Adirondack Wild Makes SLMP Suggestions

by Editorial Staff
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The advocacy group Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve has issued a report calling for strengthening in policy and practice under the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (SLMP).

The Adirondack Park Agency (APA) is currently considering amendments to the SLMP, the governing document for the classification and management of constitutionally protected Forest Preserve lands within the Adirondack Park. Adirondack Wild's report can be accessed at their website. The special report offers general thematic and specific policy, research, planning and action steps. “The Master Plan, its vision and strengths have truly stood the test of time,” Adirondack Wild's Dave Gibson said in a statement to the press announcing the report. “It is incumbent upon us as New Yorkers to see that it is further strengthened – not diluted or weakened.”

“The Master Plan establishes that the protection and preservation of natural resources and wilderness character is the State’s paramount priority,” Gibson said. “Recreational activities and potential are important secondary objectives assuming natural resources on the Forest Preserve are not compromised.”

The Adirondack State Land Master Plan establishes management guidelines for human use of all State lands in the Adirondack Park according to their classification, be it Wilderness, Wild Forest, Canoe, Primitive, Intensive Use, or Travel Corridor, that together include about 2.7 million acres. Unit Management Plans are developed by the DEC and evaluated by the APA as to whether they are consistent with the Master Plan.

The report argues that the APA’s first order of business is to assess and analyze natural resources and their capacity to withstand various human uses as a baseline for determining progress in stewardship of the Forest Preserve.
“Our vision also recognizes the important role that local governments and recreational constituencies have in safeguarding and managing the Park’s State lands in conjunction with the APA and the DEC in a manner that benefits wildness,” Adirondack Wild’s Dan Plumley said. “Only through this collaborative approach and heightened level of consciousness will we pass on to our successors a better, wilder Park.”

Adirondack Wild’s recommendations include:

- A renewed commitment to oversee and limit motorized uses on the Forest Preserve including an outright prohibition on the use of ATV’s;

- Drafting regulations for the SLMP;

- Reclassifying Primitive areas to Wilderness once certain conditions are met;

- Recommendations for better management through Unit Management Plans;
- Budget increases for State land management and stewardship projects, public outreach and education and enforcement;

- Specific recommendations regarding use and management of the Essex Chain Lakes region, mountain biking, backcountry skiing, rock climbing, group competitive events, conservation easements, and trail-less and motor-less forest lands and waters across the Park.