



For Immediate Release

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Adirondack Wild leaves BeWildNY

Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve has formally left the BeWildNY coalition. Adirondack Wild's position is that a Wilderness classification of the 20,000-acre Boreas Ponds tract would restore ecological connections to the High Peaks and Dix Wilderness areas to the north and necessitates the closure of the Gulf Brook Road to public motorized uses. Gulf Brook Road is the 8-mile long dirt road leading from the public highway in the Town of North Hudson, Essex County, to the Boreas Ponds. Adirondack Wild felt that its position was not being well represented within the coalition.

The BeWildNY coalition has recommended a Wild Forest classification for the Gulf Brook Road which would allow public motorized uses up to LaBier Flow, one mile from the Boreas Ponds.

In a letter to the coalition, Adirondack Wild explained that the opening of the Gulf Brook Road to public motorized access for roughly 7 miles seriously compromises the ecological functioning of this area and damages its landscape-scale connections to the High Peaks and Dix Wilderness areas. Both of these existing Wilderness areas adjoin Boreas Ponds to the north. If the Boreas and McIntyre tracts are added to these areas, at more than a quarter million acres it would create one of North America's largest and most significant Wilderness regions.

Eight public hearings begin on November 9 about the classification alternatives for Boreas Ponds, the adjacent McIntyre tracts and many smaller Adirondack tracts formerly owned by Finch, Pruyn Paper Company. All of these alternatives keep the Gulf Brook Road open for public motorized and mechanized uses either to the Boreas Ponds, or just a mile away. Adirondack Wild has stated the NYS APA's draft documents failed to include a full Wilderness alternative for the Boreas Ponds tract and that the agency should include such an alternative going forward.

Adirondack Wild's letter to the coalition goes on to state that the future wilderness restoration and integrity of the Boreas Ponds and its ecological connectivity to the High Peaks and Dix Wilderness areas ought to be given primary consideration. The group acknowledges that public recreation on the tract is important, but secondary to natural resource protection and cannot be allowed to degrade natural resources or wilderness values. Adirondack Wild will advocate that the Gulf Brook Road be allowed to revert to a foot trail and that because of its relatively flat grade it can be used by people of all abilities if support services are developed.

Adirondack Wild's letter concludes that "we are glad to have been part of BeWildNY's very fine work over the past year to scientifically evaluate and build public support for Wilderness at Boreas Ponds."

For more about the upcoming public hearings, link to: [APA State Land Classification Public Comment Schedule, Nov-Dec 2016.pdf](#).

Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve is a not for profit, membership 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. More on the web: www.adirondackwild.org.