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# Wilderness Ideology and the Formation of the Adirondack Park Policies

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Carlos Piedad  
Summer Research Report  
Kelly Adirondack Center Fellowship

### **Wilderness Ideology and the Formation of the Adirondack Park Policies**

The Adirondacks, and more specifically the Adirondack Park, is one of the most uniquely managed regions in the United States. Perhaps as unique as its management is the precedent set by a history of wilderness ideology that took special shape in the region, allowing the Adirondacks to hold off development pressures and creating the largest protected area in the contiguous United States.

For those who spend their lives working in conservationist organizations within the park, a common understanding is that in most parts of the United States, and indeed within New York State, people possess little knowledge on what the Adirondack Park even is. Despite the Adirondacks being a household name as equally recognizable to most as several famous national parks, few understand what this entity is and why it is important. Before delving into this research, I myself had almost no understanding and thought it was simply another National Park. However, the Adirondack Park is not a National Park. It is not federally owned, funded or protected. It is not a continuous wilderness either. And yet despite all this, the park is not necessarily at any disadvantage when compared to other, more restricted and federally owned protected areas.

The Adirondack Park is in fact larger than Yellowstone, Grand Canyon, and Yosemite combined. Nowhere, besides Alaska, could a protected area reach the enormous size of 6 million acres. And so, without the assistance of the federal government and famed conservationists like Teddy Roosevelt, how did this park come to be what it is today? The answer lies in its

comparatively less restrictive nature, which at first may seem unintuitive. The area of Adirondack Park, in stark contrast to National Parks, is currently 49% privately owned. The majority of the Park's inhabited history is encompassed by attempts to find a harmony between private property and development, and conservation efforts to protect the iconic landscapes and vital natural resources.

One of the most important efforts to find this "balance" between the ultimate goals of Adirondack Park management was the formation of the Temporary Study Commission on the Future of the Adirondacks. In 1968, New York State Governor, Nelson Rockefeller, announced his formation of a commission led by thirteen experts to "review in depth the problems of the area and to develop alternatives for the future of the Adirondacks to best serve the people of our state" (as cited in Prospectus, New York State Archives). The commission was asked to study, in depth, seven questions asked by Governor Rockefeller regarding state land acquisition, private land development control, recreational development, federal participation, management flexibility, wilderness protection, and public land consolidation (NYS Archives, 1969). The recommendations of this two year-long commission were the basis of the major private and public land development policies that still exist today. Nelson Rockefeller is often praised for his foresight in addressing the threats to the Adirondacks that could have destroyed the most valuable qualities of the Adirondack Park. However, Rockefeller's actions are just a chapter in a long history of preventing the destruction of the Adirondacks. In order to understand how the state was able to act so quickly against development pressures, one must first look to the history of the park's formation and the unique legislation that has protected it for one hundred twenty-five years.

The Adirondack Park was created in 1892, right at the tail end of the Gilded Age; an era in which the natural environment was looked at with the same disregard as immigrant laborers. The Adirondacks were no exception, and an 1870s description of the southern region of the Adirondacks, by the American Forestry Congress member J. B. Harrison, describes an area that would be unrecognizable to someone who visited the park today. He writes, "From Minerva, past Pottersville, Schroon Lake, Schroon River (Roots Hotel) and on along the Elizabethtown road past Deadwater to the new road that leads through the forest to Smith and Beede's, we traveled all day long through the blighted and hopeless land. As league after league of utter desolation unrolled before and around us, we became more and more silent" (as cited in Graham, 1984 pg. 66). Descriptions like these are the sort of nightmare realities that conservationists wanted to protect the Adirondacks from moving forward. The trend of clear cutting and burning for the charcoal industry, as well as other threats from increasing affluent tourism, and the timber industry, ravaged the Adirondack region. As Frank Graham highlights, "New York had done little or nothing to protect its forests. Much land, cut over and burned, had been abandoned by owners as worthless and returned to the state" (74). There existed a dangerous trend of only valuing land for its extractable natural resources, and the state's complicity led some to advocate for protective action.

