



Binghamton Outdoors!!!

Newsletter of the Binghamton Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK)

Volume 3, Number 1 Fall 2010

A Message From Your Chapter Vice Chair

Hello from the Vice Chairperson:

Winter is on its way! I have to admit I'm a big fan of winter and the outdoor experiences it offers. Whether you're a fan of winter or not, check out our events list. You just might find the experience you've been looking for.

Starting with our Nov. 9th meeting [hope you're reading this in time] Deb Chapin will be sharing her experiences hiking the Adirondack 46 peaks in winter. There will be pictures, gear, refreshments, and good conversation. So if your interested in climbing the 46 in winter, have climbed the 46 in winter, working on it or if you're like me and are just plain curious come on down. It will be great to see you.

Coming December 17th our holiday party provides a great opportunity to take time off from the hectic season and relax in a casual atmosphere at the beautiful historic Washingtonian Hall, home of our Membership Chair, Ken Jackson. Bring a guest. This is an enjoyable evening for both the outdoor enthusiast and those who are not.

Ending the winter season and heralding in Spring presenting at our April meeting will be Appalachian Trail through hiker, Frank Urban. He was 61 when he completed the trail! I'm really looking forward to his presentation.

Hope to see you soon. Keep an eye on the web site and list serve. Feel free to contact me with any concerns, ideas, presentations or activities you are interested in.

Donna Cole, Vice Chair
607-237-6311
coledonnarn@yahoo.com

Chapter Officers Nominations for 2011

Below is the slate of officers for the term starting January 2011. Please attend the November 9th meeting to vote

Chair: Donna Cole

Vice Chair: Brooks Getty

Secretary: Elaine Gregory

Treasurer: Mark Epstein

Director: Erik Gregory

Outings Chair: Pat Connors

Programs Chair: Gary Vanderbles

Conservation Chair: Tom Stabler

Membership Chair: Ken Jackson

Chapter Opportunities

Would you like to give a little something back to the outdoors and the ADK? Your Binghamton ADK chapter has opportunities for you to serve on outings, programs, conservation, communications, and hospitality subcommittees. Or would you like to help the chapter with a specific project such as Earth Day activities? If so please contact any of the officers.

1 From The Treasurer

Your chapter has purchased several items to improve the chapter membership experience. Our newest purchase is an ACER projector that will be used for chapter programs / presentations. The chapter also has an inventory of crampons and micro spikes for rental for those members who want to try out winter hiking in the Catskills and Adirondacks.

Mark Epstein, Chapter Treasurer, mepstein@stny.rr.com

From The Communications and Membership Chair

Are you receiving 'ADK Today' via email, and chapter messages from our BinghamtonADK Listserv? If not we need an updated email address from you! Please send your current email address to kenjny@stny.rr.com

Here are the ways you can find out the latest activities and happenings with your Binghamton ADK Chapter:

WWW.BINGHAMTONADK.ORG Check out our chapter web site! This is the place to find the latest Chapter activities. Would you like to post a picture or article on our chapter website? If so contact our webmaster Terri Gracin at tmgracin@gmail.com

BINGHAMTONADK Yahoo group listserv: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BinghamtonADK/> Chapter email communications tool. If you did not provide an email address with your membership and would like to be included, please send an email to kenjny@stny.rr.com

CHAPTER NEWSLETTER. We hope you find this newsletter informative. Please send feedback/suggestions to kenjny@stny.rr.com

FYI....Our Growing Chapter now has 182 members! Thank you for your support of ADK! Special welcome to new chapter members Alan & Christina Bangel, Rosanne Brunner, Walter Clark, Richard Cottrell, Brian Eldridge & Trish Nilsen, Stephen Fessenden, Barbara Hall, Jacki Hart, David & Meridith Jackson, Peter Knuepfer & Joyce Kruger-Knuepfer, Adam Laats, Greg Laskowski, Stephen Norovich, Michael Retzlaff, Benjamin & Colleen Robinson, Robert Ruschak, Ryan Rzeszot, Cassandra Schiefen, Daniel Snyder, Nicholas Stamato, Michele Stockton & Harold Schoonover, Sherwood Walls, David Warne, Mary & Michael Waters, and Leah Williams

Chapter Bylaws

The Bylaws are available for your review in the files section of the BinghamtonADK Yahoo Group. If you need a copy sent to you, please contact Chapter secretary Elaine Gregory at cricket46@echoes.net

Chapter Equipment For Rent

Have you ever wanted to try a new outdoor activity but did not have the equipment you needed to try it? Specialized equipment can be expensive, so consider renting. **The Chapter has 4 pairs of Crampons and 2 pairs of Microspikes available for rent at a rate of \$5 per week.** Crampons are necessary equipment for winter hikes in the Catskills and Adirondacks to traverse ice that is frequently found on trails. Microspikes are increasingly viewed as necessary equipment for late fall/early winter and early spring when snow or ice conditions make snowshoes and crampons poor tools of travel, yet bare booting becomes precarious. The Chapter Equipment / Rental policy is available on the Yahoo Group listserv and the web site. Contact Outings Chair Pat Connors at pat_connors_ny@yahoo.com to rent items or for more information

ADK Books, Maps, and Gear

Did you know....when you shop the Adirondack Mountain Club's catalog, profits from your purchases support our three-fold mission of conservation, education, and recreation! ADK members receive a **20% discount** on ADK publications and a **10% discount** on ADK logo wear and gear. Browse your ADK Online Store at:

ADK is on Facebook

* Find the ADK at www.facebook.com/AdirondackMountainClub

* Find the Binghamton Chapter at <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=354287586956>

Binghamton Chapter Fall 2010 / Winter 2011 Schedule

Outings and Meetings list (post on your calendar!)

