



For Immediate Release

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Adirondack Wild Applauds Court of Appeals Decision in Snowmobile Community Connector Case

The non-profit advocate *Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve* is praising today's decision by the NYS Court of Appeals that the state's construction of highly engineered community connector trails to accommodate more powerful snowmobiles and tracked grooming equipment violates Article 14, Section 1 of the NYS Constitution.

Earlier this year Adirondack Wild had joined with the Adirondack Council in submitting a Friend of the Court brief in the case.

"We congratulate the plaintiff Protect the Adirondacks. We especially appreciate that this Court decided that the 54 words comprising New York's unique 'forever wild' clause should be read as one integrated statement about principle, policy, and practice on the public's Forest Preserve," said David Gibson, managing partner with Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve.

"This Court of Appeals agreed that construction of snowmobile connectors involving grading and widening of trails and extensive tree cutting required constitutes an artificial alteration of the Forest Preserve, in the same way that construction of the bobsled run near Lake Placid would have altered the Forest Preserve back in 1930."

"In both cases, the state's highest court has ruled that the state was improperly attempting to construct high-speed artificial environments completely out of character with the Forest Preserve," Gibson said.

"We reject a conclusion that trails in the Forest Preserve which retain their wild forest character cannot be created or maintained because of this Court's ruling. It is the highly engineered routes for high-speed motorized use, and the thousands of trees that must be cut for such a use that this Court has ruled unconstitutional, not trails that retain the character of a foot trail."

Article 14, Section 1 of the NYS Constitution states that: "The lands of the state, now owned or hereafter acquired, constituting the forest preserve as now fixed by law, shall be forever kept

as wild forest lands. They shall not be leased, sold or exchanged, or shall they be taken by any corporation, public or private, nor shall the timber thereon be sold, removed or destroyed.”

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.