Foremost among these early activists was Albany native, Verplanck Colvin. Colvin was known for his passionate love of the Adirondack mountains and illustrative writings, which proved to have great influence on the public. In the late 1860s, Verplanck wrote for the New York State Museum of Natural History's Annual Report to the Legislature. In this report he cited his own experiences to discuss the importance of the Adirondack wilderness as New York's most

important watershed. Colvin pointed to the chopping and burning of wood as the main cause of the watershed's destruction, while painting a vivid image of how this practice disrupts the water cycle. It was within this report that he proposed an Adirondack Park or a timber preserve as a remedy to control irresponsible forest management (as cited in Graham pg. 70). And so, the idea for the protection of New York's watershed and timber supply through an Adirondack Park was introduced. The formation of the Adirondack Park was not originally for the intent of recreational enjoyment as it was for National Parks forming in the same time period. However, these desires did come about later on. The State paid little mind to the suggestion of a park until a cultural shift came about in the 1890s, led by doctors who described the health benefits of the wilderness as a sort of "sanatorium" and from sportsmen who saw value in protecting natural resources for better hunting and fishing (Graham, 1984 pg. 121). Then finally, on May second of 1892, the Adirondack Park was formed through the Adirondack Park Enabling Act.

The formation of the park was an important step towards a better managed Adirondacks, but it only applied to public lands in the park, which the Forest Commission could still sell or lease. The most important legislative action for the region's protection came two years later during the 1894 Constitutional Convention, in which Article VII was written and passed. This amendment has since been moved to Article XIV, but is famously known as the "Forever Wild Clause". The original two sentence provision ensures that all Forest Preserve land "shall not be leased, sold or exchanged, or be taken by any corporation, public or private, nor shall the timber thereon be sold, removed or destroyed" (1894 NYS Const. art. VII, § 7). This constitutional amendment provides the state land within the Adirondack Park, as well as the Catskills, with the highest degree of protection assurance that the State could provide. The idea of allocating land

just for the sake of preservation was almost unheard of at the time, and represented a significant change for the State of New York. The State went from paying little mind to the management of Adirondacks and encouraging settlement, to prioritizing its eternal protection in its constitution. Something like the Adirondack Park's formation could only have happened in the era that it did. There was enough political support and pressure, while the region was still lightly populated and a lot of land had already been turned over to the state. That is not to say that it was easy. Despite this constitutional promise to keep these state lands forever wild, there were still challenges to this novelty idea.

Perhaps the most impactful of these challenges to the "Forever Wild" clause of the constitution came in the 1930 landmark court case, *The Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks v. MacDonald*. The Association, as it is commonly referred, had been a conservation organization since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Their founders understood, only a few years after the Article VII amendment was written, that third party accountability would be necessary in order to protect the Adirondack Park from threats, including the State's negligence. Their foresight was proved to be especially useful when, in 1929, the Conservation Department's (now Department of Environmental Conservation) first ever Conservation Commissioner, Alexander MacDonald, authorized in the Laws of 1929 the construction of a bobsleigh run on Forest Preserve land. It was the duty of the Conservation Department to protect and manage the lands of the Forest Preserve, and yet they authorized this construction project which would require four acres of land below Mt. Van Hoevenberg to be destroyed (Gibson, 2019). This bobsleigh run was planned to be constructed for the winter Olympics that were to be held in the nearby town of Lake Placid. The pressures for development have been a continuous threat to the Adirondacks

since before the American Revolution, when the King laid claim to all pine trees of appropriate dimension to be reserved as the masts of His Majesty's Royal Navy. The pressure of the global eye of the Olympics had pushed the Conservation Department to approve of a small bobsleigh development, and the Association took them to court for being incompliant with the Article VII of the State Constitution. The case eventually rose to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court and then the Court of Appeals, which is the highest court of New York.

