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**SCIENTISTS: ADIRONDACK HIGH PEAKS TRACT ECOLOGICALLY IMPORTANT  
ADVOCATES CALL FOR HIGHEST POSSIBLE LEVEL OF PROTECTION**

*Waters, Forests, Wildlife Habitat are Sensitive, Unusual & Remote  
As Wilderness Would be Safe from Noise, Pollution, Invasive Species*

NORTH HUDSON, N.Y. – The state’s newest piece of Adirondack Forest Preserve shelters rare plants, pure waters and sensitive wildlife species, while exhibiting high ecological integrity and wild character, according to two scientific studies released today.

Studies conducted by two of New York’s most respected research teams clearly illustrate why the 20,500-acre Boreas Ponds tract here should be shielded from automobiles, invasive species, and motorized or mechanized recreation, conservation advocates said.

They called on Gov. Andrew Cuomo and his Adirondack Park Agency to classify most of the new tract as wilderness, give it the highest level of protection possible, and adding it to the High Peaks Wilderness. The studies were completed by Adirondack Research LLC and by the Wildlife Conservation Society.

“Both studies confirm that Governor Cuomo was right to purchase the Boreas Ponds tract from the Adirondack Nature Conservancy,” said **Adirondack Council Executive Director William C. Janeway**. “This is a rare, fragile and globally unique treasure. It deserves the State’s highest level of protection. Only if it is protected as wilderness can we ensure that future generations will inherit this magnificent landscape in a condition as good as it is today. Only if it is protected as wilderness can we ensure that surrounding communities will reap the maximum benefit from new tourism.”

“These waters and forests have been off-limits to public use for more than a century,” said **Neil Woodworth, Executive Director of the Adirondack Mountain Club**. “They are unspoiled and should remain unspoiled, protected from autos, motorized or mechanized recreation and invasive species, while offering a variety of public recreational opportunities. How we classify and manage these lands and waters is critical to their future.”

“A wilderness classification would be very good for wildlife,” said **William C. Cooke, Director of Government Relations for Citizens Campaign for the Environment**. “These studies show that Boreas Ponds can support up to four breeding pairs of common loons. Loons are a species of special concern in New York. Loons fare best when they have the quiet and solitude that characterizes Adirondack wilderness areas.”

“Protecting Boreas Ponds helps ensure New York has a well-managed, resilient, and diverse forest ecosystem that provides critical habitat for birds during all seasons,” said **Erin**

**Crotty, Executive Director of Audubon New York.** “Preserving this for all future generations of birds and wildlife, especially those of conservation concern, is our responsibility.”

"The Boreas Ponds is a majestic place that meets the Wilderness definition," **said Adirondack Wild's David Gibson.** "It has scale, primeval character and natural processes predominate. The High Peaks just beyond beckon, but the many more visitors to North Hudson who stay at the periphery and who have no desire to paddle or hike will still value and support this as protected wilderness."

"We thank the Governor, the State of New York and The Nature Conservancy for having the vision to acquire and protect this and other Adirondack properties on behalf of current and future generations of New Yorkers," said **Marcia Bystryn, President of the New York League of Conservation Voters.** "Protecting these lands for all, as forever wild, ensures future generations will enjoy the water and mountains of the Adirondacks forever."

"Boreas Ponds contains excellent cold water habitat for heritage strains of native fish and is a known travel corridor for large mammals such as black bears and moose," said **Richard Schrader, New York Political and Legislative Director, the Natural Resources Defense Council.** "It deserves protection as wilderness."

"The science affirms what many New Yorkers would like to see: the addition of Boreas Ponds to the High Peaks Wilderness," said **Peter Iwanowicz, Executive Director of Environmental Advocates of New York.** "Doing so will ensure no new roads and traffic will be created that would interrupt this critically important state treasure."

### **Boreas is Part of a Plan to Expand High Peaks Wilderness**

All Adirondack Forest Preserve is protect by the “forever wild” clause of the NYS Constitution (Article 14, Section1), which bans logging, development, sale or lease of public forests inside the Adirondack Park. About half of the six-million-acre park is Forest Preserve. Less than 20 percent of the park is further protected by being classified as wilderness, where motorized and mechanized recreation is not allowed. Exceptions are made for powered wheelchairs and other conveyances designed to aid people with disabilities.

