Adirondack Virgin Forest.

Defending the WILDERNESS

THE ADIRONDACK WRITINGS
OF PAUL SCHAEFER

Paul Schaefer

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Preface

Around 1930 an unprecedented series of attacks were made upon the integrity of the New York State Forest Preserve in the Adirondack and Catskill mountains. The issue was either to maintain the wild-forest character of these mountains or to modify/eliminate the ironclad protection that these state lands enjoyed since 1894 under the now-famous "forever wild" covenant of the New York State Constitution.

The essays in this book were written over a period of fifty years and were published on an average of about one every year and a half. Each article was meant for specific audiences in light of the constantly changing legal, legislative, and public happenings. As a builder of traditional homes, I was usually under great business pressure, since I usually had a half-dozen jobs under way simultaneously and twenty or more craftsmen working for me. But the Adirondacks always came first. When a problem surfaced, I would leave the jobs in the best hands possible and come home and pound the typewriter until the point I had in mind had been expressed and the resulting article had been sent to the press, magazines, wire service, or to my own publication the *Forest Preserve*.

During those years, I found that words crystallized and took on a luster far beyond their dictionary meanings when illustrated with photographs. No combination of words could describe the beauty of virgin forest in Moose River country or the devastation of Wolf Mountain by forest fire. Yet if you compare photographs of each (both are in the text) side by side, the images formed in the mind present us with a choice of either protecting nature or allowing it to be destroyed. The emotions that the combination of words and pictures evoke are so powerful they impel us into action.

From early on I carried a camera wherever I went and recorded on

film, first in black and white and more recently in color, places and people of the Adirondacks. Most of the photographs in this book were taken in the Adirondack wild country during our efforts to define wilderness, and they were used to strengthen the image of our wonderful natural heritage that would be lost if the "forever wild" covenant was weakened. In addition to my own photographs, I have included many that were taken by individuals (credited throughout the book) who have permitted me over the years to use their work to supplement my own extensive collection.

Another dimension of photography that became very important in our campaign to preserve Adirondack wild country was the motion picture. No one I ever met advocated its use more than conservationist John S. Apperson. Within weeks after my first meeting with him in 1931, he put Dr. Irving Langmuir's 16-mm Bell and Howell camera in my hands. "Take this," he said, "Go up to Tahawus and shoot the lumbering operation and the marvelous country it ruined. We will wake them all up." When we reached Tahawas several days later, a major crown forest fire was sweeping across the highway, across Lake Sanford, across the Opalescent River to to the top of North River Mountain.

The silent, black-and-white documentary film we helped to produce for Apperson in 1931 and 1932 does not compare to the sound-and-color films of today. But then, no one else was using film to help win conservation battles, and the medium was amazingly successful. A few years later, in 1945, again we used a motion picture, some of it shot in color, to help win the eleven-year battle over the South Branch of the Moose River.

While my days behind a motion-picture camera were limited, I recognized the value that film had in educating people about the forest preserve and have used it to advantage through the years. In 1970, *Of Rivers and Men* played an important part in the effort to get the Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers System Act a part of New York state policy.

The success of *Of Rivers and Men* spawned another film *The Adirondack—The Land Nobody Knows*, which was completed in 1980. The full effect of this film is not yet known. Its worldwide exposure and its presentation to thousands of audiences, notably in schools, has had as great an impact on the Adirondack Forest Preserve as any other single contribution that I can think of during the last half century. The latter film was made through the efforts of countless volunteers

who donated their time and skills for years—especially photographers Walt Haas and Ed Niedhammer and writer/editor Noel Riedinger-Johnson.

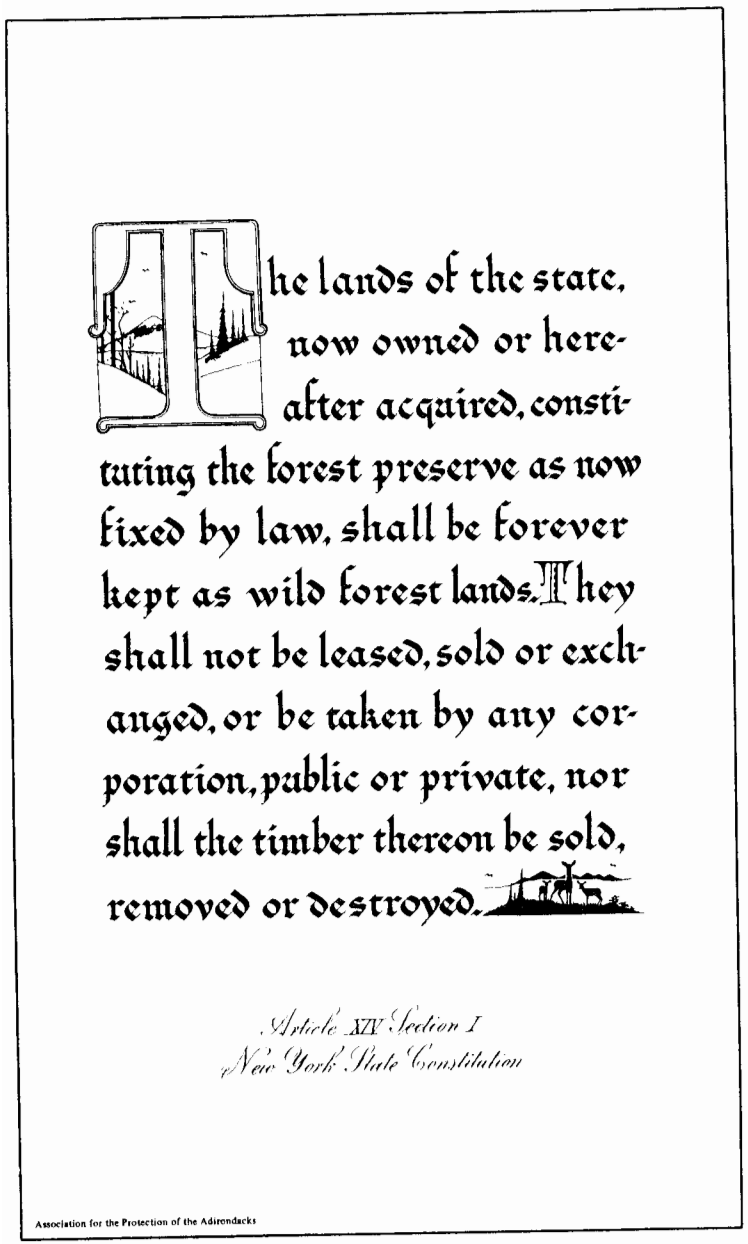
Looking back on these last fifty years—when it often seemed the country we loved so much was about to be destroyed—I have to say honestly that they were some of the finest times of my life. The frequent trips into the wilderness and the innumerable—and often exhausting—barnstorming trips across the state gave a powerful meaning to the ideas I tried to express in the articles I wrote, which appear here with only some minor adjustments and updatings. Somehow during those years the houses got built, the jobs finished, the men paid. And somehow it seemed that our efforts to keep the "forever wild" covenant intact developed into a philosophy that became consistently stronger.

I would not have been able to devote the time and effort over the years without the support of my family, who understood my devotion to the Adirondack lowlands and saw the splendor of forests, rivers, and lakes from the summits of all the high peaks and many lesser ones; the many individuals who unselfishly devoted their lives to the New York State Forest Preserve; the New York State Conservation Council with its hundreds of thousands of sportsmen across the state; the many organizations and associations that came together in political support of "forever wild"; and the statesmen who made possible our fondest aspirations. I appreciate the editorial assistance of Noel Riedinger-Johnson who helped compile this collection of articles that document our campaign of more than a half century to preserve wilderness in the Adirondacks.

Teddy Roosevelt once said it all in just a few words: "Aggressive fighting for the right is the noblest sport the world affords."