The Association won the case in both courts, and the opinions of the judges famously set a precedent for the importance of wilderness and the legitimacy of the Forever Wild clause. In January of 1930, when the case was in the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, Judge Harold Hinman spoke in length of the intentions of those who participated in the 1894 Constitutional Convention, the men who wrote Article VII. In his opinion he said that "the convention deliberately chose to perpetuate the Forest Preserve as just 'wild forest lands'. Not a door was permitted to be open which might convert this preserve into anything but a wilderness" (Assn. for Protection of Adirondacks v. MacDonald, Jan 1930). This language persists throughout the judge's opinion as his main reason for siding with the Association. Judge Hinman believed that the original intent of those who wrote Article VII mattered greatly, and so he cited the actual records of the Constitutional Convention. Judge Hinman noted that they had strongly advocated for specific language, such as the inclusion of the word "destroyed" so that proposed projects that might not remove trees directly but would damage them could not be permitted. The committee which wrote the amendment saw to it that there would be no cutting of timber for any reason, including for state sale of fuel. They wanted to not permit a door to be open. The convention members saw that any intrusion on the Forest Preserve could set a dangerous

precedent which would make the “forever wild” clause futile. It was clear that Judge Hinman agreed with the Association, that MacDonald and the Conservation Department’s actions would set such a precedent.

Hinman continued, after establishing the intent of the convention committee, to defend Article VII and the need to preserve a wilderness. At times his opinion seems to resemble more the writings of someone like Verplanck Colvin than an impartial judge. The defendants had tried to argue that the construction of a bobsleigh run fell within one of the purposes of the Forest Preserve, which is to be open for the enjoyment of the people. Hinman concluded that the idea of the park was to be open for people to visit and admire the wild forests, not to ride down a bobsleigh. The judge further emphasized in his opinion the purpose of the Forest Preserve is intended to provide a wilderness experience for all. And he said:

We must preserve it in its wild nature, its trees, its rocks, its streams. It was to be a great resort for the free use of all the people, but it was made a wild resort in which nature is given free rein. Its uses for health and pleasure must not be inconsistent with its preservation as forest lands in a wild state. It must always retain the character of a wilderness.

In March of the same year, the case moved up to the Court of Appeals, in which Judge Frederick Evan Crane gave his opinion that contained several similarities to the concurring opinion of Judge Hinman. He pointed out that when the building of roads were authorized, they were done so through a constitutional amendment, which is not the procedure that had been followed by the Conservation Commissioner. Judge Crane reminded the court that “What may be done in these forest lands to preserve them or to open them up for the use of the public, or what reasonable cutting or removal of timber may be necessitated in order to properly preserve the State Park, we are not at this time called upon to determine” (Assn. Protection Adirondacks



v. MacDonald, 1930). This dismisses any argument that the removal of timber for any of the aforementioned reasons does not constitute timber removal for anything else. Notably, Judge Crane references Robert “Bob” Marshall’s essay “The Problem with Wilderness” when giving the example of camping as a wilderness use that does not interfere with the Park’s preservation, in contrast to an activity such as bobsledding.

Robert Marshall was the chief founder of the Wilderness Society, though that would not be formed for another five years after the case. However, even during the year 1930, Marshall was known as an extremely passionate wilderness advocate. The article which was cited by Judge Crane, was not, as the title may seem, a description of what is wrong with wilderness areas. Rather it is one of Marshall’s most cited works, in which he gives his views on the benefits of wilderness, how it can be preserved, and even provides his own definition of wilderness as “region which contains no permanent inhabitants, possesses no possibility of conveyance by any mechanical means and is sufficiently spacious that a person in crossing it must have the experience of sleeping out” (Marshall, 1930). It is within this article for the journal, *Scientific Monthly*, that Marshall poetically articulates a case for the physical, mental and esthetic benefits wilderness has on man. Marshall refers to life without a chance of wilderness experiences as “a dreary game, scarcely bearable in its horrible banality” (Marshall, 1930). Such writing, it would seem, would have little place in a court room. And yet it is clear that Judge Crane, of the highest New York court, does subscribe, at least in part, to the ideas of Robert Marshall. It should be noted that Marshall’s article was released just one month before Judge Crane delivered his opinion, meaning that he was following Marshall fairly closely.

