



ADIRONDACK COUNCIL
Defending the East's Greatest Wilderness

April 7, 2008

Honorable Cecil Wray
 Commissioner
 Adirondack Park Agency
 P.O. Box 99
 Ray Brook, NY 12977

Dear Commissioner Wray,

On behalf of the Adirondack Council, I wish to thank the Adirondack Park Agency (APA), and particularly its Enforcement committee and staff, for its continued efforts to strengthen the program most central to deterring violations of the Adirondack Park Agency Act. Without a strong set of laws and diligent enforcement, the Adirondacks would have become just another fragmented and over-developed area. We write also to urge you to impose the maximum penalties on the most recalcitrant of resource and rural land exploiters. When developers, be they wealthy agribusinessmen or shoreline subdividers, flout the law, they must be firmly and consistently punished. Penalties must be hefty enough to strongly discourage additional law-breaking.

At present, one of the developers most in need of deterrence is Leroy Douglas, infamous in the Silver Lake area for his bullying and bulldozing. We would urge the APA and DEC to continue to carefully investigate his developments and take decisive action against all infractions of the APA Act and Freshwater Wetlands Act. In particular, his bulldozing a road through a wetland should be met with a substantial fine in order to send a clear message that flagrant violations will not be tolerated. This is especially true of apparent violators who attempt to use intimidation to advance their illegal actions.

The Council notes that the Silver Lake area, and Douglas's lands in particular, are of great conservation importance. Much of the southern shore of Silver Lake is in Forest Preserve; just north of the lake is Adirondack Nature Conservancy's Silver Lake Bog Preserve. The extensive Silver Lake shoreline owned by Douglas is recognized by the state as a conservation priority in the 2005 Open Space Plan.

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Whereas private land owners serving as good stewards should be financially rewarded through tax breaks and other financial incentives, owners of important lands who are illegally damaging those lands should be punished to the maximum extent of the law. Only then will the unique public/private mix that is the Adirondack Park realize its potential as an international model for conservation and sustainable use.

Sincerely,

Scott M. Lorey

Scott M. Lorey
Legislative Director

Cc: Enforcement committee
Paul Van Cott