Schenectady, New York
Fall 1988

PAUL SCHAEFER



Article XIV, Section 1.

The Covenant

Protection of New York State's watershed mountains was given in 1885 under a statute law when the New York State Legislature created the New York State Forest Preserve and appointed the forest commission to administer state lands in the Adirondack Mountains. In 1892 the legislature approved the forest commission's proposal to designate 2,807,000 acres of land in the Adirondacks, delineated by a blue pencil line on a state map and commonly referred to as the "blue line," to become the Adirondack Park. This contained both the state lands of the preserve as well as those privately held. When the forest commission failed in its duties to oversee the state lands by selling or leasing prime wild lands to lumber interests, the public, as represented by members of the 1894 New York State Constitutional Convention, took away the commission's powers and invested control of these lands to the people of the state in the now-famous "forever wild" constitutional covenant.

This constitutional provision can be changed only by the affirmative action of two successive legislatures followed by a referendum of the people in election time. Although it has been under almost constant attack by commercial interests since 1895 when it went into effect, this covenant has been sustained for nearly one hundred years by the people in constitutional conventions and by the New York State Court of Appeals in many diverse decisions.

This unique covenant protects critically important watershed forests at the sources of the state's principal rivers and streams. It prevents unnecessary highway and reservoir construction that would devastate prime river and lake basins and the wildlife thereon. And it bans all manners of usages contrary to the preservation of natural wild-forest conditions.

Today the Adirondack Park contains nearly six million acres of

land and is the largest park in the contiguous United States. It is larger than the state of Massachusetts, larger than the combined areas of Yellowstone, Yosemite, Grand Canyon, Glacier, and Olympic national parks. The Adirondack Forest Preserve has grown to more than 2.6 million acres within the "blue line" boundary of the park, which is protected by Article XIV, Section 1, of the state constitution.

More than a million acres in the forest preserve are designated as wilderness and primitive regions. The remaining one and a half million acres are specified as wild-forest areas and differ only in that they lack the ban against motor vehicles and planes, which the wilderness and primitive regions enjoy. There is enough land to identify additional areas that exhibit unique ecological diversity, including another major natural area in the northwest portion of the park. A system of wild, scenic, and recreational rivers assures the free-flowing character of more than twelve hundred miles of the state's finest rivers.

In the forest preserve, scores of public campsites, awe-inspiring mountains, magnificent lakes and streams, and challenging white-water rivers afford limitless opportunities for camping, hiking, backpacking, canoeing, rafting, swimming, hunting, fishing, skiing, snowshoeing, and many other outdoor activities. None of these activities interfere with the primary goal of the New York State Forest Preserve, which is the protection of the vital sources of our principal rivers and streams—the great watershed forests on the mountains and in the fragile wild areas.

Many of the individuals who have fought to retain the integrity of the forest preserve generally agree that the best use of land in the Adirondack Park will be when slightly more than three million acres are constitutionally protected forest preserve lands and slightly less acreage is in private ownership and commercial entities. It is hoped that the open spaces of the private lands will complement the wild-forest character of the state land. Protection of the back country will be encouraged through the use of conservation easements.

With all its outstanding attributes, the park is still large enough to accommodate great open-space estates and hundreds of thousands of acres of forest lands commercially harvested by lumber and paper companies. There is room enough for university campuses totaling tens of thousands of acres to conduct forestry and wildlife studies and for the Olympic Authority to run two major ski centers, one with the highest vertical drop in the East, not to mention other private ski centers. Many villages and hamlets dot the park with a resident population of more than 100,000 people. Many of these inhabitants belong to families who

have lived in the Adirondacks for generations, and they embody the fortitude of this vital region.

But for all its present uses and protections, the park needs a watchful eye over future planning—especially regarding land use for people and for commercial establishment serving the tourist industry. Most important the people of the state must continue their sentinel of the New York State Forest Preserve and Article XIV, Section 1, of the New York State Constitution. For a hundred years, there have been philosophical disagreements over this treasured land. These will continue. Ultimately the more persuasive arguments will crystallize, and the Adirondacks will continue to be one of the most unique places on planet Earth.

O.K. Slip Falls. "We cannot set aside wilderness for a decade or two, merely until we want to use it for other purposes. The essence of wilderness preservation is perpetuity."—William M. Foss, Assistant Commissioner for Lands and Forests, New York State Conservation Department, 1959.

As the year 1984 was drawing to a close and the New York State Forest Preserve Centennial Celebration was approaching in 1985, numerous excellent short histories about the Adirondacks and the Catskills were being published. None of them contained a chronological record of the way wilderness regions evolved within the New York State Forest Preserve.

Since wildness is the essence of what the forest preserve represents, it seemed important to recount the movement that transformed much of the wild forest lands protected by the New York State Constitution into genuine wilderness regions. I was asked to write an article for the centennial issue of the *New York State Conservationist*. "The Making of a Wilderness," appeared in the May 1985 issue of the magazine. This essay is essentially in the form originally submitted for publication and includes material that was edited out because of duplication of facts appearing in other articles in that issue.

Looking back a hundred years, the New York State Forest Preserve was established when state lands in the Adirondack and Catskill mountains were set aside and given "forever wild" protection through statute law in 1885. Devastating lumbering operations in these regions and the resulting forest fires had destroyed critical watershed forests and seriously diminished the flow of water in rivers and streams. A serious drought in 1883 had compounded the problem. Continued mismanagement of these lands by appointed officials between 1885 and 1894 caused the original "forever wild" statute to be placed within the new New York State Constitution, which went into effect in 1895. This action took control of the forest preserve from state officials and vested it in the hands of the people, where it has remained.

The debates that led to the "forever wild" constitutional covenant emphasized the preservation of watershed forests at the sources of our principal rivers and streams. Among these rivers were the Hudson, Mohawk, Black, Oswegatchie, Beaver, Raquette, Saranac, and Ausable. The philosophy of watershed forest protection dominated the efforts of preservationists in their innumerable battles to protect the covenant for more than three decades.

This new protection, even without specific guidelines, seemed to

be doing an adequate job of protecting the forest preserve until 1932 when state officials approved construction of a bobsled run on state lands for the Olympics. The proposal was challenged by the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks on principles espoused by Louis Marshall, the brilliant constitutional lawyer and delegate to the New York State Constitutional Conventions of both 1894 and 1915, who helped to write the "forever wild" article. In upholding the association's position, the Court of Appeals unanimously held that: "We must preserve it [the forest preserve] in its wild state, its trees, its rocks, its streams. . . . It must always retain the character of a wilderness."

At that time aircraft and motor vehicles were beginning to penetrate some of the most remote regions of the forest preserve, and there were no clear-cut regulations prohibiting such use. Wilderness potential in the Adirondacks was being eroded despite the constitutional covenant, which was ambiguous in this regard. In 1932 a proposal for the construction of closed cabins with access roads and appurtenances, having been approved by two successive legislatures as required by law, came before the people for decision. If approved, wilderness was doomed. But last minute all-out efforts by conservationists, supported by key public officials and statesmen, killed it. Out of that close call and resounding victory came the conservation movement that sought to really protect and enhance the wilderness in both the Adirondack and Catskill parks.

The February 1930 issue of *Scientific Monthly* carried an article entitled "The Problem of the Wilderness." This four-thousand-word article was written by Robert Marshall, Louis Marshall's son, who had spent his youth with his brother and a guide climbing Adirondack mountains and who had obtained his initial forestry education on the Adirondack campus of the Syracuse College of Forestry. Marshall espoused the cause of wilderness in a manner that had never been done before. A wilderness philosophy as such was not really new. Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Aldo Leopold, and others voiced in their best language wilderness values. But Marshall used the words that fitted the era in which he lived: a time when the mechanization and pollution of the nation was becoming more and more visible, a time when it appeared that unless the heedless rush of civilization could be curbed the priceless entity of wilderness would be lost forever. He ended that article with words that have sounded the tocsin ever since:

> It is exigent that all friends of the wilderness ideal unite. If they do not present the urgency of their viewpoint the other side will certainly capture popular support. Then it will be only a few years until the last escape from society will be barricaded. If that day arrives there will be countless souls born to live in strangulation, countless human beings who will be crushed under the artificial edifice raised by man. There is just one hope of repulsing the tyrannical ambition of civilization to conquer every niche on the whole earth. That hope is the organization of spirited people who will fight for the freedom of the wilderness.