The Association v. MacDonald court decisions not only further instilled the notion that only necessary changes, made through constitutional amendments, to the Forest Preserve's trees and land would be allowed, they also legitimized the importance of wilderness as a resource that all New Yorkers have a right to access. Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, there has been a noticeable trend of a growing wilderness ideology that was almost completely alien to the region during the destructive Gilded Age. Fifty years prior to these court decisions, clear cutting and burning was a common practice in the Adirondacks. Yet by 1930, even judges were reading and citing in their rulings, the writings of the vigorous wilderness activist Robert Marshall. The existence of this growing prioritization of wilderness, and the idea that its access should be a right, is what has allowed for such unique management within the Adirondack Park. After the cases of 1930, it was clear that the legal system would defend these ideas too.

The court opinions of Judge Hinman and Judge Crane are only two examples of how wilderness ideology has long held a privileged position within the Adirondack Park (Vidon, 2016 pg. 100). For a majority of the 1800s and before, the Adirondack's identity was one of ruggedness and opportunity to make a living, or even a fortune, from natural resource extraction. However, overtime that identity has transformed, as cultural shifts allowed for a wilderness identity to begin to take hold. This did not just apply to the Adirondacks. There is a long history of wilderness ideology in America that has found a home among those seeking a spiritual, sublime connection with nature. This came in the form of the transcendentalism, which was a literary movement born out of the Northeast in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. This movement was highly influential and changed the meaning of wilderness in the United States forever. Ideas were brought into the American consciousness that God and profound spirituality could best be found

through nature and in wilderness. In an era characterized by the emerging massive Industrial Revolution, the transcendentalist movement was a spiritual return to the land; something which resonated with many at the time. This new spiritual awakening affected the way Americans viewed their relationship with wild lands and forests.

Ideas of wilderness and preservation are much older than most people realize. The Adirondack Park was created, in part, as a result of the transcendentalist movement that brought to light many of those ideas. Spirituality and sacredness became tied to wilderness; a word that was once had a dark connotations and was synonymous with waste and uselessness. Suddenly, there was considered to be irreplaceable value in the remaining wild lands of the United States, the Adirondacks among them. Wilderness and the need to protect it has become the dominating truth in the Adirondack Park, and that has become intimately tied to the State's power. Wilderness ideology in the park has gained power from several outside Ideological State Apparatus' (ISA) such as the New York State government, nature tourists, wilderness friendly politicians, activists from outside the Park, and many more (Vidon, 2016 pg. 103). Wilderness values carried on strongly through the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the identity of the Adirondack Park, though this identity does not exist alone. There exists so much outside pressure and influence on the park's identity, that local communities and residents feel the need to hold on tight to a competing identity. While wilderness ideology and rhetoric brought in by nature tourists and wilderness advocates do seem to dominate the identity of the park, there is a continuing struggle as "local communities and residents have increasingly sought voice in co-constructing the Park's identity as more than an aesthetic resource offering recreation opportunities for tourists" (Vidon, 2016). This competing identity aligns more with prioritization of economic growth through

manufacturing and resource extraction; essentially having freedom to take advantage of private land. This split in identity is best characterized in an interview with Richard Beamish, who was the Communications Director for the Adirondack Park Agency for the first six years of its existence. When asked about the how New Yorkers felt about the prioritization of the Adirondacks during the time of the Temporary Study Commission, he said “I think a lot of people outside the park who knew anything about the Adirondacks were in favor of protecting it better. Inside the park it was a different story, because the developers and real estate interests didn’t want any kinds of restrictions at all on their activity...local governments opposed it because they resented the idea that a higher form of government was going to come in and tell them what to do. They didn’t like that all, and they fought it fiercely along with the development interests” (Beamish, 2019). Finding a balance between these two identities, through management policies, has been the ultimate goal since the Adirondack Park’s formation. As the 20<sup>th</sup> century carried on, this task would prove to be more necessary and more difficult than ever.