ALWAYS CALL LEADERS FOR DETAILS

All area codes are 607 unless otherwise noted

Each trip's leader must have all participants sign a liability release form. The liability release form along with the ADK Outing Guidelines, which all outing participants should read, is posted on the BinghamtonADK Yahoo Group/Listserv. Persons wanting to lead an outing activity or have questions should contact Pat Connors: pat_connors_ny@yahoo.com

Nov 14, Sunday, 1PM. Binghamton area hike at Chenango Valley State Park Yes GOTS is back, Get Out There and Stretch. Gary & Mary Jo Vanderbles will be leading the GOTS hikes on the second Sunday afternoon of the month. These are hikes of 4 to 6 miles in wild places within a half to three quarters hour drive from Binghamton They will start around 1:00 PM. These hikes will be moderately paced, about 2 MPH, and designed to keep the group together. Dress for the weather. Bring water, snacks, and binoculars or cameras if you like. We will stop to use them. Future GOTS Hikes will be announced on the Chapter's list serve or by email for those members that wish to be personally notified. Questions or to register 722-3765 or gvanderbles@stny.rr.com

Dec 12, Sunday, 1PM. Binghamton area GOTS hike! Location TBD. See above

Dec 17, Friday. 6PM until whenever. Chapter Holiday Party at historic Washingtonian Hall. Bring a dish to pass and/or your favorite wine, and your family/guest. This is a great way to get to know your fellow Binghamton ADK members and families a little better. Washingtonian Hall will be decked out for the holidays so bring your holiday spirit! 3725 River Rd, Endwell, NY. Call Ken and Linda Jackson at 607-757-9130 (kenjny@stny.rr.com) if questions or if you need directions.

December 19, Sunday, 10AM. Hike Kaaterskill High Peak in likely winter conditions. We will meet in Binghamton at 10:00 am Sunday to drive to the Catskills together. We will approach KHP from the south on Platte Clove Road (Rte 16) on The Long Path. We will hike around the summit and make the final approach from the north where we will leave the formal trail for the summit. If the weather is clear we will make a short (.4 mile) bushwhack to Hurricane Ledge for a nice view of the Devil's Path. A relatively moderate hike with one short steep pitch at the end that can be difficult if icy. Be prepared to use snowshoes and/or crampons or possibly micro spikes if snowfall and ice is limited Despite the short steep area, **this a good outing for those new to winter hiking.** Round trip 8.8 miles. Ascent 2,000'. Figure on eating lunch in the car during the drive. **Dinner on the road after the hike.**

Should there be enough snow to allow snowmobiling which is allowed on KHP, SW Hunter is our backup hike. A bushwhack to a peak with a canister to record successful ascents. While there are no views on this hike, the canisters are a novelty no longer found in the Adirondacks, yet still enjoyed in the Catskills. Also a good outing for those new to winter hiking. Round trip 5.8 miles. Ascent 1,600'. Please contact Mark Epstein (mepstein@stny.rr.com) to discuss interest.

Jan 9, Sunday, 1PM. Binghamton area GOTS hike! Location TBD. Hikes will be announced on the Chapter's list serve or by email for those members that wish to be personally notified. Questions or to register 722-3765 or gvanderbles@stny.rr.com

Jan 22, Saturday, 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Winter Fun for all ages. Meet at the Whitney Point Wildlife Management Area on Kieble Road [CR77]. We'll have a warming fire, soup, coffee, and hot chocolate. Possible opportunities for ice fishing, cross country skiing, and sledding, dependent on the weather. No matter what the weather we'll be there with something fun to do! For further information contact Tom Stabler at 607-821-9138 or Donna Cole at 607-237-6311, coledonnarn@yahoo.com

Feb 5, Saturday, 10AM, Hike/Snowshoe to Cold Spring Lean-to. 1.8 miles roundtrip. Easy. Perfect for beginners and those who just want to get out and un-wind. We'll park at the DEC Parking area on route 8 [between Masonville and Deposit] and hike to the Cold Spring Lean-to and have a warm drink and snack and hike back. Meet at the Weis parking lot on Conklin Ave. at 10:00 AM or 10:45 AM on Route 8. Dress for the weather. Bring snowshoes if enough snow. Possibility for a visit to Masonville General Store, a coffee shop, gift shop, and health food store all rolled up in one. Contact for information or to make arrangements for an alternative meeting spot. Donna Cole 607-237-6311, coledonnarn@yahoo.com

Feb 13, Sunday, 1PM. Binghamton area GOTS hike! Location TBD. Hikes will be announced on the Chapter's list serve or by email for those members that wish to be personally notified. Questions or to register 722-3765 or gvanderbles@stny.rr.com

Feb 27, Sunday, 10AM. Use your crampons this winter! Hike location dependent on conditions. A likely goal is Sugarloaf mountain. 6 mile with 1,800' ascent. A rigorous climb, particularly if icy. Blackhead, among others, is another possibility.