I had met Marshall on the top of Mount Marcy in July, 1932. At that chance meeting, Marshall learned of the pending closed cabin amendment and saw firsthand the extensive lumbering of virgin forest on Mount Adams. Visibly upset, Marshall restated the need for like-minded people who loved the wilderness to band together and fight for wilderness preservation.

In 1935 Marshall organized the Wilderness Society with the help of seven other people. Two years later he wrote another classic article entitled "The Vanishing Wilderness" with the awesome, deathless words bringing urgent, new life to those who had experienced wilderness.

A young man employed by the federal government in Washington was one of those who clearly heard the call that Marshall had sounded. His name was Howard Zahniser. He left a more lucrative job to become the executive secretary of the Wilderness Society. He and I first met at the showing of a film on the Moose River in 1946, deep in the canyons of New York City. When he learned that the Moose River Plains and the largest deer wintering yard was about to be flooded, he pledged support to help stop construction of the planned dam. He agreed to come to the Adirondacks at an early date; he had never been there before. In August of that year he and I, along with Ed Richard who was heading the Moose River fight, made a seventeen-mile hike that ended at my ancient log cabin on the edge of what is now the Siamese Ponds Wilderness. He asked me to find a cabin for him and his family, and I located one about a quarter of a mile from mine at two-thousand-feet elevation, from which he could look across miles of what was to become a land he loved above all others. His nearest neighbor to the west was thirteen miles distant, across a wild land of mountains, forests, lakes, and streams. It meant, also, that we would be able to meet frequently. He became deeply involved in our many battles over the Adirondacks.

The state legislature had created the Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources for New York State in 1950. Composed of distin-

guished members of both the senate and assembly, it also had sixteen advisory members representing a broad spectrum of business as well as conservation interests. Along with men representing lumber and power interests were such men as Karl T. Frederick, founder of the New York State Conservation Council; Lithgow Osborne, respected commissioner of the New York State Conservation Department for ten years; and Gustave Swanson, head of the Cornell University Department of Natural Sciences. I served on the committee for fifteen years.

On January 2, 1953, Howard Zahniser was requested to present his views of the Adirondacks in national perspective before this legislative committee in Albany. It was a memorable and inspiring speech that brought out the richness of wilderness possibilities in the Adirondacks. A month later he introduced in the United States Congress the first draft of the National Wilderness Preservation Act, which he authored. His presentation to the committee included the following statement: "My work as executive secretary of the Wilderness Society . . . has taken me far and away to great and beautiful wilderness areas throughout the country, and I can testify with assurance that here, within practical reach of some twenty millions of people are some of the loveliest wilderness retreats left in the United States."

Six more years passed with the New York State Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources meeting monthly and with members of the committee taking extended trips into the Adirondacks before the question of wilderness was to become a serious item on the agenda. At the December 2, 1959, meeting in Albany, Chairman Robert Watson Pomeroy stated that when he assumed chairmanship of the committee, he had initiated the study of wilderness in the Adirondacks and said that he would soon begin a similar study in the Catskills. He reported that at a meeting held at Shattuc Clearing in the High Peak country on September 9–11, 1959, Neil Stout, executive director of the committee, and Clarence Petty, a forester assigned to Stout from the Conservation Department by Commissioner Harold Wilm, recommended wilderness designation of eight areas with plans to add more. During the meeting in Albany on that December 2d, J. Victor Skiff, deputy commissioner of the Conservation Department said: "I have reported previously that at a special meeting held early in the spring with Chairman Pomeroy, Commissioner Wilm, and myself, a decision resulted in regard to Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserve areas. We have decided to leave the wilderness part of the survey pretty much up to this committee."

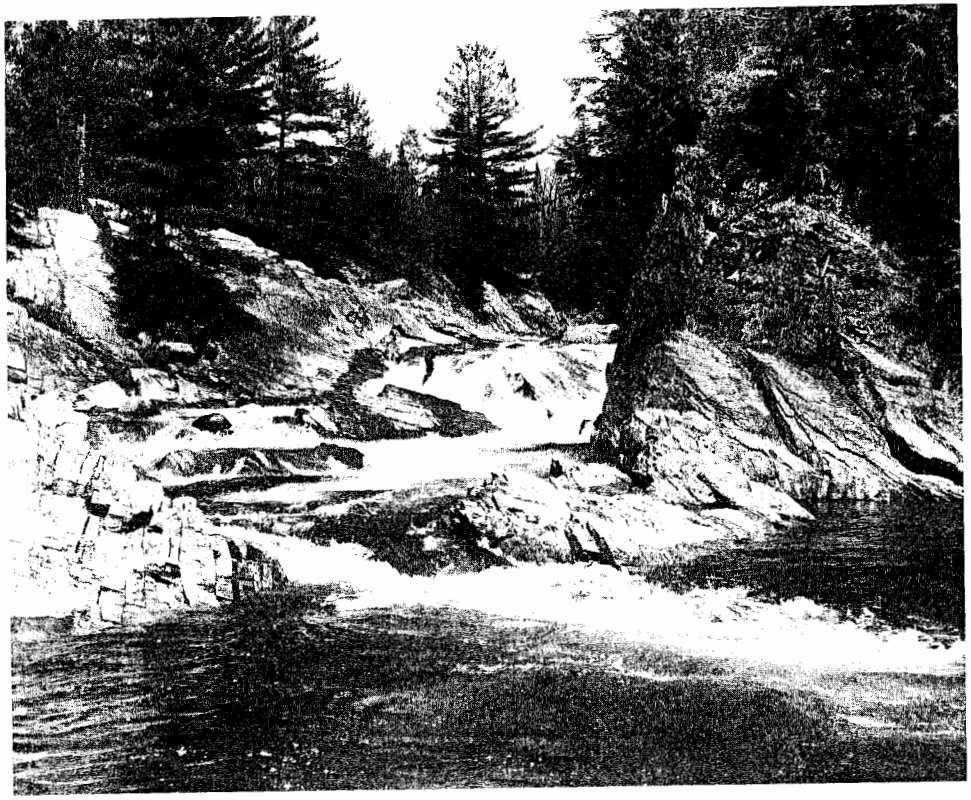
William M. Foss, assistant commissioner for Lands and Forests of the Conservation Department and a dedicated consultant for the New

York State Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources, followed that statement by saying: "I think everyone here will agree to the desirability of preserving for future generations the true wilderness areas. I would like to point out that we cannot set aside wilderness for a decade or two, merely until we want to use it for other purposes. The essence of wilderness preservation is perpetuity; zoning for wilderness must keep this in mind."

Dean Hardy Shirley of the Syracuse College of Forestry concluded: "I want to say first that I am personally delighted with the type of report we had this morning on the designation of wilderness areas, and I think it is an absolutely essential step if we are not to lose the entire character of the Adirondack Forest Preserve and the whole Adirondack Park."

The work of the committee received vital support from Lieutenant Governor Frank C. Moore and Assembly Speaker Oswald D. Heck and reflected the political strength conservationists had secured through a series of legislative actions and constitutional amendments. Supplementing this was the growing support for wilderness at the national level and in Congress, resulting from the indefatigable efforts of Howard Zahniser, that was reported in the press. A near-final version of the National Wilderness Preservation Act, which he wrote, was introduced on February 11, 1959. And as his voice was a major influencing factor in the setting aside of wilderness areas in New York, New Yorkers, including the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks and the New York State Conservation Council, voiced their strong support for the national wilderness legislation that finally passed Congress in 1964.

