now be fitted to our needs". One way to accomplish this was to create an "airtight zoning plan for the Preserve". They proposed three zones, and that whatever the plan, it "should leave nothing whatever to the future judgement of individuals".

1. Wilderness areas locked tight and untouchable, as they now are, but with a constitutional blessing on primitive facilities.
2. Management areas limited to certain forest, fish and game management practices by the State which would retain or (we believe) enhance the wilderness aspects of the Forest Preserve and ensure the healthy permanence of its forests and wildlife.

3. Recreational areas requiring even less than one percent of the Forest Preserve, specifically designated along certain highways, points of water entrance, and the like, where readily accessible non-commercialized recreational facilities could be developed of a kind in keeping with the atmosphere of the Forest Preserve.

Deputy Commissioner J. Victor Skiff said of question 4:

Asking this question is like asking, "How much is your wife worth to you?" We don't think the real value of the Forest Preserve can be expressed in dollars and cents; we don't believe that anybody ever intended that its value should be so expressed, and we hope that nobody will ever attempt to reduce the Forest Preserve to mere dollars and cents. We certainly won't.

Based on his colleagues' answers to questions 1, 2 and 3, he concluded the Forest Preserve had "already proven a fine investment and, even under present public policy, has great economic usefulness", but that there was an "opportunity to build a still greater preserve, of still greater usefulness to our people and still have our wilderness".

In the February-March 1952 issue, six responses from the public were published. Gustov A. Swanson, Head of the Department of Conservation, Cornell University, and William Pearson Tolley, Chancellor, Syracuse University, fully supported the Conservation Department's positions. Gerald Kenwell, a long-time Adirondack guide, favored amending Article XIV to make the wilderness more accessible to a greater number of people. John E. Hammett, Chairman of Campfire Club of America's Committee for Conservation of Forest and Wildlife, strongly objected to any weakening of Article XIV and questioned the Conservation Department's motives in initiating such a discussion.

Paul Schaefer (a Director of the NYS Conservation Council) characterized the questions as asking whether or not "to allow the destruction of the wild character of these quiet forest and lovely lakes and wild rivers". His position was that timber harvesting in any form was incompatible with wild forest lands and "to uphold one is to deny the other". He took issue with the argument that trails, lean-tos and campsites may be illegal and challenged the concept that the Forest Preserve was "locked up" by pointing out that there

are "thousands of miles of paved road", "several thousand of secondary roads" and "thousands of miles of trails providing access to the Forest Preserve" and that "hundreds of thousands of people" enjoy the Preserve each year.<sup>10</sup>

Frederick T. Kelsey, President of the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks, responded to the four questions as follows:

"In the Constitutional Convention of 1938 every argument was advanced that could be made in favor of 'scientific forestry' in the Adirondack Preserve and all efforts to change Article XIV to permit this were overwhelmingly rejected."

"Our Constitutional provision did not direct forests to be administered as a game management area but limited it to the trees and direct statement 'they shall forever be kept as wild forest lands'. The lands as nature made them and as man found them."

"Further development along the line implied or suggested by the articles in the Conservationist would certainly tend to impair the wild forest character of much of the Preserve and, thereby, would, in our opinion, actually destroy its greatest recreational value."

"The need today for protection of the Preserve against commercial spoliation for economic purposes -- such as development of power projects under the guise of flood control and similar economic uses -- is as great as was the vital need of such protection from timbermen many years ago."<sup>11</sup>

While the Adirondack Mountain Club did not have its position published in the Conservationist, its magazine the AD-I-RON-DAC, carried an article entitled "No Longer Wild?" in the March-April, 1952, issue. The article criticized the views expressed by the Conservation Department staff which it considered as a proposal for a "fundamental change in the nature of Forest Preserve and the policy under which the people of the State have sought to have it administered." There was no doubt concerning the historic intent of Article XIV. The article stated:

Of course, the undisturbed forest environment is precisely what the framers of Article XIV, Section 1

(then VII:7) wanted and intended to guarantee through the State Constitution, and it is what the Constitutional Convention of 1938, and the people of the State thereafter, decided we still want.<sup>12</sup>

It opposed game management as it was not one of the purposes for which the Preserve was created and questioned the impact of timber harvesting with its network of roads on non-game species.

The article took issue with the Department "pretending" that trails, lean-tos and campsites, which the courts and the Attorney General had said are permissible, were illegal. It put forth the position that "a law which has been tested and interpreted by the highest courts is stronger and more administrable than one whose scope and meaning are uncertain". It questioned "why the people of the State of New York, who have in their Forest Preserve a recreational resource comparable to the greatest of our National Parks, should abandon its unique features and convert it to<sup>13</sup> a type of resort park because all people do not enjoy it".

In the April-May 1952 Conservationist, the Department countered the critics with a series of statements and letters by prestigious leaders and professionals (Nathaniel L. Goldstein, Attorney General; W.B. Greeley, former Chief, U.S. Forest Service; Ira N. Gabrielson, President, Wildlife Management Institute; H.H. Chapman, Professor Emeritus, Yale University, School of Forestry; Representative Harold C. Ostertag; Lithgow Osborne, New York Conservation Commissioner, 1933-1942; O. Byron Brewster, Associate Justice, Supreme Court Appellate Division). All praised the Department's opening of the debate as a great public service and Greely, Gabrielson and Chapman endorsed its zoning approach to Forest Preserve Management. Lithgow, Osborne, and Donald Tobey, President of the NYS Conservation Council, proposed that the issue be studied further by a subcommittee of the Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources.<sup>14</sup>

This round of the debate formally concluded with Commissioner Duryea confirming the Department's position that forest and wildlife management "could and should be applied to carefully selected parts of the Forest Preserve", that more recreational facilities "could and should be erected for the use of more people", and that none of these things could be done under Article XIV. With that he asked Senator Wheeler Milmo, Chairman of the Joint Legislative Committee on

Natural Resources (JLCNR) to have that committee study the matter further.<sup>15</sup>

An additional article in the Conservationist (June/July 1952) deserves mention. In an article entitled "Some Thoughts on Zoning the Forest Preserve", Arthur S. Hopkins, Director, Lands and Forests, put forth a proposal to "zone" the Preserve. Hopkins reasoned that since a given area of the Forest Preserve could not be managed for both intensive forest management, recreation and other indirect uses, the solution would be to determine what the values of various areas of the Forest Preserve are and permanently zone them for those purposes. Toward that end, he identified four zones which should be kept uncut:

Zone 1: Mountain Peaks. These areas are critical to watershed protection and erosion control.

