



For Immediate Release

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Adirondack Wild Calls on the Legislature to terminate threat of future mining at 'Lot 8' in the Jay Mountain Wilderness

The nonprofit wildlands advocate *Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve* will ask members of the New York State Legislature to impose a deadline for future mineral sampling and mining at Lot 8 in Lewis, a 200-acre portion of the NYS Forest Preserve's Jay Mountain Wilderness area.

The constitutional amendment allowing mineral samples, possible mining and a potential land exchange with NYCO minerals passed the NYS Legislature and was narrowly approved (53%-47%) by voters in 2013. No deadline for the mineral sampling or the mining was established by the voters, and no implementing legislation was ever approved in Albany. Adirondack Wild believes that a deadline should now be established after which the threat of future mining on this portion of the public's Wilderness will end.

In the five years since the amendment was approved, NYCO Minerals was sold to a French mining concern named Imerys. None of the stability or growth in employment promised by politicians endorsing the 2013 amendment has materialized. Instead, according to multiple news reports Imerys has reduced employment and reduced union representation at the company, shipped some of its wollastonite business to its mine in Mexico, and brought in outside workers to operate its Essex County operations.

Moreover, mineral samples taken by the former NYCO on Lot 8 from a dozen sites drilled in 2015 have never been presented to the State for appraisal purposes, as anticipated and required by the State Legislature. According to news reports, few people close to the former NYCO believe Imerys will follow through on the mineral sampling and a land exchange that provides the public with new Forest Preserve equal to or greater than the value of Lot 8.

“In our field work we found Lot 8 to be a magnificent part of the Jay Mountain Wilderness, full of older forests, and harboring a rich variety of plant and animal life and habitats. The threat of mining there should not hang over this forest forever,” said Adirondack Wild’s Dan Plumley.

“The company Imerys apparently has no intention of following through on the actions made possible by the 2013 constitutional amendment,” said Adirondack Wild’s David Gibson.

“Therefore, we think it is in the public interest to ask the State Legislature to create by constitutional amendment a sunset date beyond which the mining threat is ended forever.” The organization is proposing that in 2019 the State Legislature begin a process to amend Article XIV of the NYS Constitution, to the effect that beyond a specific sunset date in 2020 or 2021 Imerys may not engage in mineral sampling and that beyond that same date the State may not convey Lot 8 to the mining company.

Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve is a not-for-profit, membership organization which acts on behalf of wilderness and wild land values and stewardship throughout the region. Its policy is that Article XIV constitutional amendments should always serve a well-documented need for public facilities or services that cannot be provided in ways other than through an amendment, and never be for the sole purpose of benefiting a private or public corporation, as the NYCO amendment unfortunately was. Amendments taking the form of a land exchange should always be greater in acreage and in ecological, recreational and stewardship values than the lands to be removed from the Forest Preserve. This, also, was not shown to be the case in 2013. More on the web at www.adirondackwild.org.