This was the genesis of designated wilderness in the Adirondacks and Catskills, where further activities by state agencies, the legislature, and the governor established more than a million acres of wilderness free from aircraft, jeeps, and other vehicles.



Griffen white water on the East Branch of the Sacandaga River. "We must preserve it [the New York State Forest Preserve] in its wild state, its trees, its rocks, its streams"—New York State Court of Appeals, 1932.

The Making of a Wilderness

In 1920, when I was twelve years old, I came to the Adirondack Mountains. My mother had been ill, and it was thought that a period of time in the mountains would refresh her spirits and restore her health. We were to stay at the home of a mountain guide on the edge of what is now the Siamese Ponds Wilderness. His house stood at about two-thousand-feet elevation near the foot of a lofty mountain, with views to the east revealing mountain range on mountain range to the horizon.

My mother's illness turned out to be a blessing in disguise for all our family. I found myself in the midst of the Adirondacks, a land of towering mountains, great forests, and a people uniquely and refreshingly different from those I had known in the city.

By the second summer, I had ingratiated myself to the guide sufficiently well to get an invitation from him to go on a fishing trip "back o' yonder." We entered the great forest by means of a winding trail which snaked its way through the woods to a lovely glacial lake, to a boat, to an island, and finally to a fully equipped log cabin on the island. On state land! From city streets to the depths of a great wild country replete with deer, bear, beaver, and trout! What an outstanding experience for a young boy.

My several mountaineer friends saw at once that I thrived in this wild country, that I had lots of energy, and that I was a willing packer for their frequent excursions into the back country. By the age of seventeen, because of incredible luck, I had taken a fine antlered buck and a bear. This good fortune resulted in the natives asking me to help guide their hunting parties.

Then my brother and I bought an ancient log cabin and seven

Reprinted from the *Conservationist*, May 1985.

acres of land with a mountain stream. The nearest neighbor to the west was more than ten miles distant.

The lure of this cabin country was irresistible. For years I headed north each weekend. I soon got to know the joy of standing atop some storm-swept mountain peak, or sitting around a campfire at a remote beaver pond where the solitude of wilderness was emphasized by the miles of wild country between us and the cabin, by the haunting cry of a loon, and the mysterious sounds in the night.

This land, I had been told, belongs to the people. It was part of the New York State Forest Preserve and protected by the New York State Constitution. Then it was our land. I decided that I must learn as much as possible about the land and that I would begin a library about the Adirondacks.

I started my search for Adirondack books. The wise, old Albany bookseller, John Skinner, sympathetic to my desire to start a library, had convinced me that my first book on the Adirondacks ought to be one he had—an autographed copy of Verplanck Colvin's 1873 report to the legislature. I paid for it in installments over a period of about a month. I took the book home and soon knew it almost by heart.

I began to understand how Colvin must have felt when he stood atop the remote and trailless Seward Mountain on the morning of October 15, 1870. He and his guide had camped the night before high in the mountains and had witnessed an amazing display of the aurora borealis. He had written that "it shot up from the northwest, and passing over to the east, formed a broad crimson belt overhead; while the whole dome of the heavens was lit with a silvery glory, which flashed and swayed in seeming accord with the eddies of a gale then swirling around the mountain." In Colvin's many writings I found that most basic of all joys—the joy of recognition. When Colvin described the Adirondacks (in his early narratives) as "wilderness everywhere, lake on lake, river on river, mountain on mountain, numberless," I knew he spoke the truth, for I had been there and had experienced the same thing myself. And when he told of his unabashed love of the Adirondacks, it was the same love that I felt for my few wilderness acres.

Colvin's writing made me want to learn as much as possible about the Adirondacks and why he would write such beautiful prose for submission to state agencies. I began to find out more about the mountains and how the New York State Forest Preserve came into existence.

At the close of the American Revolution, the crown lands of Great Britain, confiscated by the provisional government, became the property of New York State. They comprised seven million acres, virtually all of the state north of the Mohawk River to the Canadian border.

The region encompassed primeval wilderness of more than a hundred miles in diameter from its near sea level boundary of rivers and lakes. For more than a century, England and France had struggled for control of these vital waterways but wisely refrained from waging battles in the adjacent wilderness because of its incredibly rough terrain.

A book of maps prepared by British army engineers for use by officers of their North American armies was published in London in 1776. It included a map dated 1775 outlining the region now known as the Adirondacks with only surrounding waters noted, and the rest of the map left blank except for these words:

COUCHSACHRAGE
This country by reason of mountains, swamps,
and drowned lands is impassable and uninhabited.

The lands that the British found to be impassable and uninhabited rose gently and occasionally precipitously from the boundary waters to highlands, which in the central region averaged two thousand feet above the boundary waters. Mountain heights exceeded a mile above the sea. More than thirty rivers and streams radiated from near the region's center outward to all points of the compass, dropping more than a thousand feet in their serpentine courses, replete with innumerable waterfalls, flumes, and gorges. Glaciers of the last ice age, more than a mile in thickness, carved out myriad lakes, many near mountaintops.

Here was a land with thousands of mountains and hills, thousands of lakes and beaver ponds, thousands of miles of rivers and streams, and a half-million acres of wetlands. So rough and untamed was the country that generations of pioneers bypassed it in the early days, going up the Mohawk and Saint Lawrence rivers to gentler and more fertile lands in the west. The four-hundred-mile Erie Canal along the Mohawk River was dug by pick and shovel across the state and paid for by tolls more than a decade before the highest peak of the Adirondacks was discovered by a state geologist in 1837. He named it for his sponsor, Governor William Marcy, and christened the range of which it is a part, "the Adirondack group," commemorating an Indian tribe that hunted there.

Hunters and trappers began penetration of the wilderness by ca-

noeing and portaging up its innumerable rivers to remote lakes in the interior. There they built log cabins from the limitless spruce forest and made small clearings to help sustain themselves and their pioneer families.

Wildlife was abundant. A large beaver population had, since ancient times, been building dams on tributary streams, creating ponds and sunlit clearings the length and breadth of the wilderness. Such openings favored a variety of plants and shrubs, which would not grow in an otherwise unbroken forest. The white-tailed deer, moose, bear, marten, fisher, otter, and other animals found ideal habitat there. The mountain lion and wolves were part of the scene. All manner of birdlife, including eagles, hawks, owls, heron, loons, and ducks were common. The crystal streams were alive with trout, and deep, cold lakes had lake trout and whitefish. Salmon were common in the larger lakes and rivers.

Stories of the great forests soon reached receptive ears of people downstate. White pines, six feet in diameter and two hundred feet tall, and great tracts of spruce brought in the enterprising frontiersmen. Soon log bunk houses were filled with lumberjacks who worked long hours and gloried in their ability to cut more trees in a day than their fellows. The lumbermen used horses and oxen to move the logs from the forests to rivers where they floated downstream to mills.

Of the forest composition, spruce and balsam usually dominated the lowlands, around lakes and along rivers and streams. They also crowned most of the several thousand mountains. Giant hardwoods, notably maple and yellow birch, clothed the ridges and mountainsides up to about the three-thousand-foot elevation. Interspersed throughout the forests were giant pines and hemlocks. Cedar and tamarack were common in wetland regions.

The state government, incredibly, by 1870 had deeded away all but forty thousand of the seven million acres of this magnificent country to loggers and private interest groups. Their activities, completely uncontrolled, were transforming rich, lush river valleys into endless miles of dead trees and stumps. Critically important watershed forests on steep mountain slopes were devastated. Forest fires ravaged the mountains, burning the centuries-old forest floor down to bed rock. Rivers and streams began to dry up.