Zone 2: Roadside Strips. To protect the scenery along improved State, county and town highways.

Zone 3: Lake Frontage. To protect the scenic value of the shoreline.

Zone 4: Special Areas. This included the Lake George Watershed; scenic and recreational areas; museum areas (unique features) and miscellaneous areas.

These "restricted zones" would consist of about 30% of the Forest Preserve with the remaining 70% being utilized for timber production. While he suggests these uses should be permanently zoned, he is emphatic that the actual zones, or even their definition, should not be included in a constitutional amendment or established by law. In his view, the administrative agency should be given the latitude to adjust the management of the zones to meet changing conditions.<sup>16</sup>

#### B. The Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources

The Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources had been established in 1951 to study the conservation, preservation and use of the State's natural resources. Senator Milmoie accepted Commissioner Duryea's request to study the Forest

Preserve and appointed a Special Advisory Committee of outstanding citizens to assist his committee in its efforts in May, 1952. This Advisory Committee began work almost immediately. It identified 21 issues to be studied and received a series of reports on the history, conditions and current management of the Preserve and on wilderness preservation. It investigated the forest management practices of other states and the U.S. Forest Service.<sup>17</sup> By 1959, the JLCNR achievements were limited to extension of the Blue Line and the land bank and detached parcel amendments to Article XIV. Senator Milmo called progress on the Forest Preserve inadequate and cited a lack of permanent staff as the reason.<sup>18</sup>

Assemblyman Watson Pomeroy assumed the Chairmanship of the Committee in 1959. The next year's annual report contained a report on the "Adirondack Wilderness Study". Eleven areas assessing wilderness character within the Adirondack Park were identified and briefly described. Each exceeded 10,000 acres in size, had no permanent habitation, and was isolated from public or private roads. Areas which contained roads were to be eliminated from the Wilderness Areas or the roads closed to motorized equipment.<sup>19</sup>

In 1961 a twelfth Wilderness Area (Giant Mountain) was identified, and area descriptions and statistics for all 12 were completed. These 12 areas comprising about 36% of the Forest Preserve were: 1) McKenzie Mountain; 2) Sentinel Range; 3) High Peaks; 4) Giant Mountain; 5) Mt. Dix; 6) Pharaoh Lake; 7) Siamese Ponds; 8) Silver Lake; 9) West Canada Lake; 10) Big Otter Lake (eventually called Ha-De-Ron-Dah); 11) Pigeon Lake; and 12) Five Ponds. The following tables from the 1961 Annual Report of the Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources briefly describes these areas.<sup>20</sup>

TABLE 1

Area No.	Roads or Trails Used by Vehicles Within Area Boundaries	Miles Motor Vehicle Roads or Trails	No. of Roads Starting From Private Lands	No. of Roads Starting From Behind Locked Gates on Private Land
1	3	3.0	3	2
2	1	0.7	1	-
3	7	22.0	4	-
4	Not all checked at this time			
5	5	5.5	4	-
6	11	14.5	5	2
7	9	28.0	3	-
8	8	9.0	8	-
9	5	15.3	3	-
10	3	14.2	2	1
11	None	-	-	-
12	1	3.0	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>115.2</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>10</b>

Source: 1961 Annual Report of the Joint Legislative Commission on Natural Resources

TABLE 2

Area No.	Area (Acres)	Private Land Included (Acres)	Length of Boundary (Miles)	Boundary Along Hgwy (Miles)	
1	McKenzie Mt.	34,000	134	56	10.9
2	Sentinel Mt.	19,700	-	31	10.9
3	High Peak	181,180	480	202	17.9
4	Giant Mt.	21,000	-	32	7.5
5	Dix Mountain	43,300	-	52	8.2
6	Pharaoh Lake	47,000	160	62	9.0
7	Siamese Ponds	104,400	320	106	6.0
8	Silver Lake	110,300	1,094	126	13.6
9	West Canada Lake	109,700	80	135	19.7
10	Big Otter Lake	28,100	-	43	0.2
11	Pigeon Lake	47,750	-	67	5.0
12	Five Ponds	76,000	320	85	0.7
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>822,430</b>	<b>2,588</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>108.7</b>

Source: 1961 Report of the Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources.

Next, the Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources proposed a study bill which would allow the Conservation Department to designate wilderness areas (12 in the Adirondacks and 4 in the Catskills) in the Forest Preserve, and strictly control motorized equipment therein.<sup>16</sup> The Legislative findings of the bill set forth the position that:

- a) Outdoor recreation was the primary use of the Preserve and that increasing recreational demand was intensifying use of the Preserves (Adirondack and Catskills).
- b) The Preserves were the only areas of the State that could provide Wilderness recreation and accommodate Wilderness values.
- c) The Wilderness areas identified by the Committee qualified as Wilderness in terms of size, remoteness and lack of habitation.

- d) Each year more people were using motorized equipment to penetrate remote areas of the Preserve and there are indicators that "the unique and priceless<sub>21</sub> wild character of these lands is being ruined".

In the Summer and Fall of 1961, the Committee held four public hearings on the Wilderness Bill. Major concerns with the bill were:

- that the existing constitutional protection of the Forest Preserve is sufficient and that authority to carry out the purposes of the bill already existed in law.
- the vehicle ban would deny the right of the aged and less able access to remote areas and would limit access to a few rugged individuals.
- wilderness areas should be designated by the Legislature and not left to the Conservation Department.
- watershed protection, not recreation, was the still primary purpose of the Preserve.
- any zoning plan for the Preserve should include the entire Preserve, not just part of it.
- the protection afforded the wilderness areas would lessen the protection offered the remainder.
- deer and wildlife management could not be carried out in these areas.<sup>22</sup>

In December 1961 Attorney General Lefkowitz, in response to an inquiry from the Conservation Department, issued an opinion that concluded that the Conservation Department had the authority under existing law to make reasonable rules and regulations to protect the Forest Preserve, and that this authority included regulating the use of motorized equipment. Since the Wilderness Bill had been prepared in response to the Department's position that it did not have the authority to control motorized equipment, the bill was no longer needed and, therefore, no further action was taken on it.<sup>23</sup>

Chairman Pomeroy then proposed that the Committee turn its attention to campsite development (how many and where) and studying the remainder of the Forest Preserve, and classify it according to characteristics of the areas in terms of the most appropriate forms of recreation. He recognized that some of the areas, while not large enough to meet Wilderness standards, shared the same characteristics and wild character and deserved special attention. At the same time, there were areas where access could be improved for hunting and fishing.

