

Letter to the Editor, Daily Gazette

August 8, 2015

Dear Editor,

Your recent editorializing (August 4 edition) on the importance of state water, sewer and planning assistance to hamlets in the Adirondack Park is appropriate, and widely supported. While \$200 million spread over three years for water and sewer infrastructure upgrades throughout the six million acre Park is a positive part of this year's state budget, it barely begins to address the actual clean water/treatment needs of 103 towns and villages and six counties, or the negative effects of neglecting aging infrastructure – including old septic tanks and leach fields - on the water quality of Adirondack streams and lakes and on community development. The same can be said for the entire State, where the clean water/sewage treatment deferred maintenance and upgrading bill runs into many tens of billions, not millions. A robust, statewide environmental bond act is badly needed and the Gazette should champion it.

Where your editorial goes quite wrong is the statement "protecting the environment has always been and continues to be a top priority." As Adirondack Wild's report *Adirondack Park at a Crossroad: A Road Map for Action* makes clear, the Adirondack Park Agency is no longer making the Park's delicate physical and biological resources its top priority, as it should. APA has not in recent times "discouraged development in environmentally sensitive areas," to quote your editorial, but instead issued permits for spread-out, large-lot residential development in the very "green" zones that the APA law states is the most sensitive and therefore should be reserved for forestry and open space recreation. APA has issued these permits without the thorough natural resource inventories and wildlife surveys that would better site and design such development away from sensitive resources. The recipient of the APA's Adirondack Club and Resort permit, authorizing 15 miles of new roadway, sewer and water and electric lines on steep, forested, wet and rocky environments outside of Tupper Lake, now asks state taxpayers to fund that very infrastructure !

NYS Adirondack Park Agency is no longer on the cutting edge of environmental protection for the Adirondack Park. APA also needs an

"upgrade," a backbone, and stronger tools to do its job. For a needed action plan and recommendations, find the Park at a Crossroad report at www.adirondackwild.org.

Sincerely,

David Gibson, Adirondack Wild

(the writer is co-author of The Adirondack Park at a Crossroad: A Road Map for Action found at www.adirondackwild.org).