I began to understand through Colvin's writing that he had the vision to see what was happening to the Adirondacks and the courage to do something about it. At the age of twenty-one, he had authored an excellent treatise on the Helderberg Mountains near Albany and a dramatic account of his barometrical measurement of Seward Mountain in the heart of the Adirondacks. By 1872 the legislature had appointed him chief of the Adirondack Topographical Survey and made him a commissioner of State Parks. His first topographical report to the legislature included his discovery of a tiny sheet of water high on the flanks of Mount Marcy, the ultimate source of the Hudson River. He described it as a "tear of the clouds." His report began with these words:

> Since the completion of the primary geological survey of New York there has not been even an attempt at an exploration of the whole of the vast forest now known as the Adirondack Wilderness. For almost all of the exact knowledge that we possess of the topography and physical character of the region, we are indebted to Prof. Emmons and those who so ably assisted him. Through them we first learned that Whiteface Mountain, beforetime placed at about two and a half thousand feet above the sea, and consequently, supposed to be far inferior in altitude to the Catskills, really overtopped, by more than a thousand feet, those more famous and familiar mountains, while southward, towering amidst the clouds, arose a sea of summits grander and still more magnificent.

Serving with Colvin on the State Parks Commission was historian-scientist Franklin B. Hough, former Governor Horatio Seymour, and other distinguished citizens. The commission's first report to the legislature, also submitted in 1873 and obviously written by Colvin, called for the immediate protection of a region comprising 1,730,000 acres of the wild lands in the Adirondacks.

In the following years, Colvin worked tirelessly. With scores of guides, surveyors, axmen, and packers, by horse and wagon and by boat, his expeditions laced the wilderness, then almost entirely privately owned and being pillaged. The lumbermen seemed to have no thought for the future as they cut virgin headwater forests and left them ripe for devastating forest fires, which were certain to come. Dam builders, storing water to flush logs downstream and generate power for their mills, were drowning out lush, verdant river valleys and creating a desolation for wildlife. Colvin's published reports were being read by a growing number of people concerned with the protection as well as the exploitation of the mountains.

In 1885 the recommendations of Colvin and Hough finally took form when the committee headed by Charles Sargent successfully espoused the "forever wild" statute that created the New York State For-

est Preserve of lands in the Adirondacks and Catskills. The amount of land had increased to 681,000 acres, much of which had reverted back to the state for unpaid taxes. The "forever wild" statute was incorporated into law to be administered by a forest commission established a year earlier.

Public attention had become focused on the mountain regions of the state. The creation of the Adirondack Park in 1892, which included 2.8 million acres of both public and private lands in the Adirondacks, gave substance to the "forever wild" statute.

Because the Forest Commission was failing in its administration of the forest preserve, leading citizens and statesmen sought to find a way to permanently protect the watershed forests. The unanimous approval of a "forever wild" covenant by the Constitutional Convention of 1894 stripped the Forest Commission of its control of the forest preserve and put it in the hands of the people. The most potent argument advanced for its approval was the protection of the critically important watershed forests. Three of the five members of the convention's Committee on Forest Preservation were delegates from the Adirondacks who were witnessing the rivers in drought and flood. Colvin's description of these forests, which he reprinted numerous times in his reports, had echoed down through the years. He wrote after his 1870 ascent of Seward Mountain:

> The Adirondack wilderness contains the springs, which are the sources of our principal rivers and canals. Each summer the water supply for these rivers and canals is lessened, and commerce has suffered. The immediate cause has been the chopping and burning off of vast tracts of forest in the wilderness, which have hitherto sheltered from the sun's heat and evaporation the deep and lingering snows, the brooks and rivulets, and the thick, soaking sphagnous moss which, at times knee deep, half water and half plant, forms hanging lakes upon the mountainsides, throwing out constantly a chilly atmosphere, which condenses to clouds the warm vapor of the winds, and still reacting, resolves them to rain. With the destruction of the forests, these mosses dry, wither and disappear, with them vanishes the cold, condensing atmosphere which forms the clouds. Now the winter snows accumulate on the mountains, unprotected from the sun, melt suddenly and rush down laden with disaster.

Colvin's writings emphasized the unique and vital values of a protected watershed and other natural resources. It was clear that he understood the inspirational value that they might be to people. But, I soon learned that many did not share Colvin's view and that numerous attacks on the "forever wild" clause were made by various interests wanting to exploit the forest preserve's resources. Mile after mile of land denuded of forest, beset with numerous fires, streams choked with silt and debris, an absence of fish and wildlife—all attested to that fact. I began to realize that the historic legislation, of which Colvin was so much a part, did not secure wilderness preservation. State holdings were too meager and too scattered to provide protection for the remaining wilderness, largely privately owned, that were being ripped and torn asunder! I became convinced that I must—in some small way—help preserve this wonderful country. It was Colvin's vision that served as my first inspiration.

Gradually state acquisitions filled in voids in state holdings. Often lands were stripped of their forests and in devastated condition, when the state regained what it had practically given away. It would require generations of natural processes to restore these lands to a semblance of their former beauty.

As the size of the forest preserve increased in both the Adirondacks and Catskills and the dreams of Colvin and Hough began to be realized, the people of the state began to see the potential for great mountain parks. A strong constituency began to develop as visionary statesmen and leaders of major conservation groups supported legislative actions that increased both the size of the parks and the forest preserve. In 1901 the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks was organized by an acting lieutenant governor whose initial purpose was to block the state from lumbering 100,000 acres of virgin forest in the Raquette Lake region. Its membership soon included many of the large landowners in the Adirondacks who perceived the forest preserve to be essential to the integrity of a magnificent region. Members included the eminent lawyer Louis Marshall and others who were to devote their lives and their fortunes to the protection of the forest preserve. The association became the legislative watchdog for the forest preserve. By 1916 the forest preserve in the Adirondacks contained 1,765,000 acres. Bond issues of 1916 and 1926 soon added another 638,000 acres including 128,000 acres of virgin forest. By 1931 the Adirondack Park, whose boundary encompassed the majority of forest preserve land along with important scattered private holdings, had doubled in size. Yet there still was no designated wilderness.

Through my scouting and then through membership on a hiking club's conservation committee, I was led step by step in 1931 to the

