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Albany

## Governor Cuomo Announces Completion of Largest Addition to Adirondack Forest Preserve in More Than a Century

20,758-acre purchase of the Boreas Ponds Tract caps acquisition of 69,000 acres of lands from The Nature Conservancy

Newly acquired land will enhance the region's tourism economy through expanded recreational opportunities

TNC to provide \$750,000 in grants to local municipalities to improve connections to conserved lands

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced the completion of the state's largest Adirondack land acquisition in more than 100 years, with the purchase of the 20,758-acre Boreas Ponds Tract. This is the final acquisition in a series of land purchases the state has completed under a 2012 agreement with The Nature Conservancy to conserve 69,000 acres of land previously owned primarily by the former Finch, Pruyn & Company paper company. The Tract is located primarily in the town of North Hudson in Essex County, south of the High Peaks Wilderness Area.

View a [photo tour](#) of the property.

See a [map of the Boreas Tract](#).

Today, Governor Cuomo also sent a [letter](#) to the Adirondack Park Agency requesting the agency begin the classification process for the Boreas Ponds Tract. Since 2010, through the Governor's efforts to promote recreation in the Adirondacks, tourism-related employment is up nearly eight percent, tourism spending is up 10 percent and visitation is up 15 percent in the Adirondack Park.

“The Adirondack Forest Preserve is a national treasure, and adding nearly 21,000 acres to the Preserve by completing the acquisition of the former Finch lands will benefit the region for generations to come,” said **Governor Cuomo**. “By acquiring this remarkable tract, we are helping to conserve the region's natural beauty while also creating new economic opportunities for communities in the park. This will provide even more unparalleled settings for outdoor tourism and recreation, and I encourage New Yorkers to visit the region and see what they've been missing.”

The state purchase the tract with \$14.5 million from the Environmental Protection Fund, providing the resources necessary to protect this treasured resource and its remote character,

while expanding outdoor recreation opportunities including hunting, hiking, paddling and wildlife observation. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation is in the process of developing interim plans to provide trails, parking lots and waterway access sites for public use in the summer. With this announcement, the public may access and recreate on the lands and waters by non-motorized means only.

**Acting DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos said:** “DEC is proud to finalize this amazing addition of one of the most iconic landscapes in New York to the Adirondack Forest Preserve. Through Governor Cuomo’s continued leadership, we look forward to working with all partners to carefully protect this vital habitat and ensure that all visitors can enjoy the breathtaking views and outstanding recreational opportunities.”

The Nature Conservancy purchased 161,000 acres in 2007 from Finch Paper Holdings LLC, the company that purchased all of Finch, Pruyn & Company’s assets. In 2010, the state purchased conservation easements on 89,000 acres of these former Finch lands. In 2012, Governor Cuomo announced the planned acquisition of the remaining 65,000 acres of former Finch lands in fee, along with 4,000 acres of other Nature Conservancy lands. Under the agreement with The Nature Conservancy, the property was sold to the State in a phased five-year contract. Using the EPF, the State paid a total of \$47.3 million for the property over five years, including the following purchases:

Chain Lakes Tract	\$12,383,319	Purchased in 2012
Indian River Tract	\$638,383	Purchased in 2013
OK Slip Falls Tract	\$1,925,237	Purchased in 2013
Macintyre Works Tract West	\$3,780,458	Purchased in 2014
Southern Tracts/Casey Brook	\$9,872,066	Purchased in 2014
Macintyre Works Tract East	\$4,241,383	Purchased in 2015

In addition, DEC and The Nature Conservancy provided 15 grants in 2014 to local businesses and communities to implement tourism and recreation projects related to former Finch lands. These grants – adding up to \$500,000 provided by The Nature Conservancy – are supporting equestrian staging areas, modernized lodging, campground improvements, marketing initiatives and professional outdoor guiding businesses.

