

The Sun Community News

May 10, 2016

Gov. Cuomo signs off on Boreas Pond Tract acquisition

<http://www.suncommunitynews.com/articles/the-sun/gov-cuomo-signs-off-on-boreas-ponds-tract-acquisition/>

NORTH HUDSON — Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced on Tuesday the completion of the Boreas Ponds Tract acquisition to the state's land holdings.

With a shimmering Elk Lake framed by a ring of spruce trees as a backdrop, Cuomo formally announced the completion of the largest addition to the Adirondack Park in a century.

"The soul of the state of New York is singing because of what we did today," Cuomo said.

The purchase of the 20,758-acre Boreas Ponds Tract, which is primarily located in North Hudson, is the final in a series of land purchases the state has completed since 2012.

Working with the Nature Conservancy, 69,000 acres of land previously owned primarily by the former Finch Pruyn paper company have been conserved.

Funds for the \$14.5 million purchase came from the state's Environmental Protection Fund.

Frequently referred to as the "crown jewel" of the series of acquisitions, the Manhattan-sized tract contains a diverse spread of wildlife, from alpine-type summits to lowland forest.

The land also contains views of nearby High Peaks, including Marcy, Haystack, Gothics and Saddleback.

Cuomo called the "functionality" of the tract important, citing the connection between Casey Brook Tract and the High Peaks Wilderness Area.

The acquisition, said the governor, marks the rare chance when government policy results in actions that make a permanent difference.

"We didn't inherit our planet from our parents, we're borrowing it from our children," Cuomo said, citing an Indian proverb. "Today we know we are leaving our children a better North Country, a better park, than we inherited. That, my friends, is the greatest accomplishment."

Gov. Andrew Cuomo speaks with an aide at Elk Lake in North Hudson on Tuesday, May 10.

Removal of a number of structures on the tract is scheduled to begin this summer starting with a hunting lodge formerly used by company executives.

A number of hunting camps will be demolished once their leases expire in 2018, said Mike Carr, executive director of the Nature Conservancy.

"The Nature Conservancy is pleased to assist in the removal of existing structures," Carr said.

The Nature Conservancy will provide \$750,000 in economic development grant money to aid the process.

Cuomo said the state will continue to pay school and property taxes on the new addition.

"That's why you see the supervisors smiling today," Cuomo said.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo sits between Essex County Board of Supervisors Chairman William Ferebee (R-Keene) and Supervisor Ron Moore (R-North Hudson). Behind is Essex County Board of Supervisors Vice Chairman Randy Preston (I-Wilmington).

Cuomo called tourism the state's "most successful economic development tool."

In the past six years, he said, tourism-related jobs in the Adirondack Park have grown by 8 percent; spending has increased by 10 percent; and visitation, 15 percent.

As part of Tuesday's agreement, Cuomo authorized the beginning of the land classification process.

The governor said he understands the passion from those advocating for preservation and economic development.

"The passion is what makes the Park special," Cuomo said.

North Hudson Supervisor Ron Moore said he looked forward to the completion of a multi-use trail system that will connect five towns throughout the central Adirondacks.

"It is our hope that increased recreational tourism will provide the economic boost that our towns so desperately need and that it will not only sustain the businesses we have, but provide for new business opportunities and growth," said Moore in a statement. "To maximize that opportunity, we feel it is of the utmost importance that we allow for maximum reasonable access and permit a wide array of recreational uses."

The state has paid a total of \$47.3 million for acquisitions over the five years.

Accessible only by an unpaved road, Elk Lake is tucked about six miles deep into the wilderness. Black flies swarmed overhead as dignitaries gathered for the ceremony.

"June, June, June," the governor said, noting the notorious insect.