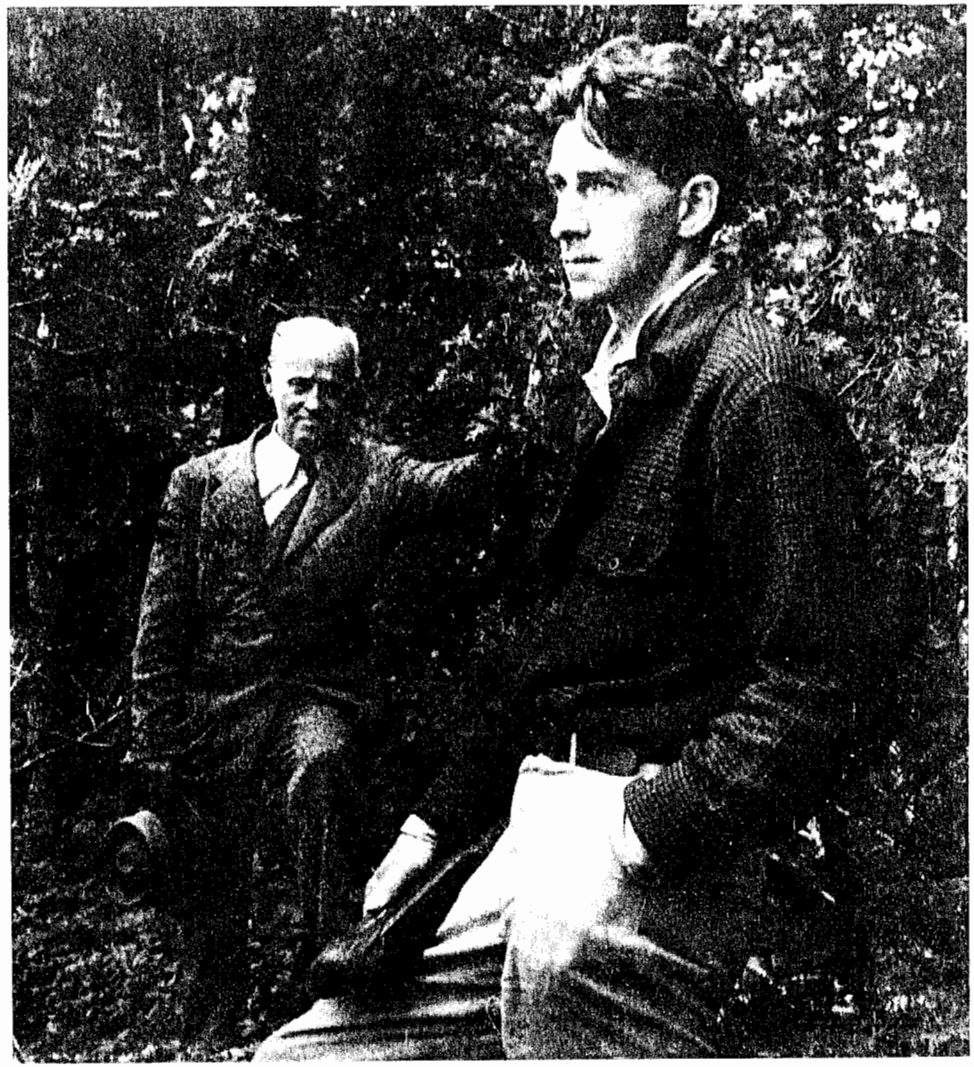
home of John S. Apperson, an official of the General Electric Company. He was, I was told, the preeminent conservationist of our region, a Virginian who had climbed Mount Marcy on skis in 1912 and who, from that experience, had decided to devote his life to the support of the "forever wild" covenant in the constitution. My association with Mr. Apperson began what has turned out to be a lifelong involvement and commitment to the integrity of the forest preserve.

Apperson was at the time in the middle of a battle against a proposal that would permit the state to reforest and commercially lumber its lands outside the boundaries of the Adirondack and Catskill parks. At the time, places like Lake George, Schroon Lake, Lake Champlain, and Sacandaga Reservoir were outside the "blue line," the term that defined the boundary of the Adirondack Park. He felt these scenic regions were essential for a well-balanced park. Former Governor Alfred E. Smith and Senator Ellwood Rabenold, president of the New York State Fish, Game, and Forest League, were Apperson's enthusiastic supporters. Apperson's group produced pamphlets, gave speeches and produced a documentary movie to help their cause. However, Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt and scores of major organizations, including the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks, and state agencies were in favor of the proposal. The electorate approved it.

A remarkable event took place as a result of the controversy. To reduce opposition to the amendment, legislation was introduced to bring into the park the many threatened border regions. As a result, the legislature added 1.5 million acres to the Adirondack Park. What appeared to be a defeat resulted in a great victory.

My joy was soon tempered by knowledge that a devastating amendment to the "forever wild" clause had passed two legislatures and was to come before the electorate in 1932. The proposal would permit the legislature to authorize the construction of buildings and appurtenances anywhere in the forest preserve. The effect of this so-called closed cabin amendment would be to return control of the forest preserve to the legislature where it had been vested forty years before with disastrous results. The amendment was, in part, a reaction to a Court of Appeals decision in 1930 banning the state from constructing an Olympic bobsled run at Lake Placid. This action, successfully argued in the courts by the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks, became the legal cornerstone for all subsequent challenges to the integrity of the preserve.

The closed cabin amendment posed an ultimate threat to future wilderness. Our group, led by Apperson, moved to alert people all



John S. Apperson and his disciple Paul Schaefer, 1947. "I was led step by step to John S. Apperson, who had years earlier decided to devote his life to support the 'forever wild' constitutional covenant"—Paul Schaefer. Photograph by Howard Zahniser, by permission of Alice B. Zahniser.

across the state. The Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks formed a statewide committee to fight its passage. Included on the committee were representatives from the Adirondack Mountain Club, the Izaak Walton League, and other concerned citizens, including myself. It had to be an all-out effort. The proposal had been introduced by Adirondack legislators who refused to debate the issue. Once again the strategy was a wide distribution of pamphlets, innumerable letters, articles in state and national magazines and a documentary film, *Our Wilderness?*

This issue brought me in personal contact with many statesmen and citizen leaders, including the trustees of the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks and Russell Carson of the Adirondack Mountain Club. It was my introduction to the political process and how public opinion could pressure the legislature.

During the fight, Apperson sent a friend and me to film a forest fire near Tahawus and vistas atop Mount Marcy. One of Apperson's cardinal rules was that you had to stand on the ground of any land in question before you could accurately discuss it. We had just set the tripod on the summit when Bob Marshall and his guide Herb Clark appeared. Marshall, the son of Louis Marshall, was at the peak of his career as an explorer, mountaineer, and author. It was July 15, 1932. Bob had just returned from the Arctic. Unfamiliar with the critical Adirondack issues at hand, he was dumbfounded to learn of the closed cabin amendment and very upset when we pointed to the lumbering of virgin forest on Mount Adams six miles distant and the fire scars on North River Mountain. We photographed Herb Clark while Bob was circling the summit, his hair blowing wildly in the wind. Then he came over and said with a determination I shall never forget: "We simply must band together—all of us who love the wilderness. We must fight together—wherever and whenever wilderness is attacked. We must mobilize all of our resources, all of our energies, all our devotion to wilderness. To fail to do this is to permit the American wilderness to be destroyed."

Marshall promised aid from Washington, and he delivered it in articles and speeches until the battle was over. The closed cabin amendment was defeated by a plurality of over six hundred thousand votes, much of it coming from New York City where Senator Rabenold had worked so diligently. We felt that we had survived the baptism of fire, and the enthusiasm we experienced as a result of that victory would last for years, as would our reliance on the scores of friends we had made across the state.

But the establishment of wilderness areas protected from human intrusions was still years away. I was disturbed at Bob Marshall's remark that "the universe of the wilderness, all over the United States, is vanishing with appalling rapidity. It is melting away like the last snowbank on some south-facing mountainside during a hot afternoon in June."

After Marshall organized the Wilderness Society, I was named to one of its committees at the first New York City meeting. And I was moved at his description of wilderness:

> It is the song of the hermit thrush at twilight and the lapping of the waves against the shoreline and the melody of the wind in the trees. It is the unique odor of balsams and of freshly turned humus and of mist rising from mountain meadows. It is the feel of spruce needles under foot and sunshine in your face and wind blowing through your hair. It is all of these at the same time, blended into a unity that can only be appreciated with leisure and which is ruined with artificiality.

One of the most significant actions in support of the "forever wild" covenant occurred when the Constitutional Convention of 1938 reiterated the law, merely changing its number in the New York State Constitution from Article VII, Section 7, to Article XIV, Section 1. Honorable 0. Byron Brewster, as chairman of the convention's Conservation Committee, heard all the arguments pro and con. An overwhelming majority of delegates, urged by the solid preservationist constituency, affirmed the law without change in its basic declaration.

During the next few years, the then conservation department was filling in voids in state ownership of remote regions, and gradually our dreams of a better protected wilderness began to take shape. National attention was focused on World War II and assaults on the forest preserve quieted.

But the problems were not over. The close of the war brought renewed emphasis on power production. A massive attack on the Moose River country began in 1945 when a dam near Higley Mountain came to the point of imminent construction. On the South Branch of the Moose River and adjacent country were some of the finest stands of virgin forests left in the East. Lovely lakes and streams, the state's largest winter yarding ground for deer, abundant wildlife—all these were to be inundated. We recognized this magnificent region as a frontier that simply could not be breeched without the most dire consequences to the rest of the preserve. Ed Richard and I, along with others, formed the

Adirondack Moose River Committee and began what was to be the largest, longest, and most expensive conservation fight in the country.