In the absence of reported ice, we will likely hike Slide (6 miles, 1,800' ascent). Slide is the biggest mountain in the Catskills, but often considered one of the easiest hikes. Regardless of the chosen mountain, be prepared to use snowshoes and/or crampons or possibly micro spikes if snowfall and ice is limited. We will meet at Binghamton at 10:00 am Sunday. Figure on eating lunch in the car during the drive, and dinner on the road after the hike. Please contact Mark Epstein (mepstein@stny.rr.com) to discuss interest.

Mar 5, Saturday, 10AM. Hike/ Snowshoe Chenango Valley State Park. Meet at the Beach Parking Lot at 10:00 AM. We'll take an easy hike around the Lake. Great way to break up winter blues and get your energy flowing! For more information contact Donna Cole 607-237-6311, coledonnarn@yahoo.com

Mar 13, Sunday, 1PM. Binghamton area GOTS hike! Location TBD. Hikes will be announced on the Chapter's list serve or by email for those members that wish to be personally notified. Questions or to register 722-3765 or gvanderbles@stny.rr.com

Binghamton ADK 2010/2011 Meetings

Please mark your calendar for these upcoming Chapter meetings. Each meeting has a little business and a lot of focus on ways to be prepared and enjoy the outdoors!

Nov 9, Tuesday 7PM Chapter meeting. Program: presentation from Deb Chapin on hiking the 46 peaks in winter. Gander Mountain Meeting Room, Harry L Drive, Johnson City, NY

Dec 17, Friday. 6PM until whenever. Chapter Holiday Party at historic Washingtonian Hall. Bring a dish to pass and/or your favorite wine, and your family/guest. This is a great way to get to know your fellow Binghamton ADK members and families a little better. Washingtonian Hall will be decked out for the holidays so bring your holiday spirit! 3725 River Rd, Endwell, NY. Call Ken and Linda Jackson at 607-757-9130 (kenjny@stny.rr.com) if questions or if you need directions.

Jan 11, 2011 Tuesday – Chapter meeting. Program: Exercises to prevent injury during hiking, climbing, skiing, snowshoeing, & biking

Feb 8, 2011 Tuesday - Chapter meeting. Program: Cold Weather Clothing - What to Wear & Why

Mar 8, 2011 Tuesday - Chapter meeting. Program: Nutrition for Optimal Performance and Recovery Pre, During, and Post Outing

Apr 12, 2011 Tuesday - Chapter meeting. Program: **Chapter Member Frank Urban to speak about his thru hike of the Appalachian Trail!** Frank hiked the AT in 2006 from May 1st to Sept. 5th. How fortunate we are to have an AT thru hiker in our membership!

May 10, 2011 Tuesday - Chapter meeting. Program: Staying Found with a GPS - Bring your GPS & Questions

Additional programs being considered for 2011 meetings include a naturalist presentation, GPS 101, the Catskill 3500s, etc. If you have ideas on a chapter meeting program please contact Gary Vanderbles @ 722-3765 or gvanderbles@stny.rr.com

ADK COMMUNITY NEWS & ACTIVITIES

Adirondack Groups Win Round in Suit to Protect Wilderness Canoe Route

Oct 1, 2010: The Adirondacks' leading conservation groups, the Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK) and Protect the Adirondacks! (PROTECT), have won an important round in a lawsuit to force the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) to adhere to state law and classify a state-owned wilderness canoe route in the heart of the Adirondacks. State Supreme Court Justice Michael C. Lynch denied the state's motion to dismiss a lawsuit against APA and the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). The groups brought the lawsuit because of APA's failure to classify the waters of Lows Lake and nearby water bodies. The groups assert that state law requires the state to classify state-owned water bodies that are part of the Forest Preserve. "We are pleased that the Court has rejected the state's effort to delay the resolution of this case and look forward to the day when APA and DEC will have to comply with the State Land Master Plan and

classify Lows Lake as part of the Five Ponds Wilderness Area," said Dale Jeffers, co-chair of PROTECT's Conservation Advocacy Committee.

The following letters provide detailed information about your ADK's positions to the EPA and DEC on hydrofracking and state forest management. Please take the time to read them and find out the facts!

Adirondack Mountain Club: Comments on the USEPA proposed Hydraulic Fracturing Research Study

September 28, 2010

Jill Dean, Office of Water

United States Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Mailcode 4606M,
Washington, DC 20460

The Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK) thanks the United States Environmental Protection Agency for the opportunity to submit written comments on the proposed High Volume Hydraulic Fracturing Study. (the HVHF Study) The Adirondack Mountain Club is dedicated to conservation, education, outdoor recreation and protection of New York's Forest Preserve, parks, wild lands and waters. ADK represents some 30,000 hikers, paddlers, skiers and backpackers.

While ADK has special concern for the Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserves, there are many valuable State Parks, Wildlife Management Areas and State Forests in Central and Western New York that are extremely important to our members. ADK will present our concerns for the potential environmental and recreational impacts that high-volume hydraulic fracturing horizontal (HVHFH) natural gas drilling in the Marcellus Shale will have on New York's public and private lands. We hope that you will include our concerns in the scope of the EPA HVHF Study.