In 1957, Interstate 87 was constructed which provided a major highway that went from New York City, right through the Adirondack Park, and on to Montreal. In the fifties and sixties, the American class was growing both in size and wealth. As a result of this new highway, not only was there an easy route to the Adirondacks from major southern cities like New York and Boston, but more households had the wealth to own a car and access the region. Even more so, a greater number of people had the financial mobility to vacation and own second homes. With the completion of I-87, the economy of the Adirondacks began shifting to a more touristic economy, centered around hotel, resort, second home development. With that new economy came threats of overuse, over visitation of natural areas, erosion, incompatible development, and

more. It was clear that the Adirondack Park was facing its greatest threat yet. Never before had the Adirondack Park had so much development pressure, and threats of this pressure had environmental groups ringing the alarms forcing the state to take action.

The first action that was taken was a proposal, announced on July 27<sup>th</sup> 1967, from Laurence Rockefeller to create a National Park within the Adirondacks as a way to protect the park from the onslaught of visitors and developers. On October 28<sup>th</sup> of 1967, Mr. Rockefeller defended his Adirondack National Park proposal in an address to the Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK), a large influential outdoors enthusiast club. He felt that the support of the ADK would help his proposal become a reality. In the address, he commends the efforts of the commission members who created the “forever wild” constitutional provision, but emphasizes that new threats require new bold actions. He highlights the differences between the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the present. When the constitution was amended to protect the Forest Preserve, New York’s population was 6 million and few could manage a journey to the Adirondacks. Laurence reminded ADK members that “there are 55 million people within a day’s driving distance of the Adirondacks. The new Northway puts millions of them within a few hours” (Rockefeller, 1967). Mr. Rockefeller believed that a management solution to these millions of potential visitors and homeowners would be the creation of a 1.7-million-acre National Park centered in the High Peaks region of the Adirondacks. He explains how the idea came about during a brief meeting with former National Park Director, Connie Wirth, at the 1967 Constitutional Convention. Rockefeller argued that a National Park would allow the federal government to acquire more private land than New York ever could, since federal partnership ensures that needed lands will be acquired. This, he argued, would

reduce the pressures of incompatible development. He highlighted that federal participation would save the state money which could be used to help protect other areas.

The proposal would have been a solution to some of the oncoming threats, though it was ultimately rejected. In fact, the Adirondack Mountain Club responded to Rockefeller's address with disapproval on October 30<sup>th</sup>, only two days later. The ADK shared their faith in the effectiveness of "forever wild" clause, and argued that "the intermingling of private and public land...has also permitted a pattern of use of both which has many advantages and it seems by no means certain that complete consolidation would be desirable" (Adirondack Mountain Club). They went on further to insinuate the pressure for development around the National Park boundary may be much greater as a result of draw of the national park, and that it would be difficult to preserve all other areas of the Forest Preserve. Instead the ADK encouraged the pursuit of easement agreements with private land owners and to expand education and interpretive naturalist programs to aid in public appreciation for the park and to better understand the park's natural value (Adirondack Mountain Club). The National Park Proposal was widely met with skepticism, from advocacy groups like the ADK and from the Conservation Department. The man who would later serve as the Executive Secretary for the Temporary Study Commission on the Future of the Adirondacks, Harold Jerry, authored an official rebuttal to the proposal for the Conservation Department. Mr. Jerry criticized the proposal's land pricing analysis and argued that a National Park would have negative consequences for the wood-use industry, tourism, public recreation, and more (Conservation Department, 1967). Despite the lack of acceptance for the proposal, its impact would prove to influence Laurence Rockefeller's brother and then New York Governor, Nelson Rockefeller.

The question of what should be done to protect the Adirondacks was a hot topic issue for New York, and so when Laurence's solution was found to be undesirable, it was time for his brother Nelson to come up with a solution. In fact, from the moment that it became clear that Laurence's proposal would not succeed, Nelson began designing his plan of creating an Adirondack Park Agency (Folwell, 1989). On September 18<sup>th</sup> of 1968, Nelson Rockefeller appointed the Temporary Study Commission on the Future of the Adirondacks. His goal was to improve on the work of his brother and create a management plan based on the recommendations of this study commission, that would be more encompassing of the two identities of the Adirondack Park, wilderness and development.

