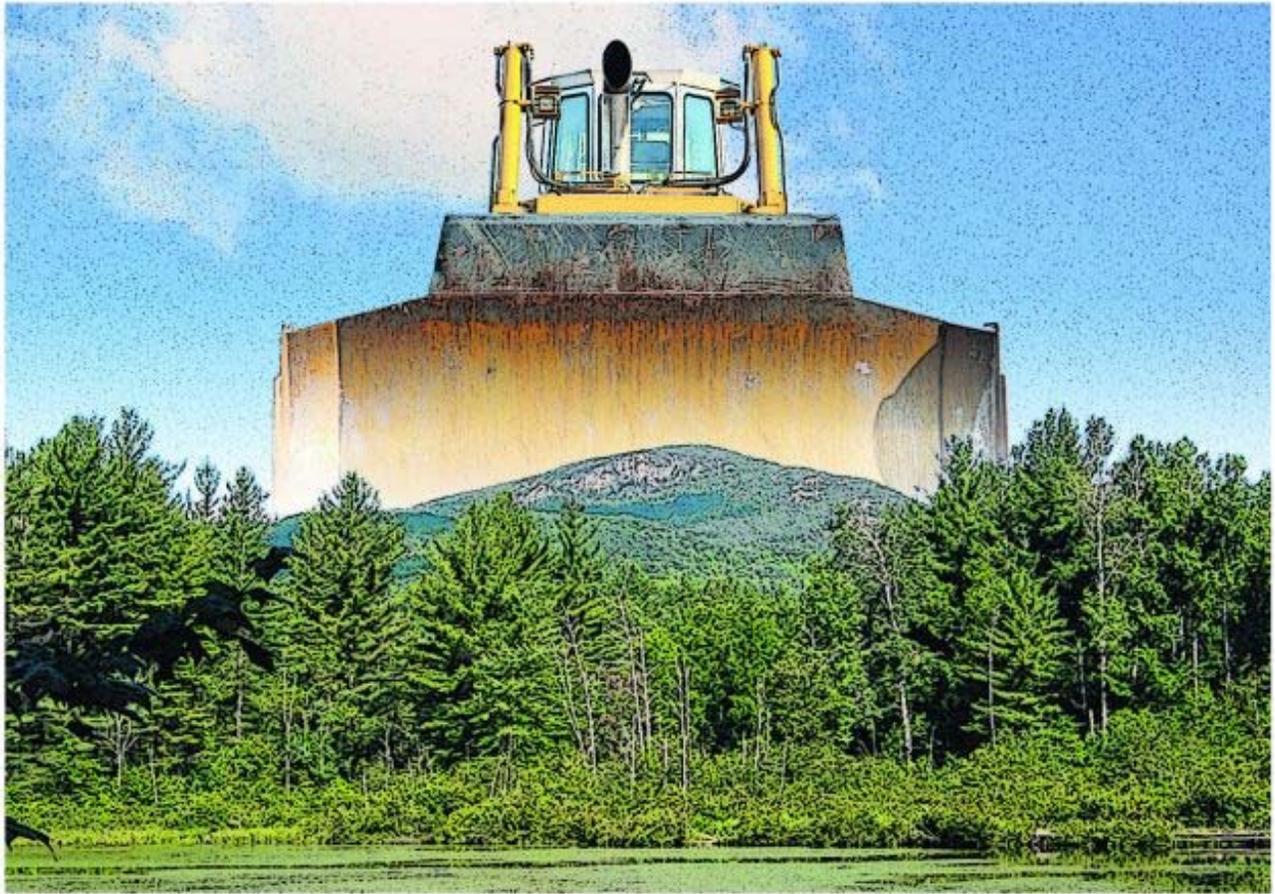


# Editorial: Sprawl, Adirondack style

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*Photo illustration by Jeff Boyer / Times Union*

## **THE ISSUE:**

The [Adirondack Park Agency](#) is considering the impact of a housing development proposed for Fulton County.

## **THE STAKES:**

The APA shouldn't allow a maximum number of lots just because it can. [Yogi Berra's](#) quote, "It's deja vu all over again," comes to mind looking over the development proposed for the Woodworth Lake Boy Scout Camp in northern Fulton County in the Adirondack Park. The housing project would chop up 1,100 acres into lots for 26 luxury homes in much the same way as another project in Tupper Lake.

The Tupper Lake project, the [Adirondack Club and Resort](#), is the largest ever approved by the Adirondack Park Agency — 80 luxury homes scattered across 4,700 acres. Groundbreaking is planned this year.

Both projects fall under the park's most restrictive land classification, resource management. That classification, under the Adirondack Park Agency Act, allows "residential development on substantial acreages or in small clusters on carefully selected and well-designed sites."

The devil falls in the details of exactly what constitutes "substantial acreages" or "small clusters."

With both projects, leading park conservation organizations have argued the developments are too dispersed, allowing too great an impact on the park's resources and wildlife.

[Peter Bauer](#), executive director of Protect the Adirondacks, argues in the Adirondack Almanack that "conservation subdivision design" would be more appropriate because fewer parcels would be "clustered" in one region of a project's overall footprint, leaving vastly more land completely untouched. The APA, Bauer notes, approved such a development more than 10 years ago for 420 acres of resource management land in Horicon. That project clustered 10 lots in one 20-acre corner, leaving the rest alone.

In fact, tighter clustering is recommended for wildlife, especially for projects on previously undeveloped land. A study in the 2003 Journal of the [American Planning Association](#) found "clustered development, in contrast to dispersed development, can reduce the impact of exurban residential development on wildlife habitat."

Protect the Adirondacks and a host of other groups have asked that the public comment deadline on the Woodworth Lake project be extended and a hearing be held. That stance is backed by [Adirondack Mountain Club](#); Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve; Protect the Adirondacks; [Sierra Club/Atlantic Chapter](#); and The [Adirondack Council](#).

The Tupper Lake project withstood environmentalists' legal challenges, but that doesn't mean sprawling "great camp" developments are a model of good planning. Given that only 800,000 of the park's 3 million acres of private land fall under this most-precious category of lands available to develop, more time for comment and a hearing are not too much to ask of the agency charged with stewardship of the Adirondacks.

Otherwise, some corners of the Adirondack Park may soon enough bring to New Yorkers' minds another Yogi Berra quote: "Nobody goes there anymore. It's too crowded."