Before detailing our own concerns, ADK adopts, endorses and realleges the contents of the 63 pages of comments submitted by the City of New York on December 22, 2009 on the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DSGEIS) and the 90 pages of comments, analysis and conclusions of the Final Impact Assessment Report on Natural Gas Production in the New York City Watershed prepared by Hazen and Sawyer, P.C., with the same force and legal effect as if the contents of these documents were fully set forth herein.

While ADK understands that Article XIV, section 1 of the state Constitution fully protects the lands of the Catskill Forest Preserve, we are deeply concerned about the impacts of HVHFH gas drilling on the lands of the New York City watershed and the surrounding lands of the Catskill region. The Marcellus formation is thickest in this region and is a very likely target for the energy industry exploiting the HVHFH technology. HVHFH gas drilling is even more inappropriate for the incomparable lands of Allegany State Park. HVHFH is an intensive industrial activity which if allowed, would destroy the magnificent forests, pristine lakes and streams and ecological resources of this third largest state park in the nation. Under no circumstances should HVHFH gas exploitation activity ever be permitted in Allegany State Park.

DEC has stewardship responsibility for some 786,000 acres of designated State Forests and Wildlife Management Areas primarily located over the Marcellus formation. These valuable public lands are currently managed for watershed protection, public recreation, wildlife habitat and open space conservation. The renowned Finger Lakes Trail traverses many of these State Forests and Wildlife Management Areas as does the North Country National Scenic Trail authorized by Congress.

ADK is deeply concerned about the potential for HVHFH gas drilling on DEC managed State Forests and Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). We were dismayed by assertions by Governor Paterson in the Draft State Energy Plan that public lands like our State Forests and WMAs be leased for HVHFH gas drilling. ADK will oppose by any legal means available any effort by the state to grant new or expanded leases to private entities for HVHFH exploration and exploitation in our State Parks, State Forests and WMAs. The intensive industrial footprint and activity required for HVHFH gas drilling is wholly inconsistent with the conservation of these state lands for public recreation, watershed protection, habitat preservation and open space protection.

While ADK will strenuously oppose any state leasing of HVHFH Marcellus gas exploitation rights in State Forests and WMAs, we observe that any proposal for HVHFH gas drilling on these legally designated conservation lands must be evaluated under the State Environmental Review Act (SEQRA) by means of the same site specific SEQRA review as now required for any proposed gas drilling project in a state park.

Our DEC managed public forests and WMAs deserve the same level of legal protection as our state parks managed by the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). Due to the extensive negative environmental impacts of HVHFH gas drilling on the natural resources and character of our State Forests and WMAs, ADK is quite certain no HVHFH leasing would be legally permitted after a fair site specific SEQRA process. A site specific SEQRA process would allow the users of these State Forests and WMAs to express their views on the industrial alteration of these publicly owned conservation lands.

The dSGEIS fails to adequately and specifically discuss the probable negative environmental impacts of HVHFH gas drilling on the natural resources and aesthetic setting of state parks, state forests and wildlife management areas, especially cumulative impacts. EPA needs to include these impacts in the HVHF Study.

Site development for HVHFH gas drilling requires extensive tree cutting, vegetative clearing and grading of about 5 acres for a single well pad for the well pad, water and wastewater storage, truck parking and drilling infrastructure. With installation of the necessary utility and road corridors, the total single well pad disturbance is estimated at 7 acres. The DEC dSGEIS fails to evaluate the cumulative

impacts of forest fragmentation, habitat destruction/loss and wildlife disruption from HVHFH site construction. The dSGEIS fails to adequately analyze the impact of the conversion of permeable forest cover or fields to gravel or other low permeability compacted surface, the resulting accelerated storm runoff and erosion potential due to reduced percolation and infiltration and the increased water flow velocities due to the clearing of trees and vegetative covering. See, Hazen and Sawyer, pages 32 – 34. Moreover the clearing of the HVHFH drill site is very likely to increase the spread of invasive species.

ADK completely disagrees with the Department's SEQRA finding that the action of leasing state land for oil and gas development, road construction, backflow storage, lagoons, and impoundments will have no significant environmental impacts.¹ Average production pad size, likely to be 5 acres, is a considerable footprint on the landscape during high volume hydrofracking and during the likely re-fracking activity in subsequent years. It is highly unlikely that energy companies will restore public lands to their original condition because of the very high cost of complete site restoration. Mere well plugging alone is totally inadequate as a remediation outcome. EPA needs to evaluate these impacts in the HVHF Study.

This includes hundreds of thousands of acres of state forests scattered across central New York, western New York and the Southern Tier. In particular, state forest lands traversed by the Finger Lakes Trail and the North Country National Scenic Trail should be off limits to high volume hydrofracking.

