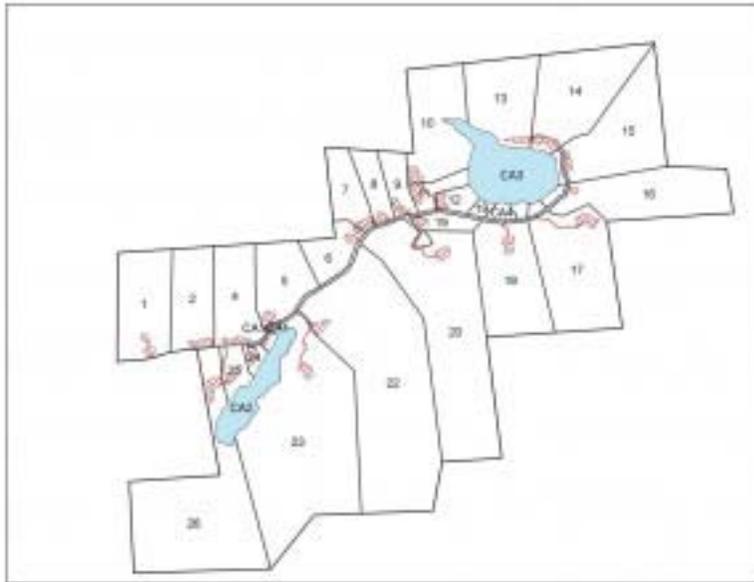


APA Approves Controversial Subdivision

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The APA map shows the layout of the 24 building lots. The developer originally planned for 26 lots. Two were dropped, but the numbers of the remaining lots did not change. Hence, the map still shows Lot 25 and Lot 26.

The Adirondack Park Agency board voted unanimously Thursday to approve a controversial development at a former Boy Scouts camp in the southern Adirondacks.

New York Land and Lakes Development LLC plans to subdivide the 1,119-acre property into 24 building lots, most of them bordering two water bodies, Hines Pond and Woodworth Lake. The lots range from three acres to 145 acres.

All of the Park's four major environmental groups as well as the regional chapter of the Sierra Club opposed the project. They contend that the developers should be forced to minimize fragmentation of the forest by clustering homes closer together.

"We are confident the APA could have accommodated a similar number of new homes on a much smaller footprint, working in collaboration with the developer, while still providing the privacy home buyers seek. That would

have protected water quality, wildlife and outdoor recreation for everyone," Willie Janeway, executive director of the Adirondack Council, said in a news release after the vote.

But APA Chairwoman Lani Ulrich hailed the project as an example of environmentally sensitive development. "The agency's extensive review resulted in a permit that concentrates where development will occur and ensures best management practices are used to avoid the fragmentation of wildlife habitat and minimize impacts to waterways," she said in a news release.

Sherman Craig, chairman of the APA's Regulatory Programs Committee, also said he believes natural resources will be protected. He said the agency's staff looked at nearly 50 criteria in evaluating the project's environmental impacts.

"To simply focus on how close the houses are together, that puts one criterion over all the others," he told *Adirondack Almanack*.

Ariel Lynch, an environmental program specialist, told the APA board that most of the proposed locations for homes were changed based on recommendations of the APA staff. Under the conditions of the developer's permit, she said, all the homes will be at least 100 feet from the waterfront. Other permit conditions aim to protect wetlands, streams, and water quality.

Lynch also noted that under APA regulations the developers could be allowed to build up to 49 homes—more than twice as many as planned. The unused building rights will be extinguished. The developers also agreed to reduce the number of lots from 26 to 24.

Most of the property is designated Resource Management, the strictest of the APA's land-use classifications for private land. The Private Land Use and Development Plan allows residential development on RM lands "on substantial acreages or in small clusters on carefully selected and well designed sites."

Critics contend that the New York Land and Lakes project meets neither criterion. However, the Appellate Division of State Supreme Court recently ruled, in another case, that the criteria are only guidelines, not mandates. In any case, Craig said the developers will protect natural resources by making use of the Boy Scouts' development footprints: building homes in existing clearings and using existing woods roads for driveways, thus minimizing tree cutting.

Dan Plumley, a partner in Adirondack Wild, criticized the agency for refusing to convene an adjudicatory hearing, which would have given stakeholders a chance to offer expert testimony. "This is a sad day for the Park," Plumley

said. "The agency has just opened the door to the kind of projects it used to deny outright."

Fred Monroe, executive director of the Local Government Review Board, which has a non-voting seat on the APA board, applauded the agency's action. He said the development will generate \$60,000 a year in property taxes. The property is located in the towns of Bleecker and Johnstown in Fulton County.

"This project was thoroughly vetted and strictly conditioned by agency staff," Monroe said in a news release. "Over 95 percent of the land will remain open space in perpetuity. It fully complies with the APA Act."

The Woodworth Boy Scout Camp had used the property from 1949 until 2013, when it closed.