In 1962 there was an attempt to zone the Preserve legislatively. Assemblyman Bartlett and Senator Warren Anderson introduced a bill supported by the Conservation Department and the State Council of Parks which would have allowed road building and game management on 60% of the Preserve; 30% would remain undisturbed except for motorized access allowed by the Legislature and 10% would be devoted to intensive recreation including enclosed cabins. The bill, widely opposed, was returned to the Committee, and no further action was taken on it.<sup>24</sup>

One of the constant criticisms of the Preserve and the Committee's proposed Wilderness areas was that the land was locked up and not accessible to the people of the State. This was one of the priority issues identified by the Special Advisory Committee in 1952, and the study of accessibility to the Forest Preserve was concluded with publication of the following information in the 1963 Annual Report describing accessibility of different categories of Forest Preserve land.

TABLE 3

WILDERNESS LANDS; Distance from Public Roads or Public Waterways

ADIRONDACKS

<u>Miles</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent</u>
0-1 mile	201,134	24
1-2 miles	214,660	26
2-3 miles	155,046	19
3-4 miles	110,813	14
4-5 miles	68,171	8
5 or over	72,020	9
<hr/>		
TOTAL	821,844	100%

Source: 1963 Annual Report of the Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources

TABLE 4

NON-WILDERNESS AREAS; Distance from Public Roads or Public Waterways

<u>Miles</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent</u>
0-1 mile	566,000	48
1-2 miles	341,000	29
2-3 miles	155,000	13
3-4 miles	83,000	7
4-5 miles	22,000	2
5 or over	7,000	1
<hr/>		
TOTAL	1,174,000	100%

Source: 1963 Annual Report of the Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources

TABLE 5

ALL FOREST PRESERVE LANDS; Distance from Public Roads  
or Public Waterways

<u>Miles</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent</u>
0-1 mile	767,134	38
1-2 miles	555,660	28
2-3 miles	310,046	16
3-4 miles	193,813	10
4-5 miles	90,171	4
5 or over	79,020	4
<hr/>		
TOTAL	1,995,844	100%

Source: 1962 Annual Report of the Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources

Thus, it can be seen that 38% of the Adirondack Forest Preserve was within one mile of a public road and waterway; that 82% was within 3 miles; and, only 18% was three or more miles distant as calculated in 1961.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, in 1963 the Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources set forth its recommendations for a management policy for the Forest Preserve. In response to the notion that Article XIV was a straight jacket that must be drastically modified if the Forest Preserve was to fulfill its recreational potential, the report states:

"In considering such proposals, two factors must be considered: first, that the Forest Preserve is but one part of New York's publicly-owned outdoor recreational system, and, second, that only adherence to the 'forever wild' principle has given the Forest Preserve its present distinctive value as part of that system."<sup>26</sup>

The Committee recommended the following management policies:

1. That the principal uses of the Forest Preserve, each of utmost importance, be regarded as watershed protection and public outdoor recreation of a type that is consistent with preservation of natural conditions.
2. That the preservation of its natural conditions under the constitutional protection of Article XIV be continued as fundamental policy.
3. That the further construction of foot trails, lean-tos and public campsites be encouraged as need develops, but that such facilities as campsites and picnic areas be located outside of any defined Wilderness areas such as those recommended in the 1961 Report of the Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources.
4. That the Conservation Department take such action as may be necessary to regulate or, if necessary, prohibit the use of motorized equipment where the wilderness character of the Forest Preserve is threatened thereby.
5. That continuing studies of wildlife habitat improvement be conducted by the Conservation Department and that appropriate action, consistent with the Constitution, be encouraged<sup>27</sup> to preserve and enhance our wildlife resources.

In 1964, the Conservation Department renewed its proposal to zone the Forest Preserve. In an article in the April-May issue of the Conservationist, the former editor of the magazine, P.W. Fosburgh, put forth the Department's familiar position:

- Constitutional protection of the Forest Preserve should continue.
- True Wilderness Areas (those identified by the Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources) be given greater protection.
- Recreation should be recognized as the principal use of the Forest Preserve, and that the legal status of recreational facilities consistent with the character of the Preserve be clearly established.
- Provision should be made on specific non-wilderness areas to allow cutting timber (and its sale) for game and fish management.<sup>28</sup>

In 1966, the Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources split on the zoning issue, with its Chairman, Assemblyman Wolf from Plattsburgh, and half of the members favoring a plan that would designate 30% of Preserve Wilderness and allow intensive recreation including "restaurants at the ends of Wilderness trails" and timber harvesting and game management in the remainder. Former Chairman Pomeroy and half the members supported the 1963 position of the Committee and advised further study before taking any action.<sup>29</sup>

Article XIV remained again under attack during the 1967 Constitutional Convention but went unchanged due principally to the unpopularity of proposed amendments dealing with education.<sup>30</sup>

After 15 years of study and debate, there was still no clear consensus on how the Forest Preserve should be managed. Those who viewed the Forest Preserve in utilitarian terms, including the Conservation Department, still believed there was room in the Preserve for timber management, and game management, and that more extensive recreational facilities were urgently needed to keep pace with demand and to accommodate a wider range of people. On the other side were those who viewed the Forest Preserve as a unique and valuable

resource, and who believed that Article XIV was intended to protect the natural forest system; and watershed protection was an expression of that philosophy. This constituency successfully thwarted all attempts to weaken Article XIV, and it was clear that any management strategy for the Preserve would have to satisfactorily address their concerns.

### C. The National Wilderness Debate

New York's debate on the management of Forest Preserve coincided with momentous national environmental issues and the creation of a National Wilderness Preservation System. There are many similarities in events and issues, and the publicity of national debate certainly influenced New York's course of action. To a certain extent New York also contributed to the creation of the National Wilderness Preservation System. Two of the leading proponents of such a system, Robert Marshall and Howard Zahniser were intimately familiar with the Adirondacks. Marshall had called for Congressional protection of Wilderness areas in the 1930's and in 1939 as Chief of the Division of Recreation and Land in the U.S. Forest Service formulated the U-Regulations, an administrative designation of wilderness, wild areas and roadless areas.