Into this scenario in 1946 came Howard Zahniser of the Wilderness Society. He, Ed Richard, and I had packed through Avalanche Pass to the Flowed Lands where we camped in an open lean-to. We had just returned from Hanging Spear Falls on the Opalescent River, had finished our final meal there, when Howard went down to the water's edge, to sit in the sun with his feet in the water. He was looking across the water toward the lofty MacIntyre Mountains and its virgin forest. I joined him. He spoke quietly. "I've been trying to make a comparison of this view with some other one I know," he said, "but there's nothing else I've seen quite like it. It has the same kind of perfection I sensed when looking at the Grand Tetons." Then getting up he looked up the valley toward Mount Colden and Avalanche Pass and said, "So this was Bob Marshall's country. No wonder he loved it so."

One of our conversations on the trip was most significant in light of future events. Zahniser said, "In addition to such protection as national parks and monuments are now given, we need some strong legislation which will be similar in effect on a national scale to what Article XIV, Section 1, is to New York—to reclaim for the people, perhaps through their representatives in the Congress, control over the wilderness regions of America."

Zahniser became an eloquent advocate of our cause. In Washington, he mustered national assistance for us on a massive scale not only from conservationists of great stature but editors, labor leaders, and heads of federal agencies. He became a frequent visitor with his family to the Adirondacks where he purchased a mountaineer's cabin not far from the ancient log cabin that my brother and I had bought years before. During the following years, while he and I fought for wilderness, our growing families spent countless summer days hiking and camping together in this cabin country and in the beckoning High Peaks region to the north.

Eighteen years later, thanks largely to Zahniser's dedication and indefatigable spirit, his dream became a reality. On September 3, 1964, four months after Zahniser's death, the President of the United States affixed his signature to the National Wilderness Preservation Act, which automatically protected a little more than nine million acres of the nation's most cherished lands. People across the country finally had a definition of wilderness. In the act, Zahniser had written: "A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain."

Five Ponds Wilderness. "Wilderness . . . an area where earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man"—Howard Zahniser, 1964. NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.

Significantly, President Johnson called Zahniser's wife, Alice, to Washington for the signing of the act and then presented her with the pen. At the time, she was at her Adirondack cabin.

Opposition to the dam on the Moose River gained force. In 1947 Assembly Speaker Oswald D. Heck convinced Governor Thomas E. Dewey to halt the Moose River Project. Our joy was short-lived when soon afterward it was announced that a larger dam would be built near Panther Mountain on the same river downstream where more private land was involved.

Several years of legal and political maneuvering ensued. We had just about reached a dead end when Speaker Heck again intervened. He created a Joint Legislative Committee on River Regulation for New York State and charged it to exhaust the Moose River issue. Assemblyman John Ostrander was named chairman. A series of public hearings further alerted the people and the press to the issues. At Buffalo Frank Moore, who was state comptroller, advocated that the section of the 1913 amendment to the constitution authorizing the use of up to 3 percent of forest preserve land for regulating the flow of streams be eliminated. At a hearing in New York City, many federal agencies concerned with natural resources testified against the dam. It was at this point that I began to believe that anything was possible in the Adirondacks—even large wilderness tracts!

By 1953 the electorate had approved a committee recommendation for an amendment to the constitution outlawing all regulating reservoirs except those specifically approved by the legislature and the people. Under this amendment, the proposed Panther dam was approved by the legislature but killed by a plurality of over a million votes. With the defeat of this dam project, thirty other smaller reservoirs located in remote regions of the Adirondacks also went down the drain. It took eleven years and a score of major court and legislative actions to prevent the construction of Higley and then Panther dams.

During this period, the New York State Conservation Council came of age. Led by its founder, Karl T. Frederick, Herman Forster, Donald Tobey, Robert Thompson, Michael Petruska, and others, the council with more than a thousand clubs located in more than fifty counties was decisive in the great successes we achieved in the fight for free-flowing rivers. Cooperating with the Adirondack Moose River Committee and the Conservation Council was a coalition of bird clubs, labor unions, and garden and service clubs. The legislature became acutely aware of the political muscle we now had. Slowly, but surely, New York residents were defining what they wanted their forest preserve to be.

Another serious threat to wild country came right after the war when jeeps, half-tracks, and planes became more commonplace. The new mechanized equipment could go almost anywhere a horse could. With such equipment, all the trappings of civilization could find their way into the most remote regions.

The quiet of the wilderness was now echoing to the sound of motors. Assembly Speaker Oswald E. Heck called for the creation of the New York State Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources in

1951 and charged it with settling this and some of the other vexing Adirondack problems.

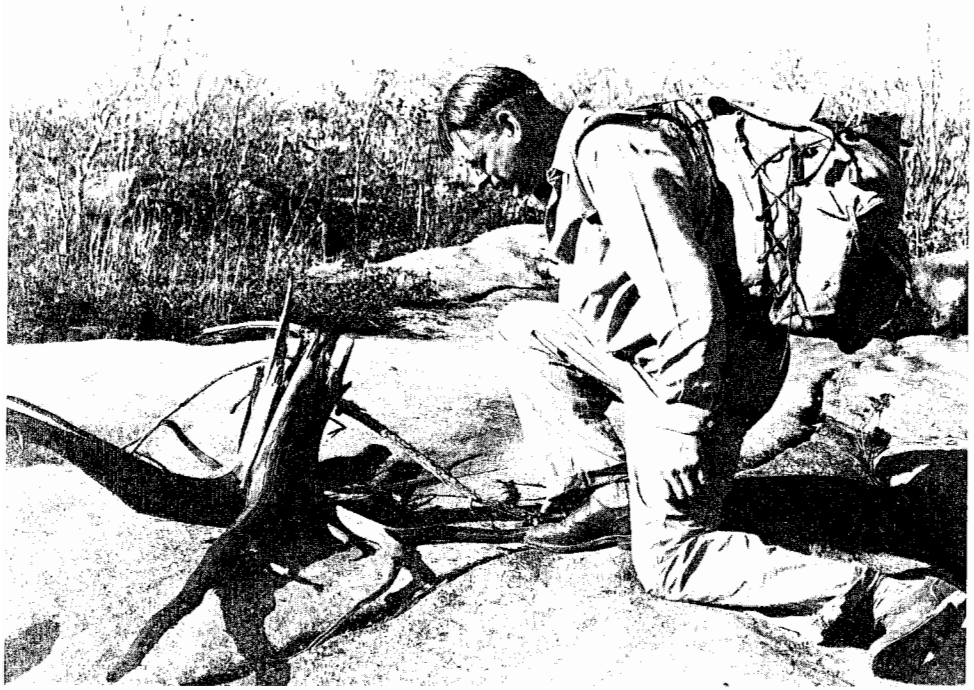
The committee, headed by Senator Wheeler Milmoe for eight years, and then headed by Assemblyman Robert Watson Pomeroy for seven years, met with an advisory group of sixteen members with a wide representation from commercial groups as well as conservationists. I was one of the advisors. It was a vitally active group. We made many trips into both parks and hiked into numerous wilderness regions. After a series of monthly meetings and scores of public hearings, a substantial inventory of the natural resources of both the Adirondacks and Catskills was completed.

The committee also settled the perennial forest preserve land loss question by initiating five legislative acts that stopped the annual loss of hundreds of acres of land and by creating a land bank of four hundred acres of forest preserve to make possible better designed roads on the deteriorated highway system in the park.

In 1956 the question of motorized vehicles came to a head when jeeps penetrated Second Pond Flow, four and one half miles into the Siamese Ponds region. This started a definite movement to close large and important wild areas to mechanized transport.

