

NEWS RELEASE

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ADIRONDACK CONSERVATIONISTS CONVERGE ON STATE CAPITOL SEEKING PERSONNEL, FUNDING, LEGISLATION TO BETTER PROTECT PARK

ALBANY, N.Y. – Adirondack conservationists met at the State Capitol today to seek funding, personnel and legislation that would protect the Adirondack Park’s forests, waters and wildlife from surging crowds and inappropriate development in remote locations, while curbing the spread of road salt contamination and invasive species.

More than 100 activists – bedecked in matching red-and-black plaid scarves – converged on the Legislature for an **Adirondack Park Environment Lobby Day** to discuss:

Protecting the Adirondack Forest Preserve from overcrowding by adding more Forest Rangers and funding projects that promote natural resource preservation and trail stewardship

Reforming the Adirondack Park Agency by securing a full slate of board appointments with diverse backgrounds and expertise, and passing legislation to prevent habitat fragmentation with the Park’s largest subdivisions

Preserving clean water by strengthening the invasive species transport law in the Adirondacks and by establishing an Adirondack Road Salt Task Force

Activists represented the Adirondack Council, Adirondack Mountain Club, Adirondack Wild/Friends of the Forest Preserve, Protect the Adirondacks!, and Sierra Club.

“The recent debate over how to manage new Forest Preserve and the record-setting crowds visiting the Adirondack Park has brought a lot of new voices to the defense of the park’s wild character and ecological health,” said **Kevin Chlad, Director of Government Relations for the Adirondack Council**. “We were thrilled to welcome them all to the capitol and work with them

to ensure they get to speak with Legislators whose votes will affect the outcome of our shared agenda.”

"We stand united in seeking critical funding to ensure sustainable trails and overall stewardship in order to protect our State's vital wilderness areas and improve the experience of those who come to recreate," said **Michael Barrett, Executive Director of the Adirondack Mountain Club.**

“One of the major goals of the day was to express how important it is for the Governor to appoint a full slate of qualified candidates for the Adirondack Park Agency board,” said **Adirondack Wild’s managing partner David Gibson.** “We also sought reform of the APA’s rules for development in the park’s most remote locations, to better protect wildlife, water quality and intact forests.”

“Protection from the spread invasive species and from road salt contamination in lakes and drinking water are common goals sought by environmental activists and Adirondack communities alike,” said **Caitlin Ferrante, Conservation & Development Program Manager, Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter.** “We are grateful to the activists who came out today to help us deliver this important message.”

“A major goal of this lobby day is greater spending on the Forest Preserve, especially for the High Peaks Wilderness. The public Forest Preserve in the Adirondacks underwrites the local quality of life and is the cornerstone of the tourist economy, attracting visitors from all over the country and beyond. The Cuomo Administration needs to make a much greater investment in the management and maintenance of the Forest Preserve in the Adirondack Park," said **Peter Bauer, executive director of Protect the Adirondacks.**

The activists said they chose to wear matching red-and-black scarves to make sure they were noticed by Legislators and their staffs as they navigated the cavernous halls of the Capitol and Legislative Office Building at the Empire State Plaza government complex.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s budget proposal contains a \$3-million increase in funding for wildland protection and stewardship, including more education, trail crews and user management actions. The groups are asking the Legislature to approve an increase of \$10 million, with funding dedicated to managing surging levels of visitor use.

Adirondack Park Environmental Lobby Day should not be confused with annual Adirondack Day at the Capitol. Adirondack Day is a non-political, regional cultural celebration of all things Adirondack, including communities, organizations, outdoor recreation, food, beverages, and other local products.

Adirondack Park Environmental Lobby Day is for expressing conservation goals to lawmakers and staff.

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