These designated State Forests are in DEC's own words: "highly valued for the recreational opportunities and for their contributions to ecosystem health." These areas are used by the public for hiking, mountain biking, snowmobiling, horseback riding, snow shoeing and cross country skiing. There are also portions that are used to protect and enhance populations of rare, threatened or endangered species. DEC's sustainable management of these lands for multiple benefits includes clean water, recreation, wildlife and scenic beauty. The DEC encourages New Yorkers to visit its wildlife management areas boasting the scenic vistas and reminds us that these lands are our lands. High-volume hydro-fracking in these areas would go against the purpose for which they were created and would rob New Yorkers of the opportunity to utilize the special areas that they have invested in.

The amount and degree of vegetative cutting and site alteration for gravel wellpads, backflow lagoons, truck parking, access roads and pipelines involved in a full build-out of Marcellus Shale formation gas exploitation needs to be evaluated by the EPA in the HVHF Study.

According to Section 3.2.2.5 of the dSGEIS, permit applications require a fluid disposal plan to be approved by the Department prior to well permit issuance for "any operation in which the probability exists that brine, salt water or other polluting fluids will be produced or obtained during drilling operations in sufficient quantities to be deleterious to the surrounding environment."² To fulfill this obligation, the EAF Addendum will require information about flowback water disposition, including:

- Planned transport off of well pad (truck or piping), and information about any proposed piping;
- Planned disposition (e.g., treatment facility, disposal well, reuse, centralized surface impoundment or centralized tank facility);
- Identification and permit numbers for any proposed treatment facility or disposal well located in New York; and
- Location and detailed construction and operational information for any proposed centralized flowback water surface impoundment located in New York.

ADK opposes the creation of any flowback water surface impoundments on state parks and DEC managed State Forests and WMAs. Flowback fluids should be pumped into trucks for transport to a treatment facility, or temporarily stored in tanks. Section 6.9 of the dSGEIS concluded "that visual impacts from oil and gas drilling and completion activities are primarily minor and short-term, vary with topography, vegetation, and distance to viewer, and rarely trigger a need for site-specific comprehensive review or mitigating conditions such as limited drilling hours and camouflage or landscaping of the drill site."

HVHFH gas drilling projects that require 20-foot wide access roads with additional cleared 10-foot rights-of-way should never be constructed on any state owned lands that are currently open to public recreation. The clearing of State Forest and WMA lands and creation of temporary roads for trucks will attract many "thrillcraft" riders such as all terrain vehicle (ATV) and dirt bike enthusiasts who are seeking challenging and muddy terrain. ADK fears that an expanded road network on State Forests and WMA lands can lead to increased ATV trespass on state lands and scenic hiking trail systems. EPA needs to include these impacts in the HVHF Study.

Limit water withdrawals to protect New York's valuable water resources.

ADK believes that EPA should study the cumulative impact of potential HVHFH gas drilling water withdrawals. ADK is greatly concerned about the withdrawal of billions of gallons of water that will be required for HVHFH gas drilling from New York's lakes, rivers and streams. ADK disagrees with the conclusion in the DEC dSGEIS that there does not need to be any limitation on water withdrawal amounts for HVHFH operations. ADK believes that any HVHFH developer extracting 50,000 gallons per day or more should have to obtain a permit. The water withdrawal permitting process must carefully evaluate the actual and cumulative impact of water withdrawals on stream flow, water quality and aquatic life. The dSGEIS does not do a cumulative impact analysis of the impact of HVHFH water withdrawals at the anticipated level of HVHFH gas well development in Marcellus Shale area of New York. EPA needs to do so.

EPA needs to do this cumulative impact analysis of HVHF water withdrawals in the HVHF Study. Water withdrawals of the quantity anticipated for Marcellus Shale HVHFH gas drilling operations are likely to have a severe impact on the water quality, quantity of flow and aquatic ecology of many lakes and streams that are popular for fishing, canoeing, and kayaking.

EPA needs to include these impacts in the HVHF Study. The EPA HVHF Study needs to calculate potential peak water withdrawals and total current and projected water treatment capacity at the predicted height of production of natural gas from the Marcellus Shale Formation. EPA should determine the chemical makeup of the flowback and ensure that waste water treatment plants can actually cleanse these fluids so they can be safely released into rivers and streams. This is especially true of the radionuclides, dissolved chlorides, total dissolved solids, acrylonitriles, benzene, toluene, xylene and other fracking additives.

The dSGEIS inadequately addresses the possibility of waterfowl using water impoundments during migration and provides no mitigation measures.

Surface water impoundments for storage of HVVHFH gas drilling waste waters create a serious risk that waterfowl might use the impoundments during migration or during the winter if the water remains unfrozen and if the impoundment is located near feeding areas like corn fields. Backflow water will be tainted with fracking fluids that create a potential for poisoning birds and other wildlife. EPA needs to study this potential harm in the HVVHF Study.

The EPA HVVHF Study needs to discuss and address the likelihood of accidental spills, leaks and releases at HVVHFH gas drilling sites on groundwater and surface waters.

Accidental spills, leaks and releases associated with HVVHFH drilling operations have resulted in hundreds of documented groundwater and surface water contamination incidents across the nation. Surface spills are a relatively common occurrence at HVVHFH gas drilling sites because the drilling and fracturing process involves the transfer of very high volumes of fluids between tanks, trucks and impoundments, often at high flow rates and tremendous hydraulic pressures, substantially increasing the likelihood of a spill due to human error, equipment failure or accident. See, Hazen and Sawyer, page 39.

