NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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
STATE New York
VICINITY OF

3 CLASSIFICATION
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>PRESENT USE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>DISTRICT</em></td>
<td><em>PUBLIC</em></td>
<td><em>X OCCUPIED</em></td>
<td><em>AGRICULTURE</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>BUILDING(S)</em></td>
<td><em>PRIVATE</em></td>
<td><em>UNOCCUPIED</em></td>
<td><em>COMMERCIAL</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>STRUCTURE</em></td>
<td><em>X BOTH</em></td>
<td><em>WORK IN PROGRESS</em></td>
<td><em>EDUCATIONAL</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>SITE</em></td>
<td>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</td>
<td>ACCESSIBLE</td>
<td><em>PRIVATE RESIDENCE</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>OBJECT</em></td>
<td><em>IN PROCESS</em></td>
<td><em>X YES. RESTRICTED</em></td>
<td><em>ENTERTAINMENT</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>BEING CONSIDERED</em></td>
<td><em>YES. UNRESTRICTED</em></td>
<td><em>GOVERNMENT</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>NO</em></td>
<td><em>INDUSTRIAL</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>SCIENTIFIC</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>TRANSPORTATION</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>MILITARY</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>X OTHER</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
CITY, TOWN
STATE
### DESCRIPTION

**CONDITION**

| X EXCELLENT | _DETERIORATED |
| _GOOD       | _RUINS       |
| _FAIR       | _UNEXPOSED   |

**CHECK ONE**

| X ORIGINAL SITE (expanded) |
| _MOVED_ DATE__________    |

---

**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.
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 depredations 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
**MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**


**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

- **ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY**: 6 million acres

**UTM REFERENCES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZONE</th>
<th>EASTING</th>
<th>NORTING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZONE</th>
<th>EASTING</th>
<th>NORTING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

See continuation sheet

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>CODE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**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 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.

**FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE**

- **TITLE**: Landmark
- **DESIGNATED**: May 7, 1963
- **BOUNDARY CERTIFIED**: Aug. 10, 1969
- **DATE**: May 14, 1979

**DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

- **DATE**:

**KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER**

- **SIGNATURE**: Establishing National Historic Landmark Boundary
investigate the matter. But in 1885, a major breakthrough occurred when the legislature enacted the "first comprehensive forest administrative act in America."\(^1\)

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.
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.
Dear Mr. Decker:

After reviewing the proposal made in your letter of November 21, 1977, reading The Adirondack Forest Preserve: A Chronology supplied by your office, and talking with Mr. Peter R. Borrilli of your staff, we concur in the boundary you have proposed for the Adirondack Forest Preserve National Historic Landmark. We are amending the present documentation form for the landmark, limiting the acreage to State-owned land within the Adirondack Park as defined by the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan. We recognize that the boundaries will increase as the State acquires land. The acreage will be documented cartographically in our files with the single Master Plan map in which shades of green indicate State-owned land. It is our understanding that your office will supply us with updated copies of that map to reflect changes in State ownership. It is also our understanding that detailed State ownership records and maps will be available in your office as they are needed for compliance with section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The forms’ list of counties included in the landmark will be corrected to include Saratoga, Oneida, Washington, and Lewis. We will send you a copy of the corrected form.

We are also using this occasion to clarify the meaning and scope of the Adirondack Forest Preserve National Historic Landmark designation. The landmark designation commemorates the precedent of New York’s early legal conservation measures and encourages the preservation— as historic resources—of the general forest resources and manifestations of appropriate public use that derive from that original legislative and constitutional action.

We will be glad to talk in greater detail about the meaning of the landmark designation with the State Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, who are responsible for determining the scope and nature of compliance with State environmental legislation and section 106 of the NHPA.
This general national landmark designation of State-owned land within the Adirondack Park does not satisfy the NPS requirement for a systematic inventory of specific historic, architectural, and archaeological resources in that area. Although properties such as Fort Crown Point are already listed in the National Register, it is our understanding that a systematic inventory has not been done. We anticipate that such an inventory would identify significant individual properties or complexes important either for their association with the development of the park or with other themes. We encourage all appropriate States offices to participate in a survey process in the near future and to evaluate unsurveyed properties carefully if they will be affected by change before the full inventory is complete.

Please let us know if you need additional information or documentation.

Sincerely,

(Sgd.) William J. Murtaugh

William J. Murtaugh
Keeper of the National Register

cc: Mr. Orin Lehman
Commissioner
Parks and Recreation
Agency Building #1
Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12238

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
1522 K Street NW, Suite 430
Washington, D.C. 20005

bcc: Director's Reading File
FRR: B Lebovich:ggk:343-6401
BASIC FILE RETAINED IN NR
ADIRONDACK PARK
STATE LAND MASTER PLAN
STATE OF NEW YORK
ADIRONDACK PARK AGENCY
SEPTEMBER 1974

Prepared by Cartographic Services Section of the Office of Planning Services

Wilderness
Wild Forest
Intensive Use
Primitive Area
New Acquisition Not Yet Classified

Adirondack Park Boundary

Scenic Vista
Boundaries
IS New Acquisition Not Yet Classified

Base map copyright by N Y S Department of Transportation