



Adirondack Wild Calls on Governor to Nominate Conservation Leaders to APA Board

For Immediate Release
May 22, 2019

Contact: David Gibson, 518-469-4081, dgibson@adirondackwild.org

Ray Brook, NY - *Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve* is calling on Governor Andrew Cuomo and the NYS Senate to substantially strengthen the NYS Adirondack Park Agency's board, which is currently rudderless.

"The Governor needs to seize this moment and nominate individuals with strong environmental credentials and demonstrated commitments to protecting the Adirondack Park," said Adirondack Wild's managing partner David Gibson.

Serious gaps in leadership and qualifications presently exist on the eleven-person APA board. The APA's Acting Chair, Karen Feldman, suddenly resigned from the agency this past week. Two other APA members also resigned in the past year and their seats remain unfilled. Five other members will be serving expired, four-year terms by July 1. Two APA members have been serving since 2006, nominated by then Gov. George Pataki.

Despite the APA's legal mandate to protect the delicate biological and physical resources of the Adirondack Park, there are no APA members serving today with backgrounds in environmental law, the biological sciences or land use planning. Chad Dawson is the only APA member with a strong background in an important field, wilderness recreation resources management, relevant to APA's responsibilities.

"The Adirondack Park is treasured by all New Yorkers and by people from around the world. To do its job to protect the Park, the APA board badly needs board members skilled in environmental law, ecological science and land use planning, all of which are central to its mission," said Gibson. "We joined

a coalition of Adirondack groups who have given Governor Cuomo the names of many excellent candidates in all of these fields. These candidates have the knowledge and readiness to serve. The Governor has many strong candidates to choose from.”

“Given a Park of such statewide and national importance as the Adirondack Park, we will also expect the NYS Senate to reject unqualified individuals who lack the skills and backgrounds to contribute to the Park’s protection and stewardship. The statewide interest in the protection of the Adirondack Park’s natural resources must come first.”

The lack of qualified APA board members in recent years contributed to a series of ill-informed decisions. APA voted to approve the largest and most fragmenting private land subdivision in its history, allowed other large subdivisions in the Park’s Resource Management zone without a thorough natural resource survey, approved State Land management plans that fail to comply with legal requirements, allowed motor vehicle access to the fragile Boreas Ponds and, for the first time, weakened environmental protections in the State Land Master Plan.

Adirondack Wild’s report *Adirondack Park at a Crossroad: A Road Map for Action* documents a steady erosion of the APA’s regulation of private land development and its oversight of management of State-owned lands in the Park. The report also pointed out the lack of environmental, legal and land use experience among APA board members.

“This session’s APA nominations will be a litmus test for how serious Governor Cuomo is about protecting the Adirondack Park,” added Adirondack Wild’s Vice Chair Chris Amato. “We hope the Governor gives serious consideration to the many promising candidates the coalition of Adirondack groups worked hard to develop.”

Adirondack Wild’s report *Park at a Crossroad* can be found at www.adirondackwild.org. Adirondack Wild 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.