



Governor signs off on fire towers, Moose River Plains

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RAY BROOK - In one of his final acts before leaving office, Gov. David Paterson has approved state land classifications recommended by the Adirondack Park Agency for state lands inside the Adirondack Park.

The announcement represents the culmination of three major state land planning efforts completed in 2010 by the APA and the state Department of Environmental Conservation:

- Reclassification recommendations in the Moose River Plains Wild Forest, including creation of a new Little Moose Mountain Wilderness Area and establishment of a new Intensive Use Camping Area.

- Classification of the historic fire towers on Hurricane and St. Regis mountains to a Historic Classification and reclassification of the former Hurricane Mountain Primitive Area to wilderness.

- Approval of annual state land classification recommendations by the agency for newly acquired lands being added to the Forest Preserve. The governor's approval involves lands in 10 counties including: Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Herkimer, Lewis, St. Lawrence and Warren with major new additions to the Chazy Highlands Wild Forest and High Peaks Wilderness areas.

"My approval represents a balanced approach for a truly wild place that also serves as home to approximately 135,000 permanent residents and is a vital four-season recreational asset for New York state," Paterson said in a Thursday news release.

The governor's action allows the DEC to implement the final unit management plans for the Moose River Plains Wild Forest and the Moose River Plains Intensive Use Camping Area. The APA says the plans will

enhance traditional camping activity, improve snowmobile and mountain bike opportunities, create a historic area management plan for the Great Camp Sagamore historic resources and implement river area management plans in accordance with the state Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act.

The Historic Fire Tower designation approved by Governor Paterson involved the reclassification of 13,742 acres of state lands resulting in the creation of the Hurricane Mountain Wilderness Area and the Hurricane Mountain Fire Tower Historic Area in Essex County as well as the St. Regis Mountain Fire Tower Historic Area in Franklin County.

"The fire towers, along with the rangers assigned to them, were instrumental in protecting the Forest Preserve, managing recreational use and cultivating a conservation ethic in the early twentieth century," Paterson said. "Our action today affirms the state's commitment to wilderness and honors the historic significance these fire towers represent to so many people throughout the Adirondacks, this great state and nation."

Additionally, the Governor endorsed recommendations proposed in the 2010 Annual Classification action which included 91 state land classifications totaling approximately 31,056 acres and four state land reclassifications totaling an estimated 468 acres. This action established the Chazy Highlands Wild Forest Unit by classifying 17,190 acres of state land as Wild Forest in the towns of Dannemora and Saranac - including the Lyon Mountain tract. The other major classification is the Tahawas/Henderson Lake parcel in the town of Newcomb. This area was classified as Wilderness and was added to the High Peaks Wilderness Area.

"The governor's approval is a testament that the Adirondack Park is beloved by a broad range of user groups," APA Chairman Curtis F. Stiles said in a news release. "Their passions were clearly evident from the extensive public input received during this comprehensive planning process. The Adirondack Park is a unique destination in the world and his approvals will provide opportunities for everyone to enjoy the natural wonders of the Adirondacks for generations to come."