



‘BeWildNY’ Campaign Urges Governor: Protect Our Adirondack Legacy, Expand High Peaks Wilderness Area
Adirondack Council Urges Creation of Motor-Free Area to Rival National Parks Out West

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ALBANY, N.Y. – The Adirondack Council today announced it has launched a paid media campaign using “BeWildNY” in support of a larger effort to support the expansion of the Adirondack Park’s popular High Peaks Wilderness Area.

Recent and pending state land purchases have created an opportunity to protect pure waters and wildlife, while expanding access to the park’s most frequently visited public lands to isolated communities that need an economic boost.

“The result would be a spectacular, new wilderness area covering more than 280,000 acres or 437 square miles of Adirondack Park’s most mountainous and beautiful landscapes,” said Adirondack Council Executive Director William C. Janeway. “It would rival the Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado and would be roughly twice the size of Zion National Park in Utah.”

“Governor Andrew Cuomo has been a champion for the Adirondack Park’s pure waters, wilderness and communities, so we expect him to support and embrace wilderness,” said Janeway. “We will use the campaign to explain the plan to others and gather additional support.”

Janeway said the campaign begins this week with digital advertising on popular news outlets to give readers a sense of what is at stake as state government begins to set its priorities for the coming year. The roll-out is just the beginning, Janeway said.

“The Adirondack Council has set aside significant resources to carry out the BeWildNY Campaign, the www.BeWildNY.com web site, paid ads, and associated research, education and advocacy,” Janeway said. “We appreciate that a diversity of stakeholders and organizations are supporting this investment and this messaging.”

“Look for colorful ads featuring spectacular photos of Boreas Ponds and some of the other gems that the state could add to the High Peaks Wilderness in the months ahead,” said Janeway. “The governor has committed to purchasing the Boreas Ponds tract by April 1.”

The Council and others have urged the governor to add the majority of the Boreas tract to the High Peaks Wilderness, reserving space to the south to host a community-connector snowmobile

trail, outside of the new wilderness.

Janeway said the wilderness expansion would also include 35,000 acres of soon to be or newly purchased lands, including most of the Boreas tract, all of the MacIntyre East and most of the MacIntyre West parcels; the entire Casey Brook tract, between Elk Lake and Boreas Ponds; part of the existing Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest, and other lands and waters that have not yet been classified. All of the new lands touch the boundary of existing designated wilderness.

The expanded wilderness would then be connected to the nearby Dix Mountain Wilderness Area (45,000 acres), creating a single, seamless, motor-free area of more than 280,000 acres, he said.

Starting in Capital District and Adirondack Park

Janeway said the campaign would begin in the Capital District and Adirondack markets, including a few digital and social media placements to introduce the hashtag ‘#BeWildNY’ for tracking the digital portion of the campaign.

“These first few weeks will help gauge the initial reaction to the campaign, so we can adjust any elements to maximize reach,” he explained. “The print and video elements will come later.”

Earlier this week, the Adirondack Council and a host of conservation organizations sent Governor Cuomo a letter urging him to create the new wilderness area.

“You have an extraordinary opportunity to create a true national legacy, an Adirondack wilderness area here in New York whose scale and positive impacts will rival some of the most famous conservation landmarks in the world,” the letter stated.

Why Wilderness?

All Adirondack Forest Preserve is public land, protected from logging, lease, sale or development by article 14, Section 1 of the NYS Constitution, known as the “Forever Wild clause.” Less than half of the Adirondack Park is Forest Preserve, while the other half is private land.

Less than half of the Forest Preserve is classified as wilderness. A Wilderness Area classification provides an added layer of protection from noise, pollution, motorized damage and the introduction of invasive species. Wilderness areas are motor-free. Parking is available next to wilderness areas, but not in the interior. Exceptions are made in designated areas for people with disabled-access permits.

The Adirondack Council’s mission is to ensure the ecological integrity and wild character of the Adirondack Park. The Council envisions an Adirondack Park comprised of large, core Wilderness areas, surrounded by working forests and farms and vibrant local communities.

The Adirondack Council carries out its mission through research, education, advocacy and legal action. Council members live in all 50 United States.