

would the population qualify for federal monies to finance damage control. Hence, any wolf control efforts to curb depredation and reimbursements for livestock loss would have to be funded by New York State or private organizations. Clearly these are disadvantages. New Yorkers would have to opt for wolves on esthetic grounds, as other grounds apparently do not apply.

Currently, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and various conservation organizations and interest groups for and against wolf restoration, as well as U.S. Circuit Court judges, are sparring over ESA's legal technicalities regarding probable identities of wolf stocks, wolf population presence or absence, wolf distributions real or imagined, and funding responsibilities of ESA—each to gain legal advantage for its own agenda. Whatever the solution, it is likely to be a muddy one.

Would wolves survive in Adirondack Park? Recent experience in the West and Minnesota strongly suggest that wolves would thrive, given initial protection. The most effective stock might be that of the gray wolf (Midwestern population), unlikely to hybridize with coyotes. Whether wolves enter the park on their own or are introduced artificially, firm control measures, including hunting and trapping, may eventually be necessary—a possibility of which all interest groups should be thoroughly aware. If New Yorkers decide to foster a wolf population in the Adirondack Park, I believe they would not be disappointed. If reintroduction is "voted down" and natural immigration does not occur, we would still have our consolation prize—a wild dog whose interesting howls are a good stand-in for the Top Dog. But consolation prizes are just that—there is nothing like the real thing.

We have learned much since that day at Arbutus Pond. Clearly, predator restoration faces special challenges in the densely populated eastern United States. But large predators are evolving toward survival with humans, while humans are evolving culturally to accommodate their presence. Perhaps we can learn

PART TWO | Institutions and Management of the Adirondacks

Introduction

The Park in Perspective

JON D. ERICKSON

Part one of the book aptly describes the means of the Adirondack experiment in conservation. The very rocks, trees, and rivers provided the base from which to build human communities and economies. Their study has traditionally been the realm of the natural scientist. As "nature" takes on the name "natural resource," the door to the social sciences is open, and inquiry turns away from the "what" of describing the evolution and ecology of the natural resource base to the "how" of allocating resources toward meeting desirable ends of human communities. Human choice now enters the equation, and so do such fields as economics, sociology, and political science.

From rock to ore, trees to timber, and rivers to waterways, part one also places the transformation of nature to resource in the context of recent human history in the Adirondacks. The pre-history of the park's formation followed a course familiar to students of anthropology worldwide. As hunting, fishing, and farming to sustain local populations gave way to mining, logging, and construction, the Adirondack economy developed through exporting natural resources. First raw resources were exported by water, then by rail and road. But not long after, the very beauty of the Adirondacks was exported through a burgeoning tourism industry. The early Adirondack story mirrors the story of natural resource depletion worldwide—with the northeastern United States as no exception—fueled wherever labor and energy is cheap and access to resources is open.

But something happened along the way. New York snapped out of it. Why? Why then, and why in New York amid the excesses of the Gilded Age? What else was happening in the world? What is so special about the Adirondacks?

Part two focuses on this portion of the Adirondack experiment. We turn our attention squarely on the evolution of Adirondack institutions and both their success and failure in striking a balance between economy and ecology and seeking genuine development in Adirondack communities. The periods surrounding first the creation of Article 14 of the New York State Constitution in the late nineteenth century and second the Adirondack Park Agency Act of the late twentieth divide the institutional history into a handful of “before” and “after” segments. And, as we will see, we might further divide the APA era into before and after the Commission on the Adirondacks in the Twenty-First Century.

To begin, before the passage of Article 14, there were a number of conditions that led to significant state landholdings, calls for a State Forest Preserve, and then the “Forever Wild” constitutional amendment itself—one of the strongest protections of land in the world. These conditions include a low opportunity cost of preservation, a high amount of conservation dollars on the table, and a fortunate geography.¹ The hammering of the landscape was part of what led to the protection of the Adirondacks. During the initial years of state land acquisition in the nineteenth century, much of the land that became the Forest Preserve had long since lost its value as a material resource. In fact, by 1885 the state owned nearly 800,000 Adirondack acres—what would become the core of the Forest Preserve—essentially by accident. Most of these lands were lumbered, abandoned, and then purchased by the state from local municipalities at the cost of unpaid taxes.² It was not until 1890 that the state was authorized to purchase land to add to the Forest Preserve created just five years earlier.