The move toward legislative designation of federal lands as wilderness began in earnest in 1949 with the fight to stop the Echo Park Dam on the Green River within the Dinosaur National Monument. The dam was part of the Bureau of Land Management's Colorado River Storage project. The project had been in the planning stages for years and had generated substantial support. Preservationists led by Howard Zahniser, Executive Secretary of the Wilderness Society, brought the fight to the public and Congress with a substantial media effort. The controversy continued until 1956 when Echo Park Dam was defeated. Lost, however, was Glen Canyon, a place of equal value but not part of a National Park or Monument.<sup>31</sup>

Also in 1949, and again through the efforts of Zahniser, the reference service of the Library of Congress issued a report which pointed out the lack of a consistent program for wilderness protection. It also presented survey findings indicating public support for wilderness areas as secure as National Parks.<sup>32</sup>

In the 1950's the National Park Service with its Mission 66 and the Forest Service with Operation Outdoors embarked on large scale recreational development programs. Preservationists grew concerned about the commitment of both agencies to wilderness protection and began to question the adequacy of the Forest Service regulations to protect Wilderness. In 1954 when the Forest Service announced it would open one-fifth of Three Sisters Primitive Area to logging, the preservationists began a fight to stop the action that would last for years (the area was finally designated Wilderness in 1977).<sup>33</sup>

In 1956 Zahniser proposed that a National Wilderness Preservation System be established to "secure for the American people of present and future generations, the benefits of an enduring reservoir of wilderness".<sup>34</sup> The system would provide for uniform administration of wilderness areas designated by executive order unless vetoed by Congress. There was to be a National Wilderness Advisory Council of federal officials and conservationists to monitor reports and recommendations prepared by the federal agencies and make recommendations to Congress and the President. This same year Senator Hubert Humphry introduced a bill to establish the National Wilderness Preservation System as proposed by Zahniser. The bill also identified some 160 areas to be designated Wilderness including the Forest Service L-20 Primitive Area which were to be designated temporarily while they were studied for permanent inclusion in the system. In all 65 million acres would be studied, with a potential of 35-45 million acres being designated. This began a 9 year debate that included 65 different bills and 18 legislative hearings.<sup>35</sup>

The opponents argued that the current protection was adequate; that the proposal would thwart the development of needed timber, water and mineral resources; that it would lock up large areas of land for the use of a select few; that road building did not impair the wilderness character; and that wilderness designation was contrary to the long standing Forest Service policy of multiple use-sustained yield management.

Proponents focused the debate on national values rather than local and regional economic issues and on the theoretical (scientific, experimental and historic) values of wilderness, as expressed by Thoreau, Muir, Leopold, Marsh and Marshall.<sup>24</sup> They argued that multiple-use could not logically mean

multiple use of every acre and the concept only made sense when applied on a system wide basis. Further the current proposal only included lands already administratively designated and managed as wilderness. They merely pointed to past experience to show why the administrative protection was inadequate.

To gain passage of the bill preservationists had to make numerous compromises including the way in which wilderness areas would be designated. The federal agencies fearing a loss of authority successfully blocked the creation of the National Wilderness Preservation Council. Presidential designation of areas (unless vetoed by Congress), was defeated primarily through the efforts of Representative Wayne Aspinall of Colorado who saw it as eroding the power of Congress in favor of the Executive Branch. Aspinall and other conservative law makers favored affirmative congressional action on each area, including those proposed to be included on a temporary basis for study.<sup>36</sup> In its final version the bill only included 54 areas, totaling approximately 9.1 million acres, not the 35-45 million acres originally proposed.<sup>37</sup>

The most significant compromises in management policies involved the continuation of nonconforming uses on National Forest lands designated by the 1964 Act though areas subsequently designated were not affected. Subject to reasonable restrictions to protect wilderness values, within the 54 areas designated in 1964, established livestock grazing, and certain commercial activities (i.e., guiding and outfitting) could continue. Prospecting could continue until December 1, 1983, and mining could continue on claims filed prior to that date subject to reasonable regulation to protect the wilderness character. Water resource development was to be permitted if the President deemed it better served the country's interest and he approved the project.<sup>38</sup>

Given the extent of the compromises, the success of the 1964 federal Wilderness Act might be considered questionable. There were, however, real gains. Legislative protection would be more permanent than administrative designation. A great deal of public awareness and grass root support for wilderness preservation was generated by the process. The establishment of the National Wilderness Preservation System would make defense of any given area easier. While mining and other nonconforming uses were allowed, restrictions could now be placed on them to protect wilderness values.

The most significant accomplishment was change in emphasis concerning the purpose of wilderness. Previously, administrative protection under the L-20 and U-Regulations of the Forest Service and the management policy of the National Park Service did not provide clear definition of wilderness. The focus was on controlling development and road building. With the Wilderness Act of 1964, policy shifted to the preservation of areas where natural systems would be allowed to function with as little interference as possible. The Wilderness Act defined wilderness (in part) as "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man", which retains "its primeval character" and is "managed so as to preserve its natural condition".<sup>39</sup>

The Act's policy statement states, in part:

"...these areas shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such a manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness....and the preservation of their wilderness character"<sup>40</sup>

So to a great extent Zahniser and his wilderness advocates accomplished what they set out to do.

#### D. A Management Plan for the Adirondack Forest Preserve

In 1968 Governor Nelson Rockefeller created the Temporary Study Commission on the Future of the Adirondacks (TSC) to "review in depth the problems of the area and to develop alternatives for the future of the Adirondacks to best serve the people of our State."<sup>41</sup> In appointing this Commission the Governor was responding to the controversy raised by his brother Lawrence's proposal that a 1,720,000 acre (1,120,000 acres of Forest Preserve and 600,000 acres of Private Land) National park be carved out of the central Adirondacks.<sup>42</sup> Despite its universal unpopularity the proposal did focus attention on the Adirondack Park region, the inter-relationship of public and private land, and the demands a rapidly changing society were placing on Park resources.