The Nature Conservancy will now also provide an additional \$750,000 in grants to be administered by DEC to assist the local municipalities to strengthen the critical links between local economies and conserved lands. These grants will greatly enhance local tourism infrastructure within these municipalities and assist in further expanding economic development

initiatives in the Adirondack Park.

A large portion of the Boreas Ponds Tract is a lowland area between the North River Mountain Range to the west and the Boreas Mountain Range to the east. The summits of the Boreas Mountain Range are on the tract. Spectacular views of these mountain ranges and mountains in the High Peaks Wilderness – such as Marcy, Haystack, Gothics, and Saddleback – can be seen from a number of locations. This new purchase, when combined with the Casey Brook Tract acquired by the state in 2013, connects three major Forest Preserve areas.

Boreas Ponds, the namesake of the tract, form a 320-acre body of water, now one of the largest in the park completely surrounded by Forest Preserve. Other waters on the tract include LaBier Flow, Boreas River, LeClaire Brook, Casey Brook, Slide Brook and White Lily Brook, which provide habitat for cold water fish, including brook trout. A portion of this parcel serves as the divide between the Lake Champlain and Hudson River watershed.

While more than 80 percent of the former Finch lands are in Newcomb, North Hudson, Long Lake, Indian Lake and Minerva, the entire property lies within 27 towns across the Adirondacks. The state will pay full local property and school taxes on the land. These land acquisitions are one component of a larger conservation plan under which some 95,000 acres of former Finch lands are now protected by working forest conservation easements, and a collection of tracts in Newcomb, Long Lake and Indian Lake were set aside for community purposes.

Together, Forest Preserve and conservation easement lands throughout the Adirondacks provide an abundant variety of recreational access opportunities, including hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, paddling, mountain biking and cross-country skiing. These large forest areas, interspersed with towns and villages, distinguish the Adirondack Park from other parks around the world and are integral to the local economy and way of life.

The Boreas Ponds Tract and the adjoining Casey Brook Tract will be available for limited public access while the Adirondack Park Agency leads the process to classify the lands under the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan. This process involves, among other factors, careful consideration of the natural resources' capacity to withstand use. After the land is classified, DEC will develop a management plan to fully identify and develop the recreational infrastructure on these lands.

A handful of leaseholders will continue to have driving access to their camps on the Boreas Ponds Tract through September 30, 2018. TNC will also have administrative access to the property for several years to tend to camp removal, including the removal of Boreas Lodge, which is anticipated to take place this spring.

**Nature Conservancy Adirondack Chapter Executive Director, Michael Carr said:** “We applaud Governor Cuomo and DEC for this extraordinary accomplishment. Larger in size than Manhattan, the addition of the Boreas Ponds tract to the Forest Preserve is one for the history books. This property is of National Park quality. We are proud to partner with New York to protect such a priceless resource.”

**APA Chairwoman Leilani Ulrich said:** “Under Governor Andrew Cuomo’s leadership, New York State’s Forest Preserve and Adirondack Park has increased in unprecedented ways. The acquisition of the Boreas Ponds Tract will preserve wonderful natural resources and expand our exceptional outdoor recreational pursuits. The APA is so very thankful to Governor Cuomo and the Nature Conservancy for these extraordinary wild lands.”

**Senator Betty Little said:** “I’m pleased that central to the discussions about this acquisition has been the concerns of the five towns as well as other local Adirondack interests. It’s been a long and deliberate process to this point but certainly worthwhile given the positive result for the environment, for improved recreational opportunities for local residents and tourists and for the chance to spur some much-needed economic growth. No doubt, the \$750,000 in Nature Conservancy and DEC grants will do a lot of good to help our communities make connections to the conserved lands. I’m confident that very soon -- as well as generations from now -- many people will see that benefit. I thank Governor Cuomo and acting DEC Commissioner Seggos and his staff for listening and working with us. I also commend the town supervisors for their work to do well for their constituents.”