Conservation Commissioner Sharon J. Mauhs began thinking about such regulations in 1957. He visited both the Siamese Ponds and High Peaks regions. In October of the following year with the approval of Governor Averill Harriman, Mauhs issued a paper entitled "Project Forest Preserve." He closed the Siamese Ponds region to motor vehicles. Coming just before the big-game hunting season, it caused a storm of protest by hunters who were ready to move their heavy camping equipment back into favored areas as they had done for years. The protest was so strong it appeared that the regulation might be canceled, but Adirondack residents provided horse and wagon transportation, and the storm subsided.

Then a whole series of actions began. With the Mauhs action cited as a beginning of protected wilderness regions, the New York State Conservation Department's Division of Lands and Forests advocated a wilderness system. Pomeroy, who had become a senator and had taken over the leadership of the Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources, set his staff into motion. He asked Dr. Neil Stout, a forester from Syracuse University, and Clarence Petty, who was then on loan to the Pomeroy Committee by the conservation department, to identify all areas in the forest preserve worthy of wilderness designation. Their work was monumental. They outlined eleven major regions totaling



Sharon Mauhs on Black Mountain. In 1958 Conservation Commissioner Sharon J. Mauhs called for studies of the High Peaks and Siamese Ponds areas. This was the first official step in establishing protected wilderness regions in the Adirondack Forest Preserve.

772,000 acres in the Adirondacks. Their findings were published in the 1960 annual report of the committee.

On February 21, 1961, Pomeroy introduced in the assembly for study purposes an act "to amend the conservation law, in relation to the establishment of wilderness areas in the forest preserve, and to regulate the use thereof." Public hearings were held in Indian Lake, Saranac Lake, Utica, and Kingston. Strong support as well as bitter opposition surfaced. The major worry of preservationists was that by giving special protection to perhaps a million acres of the more than two-million-acre preserve, the protection afforded by the "forever wild" clause would be surrendered. Pomeroy insisted that this was not contemplated.

Meanwhile, certain members of the advisory committee, including

Karl Frederick, Lithgow Osborne, and myself, insisted that the conservation department already had the necessary authority. It was pointed out that in 1958 Commissioner Mauhs, with the approval of the governor, had closed trails into the Siamese Pond wilderness area. A special meeting of Commissioner Harold Wilm's (Mauhs' successor) advisory committee was called on September 14, 1961, to discuss the question. Twenty-nine people were in attendance, and Pomeroy was asked to lead the discussion. Many of us served on Wilm's advisory committee as well as on the Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources. After considerable debate, it was determined that the conservation commissioner should request an opinion from the attorney general on three points: (1) Does the commissioner have the authority to ban aircraft in the forest preserve? (2) Does he have the right to ban motor boats there? (3) Does he have the authority to ban motor vehicles thereon?

On December 1, 1961, Attorney General Nathaniel Goldstein assured the commissioner that according to the law he had "care, custody, and control of the forest preserve and that he had the right to regulate the uses thereof." Accordingly Pomeroy withdrew the wilderness bill and canceled the remaining public hearings. He then began to seriously concentrate on the establishment of wilderness areas in both parks. In 1962 he released a brochure advocating an increased number of such areas in the preserve. The decision evoked a strong feeling of relief from those of us who for years had dreamed of a genuinely protected system of wilderness regions.

On April 27, 1965, Commissioner Wilm formally proposed the creation of twelve wilderness tracts in the Adirondacks and four in the Catskills, totaling 882,000 acres. He also approved signs designating such areas as being off limits to mechanization. Sportsmen indicated their approval of the proposal when a vote was taken on a county-by-county basis by the New York State Conservation Council. The vote counted thirty-nine counties favoring such wilderness protection and only two opposing it.

In 1967 two major issues focused public attention on the Adirondack Forest Preserve. First was an amendment to build a dam that would inundate thirty-five miles of the Upper Hudson River near the center of the park. The legislature, reacting to public outcry, reaffirmed that they wanted neither the lands of the forest preserve to be destroyed nor the wild rivers to be dammed. They rejected the proposal unanimously in both the senate and the assembly. They also rejected a proposed Adirondack Mountains National Park that would have taken control of the High Peaks and central lakes regions from the state and

placed them with the federal government. Because of the extreme pressure from both sides on both issues, Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller saw the need to establish long-range plans for the Adirondacks and Catskills and created a Temporary Study Commission on the Future of the Adirondacks. In 1968 the governor also created the Temporary State Commission on the Water Supply Needs of Southeastern New York. This blue-ribbon panel in three years rejected construction of any storage reservoirs for metropolitan water supply by finding other viable solutions.

The Temporary Study Commission on the Future of the Adirondacks initially was chaired by Leo O'Brien and then by the inimitable Harold Hochschild. Harold A. Jerry, Jr., then director of state planning, became the commission's executive director. They were assisted by an excellent staff and thirty-nine advisors representing a broad spectrum of interests. Again, I was asked to serve as an advisor.

Chairman Hochschild submitted his final report to the governor on December 15, 1970, which was one hundred years to the month after Colvin finished preparing his report on Seward Mountain. It contained 181 specific recommendations and was clearly the finest and most comprehensive report of its kind ever made in New York. Five of the most significant recommendations were:

> Create an Adirondack Park Agency to plan use of all lands, both public and private, in the six-million-acre park;
>
> Establish a system of wilderness regions where all mechanized travel would be banned;
>
> Create a Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers system to maintain natural conditions on a thousand miles of rivers;
>
> Adequately finance a stepped-up land acquisition program;
>
> Organize an Adirondack Conservancy in the private sector to assist in land acquisitions.

Legislative action soon created the Adirondack Park Agency and the governor appointed Richard W. Lawrence, Jr., as its first chairman. George D. Davis became director of planning. After many hearings were held across the state, the agency prepared a state land master plan. The plan classified about 45 percent of the forest preserve as "wilderness." It designated sixteen wilderness regions, based in part on the earlier work of Stout and Petty, that included about a million acres of the most desirable lands in the forest preserve. In the Catskills four tracts

The signing of the historic Private Land Zoning Act by Governor Nelson Rockefeller with Senator Bernard Smith *(right)*, Assembly Speaker Perry Duryea *(center)*, and Richard Lawrence, Jr., chairman of the Adirondack Park Agency *(left)*, May 22, 1973. © photograph courtesy of the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks.

containing ninety-two thousand acres were designated by the Conservation Department.

With the specific boundaries of wilderness areas established, Commissioner Henry Diamond, on June 21, 1973, ordered seven hundred lakes closed to aircraft and motor boats. His order listed the lakes by name and location. In his statement he said: "One of the rarest, hence most valuable recreational assets is solitude—a chance to get away from the sight and sound of others. We want to provide areas in which the intrusions of man are minimal. In these, the sound of aircraft and boat motors are an unwelcome reminder of the day-to-day world the visitor is trying to forget."

Commissioner Diamond's order was immediately challenged in the supreme court by owners of an air service, which had been flying into remote areas for years. On November 14, 1973, Justice Edmund Shea rejected the challenge. At last there was legally designated wilderness in the Adirondacks.

One hundred years had elapsed between Verplanck Colvin, Franklin B. Hough, and the State Parks Commission's call for protection of the wild lands in the Adirondacks and the New York State Supreme Court decision that tested the legality of Commissioner Diamond's regulation. The decision was gratifying to countless individuals like myself who, through successive generations, had voiced their plea and had worked tirelessly for the preservation of wilderness in the Adirondack and Catskill mountains.

I have loved this land from the first time I set eyes on it back in 1920. I am happy that I was able to help, along with countless others, to secure wilderness in the forest preserve where generations yet to come can stand, as I have, on a storm-swept mountain peak or sit around a campfire and hear the haunting cry of a loon or the roar of a wild river in an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man.

2

Rivers, Mountains, Forests