Because the Boreas Ponds tract fits like a missing jigsaw puzzle piece into the existing 204,000-acre High Peaks Wilderness Area, eight groups including the Adirondack Council, Adirondack Mountain Club, Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve, Audubon New York, Citizens Campaign for the Environment, Environmental Advocates of New York, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and the New York League of Conservation Voters have urged state officials to annex Boreas Ponds into the HPWA. They also called on the state to classify several nearby parcels as wilderness and to add them to the HPWA. This would connect the HPWA with the Dix Mountain Wilderness, creating more than 280,000 acres of contiguous wilderness.

The expanded High Peaks Wilderness Area would be comparable in size to the Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado and would be twice the size of Zion National Park in Utah. For more information visit [www.BeWildNY.org](http://www.BeWildNY.org)

### **Scientists Find Many Features Worthy of Protection**

The Adirondack Research study was carried out by **Dr. Ezra Schwartzberg.** The 27-page illustrated report is entitled ***Boreas Ponds: Scientific assessment of physical, biological and intangible characteristics.*** It examines the various features of the land that the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan requires state officials to examine when determining the classification and management plan for the property. Click [HERE](#) to read the report summary.

“My evaluation showed that the tract exhibits high levels of ecological integrity and wild character, while its wetlands, steep slopes and erodible soils make it a poor choice for siting roads,” said Schwartzberg in his report. “I hope this information will be useful to the park agency as it deliberates on the fate of this important tract.”

Adirondack Research has also conducted research for the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation (DEC), the University of Wisconsin and Penn State University.

The Wildlife Conservation Society 60-page study entitled *[Ecological Composition and Condition of the Boreas Tract](#)*, examines the ecological characteristics of the property and shows that adding the tract to the High Peaks Wilderness Area would make the wilderness more biologically rich, diverse, resilient and sustainable. It would enhance connections to other wild land areas so wildlife and plants can expand their ranges, migrate and adjust to a changing climate. Click [HERE](#) to read the report summary.

“The Boreas tract contains a number of significant habitats,” the report states. “The tract very likely provides habitat for a number of representative and rare species. The Boreas tract is distinctive from existing state land areas -- supporting a richer flora and fauna than the natural communities typical of the acid, nutrient-poor shallow soil environments.”

In addition, “Boreas has larger patches of Northern Hardwood and Conifer, Northern Peatland, and Northern Swamp, patches of which are larger, on average, on the Boreas tract than those on existing state land units,” the study notes. “If added to the High Peaks (Wilderness) management unit, the Boreas tract would enhance overall resilience, integrity, and local and regional connectedness of that unit ... all of which are above average on the Boreas tract.”

The Wildlife Conservation Society’s research has also been supported by U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, National Science Foundation, The U.S. Army, Open Space Institute, Adirondack Park Agency, DEC, Cornell University and the Olympic Regional Development Authority, among others. (For more information on the WCS Study, please contact Scott Smith at [ssmith@wcs.org](mailto:ssmith@wcs.org), 347-255-0711.)

### **Next Steps Involve Public**

The Park Agency is expected to take the lead developing classification scenarios for the Boreas Ponds tract, accepting statewide comments on those proposals, and making a final recommendation to the Governor. The State Land Master Plan sets state policy for this decision-making and prioritizes natural resource protection.

The “#BeWildNY” alliance is composed of individuals and organizations who love nature and are willing to stand up for the protection of clean water, wildlife and wilderness. We thank the Adirondack Nature Conservancy for buying and holding these lands and waters. We thank the State of New York for adding these lands to the Adirondack Forest Preserve. We are proud of New York’s century-long heritage of “forever wild” public land protection in the Adirondack Park. We support wild lands that are open to all people. We also recognize that motor-vehicle access into and across wild places can bring noise, pollution and destructive invasive species.

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