

Editorial

Tremendous possibilities for Follensby Park tract

What lies ahead for the 14,600-acre Follensby Park tract could be something wonderful that will benefit both the environment and the economy of the Adirondack Park. -Or it could be another in a long line of properties headed into state ownership as forest preserve, where its majestic stands of pine, cedar, maple, and hemlock will be left, untouched by man, to eventually waste and spoil.

The tract, which is home to the 1,000-acre Follensby Pond, a pristine place only a few people living have ever seen up close, holds a unique opportunity for its new owners to do something creative with it.

The Adirondack Chapter of the Nature Conservancy purchased the property in September from John S. and Bertha "Bird" McCormick, who owned it since 1952, for \$16 million.

For decades Follensby Park has been a working place- where lumbermen from the Tupper Lake and Long Lake area harvested its trees and where sportsmen leased land for hunting clubs. The most recent loggers there were Tom and Neilson Snye, whose operation was discontinued this fall when the Conservancy bought the park. Before the father and son team, Paul Mitchell's logging company logged it for a number of years.

Mr. Mitchell said in recent weeks the property is rich in timber, and if properly managed, could be for generations.

In forests where sustainable forestry is practiced, trees are healthy and wildlife abounds. Studies have shown that young healthy forests do a much better job of sequestering or store-housing carbon from the atmosphere than older forests do.

Environmentalists and many in state government have salivated over the prospects of the state buying Follensby for years.

Now that it is in the Nature Conservancy's hands, many figure state ownership is not far away.

From a fiscal standpoint, it shouldn't be permitted to happen any time soon. Given the state's present economic mess and Governor David Paterson's vigorous push to stem the rising tide of red ink in Albany, a prudent fiscal course for New York is imperative. To that end millions of dollars should be trimmed from the Environmental Protection Fund, which since 1993 has permitted the state to buy 90,800 Adirondack acres and protect 475,000 more through conservation easements.

The state already owns and controls enough land in the six million acre Adirondack Park. Adding more- especially in the foreseeable future- is fiscally irresponsible.

If the Nature Conservancy wants to protect the Adirondack forest, then the more power to it and its members. They will pay appropriate property taxes on it for that privilege. New York taxpayers shouldn't have to!

The best plan, we see, for this rare piece of Adirondack forestland is something of a public-private partnership. Following its emerging model of the recently acquired 161,000 acres of Finch, Pruyn timber holdings, the Conservancy should endeavor to sell or at least lease the majority of its Follensby holdings to timber companies to keep those lands in forest production and to help the local and state economies through increased employment and the production of wood as a raw material.

A network of good, gravel roads there makes the property very accessible for logging equipment.

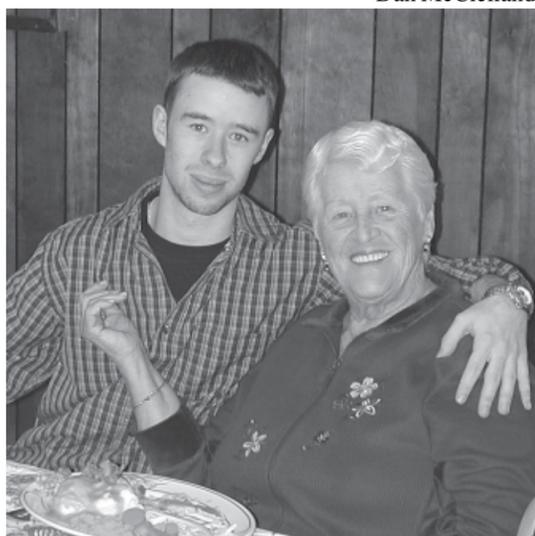
Those new owners would undoubtedly continue to lease parcels to hunting clubs- continuing a century-old tradition here.

The gem of the Follensby parcel- the area in and around Follensby Pond- should be retained by the environmental organization and opened to the public to enjoy. Hundreds would come to the area each summer to journey up and down the Raquette River to this special historic place made famous about 150 years ago by Ralph Waldo Emerson and other 19th century scholars. From new tourist visits would come the opportunity for increased commerce in the tri-lakes villages.

The lands should be classified under Adirondack Park Agency zoning as "wild forest," which would permit the use of snowmobiles on assigned trails and motorboats on Follensby Pond. Any movement to remove motor boats from the upper lengths of the Raquette River above Axton, as has been promoted by some in the past, should be fiercely resisted, for it would eliminate the ability of handicapped or elderly residents who are unable to paddle a canoe to ever visit this special place.

There are many wild places in the Adirondacks. Unfortunately, most members of the general public never have the ability to visit the vast majority of them. Follensby Pond and the forestlands immediately around it could be the beginning of a whole new type of wild Adirondack place- a place where small, motorized vehicles make it possible for everyone to visit and enjoy.

-Dan McClelland



Mary Fortier and her grandson, Jessie Reandeu enjoyed some quality time together almost as much as they did enjoying the delicious dinner at the K.

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Knights of Columbus, volunteers, team up to brighten the season

Whoever said, too many cooks spoil the broth, has never visited the Knights of Columbus Hall the evening before, or on Thanksgiving Day.