**Assemblyman Dan Stec said,** “Providing increased recreational opportunities for residents and visitors in the Adirondacks will have a positive economic benefit to our small communities within the Park.”

**Bill Farber, Chair of Hamilton County Board of Supervisors said,** "This acquisition, is the final piece, of a historic transaction. Through the leadership of TNC, DEC, and particularly Governor Cuomo, these additions to the Forest Preserve have been historic, not just for their environmental significance, but in the way communities have had a chance to partner in this process. Communities continue to benefit from the Governor's commitment to Tourism, and the commitment the State Agencies have made to working with the Towns and Counties. When there were questions about whether the Lodge could be sustained on site, or moved, TNC, DEC, and the impacted municipalities explored the options together. When all the options to sustain the Lodge, or salvage the Lodge, had been exhausted, TNC and DEC again stepped up to assure \$750,000 in funding would be available to develop Tourism infrastructure in the communities. This partnership is historic, and long overdue!"

**William (Bill) Ferebee, Chairman of the Essex County Board of Supervisors said,** “Essex County is proud to be home to one of the most magnificent pieces of public property in the Adirondack Park. We are very excited to welcome visitors to our communities and applaud Governor Cuomo for investing in making this a reality. The acquisition of this parcel and the support he is showing our Town officials to connect public lands to the communities in the region is unprecedented.”

**Town of North Hudson Supervisor Ron Moore said** “This is fantastic news. We’ve been waiting to hear this announcement for a long time and are excited that with this final purchase of the former Finch/TNC lands, that we will now be able to complete the multi-use trails that will connect the 5 Town communities of North Hudson, Minerva, Newcomb, Indian Lake and Long Lake. We stand by in full support of the Governor’s vision of opening these lands to public use, providing extraordinary new outdoor recreational opportunities, increasing the number of visitors

to the North Country and generating additional tourism revenue for towns. 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. 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. I would like to thank Governor Cuomo and The Nature Conservancy for making this new recreational opportunity possible.

**Town of Minerva Supervisor Stephen (Steve) McNally said,** “Our communities depend on public use of nearby Forest Preserve lands to generate economic opportunities for our residents and businesses. The Boreas Ponds acquisition announced today by Governor Cuomo promises to increase interest in our 5-Towns region and draw more people to visit the Adirondack Park.”

**Brian Wells, Supervisor of the Town of Indian Lake said,** “Town of Indian Lake Supervisor Brian Wells said, “Governor Cuomo has worked very hard to promote the Adirondack region as a premier tourist destination for people who enjoy recreating and appreciate the magnificence of our great outdoors. Today’s announcement is the beginning of another chapter in our efforts to generate increased public use of all that the Adirondacks has to offer.”

**Town of Long Lake Supervisor Clark Seaman said,** “Under Governor Cuomo’s leadership, the State is working to ensure that additions to the Adirondack Forest Preserve help communities to improve their economic base which is dependent on tourism and outdoor recreation. The Boreas Ponds acquisition will open up wonderful new outdoor recreational opportunities and provide visitors another great reason to come to the Adirondacks.”

**Town of Newcomb Supervisor Wester (Wes) Miga said,** “As a newly elected Town Supervisor within the 5- Town Upper Hudson River Recreational Hub, I am impressed with the energetic work of Governor Cuomo and his staff to acquire the Boreas Ponds tract and carry on the conversation about how to best link our town of Newcomb to the town of North Hudson. The community of Newcomb is already benefiting from visitation to the Essex Chain Complex and is prepared to expand our tourism services to accommodate visitors who are also attracted to the experiences they will have in Boreas Ponds.”

**Neil Woodworth, Executive Director of the Adirondack Mountain Club said:** "This is the most important opportunity to add forever wild lands to the Adirondack Forest Preserve in over 40 years. We greatly appreciate Governor Cuomo's leadership in ensuring that this beautiful property is protected permanently and available for use by all New Yorkers."