The Temporary Study Commission was created in response to the over development threats emerging in the wake of the improved accessibility of the park, but it could not have come at a better time in American history. The nation was coming to terms with the environmental threats and action necessary to mitigate the damage humans have caused. Environmentalism began to see its rise in the early 1960s. What was once a disjointed and anger filled movement was slowly coming together in understanding what the threats to our world are. This is due in large part to Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring*, which focused on the harmful effects of the excessive use of DDT, a chemical pesticide (Shabecoff, 2003 pg. 99). *Silent Spring*, which refers to the declining bird population due to DDT usage, was a bestseller and brought environmental issues into the awareness of millions of Americans. Carson's book, published in 1962, "changed the way Americans, and people around the world, looked at the reckless way we live on this planet" (Shabecoff, 2003 pg. 99). Of course, Carson's *Silent Spring* was not the first book but a scientist highlighting some environmental issue. The book was so significant because of Carson's

ability to present scientific evidence in comprehensible terms to American readers, and because she eloquently tied the destruction of nature with the destruction to human health (Shabecoff, 2003 pg. 101). The wilderness movement was also seeing a surge in activity during this era, with the National Wilderness Preservation System being created through the Wilderness Act of 1964. The Act was written by a member of the Wilderness Society, which was created by the same Robert Marshall who was cited in the 1930 case: *Association v. MacDonald*. Within the Adirondacks themselves, the first federal wilderness area came in 1956. In 1960, the Joint Legislative Committee on National Resources identified eleven wilderness zones in the Adirondacks and recommended further study.

The Temporary Study Commission benefited greatly from the existing momentum of the environmental movements that were coming into fruition during the 60s and 70s. Richard Beamish, responded in the same interview, to a question regarding the importance of the emerging wilderness movement and the acceptance of ecology across the United States to the formation and acceptance of the temporary study commission. Beamish stated, "It was absolutely crucial. The first Earth Day was in April of 1970 and there was a real strong public sentiment in favor of protecting what was left of our natural world. That was critical to the whole thing, ten years later it would have never happened. It certainly wouldn't happen today" (Beamish, 2019). Around the early sixties and into the seventies, an ecological perspective was growing in popularity within the United States. People began to understand, in part because of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, the biological and geological systems and how human actions affected them. For this reason, the Temporary Study Commission focused on the affects human



actions would have on the Adirondacks. It is also why they hired George Davis, a wilderness ecologist, as a staff member.

Though he was not one of the thirteen commission members originally appointed by Governor Rockefeller, George Davis was cited as a major contributor to several of the technical reports released by the Temporary Study Commission. Through his research and field reports, George Davis further solidified what was deemed appropriate for wilderness areas, what belongs within them and what does not. Davis highlighted the problems that currently existed in wilderness management, and even studied a few development proposals within the Adirondacks. Throughout the duration of the Temporary Study Commission, which lasted two years, George Davis went on dozens of field trips throughout the Adirondacks and throughout the country. He sent back to the commission his field reports which would shape the many of the recommendations given in the Commission's technical reports.

On June 26<sup>th</sup> of 1969, George Davis went on a field trip to the Great Gulf Wilderness in New Hampshire, which borders the famous Presidential Mountain Range. George Davis traveled with fellow staff members Harold Dyer, a recreational specialist, and Clarence Petty, a Forest Preserve specialist. The purpose of their visit was to look at the Forest Service's wilderness and non-wilderness management work. The Forest Service, Davis claims, "has pioneered wilderness management" (Davis, 1969), as they were the first to officially designate a wilderness area in 1924 with the Gila Wilderness in New Mexico. At the time, the Adirondacks had only officially designated one wilderness area, though many more had identified for further study. The Great Gulf Wilderness was at the time, the smallest wilderness within the Forest Service, at only 5,400 acres. During their trip they drove up the up Mount Washington, which takes a private toll road

to the peak which is also privately owned. In his field report, Davis said “[the] peak was a depressing sight – it is privately owned also and has several shabby buildings and a cog railroad on it” (Davis, 1969). It was clear that he saw these establishments, geared towards maximizing tourist visitation, as inappropriate for the nature of the region. The highest peak in the Northeast will forever be tainted by man’s over presence. Davis also took the time to mention a steel bridge that they came across within the wilderness area, noting that it was very much out of place. In his field reports, Davis commends all necessary structures that are made of local wood and blend within the surrounding, but shows clear disapproval for structures like the steel bridge. The aesthetic value of a wilderness is quite important to him, as it is to those who seek a spiritual experience within a wilderness area. There is no doubt that a steel bridge would last much longer than a wooden bridge, and due to the lack of maintenance required would save money in the long run. However, Davis and other wilderness advocates value a less intrusive approach to wilderness management more than they do making or saving money.

