



Adirondack Wild wants Park Subdivision in “Green” Sent to Hearing

**For Immediate Release
February 8, 2017**

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Keene, New York - Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve, a nonprofit wild land advocacy organization, is asking the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) to send a controversial subdivision in the most sensitive and protected private land use area to public hearing. The organization believes the proposed Barile Family LLC 17-lot subdivision off Route 73 near Adirondack Loj Road in the Town of North Elba fragments critical Resource Management lands (shown as green on the APA map), threatening scenic views, forests, local wildlife habitats and ecosystem functions.

The subdivision comes before the full Agency this week in Ray Brook. APA staff is recommending issuance of a permit with conditions.

In its letter to the APA Adirondack Wild acknowledges that while the project intends to keep as many as 475 acres free of most development, it nonetheless breaks-up 110 acres of diverse forests and meadow into 15 new, large residential lots ranging in size from 5-12 acres each, including accessory buildings, driveways, and permission for extensive tree-cutting on each lot.

“Such intensive residential subdivision in one of the most scenic areas of the Park, where the law states that resource protection ought to be primary, should be redesigned to avoid negative impacts. Unfortunately, the draft permit does not meet the high standard demanded in a Resource Management land use area so close to the High Peaks Wilderness. This project needs further review and analysis of alternatives and that can only happen through a public hearing,” said Adirondack Wild’s David Gibson.

“We’ve outlined significant design problems and potential impacts from the current intensive subdivision which deserves public involvement through a hearing,” added Dan Plumley. “Our primary concern with the draft Permit is that twenty percent of the Resource Management area is treated as a ‘throw-away’ zone for intensive, fragmenting development with insufficient environmental impact analysis.”

“Large subdivisions such as this located near the High Peaks Wilderness, North Meadow Brook, Class 1 wetlands, and a rich variety of wildlife habitats warrants an alternative design that places the residences where they won’t cause as much ecological damage,” Plumley added. “The APA has been trained in conservation design development principles by one of the nation’s leading experts; however the current project design fails to apply that training.”

“Because the lots proposed will allow building footprints up to 9,500 square feet and land clearing of up to 40,000 square feet and crisscrossing of roads and driveways, wildlife will essentially be cut off from over 110 acres in Resource Management. That’s wrong and unnecessary,” Gibson added. “Backcountry fragmentation is one of the greatest threats to ecological integrity facing the Adirondack Park. APA could help design the subdivision in a manner that better respects this important landscape. Such a result is exactly what the APA once strove to practice.”

“A one-hundred foot buffer between the development and the wetlands is completely insufficient to protect sensitive, slow-moving wildlife such as frogs, salamanders and turtles whose life cycles require undeveloped forest 750 feet or more beyond their breeding ponds,” adds Plumley.

“Furthermore, the fragmenting design may be more likely to result in invasive terrestrial plant species.”

Adirondack Wild also raises questions about the visual impact analysis of the subdivision, and whether it avoids or minimizes impacts to dark night skies within close range of the High Peaks Wilderness and the adjacent, protected agricultural landscape known as the “Plains of Abraham” on the opposite side of Adirondack Loj Road.

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.