The resources and political will to continue public acquisition were also part luck, as the wealthy accumulated cheap land for summer retreats, but also in part a sign of the changing culture of

the time. An elite conservation effort fueled by deep pockets and political prowess was on the move, creating a rather ironic tension between a rising romanticism of the era and the utilitarian realization of the economic value of watersheds. In the late nineteenth century, wealthy aristocrats were reinventing nature by bringing the luxuries of city life to the woods through the Adirondack Great Camp, and other extravagant bondings with nature. In 1893, 45 private preserves totaled over 940,000 acres.³ By 1897, ownership of the nearly 3-million-acre Adirondack Park was in close to equal thirds between the state, individuals and companies, and private preserves and parks. These private playgrounds were protected primarily for fishing, hunting, summer retreats, and limited lumbering. As decades passed and the interests of these families changed, they began selling their land holdings, and more often than not they provided a significant source for continued low-cost state land purchases (or gifts) through the twentieth century.

Finally, the geography of the Adirondacks served to protect the landscape both before and after Article 14. If the Pacific Ocean began at the edge of the Adirondacks, we would likely be telling a very different story today. The rugged terrain and short growing seasons of the Adirondacks kept these mountains from the agrarian fate of its New England neighbors early on, and the western frontier secured the Adirondacks against a wholesale liquidation once rail and road arrived. Today's Adirondack Mountains, and the northeastern United States more generally, are a “second-chance” forest in part because there was more land and timber to be had elsewhere, and in part because public land protections were in place once the twentieth-century development pressures arose.

The first chapters of this section explore the before and after of Article 14. Historian Philip Terrie addresses the changing cultural landscape that contributed to the foresight of the New York legislature, including the dynamic between romanticism and utilitarianism. Legal analyst Robert Malmsheimer lays out the original foundations of and the rising challenges to Article 14. Throughout the twentieth century, the development and lumbering restrictions set forth

by Article 14 withstood many challenges from timber interests and hydropower projects, and more recently, large-scale tourism development interests.⁴ Any change to the New York State Constitution requires the passage of amendments in consecutive state legislatures followed by a statewide public referendum. In fact, the significance of Article 14 has extended well beyond the park's boundaries. It is widely recognized that its language and the decades of legal experience in its defense laid the foundation for the U.S. Wilderness Act of 1964.

However by the 1960s, amid the population and economic growth of postwar America, the Adirondack Park was nothing more than a patchwork quilt of state land that could not be timbered. "Forever Wild" had little substantive meaning against the unresolved issues of recreation intensity on Forest Preserve lands and the vast development potential of intermingled private lands within the park boundary. In particular, the completion of the four-lane Adirondack Northway (I-87) through the park's eastern portion in 1967 opened the Adirondacks to millions of new visitors and thousands of new summer residents. An era of "after Article 14" gave way to "before the APA."

As Article 14 reflected the back-to-nature romanticism of the late nineteenth century, so did the Adirondack Park Agency Act reflect an awakening of the American environmental consciousness of the 1960s and early 1970s. A decade of progressive national environmental legislation—sandwiched between the Wilderness Act of 1964 and the Endangered Species Act of 1973—set a backdrop for the APA Act. Terrie stresses the importance of the U.S. environmental movement to the momentum behind the APA Act, as well as a renewed interest (however brief) in state and regional planning, most notably in Vermont, Oregon, Florida, and California. A 1967 proposal to forge a national park from the center portion of the Adirondacks—from 1.1 million acres of Forest Preserve and 600,000 acres of private land—also had a significant influence on how the APA Act was to take shape. The public demanded that the forest preserve remain in state ownership and that the public and

private lands complement one another toward both ecological and economic ends. The Adirondack region was to become something more than isolated pockets of public land among haphazardly developing private land. As with the framers of Article 14 eighty years before, there was little precedent to follow, particularly at a scale of nearly 6 million acres, an area larger than five of the biggest national parks combined.

