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Upper Hudson and Opalescent rivers protected in Adirondack Park

By Brian Mann

Another chunk of the former Finch Pruyn timber lands has been added to the Adirondack Park's forest preserve.

6,200 acres of land along the upper Hudson and Opalescent rivers will now be protected. The \$4.2 million deal also offers new access to the High Peaks.

This property is known as the MacIntyre East parcel and it's the latest installment of the massive Finch Pruyn conservation effort – affecting, in total, more than 160 thousand acres – that's been in the works since 2007.

Mike Carr, who heads the Adirondack Nature Conservancy, brokered the project. He says this parcel is special. "The water resources on this tract, five miles of the upper Hudson, seven miles of the Opalescent. Just astonishing to think that you can do conservation on this scale in New York state with 18 or 19 million people."

Carr says the purchase also opens new access to the High Peaks Wilderness area.

Part of a deal nearly a decade in the making

In a statement, Governor Andrew Cuomo called this purchase a "milestone" for the Park. It was Cuomo who in August 2012 committed the state to acquiring conservation easements and fee-title purchases worth nearly fifty million dollars. The plan was to make those purchases in stages.

Carr, with the Nature Conservancy, says there is now only one big chunk left to go. "That leaves only the Boreas Ponds tract," he said. "That's 20,500 acres, about \$14.5 million remaining as part of this largest ever acquisition."

At times, the Finch deal has been controversial, but the governor's announcement issued yesterday included statements of praise from local government leaders.

Essex County chairman Randy Douglas said this deal proves that "common ground can be found in protecting the environment." Newcomb town supervisor George Canon said this deal will "boost recreation opportunities and community-based economies in the region."

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