For the past 19 years, the Knights have opened their doors for a free community dinner that day, accomplished through their generosity and a multitude of community minded volunteers who donate their time to help in the preparations the evening before as well as doing the numerous chores that come with providing a traditional turkey dinner the day of the feast. For those unable to attend in person, volunteers have even provided personal service, delivering meals all over town so everyone can partake in the traditional fare.

Every year, the free offering has attracted scores of individuals and families who might find it too expensive to purchase the traditional menu items or perhaps are alone and have no desire to undertake the bother of cooking for one.

This year surpassed all expectations- both with the number of volunteers and the number of meals provided.

"We've already sent out over 100 dinners," Volunteer Mike Russell said at 11:30 a.m. Thanksgiving day. "The number of volunteers too, has been exceptional with children joining adults in helping with everything from peeling the vegetables to delivering meals all day long!"

According to long time volunteer Diane LeBlanc, over 400 dinners were prepared this year and well over 100 smiling faces arrived in person or in groups to join in the festive atmosphere that abounded in the hall that day.

"We peeled 300 pounds of potatoes and 100 pounds of carrots the evening before and we were done in less than two hours!" she reported. "We had young kids setting the tables that evening and many were back again on Thanksgiving day, putting out the condiments, serving dessert and helping to clean up. It was amazing, the turnout of volunteers this year! It shows how the community always pulls together to help each other!"

Diane's husband, Dave, arrived at the hall at 5:30 a.m. Wednesday and prepared the 25, 19-pound turkey breasts for roasting that day. As they were cooked, he put them into a walk-in cooler where they remained until Thanksgiving morning when they were sliced, covered with broth and returned to the oven so they would be piping hot and tender when the first diners arrived. Meanwhile, other volunteers were mashing potatoes, stirring up the gravy, dishing up vegetables and on, and on, and on.

Watching the workers in the kitchen that day, it was quickly apparent that it was a true team effort. Everyone had a task to do and they did it to perfection. "And we're having a lot of fun doing it!" one volunteer determined.

"This is by far, the best turn out we've ever had!"

Mrs. LeBlanc related that one single mother, who is new in the area, called that day to see how much the dinner would cost for herself and her children and began crying when she found out it was free. "She couldn't believe people would do this for nothing!" she said.

"The Knights always pay for everything but there are so many people donating too that it's become a true community endeavor," she reasoned. "Next year, we'll be celebrating 20 years of providing a free Thanksgiving dinner to the community and we're hoping it will be even bigger than this year!"



Many hands make light work, and that was proven to be true when the Knights of Columbus hosted its annual Community Thanksgiving dinner Thursday. Scores of volunteers, from five year old Amber Boudreau, at middle right, who helped with the waitressing duties to Lisa Jones and her son, Ben, above, who delivered the traditional fare to those unable to attend the festivities in person. Shown at top, Dave LeBlanc, Mike Russell and Yvon Fortier were taking their turns serving up the turkey and all the trimmings. This year's event was rated as one of the "best" by organizers, not only by the number of residents who took advantage of the invitation, but by the number of volunteers who turned out.

Letter to the Editor

Will Tupper Lake go green with a new traffic roundabout?

To the editor-

The debate about a traffic intersection in the Village of Tupper Lake symbolizes the challenge of our times. Do we chose to continue the high-consumption habits of the past, or can we shift perspective and build a resource-friendly infrastructure that is designed for a greener future?

A highway re-alignment was proposed by the state Department of Transportation for the intersection of Routes 3 and 30 in the center of the village. A short section of new roadway connects Demars Boulevard to a three-way junction, and the engineers strongly recommended the installation of a modern traffic roundabout.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety explains that: "Roundabouts, used in place of stop signs and traffic signals, are a type of circular intersection that can significantly improve traffic flow and safety. Where roundabouts have been installed, [accident] reductions are accompanied by significant improvements in traffic flow, thus reducing vehicle delays, fuel consumption, and air pollution."

This highway re-alignment was once endorsed by the village board, and it is an integral part of local revitalization and community lakeshore development plans. But state planners were taken by surprise when the current board members swerved off course and voted for a lumbering U-turn through town.

The Village Board now supports a meandering 'Zig-Zag' plan. This plan sends motorists up and down, back

and forth, through the streets of Tupper Lake, instead of creating an efficient and attractive highway junction.

Modern roundabouts improve traffic safety, they save time, and conserve fuel, as various internet references consistently demonstrate.

The Department of Transportation presenters at the public information meeting calculated that twenty-eight thousand gallons of motor fuel could be saved using a roundabout design instead of a single conventional intersection, and forcing drivers over the extra 'Zig-Zag' half-mile distance will waste even more petroleum.

Many local, state, and federal agencies are planning and building roundabouts in their jurisdictions. Three successful roundabouts were recently built in Keene, New Hampshire. The participants at the Climate Conference recently convened at the Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks, (located on the outskirts of Tupper Lake), learned about the Keene roundabouts from the planning director of that city. Were any of our local elected officials in attendance?

Anything new takes a bit of study, and a practice turn or two. Everyone is invited to view the continuous live webcast of a roundabout that is located in Hamilton, Ontario. See for yourselves how smoothly and efficiently vehicular traffic moves along, as demonstrated by our neighbors to the north, and see how easy it is to go green with the flow of a modern roundabout.

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Don LaBarge and Darlene Durbin were kept busy stirring up the pots all day Thursday and claimed they had a great time doing it.