The next chapter of this section, by coeditors Porter and Whaley, provides a sketch of the politics leading up to the APA Act, the early years of implementation, and a more detailed description of both the State Land Master Plan (SLMP) and the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan (APLUDP) that the act required. The chapter draws on the early history of the APA from interviews with Peter Paine and Dick Persico—the creative forces behind the state and private land plans—as well as the more recent perspective of Ross Whaley, chairman of the APA from 2003 to 2007. What follows is a more personal account of the politics and personalities that led to the act's creation and a candid assessment of the APA at year 5 from a transcribed 1976 interview with George Davis, a visionary behind the Temporary Study Commission that led to the drafting of the APA Act, the leader of the planning staff in the early years of the APA, and later executive director of the Commission on the Adirondacks in the Twenty-First Century. Complementing this chapter is the pre- and post-history of the APA Act from the perspective of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) by Stu Buchanan, as well as a more contemporary perspective on management of state lands from his position as director of Region 5 of the DEC from 1995 to 2007, the region encompassing the eastern portion of the Adirondack Park.

While politics, personalities, and interagency arm wrestling perhaps define how the APA Act was ultimately forged, debated, passed, and implemented, the act provides a foundation (or perhaps more accurately a dart board) from which to evaluate loftier ideas of what is often described under the banner of sustainable development. The work of the Temporary Study Commission on the

Future of the Adirondacks preceded the famed 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development's report, *Our Common Future*,⁵ better known as the Brundtland report, by nearly two decades. Yet together with Article 14, the resulting APA Act sets forth a framework that looks and feels like sustainable development—a living example of the balancing act between environmental conservation and economic development—at least on a regional scale.

The ideas behind the state and private land-use plans were actually a test of then contemporary ideas from landscape architecture representative of Ian McHarg's seminal work *Design with Nature*.⁶ In the McHargian tradition, land characteristics were to be inventoried, and development in the park was to be based on site-specific constraints (e.g., slope, soils, water impact) as well as landscape goals (e.g., natural beauty, watershed protection, recreation access). The resulting parkwide zoning map represents a system of concentrated development, linked via transportation corridors, buffered by natural beauty, and designed to protect water, forests, wildlife, and recreation resources. The private land plan was based largely on residential development intensity, while the public land plan was based largely on recreational use intensity.

Today we might evaluate the successes and failures of the APA Act, at least on the merits of environmental conservation, through the interdisciplinary lens of conservation biology that emerged in the 1980s.⁷ A mirror image of the McHargian foci of towns and cities, habitat becomes the core area in this model, circling outward to increasingly human-impacted buffers, until areas of intensive use are reached.⁸ Core preserves are then linked via buffered migratory corridors. Space is allocated not to its highest economic use, but rather a scale of substitution is defined from total preservation to compatible economic use to total human development.

Again, perhaps the APA Act was ahead of its time. While the conservation biology model was designed with very large landscapes in mind—with the Adirondacks more often viewed as a core to a conservation network that stretches up the eastern seaboard of the United States⁹—the SLMP and the APLUDP together provide the

sort of interlaced quilt of development and recreation intensity that might be evaluated against this view. The SLMP classifies Forest Preserve land into four main categories according to compatible recreational uses ranging from foot traffic only to various forms of motorized access and public recreation facilities. Private land is zoned into six main categories, ranging from least intensive use (forestry, low-density housing) to most intensive use (mining, high-density housing). Many Forest Preserve areas would satisfy as core preserves in the conservation model, where current, direct human impact is limited. Inner to outer buffers might include remaining state land and large private holdings, where close to 90 percent of land zoned for resource management and rural use is forested, with much of it now under conservation easements preventing residential or commercial development. The two degrees of intensive land use, hamlets and industrial-use areas, total less than 8 percent of the park, providing for concentrated, dispersed, and buffered areas of intensive use.

However, as with any policy and management endeavor, there is *intent* and then there is *reality*. The intent of the APA Act might be judged favorably against the concepts of landscape design or conservation biology, but to judge the realities of application requires a bit more pragmatism. For our purposes—to evaluate the great conservation experiment of the Adirondacks—lessons should be drawn from the good, the bad, and the ugly. Enter Bob Glennon, longtime counsel to the APA and executive director of the agency during very tumultuous years. Here we are witness to the professional frustrations and what Glennon felt were significant compromises to the spirit of the APA Act. Written law comes up against practiced ideologies and the politics of the times. As the APA pendulum swayed between pro-preservation and pro-development agendas, Glennon concludes that the APA has always had “a state government that could not decide whether preservation, or development, or both, were best for the park, so it backed both half-heartedly and got neither.”

