For Immediate Release:
December 11, 2014

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NEW VISION FOR “FOREVER WILD” NEEDED, GROUP ASSERTS;

ADIRONDACK WILD RELEASES SPECIAL REPORT ON STRENGTHENING
NEW YORK STATE’S ADIRONDACK PARK STATE LAND MASTER PLAN

Keene Valley and Niskayuna, NY -- In a year when conservationists nationwide are
looking back and celebrating the 50th anniversary of the National Wilderness Preservation
System Act, Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve is calling for a new vision
for “Forever Wild” and for significant strengthening in policy and practice under the
Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (SLMP) – the guiding policy document for
management of the Adirondack Forest Preserve.

Adirondack Wild’s report can be accessed at the non-profit’s website:
www.adirondackwild.org, and includes an executive summary, background on the critical
role of “Forever Wild” as the progenitor for federal wilderness protection, and the State
Land Master Plan’s essential focus on natural resource protection and wild land
conservation. The special report offers general thematic and specific policy, research,
planning and action steps to be taken by the NYS Adirondack Park Agency (APA) in
conjunction with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and park
stakeholders to enhance and benefit State and wild lands management.

The report’s release coincides with the close of the APA’s “Listening Sessions”
addressing public and stakeholder interest in possible amendments to the State Land
Master Plan first approved by Governor Nelson Rockefeller as part of the Executive Law
in 1972.
“The Master Plan, its vision and strengths have truly stood the test of time,” stated Dave Gibson, Staff Partner with Adirondack Wild, adding, “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 notes. “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 add up to approximately 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.

“Our report makes clear the APA’s first order of business is to assess and analyze natural resources and their capacity to withstand various human uses as crucial baseline measurements for determining progress in the stewardship of our “Forever Wild” landscape,” stated Dan Plumley, Staff Partner.

“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,” Plumley noted. “Only through this collaborative approach and heightened level of consciousness will we pass on to our successors a better, wilder Park.”

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 much needed regulations for the SLMP;
- Follow through by the APA on reclassifying the many Primitive areas which, should be reclassified to Wilderness once certain conditions are met;
- Recommendations for how Unit Management Plans can provide better management direction on state land units;
- Recognizing needed 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.

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.

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