It is reasonable to assume that a major increase in HVVHFH gas drilling in New York will be accompanied by an increased frequency of chemical and wastewater spills. See, Hazen and Sawyer Report, pages 36-39. The dSGEIS does not seriously address the mitigation measures necessary to respond to this problem or provide a regulatory response to this spillage problem. EPA needs to carefully evaluate these impacts in the HVVHF Study.

The USEPA needs to evaluate the severe problem of disposal of wastewater that results from HVVHFH gas drilling operations.

The HVVHFH gas drilling process involves injecting 3 to 8 million gallons of water mixed with 80 to 300 tons of hydrofracking chemicals at extremely high pressure. Roughly half of the injected solution returns to the surface containing the hydrofracking chemicals, high levels of total dissolved solids (TDS), hydrocarbons, chlorides, heavy metals and naturally occurring radionuclides. This flowback wastewater can not be treated by conventional wastewater treatment plants. Only a handful of plants in the whole Northeast exist that can handle this seriously briny and contaminated water. These plants are obviously too few and too limited in capacity to cleanse the anticipated billions of gallons of HVVHFH wastewater. See Hazen and Sawyer Report, pages 44-46.

The heavily saline water requires sophisticated reverse osmosis or desalinization facilities that do not exist in the region in a capacity sufficient to handle the HVVHFH wastewater anticipated to be created by Marcellus shale formation gas exploitation in New York. Even if reverse osmosis/desalinization plants were built to handle the briny HVVHFH wastewater, there would be a serious problem of how to dispose of the many thousands of tons of crystalline salt cake resulting from the reverse osmosis or desalinization processes. EPA needs to determine if there is enough existing capacity at solid landfills in the region to accept cuttings that are generated during drilling with polymer or oil based muds and salt cake output from reverse osmosis or evaporation treatment facilities.

Moreover, desalinization plants require a great deal of energy to operate while generating air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. The EPA needs to address the serious gap between the amounts of seriously contaminated wastewater produced by the anticipated level of HVVHFH gas drilling operations in New York compared to the very limited capacity of existing specialized wastewater treatment facilities that are able to properly cleanse highly contaminated HVVHFH waste fluids and return the water safely to natural bodies.

Industry has suggested that the solution to this inadequate HVVHFH wastewater treatment capacity is to allow the injection disposal of HVVHFH wastewater deep into natural rock formations. This is unproven technology and presents a serious risk for groundwater contamination particularly in view of the fractures, fissures and seismic activity of New York's geological formations. See, Hazen and Sawyer Report, pages 40 – 45. Even the DEC DSGEIS admits that the State of New York is fairly active seismically, EPA needs to carefully evaluate the risks of deep injection disposal of HVVHF backflow and waste waters.

EPA needs to carefully evaluate the dangers and risks of underground injection disposal of slickwater hydraulic fracking waste water with its total dissolved salts, carcinogenic fracking chemicals and radionuclides, especially given the foregoing analysis of the Hazen and Sawyer Report, pages 40-45.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments on EPA HVVHF Study. Respectfully submitted,
Neil F. Woodworth Executive Director and Counsel

**Adirondack Mountain Club: Comments to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Draft Strategic Plan for State Forest Management**

October 29, 2010

The Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK) thanks the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) for the opportunity to submit written comments on the draft strategic plan for State Forest Management. The Adirondack Mountain Club is dedicated to conservation, education, outdoor recreation and protection of New York's Forest Preserve, parks, wild lands and waters. ADK represents over 30,000 hikers, paddlers, skiers and backpackers.

While ADK reveres the Adirondack and Catskill Mountain ranges for their grandness, there are many valuable State Forests in Central and Western New York that are extremely important to our members, especially in our Western New York chapters. There are many aspects of this plan that demonstrate a commitment to the future health of our state forest system, such as the agencies proposal for

precluding the use of ATVs in our state forests. We are pleased with the FSI/FSC certified forestry operation plans. We strongly support the Department's management of different user groups. We are pleased with much of the plan that protects wildlife habitat, protection of water resources and open space. Much work and thought has gone into this plan.

ADK must present our concerns for the potential environmental and recreational impacts that increased natural gas drilling in the Marcellus Shale may have on our State Forest system. We will detail our assertion that the DEC is incorrect in concluding that high volume hydraulic fracturing or hydrofracking for natural gas drilling and deep water injection for fracking fluid is a consistent use for any state forest. Such uses would not only put the forests health at risk, but could also compromise water supplies for many southern tier communities.

DEC has stewardship responsibility for some 786,000 acres of designated State Forests including many located over the Marcellus formation. These valuable public lands are currently managed for watershed protection, public recreation, wildlife habitat and open space conservation. The renowned North Country National Scenic Trail, authorized by Congress, traverses several states and many of New York's State Forests.

ADK is deeply concerned about the potential for hydrofracking on DEC managed State Forests. We were dismayed at assertions made by Governor Paterson in the Draft State Energy Plan that our State Forests should be leased for gas drilling. We are now equally disappointed that the DEC has followed suit, also proposing the leasing of State Forests for natural gas drilling. "DEC is inclined to consider natural gas development on State Forests due in part to the fact it is a cleaner burning energy alternative to other fossil fuels such as coal and oil, as shown on the table at right."