The Commission, unlike the Joint Commission on Natural Resources, had a full time staff, and completed 53 studies, published 7 technical reports and made 181 recommendations to the Governor (Appendix A sets forth those related to the management of State land). Its principal conclusion was that

a "massive state action program is necessary to make the Adirondack Park a viable and lasting entity"<sup>45</sup> and Park planning and land use controls should be the responsibility of a new independent bipartisan Adirondack Park Agency.

The Commission believed this new agency should have authority for planning for State land (in consultation with the Department of Environmental Conservation (formally the Conservation Department)). The DEC would retain responsibility for day to day administration of State land within the Park. To accomplish this the agency was to develop a comprehensive plan for the Forest Preserve and individual management plans for each tract. The stated reasons for this recommendation were threefold. First, the Agency would add stability and avoid policy changes from one state administration to another. Second, a comprehensive approach was needed to avoid the ad hoc management decisions of the past which some viewed as eroding the Preserve. Finally, the newly created Department of Environmental Conservation with its statewide responsibilities would no longer be able to focus the necessary attention on Forest Preserve matters.

The Commission further recommended that to insure that Park administration was consistent with the Park priorities and the guidelines of the master plan the Department should confer with the Park Agency on that portion of its budget concerning the Park. The motivation for such a recommendation appears to go beyond the consolidation of policy making and was intended to rein in the Department's development of the preserve (campgrounds, truck trails, ranger cabins, etc.).

Just as this apparent distrust of the Conservation Department (now DEC) had grown out of the debate in the 1950's and early 1960's, the basic principals of the public land policy recommended by the Commission also were the result of that debate. The paper in Technical Report 1, Volume B, titled "Care, Custody and Control Guidelines for the Adirondack Park Forest Preserve and a Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System", addressed the issues along the line recommended by the Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources in 1963. It put forth the following positions:

- That recreation was the primary use of Adirondack Forest Preserve and that recreation commonly associated with wild forest lands could be accommodated to the extent that it does not detract from the land. The Forest

Preserve is only one component of the State's recreation system and that it cannot satisfy all recreational needs of the State. The Adirondacks are uniquely qualified to meet the demand for outdoor recreation requiring large areas of land with a wild forest character.

- Management must be based on resource scarcity, existing and future demand and the character of the resource itself. Any management system must identify subclasses of land based on its resources and the need to protect them.
- While Article XIV was too broad to provide a realistic management direction for the Forest Preserve, any management plan must fall within its constraints and in no event should it allow any part of the Preserve to be managed in a manner less stringent than that allowed by the Constitution.<sup>44</sup>

Based on these principles the Commission proposed a classification system and management guidelines for the entire Adirondack Forest Preserve. There were four basic categories; Wilderness, Primitive, Wild Forest and Campsites, Boat Launch Sites and Ski Areas. It further proposed that there could be subcategories superimposed on these areas including special interest areas, nature preserves and river areas designated Wild, Scenic and Recreational.<sup>45</sup>

The plan called for 15 Wilderness Areas (totaling 969,200 acres), the 12 proposed by the Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources plus Pepperbox, Blue Ridge and St. Regis. These areas, large tracts in a relatively natural state, were to be managed in accordance with "modern wilderness philosophies". This would require protection measures more stringent than those that had generally been associated with Article XIV. Management would have to protect those areas from heavy recreational demand. The definition of wilderness was essential that used in the 1964 Federal Wilderness Act. The primary objective was to perpetuate natural plant and animal communities where human influence was not apparent. The use of motorized equipment would not be allowed except for emergencies threatening human life or the intrusive values of the area. No new roads were to be built, and the existing roads were to be closed and revegetated.<sup>46</sup>

Primitive areas (10 totaling 103,700 acres) were to be those areas which did not meet wilderness standards due to size or

the existence of non-conforming uses (permanent in nature or whose removal could not be foreseen) but otherwise were to be managed as wilderness. The plan contemplated most would eventually be upgraded to wilderness.

Wild Forest Areas were those areas (1,165,000 acres) that are ecologically more tolerant than those classified Wilderness and Primitive and would be managed essentially as they had been in the past. Uses allowed in the past could continue so long as they remained consistent with Wild Forest environment and providing future courts did not find them inconsistent with Article XIV. The one exception was the recommendation to remove the tent platforms within five years (1 year in Wilderness Areas). The Commission viewed the permits for these structures as a form of private vested interest that was inconsistent with the purpose of the Preserve. While the Department had not issued a new permit<sup>47</sup> since 1965 many such sites existed throughout the Preserve.

The TSC recommended motor vehicles use be limited to existing public roads, open jeep trails and snowmobile trails. Their administrative use would be allowed to continue. This limitation recognized established patterns of use but prevented any further intrusions into<sup>48</sup> the remote areas not protected by wilderness designation. It also recommended that motor boat and aircraft use be restricted to protect the Park's wild character and "traditional atmosphere". Waterbodies owned by the State that were less than 40 acres in size were proposed to be closed to motor boat use and aircraft use less than 100 feet above the ground was proposed to be restricted to areas within 100 yards<sup>49</sup> of roads and bodies of water open to motor vehicle use.

The last major category included campgrounds, boat launch sites and ski areas. Ski areas were explicitly authorized by the amendment to Article XIV. Campsites and boat launch sites like ski areas were developed recreational facilities designed to accommodate a relatively large number of people and had the potential to significantly effect the Park's character and its resources. The TSC also recommended standards and guidelines for establishing new campsites to insure they would be consistent with a wild forest environment.

With respect to Commissioner Duryea's question 2 regarding wildlife in the Preserve (1952 Conservationist) the TSC found the quantity and diversity of wildlife within the Adirondack

Forest Preserve was a significant factor in distinguishing the Adirondack Park from other regions of the State. Further non-consumptive use were as important as consumptive uses of wildlife. It recommended: "wildlife in the Adirondack Park should be managed to foster the wild Adirondack environment and all the flora and fauna historically associated therewith".<sup>50</sup> It went on to recommend restricting the management of non-native species, favoring propagation of indigenous species and the reintroduction of extirpated species. Except for designated wilderness areas, fish and wildlife management would continue much as it always had within the constraints of Article XIV

The TSC presented its recommendations to Governor Rockefeller on December 15, 1970 and on May 10, 1971 he sent a bill to the Legislature that would create the Adirondack Park Agency. While its passage at times was in serious doubt, the bill was passed on June 7 and the Agency rushed to complete its first assignment, the development, in consultation with the Department of Environmental Conservation, of a master plan for the management of State land.<sup>51</sup> The master plan was required to classify State lands according to their characteristics and their capacity to withstand use and to provide guidelines and criteria for the management of lands within each classification.