Criticizing the APA Act, the park agency, and the DEC in the 1970s and 1980s had become a full-blown sport in the Adirondacks.

The chapters by Davis and Glennon attest to the lawsuits, threats to staff, and politic compromises that defined the early years of the APA. By the mid-1980s, and precipitated by some very large shifts in land ownership in the Adirondacks and eastward through Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, it was clear that the Adirondacks had become a political hot potato. Sales of subdivided property in the park tripled in 1982–85 and then doubled again by 1988. Developers were not happy about the slow pace and constraints on development. Environmentalists were not happy about the fast pace and lack of constraints on development. The forest-products industry was losing its grip on the region, selling off large tracts of land to conservation organizations and land speculators alike. And local governments were not happy about losing any of their historical home rule.

So nearly 20 years after the APA Act, Governor Mario Cuomo did what all politicians do when they need to make tough decisions: he appointed a study commission to pose recommendations. Of course, many feel the real intent was to deflect the issues. The years of *before* and *after* the Commission on the Adirondacks in the Twenty-First Century were here. Glennon recalls the many deficiencies in the original APA Act that led to the work of the Twenty-First Century Commission. But the next chapter by John Penney, managing editor of one of the region's main newspapers during the commission's study and then during the period of public reaction to their 245 recommendations, puts a fine point on much of the local sentiment surrounding these years. The APA plan recognized "the complementary needs of all people of the state."¹⁰ However, as Penney captures, the local view was one of the state government protecting the land conservation interests of tourists and downstate residents at the expense of local Adirondack residents' economic interests and private property rights.¹¹

The work of the Twenty-First Century Commission was to fuel the many critics of the APA and DEC, but this time advocacy groups were prepared for battle on both sides of the development-versus-conservation debate. The environmental groups had long been well-organized, with financial and lobbyist support drawing from both

state and national organizations. In fact, the chairman of the commission, Peter Berle, had most recently been the president of the National Audubon Society. To many locals it was a forgone conclusion that the commission was already in the hands of the downstate environmentalists—what Penney calls the "back-room agenda." But unlike the years surrounding the Temporary Study Commission that led to the APA Act, this time the pro-development and home-rule crowd had the changing winds of national sentiment on their side.

The 1980s and early 1990s were the Reagan and Bush years, and the environmental debate was in full force on the national scene, epitomized by battles over protecting gray wolves and grizzly bears in the Rocky Mountains, and over land for timber or habitat for owls in the Pacific Northwest. The Endangered Species Act lapsed in October 1992 (and has not been reauthorized since) and the Republican sweep of the 104th Congress in 1994 was due in no small part to a growing national private-property-rights platform. Closer to home, in the face of the commission's recommendations to the governor, and unlike the early 1970s, local opponents were not speeding down the Northway to block legislative proposals at the eleventh hour. This time the home-rule groups were blockading I-87 and organizing protests at the capital.

The commission's tenure marked a time when citizens of the Adirondacks and downstate New Yorkers alike began to rein in a state government that many felt had overstepped its bounds. In 1990, for the first time in state history, New York voters failed to pass an environmental bond issue that would have provided funds for significant additions to the Forest Preserve. The message was not lost on politicians throughout the state. Legislation based on the Twenty-First Century Commission's recommendations was defeated in the New York State Senate in four consecutive years. In 1994, New York's three-term democratic governor was defeated by a Republican, pro-business platform, with the help of a high voter turnout in the northern New York counties. A major theme for the years following the commission would be the erosion of a longtime top-down planning process in the park.

Ross Whaley, a member of the Twenty-First Century Commission, reflects on the events leading up to its formation, summarizes the recommendations made, and offers some lessons learned from the experience. Although the recommendations on park administration, economic revitalization, open space conservation, and other matters were never formally adopted, the public backlash from these years did lead to substantive changes in the political landscape of the park. As Whaley observes, "The commission made a mistake in not appreciating the difference between public input and public involvement." The new citizens' groups that emerged in the 1990s were no longer going to let the state government set the policy agenda for the region. For example, the Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages (<http://aatvny.org>) formed to give locally elected officials a voice at the planning table, and the Residents' Committee to Protect the Adirondacks (<http://www.rcpa.org>) formed to give a voice to local environmentalists, giving balance to what had long been viewed as a downstate-only environmental agenda. An era of nearly universal top-down planning that began with the APA Act was coming to a close.