ADK will oppose by all legal means available any effort by the state to grant new or expanded leases to private entities for high volume hydraulic fracturing natural gas exploration and exploitation in our State Forests. The intensive industrial footprint and activity required for hydrofracking is wholly inconsistent with the conservation of these state lands for public recreation, watershed protection, habitat preservation and open space protection.

While ADK will strenuously oppose any state leasing of Marcellus Shale high volume hydraulic fracturing rights in the Marcellus formation in State Forests, we observe that any proposal for gas drilling on these legally designated conservation lands must be evaluated under the State Environmental Review Act (SEQRA) not solely by means of this dSGEIS, but by the same site specific SEQRA review as now required for any proposed gas drilling project in a state park.

Our DEC managed public forests deserve the same level of legal protection as our state parks managed by the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). Due to the extensive negative environmental impacts of hydrofracking on the natural resources and character of our State Forests, ADK is quite certain no mineral leasing could be legally permitted after a fair site specific SEQRA process. A site specific SEQRA process would allow the users of these State Forests to express their views on the industrial alteration of these publicly owned conservation lands.

Site development for hydrofracking requires extensive tree cutting, vegetative clearing and grading of about 5 acres for a single well pad for the well pad, water and wastewater storage, truck parking and drilling infrastructure. With installation of the necessary utility and road corridors, the total single well pad disturbance is estimated at 7 acres. The cumulative impacts of forest fragmentation, habitat destruction/loss and wildlife disruption from well pad construction would equal devastation for these valuable ecosystems. In addition the negative impact of the conversion of permeable forest cover or fields to gravel or other low permeability compacted surface, the resulting accelerated storm runoff and erosion potential due to reduced percolation and infiltration and the increased water flow velocities due to the clearing of trees and vegetative covering. Moreover the clearing of a drill site is very likely to increase the spread of invasive species.

Even without hydrofracking, gas production is an industrial activity with a number of potential environmental consequences. It requires cutting trees, clearing land, building roads and moving heavy equipment. It creates numerous opportunities for spillage of waste and pollutants and the contamination of surface and groundwater. It is noisy and dirty. Even with no environmental mishaps, each gaswell site will leave a sizable scar on the landscape that will take years to heal.

ADK completely disagrees with the Department's evaluation that the action of leasing of state land for oil and gas development under SEQRA and findings of no significant environmental impact associated with that action. Average production pad size, likely to be between 5 acres, is a considerable footprint on the landscape during drilling and even after reclamation. It is highly unlikely that energy companies will restore public lands to their original condition because of the very high cost of complete site restoration. Mere well plugging alone is an inadequate as a remediation outcome.

The designated State Forests are in DEC's own words: "highly valued for the recreational opportunities and for their contributions to ecosystem health." These areas are used by the public for hiking, mountain biking, snowmobiling, horseback riding, snow shoeing and cross country skiing. There are also portions that are used to protect and enhance rare threatened or endangered species. DEC's sustainable management of these lands for multiple benefits includes clean water, recreation, wildlife and scenic beauty. The DEC encourages New Yorker's to visit its wildlife management areas boasting the scenic vistas and reminding us that these lands are our lands. Drilling in these areas would not only defeat the purpose for which they were created it would rob New Yorkers the opportunity to utilize the special areas that they have invested in.

ADK wants appropriate measures to be taken by the lead agency (DEC) to ensure the protection of these forest lands' scenic and recreational character. One measure ADK suggests to ensure this protection is to require a SEQR review for each proposed well. A general environmental assessment form (EAF) is insufficient for companies with multiple proposed wells. Site specific oversight is necessary to guarantee the protection of New York's valuable resources.

The original intent of preserving State Forest areas is to provide a natural experience to the public for recreation and scenic values. The potential increase in man's industrial existence cannot be ignored, therefore, ADK believes the cumulative impacts of all processes and stages of natural gas drilling must be minimized.

“Taking into account the significant environmental considerations,” The New York State Commission on Asset Maximization recommends that the State “study the potential for new private investment in extracting natural gas in the Marcellus Shale on Stateowned lands, in addition to development on private lands,” and discourages a prohibition of drilling on state owned lands. This recommendation is in clear opposition to New York’s intention to protect these special areas for their ecological, recreational and scenic character.

According to Section 3.2.2.5 of the dSGEIS, permit applications require a fluid disposal plan to be approved by the Department prior to well permit issuance for “any operation in which the probability exists that brine, salt water or other polluting fluids will be produced or obtained during drilling operations in sufficient quantities to be deleterious to the surrounding environment. To fulfill this obligation, the EAF Addendum will require information about flowback water disposition, including:

- “Planned transport off of well pad (truck or piping), and information about any proposed piping;
- Planned disposition (e.g., treatment facility, disposal well, reuse, centralized surface impoundment or centralized tank facility);
- Identification and permit numbers for any proposed treatment facility or disposal well located in New York; and
- Location and detailed construction and operational information for any proposed centralized flowback water surface impoundment located in New York.”