E. Master Plan for the Management of State Lands in the Adirondack Park (Adirondack Park Agency Act, Section 816)

Contrary to the TSC recommendations, the Adirondack Park Agency Act did not authorize the Agency to develop individual unit management plans. It reserved that function to the Department of Environmental Conservation in consultation with the APA. Nor did it require Agency review of that part of the Department's budget related to the Park of Agency review of projects on State land. The result is a two tiered system of management with the Agency responsible for overall policy development including land classification and management guidelines and the Department responsible for development of individual unit plans, the land acquisition program and the day to day management of State land.

To a great extent the master plan developed by the Adirondack Park Agency was the plan recommended by the TSC and outlined by the Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources ten years earlier. The plan was submitted to Governor

Rockefeller on June 1 and approved by him seven weeks later on July 20, 1972. It contained the categories identified in the TSC plan; Wilderness, Primitive, Intensive Use (campgrounds, boat launch sites, and ski areas), and Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers. To this the Agency added Travel Corridors and a Canoe Area (previously the St. Regis Wilderness Area). To the 15 Wilderness Areas identified by the TSC they added Hoffman Notch (35,200 acres) which had been designated Primitive by the TSC. It qualified for Wilderness when the 2,200 acre Sand Pond Mt. Tract (gifted to the State by Finch Pruyn Co. as nonforest preserve) was dropped from the area. It also added two significant Primitive Areas, Hurricane Mountain (13,449 acres) and Jay Mountain (7,100 acres). The increase in designated Wilderness and additional Primitive areas was of concern to many who viewed the Forest Preserve in more utilitarian terms. To allay these concerns a commitment was made to maintain the approximately 50/50 split between Wilderness and Wild Forest that resulted from the recommended classifications. This commitment has never been formalized yet it remains a very real constraint on ultimate configuration of the Forest Preserve in the Adirondacks.

TABLE 6

WILDERNESS AREA ACREAGE COMPARISONS

	JLCNR	TSC	1972 MASTER PLAN
1. Blue Ridge	-	41,300	43,160
2. Dix Mountain	43,300	46,900	46,900
3. Five Ponds	76,000	65,700	62,780
4. Giant Mountain	21,000	22,100	22,100
5. Ha-De-Ron-Dah (Big Otter)	28,100	26,600	26,600
6. High Peaks	181,180	215,700	219,570
7. Hoffman Notch	-	-	35,200
8. McKenzie Mountain	34,000	28,000	35,200
9. Pepperbox	-	14,600	14,600
10. Pharaoh Lake	47,000	42,900	43,340
11. Pigeon Lake	47,750	50,800	50,800
12. Sentinel Range	19,700	20,100	23,000
13. Siamese Ponds	104,400	107,900	107,740
14. Silver Lake	110,300	108,100	106,650
15. West Canada	109,400	160,400	160,320
16. St. Regis	-	18,100	18,100 (Canoe Area)
TOTAL	822,430	969,200	997,960

The master plan applies to all State land in the Park whether held in fee, long term lease or, in the case of the North Elba Park District lands at Mt. Van Hoevenberg, permanent easement. It includes land under the jurisdiction of Department of Transportation, Department of Correctional Services, and Olympic Regional Development Authority as well as those lands not considered Forest Preserve.

The master plan is neutral with respect to the status of land under Article XIV; its zoning does not resolve legal issues surrounding "inconsistent acquisitions" and forest preserve status is not a prerequisite to any master plan classification.

The non-Forest Preserve lands classified by the plan include lands in the Towns of Altona and Dannemora which were expressly excluded from Article XIV, and lands whose constitutional status has never been classified such as those gifted to the State for silvicultural or wildlife management, DEC and APA headquarters, certain historic sites and certain lands acquired under the 1960 and 1962 Park and Recreational Land Acquisition Bond Act. It should be noted that all but 390 acres of 19,473 acres of the "Bond Act Public Campsites" administratively designated nonforest preserve by DEC reported in the TSC report have since been redesignated Forest Preserve by the Department.

The master plan provides for the management and uses of the Forest Preserve lands generally considered consistent with Article XIV. It allows uses, structures and improvements and to the extent they have been established in the Forest Preserve the master plan makes no determination as to constitutional appropriateness. Nor can the master plan be construed as a determination concerning the constitutional appropriateness of the legislative or administrative classification of land as non-Forest Preserve.

The classifications are resource-based with the land's physical, biological and social or psychological characteristics and their ability to withstand use the fundamental determinant used to classify land. Physical characteristics include soils, slope, climate, elevation, winter quality and the sensitive systems these factors combine to form: subalpine and alpine areas, marshes and bogs. Biological considerations are often closely associated with physical conditions as in the instances of the sensitive alpine and

wetland zones. Areas of wildlife habitats for rare and endangered species or important habitat components of more common species (deer wintering areas) are important considerations.

The social or psychological considerations are associated with an area's remoteness and the ability to provide a sense of solitude and they in turn are the result of the area's size, terrain and forest cover. All of these elements must be present for an area to be considered for classification as Wilderness. Finally, the system takes into account established facilities. While some facilities are not permanent and may eventually be removed, others are legally permanent and require that the classification reflect their existence. Existing ski areas are obvious examples of this situation.

The single overriding principle embodied in the classification system is permanent protection and preservation of New York's Adirondack natural resources. Human use and enjoyment of the State land is permitted and to be encouraged "so long as the resources in their physical and biological context and their social or psychological aspects are not degraded." This articulates the management theme that evolved out of the years of debate and study. The classification system takes advantage of the variety of conditions within the preserve to create a spectrum of environmental condition and recreational opportunities. The factors used in the system are somewhat complex and may require subjective values judgements but have results in stable system.

For the most part the 1972 plan established the State land classification pattern for the Park. The wilderness areas and major primitive areas were established as were the intensive use areas. In the intervening 17 years a number of primitive areas have been added to the adjoining wilderness areas and the Jay Mt. Primitive Area (7,000 acres) was upgraded to wilderness. All were contemplated by the 1972 plan. No new wilderness areas have been created.

