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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
 TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC ADIRONDACK FOREST PRESERVE

AND/OR COMMON Adirondack Forest Preserve

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Northeastern New York State

CITY, TOWN Raybrook \_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
29, 30, 31

STATE New York VICINITY OF CODE COUNTY CODE  
 36 Essex 31

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES, RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES, UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Preserve

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME New York State and Multiple Owners

STREET & NUMBER Adirondack Park Agency

CITY, TOWN Raybrook STATE New York  
 VICINITY OF

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC Adirondack Park Agency

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Raybrook STATE New York

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE None

DATE \_\_FEDERAL \_\_STATE \_\_COUNTY \_\_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE (expanded)
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Adirondack Forest Preserve presently encloses the Adirondack Mountains within a six million acre region spread over twelve counties in northeast New York.

The Adirondacks themselves cover approximately 5000 square miles in the area bounded by the Hudson River and Lake Champlain on the east, the St. Lawrence River on the northwest, and the Mohawk river valley on the south. The Adirondacks do not form a connected chain like the Appalachians but consist of many summits in isolation or in groups. There are approximately 100 peaks over 1200' and the highest is Mount Marcy, at 5344'.

The Adirondacks were formed by the faulting of the earth's crust, and by erosion. The eastern half of the region generally has a more rugged appearance. The retreat of the glaciers which covered the Adirondack region has left over 200 lakes which are at least a square mile in area. In addition there are countless smaller lakes and ponds as well as swamps and spectacular waterfalls and gorges. Several rivers and streams have their sources in the Adirondacks as well.

Approximately 2.3 million acres of the Preserve are owned by the State of New York, and the remaining 3.7 million acres are privately owned. The state has created several parks, trails and camp grounds throughout the Preserve, and has recently prohibited any motor vehicles or permanent habitation from one million acres of forest.

There are 125,000 permanent residents in the Adirondacks in addition to the many seasonal residents. In light of the increased development of the private lands within the Preserve, strict population density regulations have recently been implemented.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1885

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Adirondack Forest Preserve became the first state forest preserve in the nation when New York established it as a wilderness area in 1885. Since that date, innumerable other state forest reserves have been created, following the precedent created by the Empire State over 77 years ago.

The legislative act of 1885 provided that all state-owned lands in the eleven county Adirondack region plus three counties in the Catskill Mountains would become preserve, and would thus be protected from the deprecations which private and commercial interests had incurred. Today, the Adirondack Forest Preserve, plus the Catskill timber lands, includes some 2,500,000 acres of state-owned land. In addition to providing for the continued protection of the forests, the preserve also serves as a vast recreational area. The state has developed 40 camping sites, plus many other opportunities for the enjoyment of the out-of-doors. Roads make many areas in the preserve accessible to the hiker and camper.

Prior to 1885, private and commercial interests had made great and destructive inroads upon New York's timber lands. Lumbermen invaded the Adirondack region as early as 1813, and by the early 1860's vast areas in the Adirondack Mountains has been swept clean of trees. A protest against such wanton timbering appeared in the New York Times in 1864, plus a plea that a park be created in the Adirondacks. Further outcries against the despoilation of the mountainous area failed to halt the march of the axe. But some hope appeared on the horizon in 1872, when the state established a State Park Commission and authorized a survey of the lands in dispute. Verplanck Colvin, who had been among those calling for the protection of the Adirondack region, undertook the survey. In his reports, he never failed to advocate state action to preserve the lands he was surveying. As the years marched past, Colvin and other early participants in the struggle received increasing support in the fight to save the Adirondacks.

By the early 1880's, many in New York favored measures to save the state's timber lands. The New York Chamber of Commerce joined the cause in 1883; much more significantly, the New York Board of Trade and Transportation also threw its influence behind the campaign in the same year. The latter body, unlike other groups, never gave up the fight, even when the cause seemed hopeless, and it played a major role in bringing about final success. The increasing clamor about the Adirondacks prompted some stirrings in the state legislature, but the legislators steadfastly ignored the reports of various committees appointed to

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- S.S. Bradford. "Adirondack Forest Preserve," National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings form 10-317, 2/4/63.
- Alfred L. Donaldson. A History of the Adirondacks, 2 vols. New York, 1921.
- Alexander C. Flick, editor. History of the State of New York, 10 vols. New York: 1937.
- Anne LaBastille. "My Backyard, the Adirondacks," National Geographic, vol. 147, no. 5, May, 1975.
- Arthur Recknagel and Samuel Spring. Forestry. New York, 1929.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 6 million acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Richard Greenwood, Historian, Landmark Review Task Force

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

DATE

2/19/76

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE

202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington, D.C. 20240

STATE

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL     

STATE     

LOCAL     

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

**Landmark Designated:** MAY 23 1963  
date

**Boundary Certified:** [Signature]  
DATE: MAY 10, 1979

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

See signed letter of May 14, 1979 for Murtagh's.  
*(Signature establishing boundary)*

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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investigate the matter. But in 1885, a major breakthrough occurred when the legislature enacted the "first comprehensive forest administrative act in America."<sup>1</sup>

The act of 1885 created a vast state reserve of all publicly-owned forest lands in eleven counties in the Adirondacks, plus three counties in the Catskill Mountains. This landmark legislation stated that those lands were to be kept as a wilderness, never to be leased or sold. In addition, the act established a forest commission, the second in the country, to administer the reserve's lands. Although a gigantic step forward had been taken, loose administration by the forest commission aided and abetted further depredations of the Adirondack forests, so much so that great public resentment welled up in defense of the reserve. With the approach of a state constitutional convention in 1894, advocates of the wilderness area hit upon the scheme of bringing the new constitution to the defense of the state's forest areas. And the convention unanimously adopted a provision (Article VII, Sec. 7) that declared the state's present or future timber lands should always be kept as a wilderness, and that no timber should ever be sold from those lands. This provision has protected the Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserves to this time.

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The boundaries of the Adirondack Forest Preserve National Historic Landmark are defined in the letter from Dr. William J. Murtagh, Keeper of the National Register, to Mr. H. V. Decker, Director, Forest Resources, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, May 14, 1979. The letter is part of the National Register form and constitutes, among other things, the verbal boundary description of the Adirondack Forest Preserve National Historic Landmark.