First, ADK would vigorously oppose the creation of any flowback water surface impoundments. Flowback fluids should be pumped into trucks for transport to a treatment facility, or stored in tanks. In Alleghany National Forest we have seen the devastation that can occur from allowing open flowback water surface impoundments. There have been hundreds of accidents with these open pits. Streams have been contaminated and ecosystems have been compromised. Allowing surface impoundments on any state owned land would be well beyond any interpretation of reasonable use.

ADK believes the visual impacts of natural gas drilling are neither minor nor short term. Many small towns and businesses rely on seasonal tourists who visit State Forests and support local economies. Disruption of these areas is extremely undesirable in lands that are revered for its natural character and outdoor recreation opportunities. This is especially damaging for large contiguous tracks of old growth forest, these forest would take more than a century to be restored. Depending on site topography, part of a slope may have be excavated and the excavated material may be used as fill (“cut and fill” construction) to extend the well pad, providing for a level working area and more room for equipment and onsite storage. The mineral right owner underneath state owned land should never have the option to alter the surface to the degree mentioned in the “cut and fill” technique. We would argue that the visual impact of excavating a mountain would be enough to decline a drilling permit. We believe that this holds true for any state owned lands used by the public for outdoor recreation.

Sound and visual impacts combined are strong arguments for why we should not be hydrofracking on state owned lands used for recreational purposes. Especially egregious is the DEC’s assertion that: “Injection into rock formations is a valid and viable disposal option for both:

- Produced fluids from an existing production / storage well
- Hydraulic fracturing waste water.”

As more of the public has become apprised to dilemma of what to do with this chemically laden, highly saline, slightly radioactive flowback water, industry has presented us with a controversial, untested technology of deep well injection. Industry assures us that this as a solution to inadequate wastewater treatment capacity. Allowing the injection disposal of flowback water deep into natural rock formations is an unproven technology and presents a serious risk for groundwater contamination particularly in view of the fractures, fissures and seismic activity of New York’s geological formations. The DEC offers no scientific reasoning to support their claim of viability, and we should not allow for this ill conceived disposal method jeopardize our State Forest.

In addition to our concerns with the immediate impact of drilling; disruption of natural lands and creation of temporary roads for trucks not only makes the forest more susceptible to invasive species, but also attracts many “thrill craft” riders such as all terrain vehicle (ATV) and dirt bike enthusiasts who are seeking challenging and muddy terrain. ADK fears that increased truck trails will lead to ATV trespass on State Forest and scenic hiking trail systems. We are impressed by the DEC’s thorough study on the environmental impacts of ATVs on State Forest, and allege that the agency is correct in their assessment that ATV use is incompatible with State Forest. ATVs present overwhelming enforcement problems that will only be exacerbated by creating a network of truck trails for drilling.

ADK endorses the DEC’s assessment that despite years of trying to accommodate ATV use, this activity is not fiscally or environmentally sustainable on State Forest. The cost of maintaining these trails is too financially burdensome on the state, and would be more suitable for a private owner with a fee structure in place.

We agree that environmental degradation that occurs from ATV and OHV use includes, but is not limited to soil erosion, displacement and compaction. Direct impacts to streams and wetlands from ATV crossings, including increased siltation and turbidity, noise, disturbance to wildlife and their habitats, damage to vegetation, and air pollution. These disturbances are impossible to justify on State Forest. In addition these impacts not only disturb the forest, but they also deter the public from using the area for any other recreational purpose.

The DEC acknowledges that illegal use of ATVs and OHVs on State Forest roads and trails officially closed to ATV and OHV use is frequent, difficult to prevent, and presents significant enforcement issues. Natural gas drilling will require hundreds of acres of new roads creating an influx of opportunities for illegal riding to occur.

The State Forest Plan states “Despite a variety of signs, gates, boulders, and other barriers designed to notify ATV and OHV users that particular roads and trails are closed to their use, a large amount of illegal riding continues to occur on these prohibited areas.” The plan then continues to acknowledge “Illegal use of ATVs presents significant enforcement problems because illegal riding often occurs in remote areas, where apprehension of violators is difficult and impoundment of unregistered ATVs is impractical.”

We applaud the DEC for their position regarding ATV use in our State Forest, and hope that the agency will do everything in its power to curtail illegal riding in the future. This policy decision will be a meaningful victory to our membership, many of whom have

invested their time volunteering to create and restore trails across the state.

ADK understands the economic hardships facing New York State but stresses that we must not allow our unique historic and natural environment to be sacrificed to industrialization for short term energy resource opportunities. Wells drilled in Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest were drilled during the period that energy prices were at their highest. These wells are mere miles from New York's border and of similar depth and width of the Marcellus Shale in Western New York. The damage that has been done in Allegheny National Forest must not be replicated in State Forests across New York. These forests are intended to serve New Yorkers and tourists with recreational opportunities. ADK strongly believes that economic growth and environmental sustainability can be achieved with cooperation between state and local governments, residents, and the environmental community. Thank you for the opportunity to express our concerns and opinions. Please feel free to contact me with any questions. Respectfully submitted,

Neil F. Woodworth, Executive Director and Counsel Joelle Foskett, Public Lands Advocate

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Subscription to this newsletter is included in membership in the Binghamton Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club. It is available to the public and to non-chapter members for \$5 per year. Contact Ken Jackson at (607)341-1584 for more information.

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