Though many of Davis’ critiques seem to be against private property and development, he was by no means an advocate for complete state consolidation. As was the goal of the Study Commission, Davis believed that a management strategy that incorporate public and private participation was of great value. In fact, in his visit to the Great Gulf Wilderness, he praised the private Appalachian Mountain Club for their private mountain huts which provide meals and bunks to travelers needing to escape the dangerous and volatile weather of this mountain range. Although, even here he says that “these shelters are far from aesthetic” (Davis, 26 June 1969). Further critiques of the wilderness management were the lack of proper signage, which is also a very common theme in Davis’ reports. He notes that a pass they were planning on using had

been closed due to an avalanche, but they received this information from one of the cooks in the Appalachian Mountain Club's huts. George Davis argued consistently that signage and greater availability of education would be the greatest tool to help prevent further destruction.

Another example of Davis' approval for private participation came when he visited Tennessee's Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Davis had a lot of praise for the management of the Great Smoky Mountains, which he believed "is the only unit in the National Park System comparable to the Adirondacks" (Davis, 6 Aug. 1969) due to its similar visitation rates and vegetation. Davis felt that their Resource Management Plan was so good that it should be used as a model for the Adirondacks, and that "using the ecosystem as the management unit was the key to the plan" (Davis, 6 Aug. 1969). He also praised the mutual participation of private and public land being used as camping sites. He writes:

The Park Service hopes to encourage private campgrounds just outside the park and is successfully accomplishing this by promising not to build any more public campgrounds as long as private ones are available. The private campgrounds are flourishing under this policy and the pressure is lessened on the park. Private campground fees range from \$2.50 to \$5.00 while the Park Service charge is only \$1.00. Naturally the public areas fill first but there is no revolt from visitors who must then go to the private area. Serious consideration should be given to adopting this policy in the Adirondacks.

This is an example of finding park management policies that might allow for the coexistence of the two identities within the Adirondack Park. Davis continues praising the Smoky Mountains for their visitor centers and interpretive works, and compared it to the interpretive and conservation education fields that are being largely neglected within the Adirondacks. His one critique, was on the once again based on aesthetics. He felt that there were too many visitors and that the part entrance gate had a "honky-tonk atmosphere". Through visiting and studying established wilderness areas and parks, Davis was able to provide the Temporary Study Commission with well-informed recommendations on how to establish better management strategies for the

publicly owned land within the Adirondack Park. His guidance would help ensure that wilderness areas, and Forest Preserve land, would be properly maintained for the benefit of the people

On January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1971, the Temporary Study Commission for the Future of the Adirondacks finished their work and Governor Rockefeller released their report. Unlike the reception of Laurence's National Park Proposal, the 181 recommendations that resulted from the two-year study were widely praised. On February 18<sup>th</sup> of 1971, David L. Newhouse, the President of the Constitutional Council for the Forest Preserve, released a statement on the Study Commission's work and reports. He said "my pleasure results from the nearly unanimous acceptance by conservationist all around the state of the intent of the Commission report. In fact, I have not heard of opposition from a single conservation group" (Newhouse, 1971). Newhouse remembers the general pessimism that originally surrounded the study commission, but that now more than twenty-five organizations have stated their approval of the basic recommendations. This overwhelming support showed how strong the tides of change were at this time in the Adirondacks. Conservationists could appreciate the multifaceted approach to the studying of the threats to the Adirondacks, while also seeing the inclusion of private property and development opportunities as a key to the recommendation's acceptance and success.

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