The classification of new acquisitions has been a matter of (1) filling out the existing wilderness areas to better administration of boundaries which include, to the extent possible, complete ecological systems, and (2) consolidating the wild forest tracts. At times decisions must be made regarding whether or not a newly acquired tract is an integral part of a wilderness unit or should be added to the

adjoining wild forest land. In such instances the biological and physical factors are considered as is the tracts contribution to wilderness character (remoteness and solitude) and existing facilities.

Over the years the classification of newly acquired lands has added significantly to both wilderness and wild forest areas of the Park. The following two tables demonstrate this growth (Appendix 2 shows classification of new acquisition by town and county).

TABLE 7

	1972	1979	1985*	1986	1987***
MASTER PLAN					
WILDERNESS AREAS					
1. Blue Ridge	43,160	44,393	45,736	45,736	45,951
2. Dix Mountain	46,900	50,193	45,208	45,208	45,223
3. Five Ponds	62,780	92,635	94,758	101,158	101,171
4. Giant Mountain	22,100	22,104	22,768	22,916	22,916
5. Ha-De-Ron-Dah	26,600	27,050	26,528	26,528	26,528
6. High Peaks	219,570	216,435	192,685	192,685	192,785
7. Hoffman Notch	35,200	36,045	36,231	36,305	36,305
8. Jay Mountain	-	-	7,100	7,100	7,100
9. McKenzie Mountain	35,200	35,298	37,616	37,616	37,798
10. Pepperbox	14,600	14,600	14,625	14,625	14,625
11. Pharaoh Lake	43,340	46,039	45,883	45,884	45,884
12. Pigeon Lake	50,800	51,055	50,100	50,100	50,100
13. Sentinel Range	23,000	23,137	23,252	23,252	23,252
14. Siamese Ponds	107,740	108,503	112,524	112,524	113,674
15. Silver Lake	106,650	106,997	105,270	105,814	105,814
16. West Canada	160,320	160,183	156,695	156,695	169,695
TOTAL	997,960	1,034,935	1,026,979	1,024,199	1,038,874
PRIMITIVE	75,670	64,780	61,400	64,913	54,579
CANOE	18,100	18,100	18,231	18,463	18,606
WILD FOREST	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,220,000**	1,227,563***	1,231,409**
TOTAL STATE LAND	2,260,000	2,300,000	2,400,000	2,418,000	2,426,198

\* 1985 figures are from the Agency GIS, the source of the data for the other reports is not readily known.

\*\* This figure (and therefore the total State land figure) does not include water which is a separate data value within the GIS.

\*\*\* Classifications currently before the Governor for his approval.

Of the nine categories of the State Land Master Plan, (Historic and State Administrative categories were added in 1979) Wilderness, Wild Forest and Intensive Use remain the three main categories. Primitive and Canoe are essentially managed as wilderness with the emphasis in the Canoe Area being on the management of water quality and the fisheries resources. This allows administrative use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment and aircraft in the Canoe Area which otherwise is not allowed in Wilderness.

Intensive Use Areas are site specific intensive or developed recreational facilities such as ski areas, campsites and boat launch sites. The management guidelines in addition to guiding the management of these facilities establishes specific criteria for expanding or improving existing areas and locating new areas. The requirements for new areas include the need for a unit management plan and environmental assessment prior to requesting intensive use designation.

Wilderness and Wild Forest account for the vast majority of the State land classified in system. Currently Wilderness makes up 43% and Wild Forest 51% of the State land in the Park. It is differences, real and perceived, in the philosophy and management policy for each that is at the center of the continuing debate over the management of the preserve. To a certain extent its the same debate presented in the Conservationist of 1952. Wilderness is viewed as locking up the land and Wild Forest as accessible due to the limited use of motor vehicles allowed.

Wilderness areas are defined as:

A wilderness area, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man -- where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. A wilderness area is further defined to mean an area of state land or water having a primeval character, without significant improvements or permanent human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve, enhance and restore, where necessary, its natural conditions, and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature,

with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least ten thousand acres of land and water or is of sufficient size and character as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological or other features of scientific, education, scenic or historical value.<sup>52</sup>

The primary guideline for Wilderness management is:

"to achieve and perpetuate a natural plant and animal community where man's influence is not apparent"<sup>53</sup>

Wilderness, therefore, is a place where natural processes are allowed to operate freely and dictate the area's character. Ecological change is inevitable and constant. Management of wilderness areas must therefore allow the natural processes to determine the ecologic character of the wilderness. Human activities are to be controlled and the recreation uses are to be constrained within the natural ecosystem. The ecosystem is not to be altered or manipulated to benefit human uses. The principles of wilderness management also require that when management is necessary it should be the least intrusive on the environment and wilderness character and that management of recreational use should favor wilderness dependent recreation uses and experiences. The latter means that use such a by large groups of campers seeking a social get together are not appropriate in wilderness. It does not mean that hunting, fishing, and cross country skiing or boating are incompatible uses within wilderness. Such uses are appropriate in wilderness to the extent they do not detract from wilderness values. The individual pursuing such activities is seeking a recreation experience in a setting that is remote and that require a degree of self reliance.

The wilderness areas are not only a very important component of New York State's outdoor recreation system they are significant from a regional and national perspective in that 20% of the designated wilderness east of the Rockies and 85% of designated wilderness in the northeast is located in the Adirondack Park.

The management guidelines of the State Land Master Plan allow only a limited number of improvements within wilderness

areas. Guidelines also preclude all use of motorized equipment, motor vehicles and aircraft except for use by the Department personnel for a) sudden ongoing emergencies, b) aircraft and motorized equipment for major projects involving conforming improvements or the removal of nonconforming uses, and c) for major research projects essential to the preservation of wilderness values and resources.

