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## APA's Large Subdivision Application is Positive Step Towards Conservation Design, says Adirondack Wild

The non-profit wild lands advocate *Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve* views the recent adoption by the NYS Adirondack Park Agency (APA) of new Large Subdivision Application procedures as a long-delayed, but positive step forward. The organization hopes the move contributes to the adoption of conservation subdivision design as the standard for the Adirondack Park.

The new APA application for large subdivisions, as defined, was formally adopted by the APA recently after receiving input from diverse Park stakeholders including Adirondack Wild. APA's new [Large-scale Subdivision Application](#) encourages large subdividers to engage in:

- Early consultation and pre-application meetings with APA staff to consider subdivision design at the conceptual stage before incurring major design and site plan expenses;
- Early inventory and identification of important natural, scenic and cultural resources on a development site as a first step which informs spatial design of the home lots later;
- Early assessment of potential adverse impacts to natural resources and alternative designs which avoid impacts to wildlife that are least adapted and therefore most vulnerable to their habitats being broken up into smaller pieces by human development, a process known as fragmentation.

- Early public comment about the scope of adverse impacts from a given subdivision design, and about alternative ways which could be employed to avoid them.

“It has been our experience that APA fails to consistently demand high standards of site information from its largest private land subdividers. Too often we debate the lack of data to evaluate a project rather than analyze the implications of solid natural resource inventories,” said Adirondack Wild’s David Gibson.

“We hope this new application will lead to significant improvements through an earlier understanding of a given project’s actual and potential impacts and how to avoid them,” added Adirondack Wild’s Dan Plumley. “The more information and perspective APA has during this conceptual, pre-application phase, the more the APA can do to guide the applicant towards a design that is wildlife friendly and that connects, rather than blocks, wildlife movements.”

Since publishing *Adirondack Park at a Crossroad: A Road Map for Action* in 2015, Adirondack Wild has urged the adoption of conservation design of private subdivisions as the appropriate review standard for the entire Adirondack Park. The group also published *Pathways to a Connected Park* (2017) authored by Adirondack Wild’s landscape conservation advisor Dr. Michael Klemens. The book guides Park communities through strategies that minimize forest and wildlife habitat fragmentation. As Dr. Klemens explains, [conservation subdivision design is a process to reduce negative ecological impacts from development through innovative planning and site design](#) while maintaining value for the applicant.

“We support legislation which would require use of conservation subdivision design under certain circumstances for a small number of large Park subdivisions in the most sensitive locations,” said David Gibson. “[What the APA just did complements the legislation as a positive first step.](#)”

*Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve* is a not-for-profit, membership organization which acts on behalf of wilderness and wild land values and stewardship throughout the region. More on the web: [www.adirondackwild.org](http://www.adirondackwild.org).