



January 3, 2013

For Immediate Release

Contact: Dan Plumley, 518-576-9277 or
Dave Gibson, 518-469-4081

Adirondack Wild Opposed to APA Clearcutting General Permit; Calls for Study, Impact Analysis and Public Dialogue

Keene, NY – *Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve* is asking the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) to postpone action this month on its proposed General Permit for Clearcutting private forest lands over 25 acres. The General Permit, scheduled for a decision at the APA's January 10-11 meeting in Ray Brook, authorizes clearcutting of Adirondack forests with no acreage limitations, and without full APA regional permit review, impact analysis, or opportunity for public comment.

Instead, Adirondack Wild urges APA to undertake a study which brings together scientists, foresters, land managers and conservation stakeholders to address current forest practices, sustainable forestry options and new regulatory tools. A study might inform a future decision whether this or an alternative General Permit with acreage limits and greater APA oversight were justified.

Otherwise, the group argues, the APA's commissioners are being asked to drastically change policy and practice of over 30 years duration and with potentially significant impacts across the Park based solely upon weak, anecdotal evidence and not a strong factual basis.

“The existing APA clearcutting regulations were developed after nearly two years of studying the forest industry and forest practices during 1980-82. That process included a diverse stakeholder committee, plenty of public dialogue and a major conference,” stated Dan Plumley, Partner with Adirondack Wild. “In contrast, today's APA has not done its homework. It would be unconscionable for the APA board now to jettison current policy in one meeting without proper scientific study, stakeholder and public review and impact analysis.”

For the past thirty years, APA has reviewed each application for forest clearcutting, as defined in Regulation, as a major regional project subject to public notice and comment, staff permit review, and a vote by the members of the Agency. By adopting this General Permit, at the discretion of Agency staff APA would cede its own detailed review of clearcutting practice to a variety of third-party forest certifiers with divergent environmental standards. There are no

acreage limitations in the proposed General Permit, no requirements that APA staff visit the forested sites proposed for clearcutting, and no opportunity for public notice and comment.

“We are calling for a deliberative, inclusive and transparent study of today’s forest management and related regulatory issues facing the Park’s private forest lands. Any permit policy or regulatory changes should be based in part upon the facts and conclusions emerging from that study,” added Adirondack Wild’s David Gibson. “If the APA could undertake an 18-month study of forest practices in the Park more than twenty years ago, it can and should do so again, and involve forest scientists, practicing foresters, and diverse stakeholders.”

In its formal comments, Adirondack Wild opposes the General Permit because it:

- Lacks justification or statement of need based upon a factual determination and examination of past and present forest practices in the Adirondack Park;
- Justifies the General Permit solely on anecdotal evidence;
- Fails to assess the effectiveness of clearcutting regulations in effect for over 30 years;
- Fails to consider alternative means by which current individual permit review of clearcutting practices in the Park can be made more effective;
- Allows the interests of applicants seeking faster review of forest activities to override the public interest in a well-regulated and protected Adirondack Park;
- Considers a variety of forest certification programs as equally good and equally comparable with the level of permit review required by the APA Act and Regulations, which is not the case.

“Adirondack Wild supports good forestry practices and forest certification in the Park. In our work we engage with foresters and landowners who are actively cutting timber and managing their Adirondack private lands in ways which encourage wildlife, protect streams, rivers and wetlands, and which conserves the overall ecological integrity of forest landscapes,” said Dan Plumley. “We have an inherent interest in improving forest practices and encouraging good forest stewardship. As written, however, this General Permit fail’s the public’s interest in the APA’s law and regulation and in a well-stewarded Adirondack Park.”

“Governor Andrew Cuomo should not support a General Permit affecting how forests are managed on an unlimited amount of private land in the Park which is not based on factual information about current forest practices and future trends,” Gibson added.

Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve is a not for profit, membership-supported organization which advances New York’s “Forever Wild” legacy and Forest Preserve policies in the Adirondack and Catskill Parks, and promotes public and private land stewardship consistent with wild land values through education, advocacy and research.