All non-conforming uses were to have been removed from Wilderness areas by December 31, 1975. In 1979 the Master Plan was amended to require their removal "as rapidly as possible", and in 1986 the deadline was changed to December 31, 1987. While these deadlines have not been met, substantial progress has been made in removing non-conforming uses including the elimination of 34 miles of State truck trails, 73 miles of roads, 63 miles of snowmobile trails, fire towers, and observer cabins, and 38 miles of telephone line. The following non-conforming uses remain:

Pharaoh Lake Wilderness

Crane Pond Road (2.1 miles)\*  
Pharaoh Road (1.0 miles)  
Fire Tower  
Observers Cabin  
Horse Shelter  
Lean-to Cluster

Siamese Ponds Wilderness

Old Farm Clearing Road  
John Pond Road

Five Ponds Wilderness

Mt. Electra Fire Tower

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\* Crane Pond Road was added to Pharaoh Lake Wilderness Area in the January 1986 revision to the Master Plan (approved by Governor Cuomo on November 4, 1987) and was to have been closed by December 31, 1988.

High Peaks Wilderness  
South Meadow Road  
Lean-to Cluster  
Horse Barns

St. Regis Canoe Area

Long Pond Road

Access to the wilderness as opposed to motorized access to the interior of wilderness areas, is about the same as that reported by the Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources, with about 60% of wilderness within two miles of a road or waterbody open to motor vehicles.

The master plan specifically requires each unit management plan to define the physical, biological and social carrying capacity of the wilderness resources and to take administrative and regulatory action to limit recreational use to the capacity of the resource. Such measures may include limiting access to all or portions of a wilderness by permit or regulating means and the temporary closure of all or a portion of a wilderness to allow the area to rehabilitate.

While wild forest areas are not managed according to the strict management philosophies applied to wilderness such lands are still managed to protect the natural wild forest setting. The definition of wild forest is:

A wild forest area is an area where the resources permit a somewhat higher degree of human use than in wilderness, primitive or canoe areas, while retaining an essentially wild character. A wild forest area is further defined as an area that frequently lacks the sense of remoteness of wilderness, primitive or canoe areas and that permits a wide variety of outdoor recreation.<sup>54</sup>

While a wide variety of recreational activities are allowed the intensity and types of recreation must not impair the wild forest atmosphere. It is for this reason that public use of motor vehicles is not encouraged and that there is to be no material increase in the miles roads and trails in Wild Forest Areas open to such use from that existing in 1972. Further, roads and truck trails that are open to public use should only remain open so long as they are compatible with the wild forest character of the area. Roads in newly

acquired lands are to be kept open to the public so long as they are consistent with both of these principles.

The same basic rules apply to snowmobiles except that the master plan allows that the mileage of trails lost in the designation of Wilderness, Primitive or Canoe to be made up in Wild Forest.

It is for the same reasons, protection of the environment and the wild forest atmosphere, that boat launch sites are limited to large lakes over 1,000 acres in size and are classified Intensive Use. New and existing boat launch sites are to be evaluated in terms of the physical, biological, and social carrying capacity of the lake and surrounding lands. They must be designed and maintained in a manner consistent with the carrying capacity. In the many other small lakes and ponds located in areas designated Wild Forest water access is limited to "fishing and waterway access sites": which do not allow the launching of trailered boats. This is the only realistic way to control the size of craft and motors that are placed in these waters and to insure the use will be consistent with the carrying capacity of the lake or pond and the adjoining land.

The facilities allowed in wild forest are numerous and include recreational as well as administrative and management facilities including fire towers, ranger cabins, small groupings of primitive tent sites (below 3,500 feet in elevation), horse barns and boat docks. Facilities allowed in wilderness areas are of course also allowed in wild forest.

With respect to recreational use and overuse the master plan makes it clear that with the more tolerant resources of the wild forest areas the potential for recreational overuse is not as serious as in wilderness, it must still be avoided. The relatively greater amount of use allowed in wild forest should not be construed as allowing unlimited or unrestricted use. When use of particular portions of wild forest areas exceeds the resources ability to support that use the measures described for wilderness areas should also be employed in wild forest areas.

The implementation of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan is, except for the removal of nonconforming uses, totally dependent upon the completion of the individual unit management plans.

Other than to quote the legislative mandate, the 1972 master plan did discuss unit plans or the Agency's role in the unit management planning process. In the years immediately following the adopting of the master plan the Agency's and public attention was focused on the enactment and implementation of the Private Land Use and Development Plan, and the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System. Little attention was focused on the implementation of the State Land Master Plan and little progress. As attention began to swing back to the implementation of the master plan there was considerable concern over the lack of progress on unit management planning as well as concern over the removal of nonconforming use.

To resolve questions concerning the content of unit management plans and to clarify the unit planning process the 1979 amendments to the master plan included an entire section on unit management plan development. They also included a section on the interpretation and application of the master plan. The provisions of the later specified that unit management plans were to "reasonably apply the general guidelines and criteria" of the master plan to the actual condition on the ground. It stated the Park Agency was to be responsible for interpreting the master plan and determining whether or not a unit management plan complies with the guidelines and criteria of the master plan. The master plan was further amended in 1986 to make it absolutely clear that the unit management plan must apply the guidelines of the master plan and cannot amend the master plan.

In the section on unit management plan development the amendments specified what the plans were to contain including a variety of resource inventories, an inventory of existing public use and a projection of future use, assessments of the impact from such and an assessment of the areas carrying capacity. It specified the management issues to be addressed and called for a schedule for achieving stated management objectives.

The first unit management plans completed were the Terry Mountain State Forest and the Lake George Beach and Battlefield Park. They were completed in April 1981 and November 1981 respectively and were developed so that DEC could undertake projects within the two units. Similarly the unit management plan for the Black Mountain Section of the Lake George Wild Forest was completed in 1986 to allow the State Police to modify the existing fire tower on Black Mountain to

utilize it for communication purposes. Plans completed to date include:

Region 5:

1. Terry Mountain State Forest
2. Lake George Beach and Battlefield Park, 1981.
3. Black Mountain Section, Lake George Wild Forest, 1986.
4. Mt. Van Hoevenberg Recreation Area, 1986 (ORDA).
5. Siamese Ponds Wilderness Area, 1987.
6. Whiteface Mountain Ski Center, 1987 (ORDA).
7. Gore Mountain Ski Center, 1987 (ORDA).
8. Hammond Pond Wild Forest, 1988.

Region 6:

1. Pepperbox Wilderness Area, 1985.
2. Cranberry Lake Wild Forest, 1985.
3. Ha-De-Ron-Dah Wilderness Area, 1986.
4. Independence River Wild Forest, 1986.
5. Five Ponds Wilderness, 1987.
6. Buck Pond Primitive Corridor, 1987.
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