The new paradigm was to be tested almost immediately. In the wake of the defeat of the 1990 Environmental Bond Act, New York citizens demanded a more clearly defined rationale for land and water conservation needs and a stronger local voice in state land acquisition. In response, in 1992 the state produced the first statewide Open Space Conservation Plan with input from nine Regional Advisory Committees jointly appointed by the state and local governments. The plan was to be revised every three years and provide for the rationale and public process to guide state land conservation efforts.¹² The Forest Preserve was to expand throughout the 1990s and into the twenty-first century under new Bond Acts, and an annual State Environmental Protection Fund was created in 1993—accomplishing one of the more controversial recommendations of the commission for more open space protection. But the politics of land acquisition was to find greater balance between local and state agendas, as well as between outright state land acquisition and purchase of development rights.

The growing use of conservation easements was to help define the state conservation agenda through the 1990s and into the twenty-first century. With easements, the state and conservation organizations such as the Nature Conservancy could buy development rights on private lands in return for public recreation access and sustainable forestry plans. Easements offered a way to keep large parcels of forest in timber production and reduce the expense of outright purchase and tax and overhead costs on protected land. The organizing principle in the northeastern United States had become the concept of the "working forest"—emerging from a U.S. Forest Service-funded study of the Northern Forest of New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine—and easements became a tool of compromise between outright preservation and outright development. Special resources such as waterways and recreation-access corridors continued to be added to the Adirondack Forest Preserve, but conservation easements resulted in the protection from development and continued timber output of the vast private forest holdings of Lyons Falls, Champion International, International Paper, and, most recently, Finch-Pruyn.

The forest industry perspective reflects on regional, national, and international trends and challenges, including this recent spate of conservation easements. Roger Dziengeleski presents the perspective of the manager of woodlands for Finch Paper LLC, a privately held pulp and paper mill that for more than a century was one of the largest private owners of managed timberland in the park. He outlines the economic climate of a rapidly changing forest-products industry in the northeastern United States that has led to the sale of hundreds of thousands of acres in the last few decades, and homes in on the shared threat of parcelization to both the preservationist and forest management agendas. Parcelization to a forest-products manager is not just the threat of home and large-lot owners no longer interested in active timber management. It also means parcelization because of state land purchases. Dziengeleski the optimist sees the emergence of third-party certification of sustainable forestry and the potential of easements to keep land in timber production as an indication

of "a social tolerance for local forest-products manufacturing." But his skeptical side wonders if it is all too little, too late for a forest-products industry that has lost much of its historic infrastructure, faces an ecological crisis from beech bark disease and other threats to forest health, and is today left with a legacy of regulation on private lands that unwittingly lead to much "high-grading" and consequent degradation of stand quality and resilience.

The move away from purely top-down management of the park—as reflected by these new tools for land conservation and new dialogues with the public and forest-products industry—also found its way to the changing face of the Adirondack Park Agency. Richard Lefebvre was one of several agency commissioners in the 1990s who were hand-picked by the AATV, representing the rise of the influence of locally elected officials. Lefebvre went on to chair the APA over a period that he calls the years of reconciliation, communication, and education. As he observes, "Right or wrong, the locals of the park felt disenfranchised, and there was now a chance to bring them into the process." In the final chapter of this section, Lefebvre brings an insider's view to the changing tone of Adirondack politics. Whether one agreed or disagreed with the policies or day-to-day management decisions of those years, Lefebvre brought a much-needed civility, openness, and inclusiveness to the debate. The pendulum was to swing more toward an economic development agenda for the region, an agenda many feel the APA Act promised but never delivered.

In the end, sustainable development calls for both ecological and economic strength and resilience. If the Adirondack experiment is to be successful, it will ultimately require a balanced approach. It is neither a park only for people, nor a park only for the rest of nature, but a vision for integrated conservation and development. But can the Adirondacks be all things for everybody? Can conservation and development ultimately coexist? What visions of the future are grounded in the realities of both our biophysical constraints and our evolutionary upbringings as social beings? Although parts one and two of the book help to tell the story of the ecological and social

underpinnings of this great experiment in conservation, we will turn to these much more difficult questions in part three, considering perspectives on the future of the Adirondacks, as well as lessons that this special place might provide for the rest of the world.