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Adirondack Chapter

PROTECTING FOLLENSBY POND

The Adirondack Chapter of The Nature Conservancy on September 18, 2008, purchased the 14,600-acre Follensby Pond property for \$16 million, an amount well below fair market value. This list of questions and answers supplements information in our press release and posted on our Web site at www.nature.org/follensby, about the purchase.

1. Does this mean the property will be removed from the tax rolls in Tupper Lake and Harrietstown?

No. The Nature Conservancy will continue to pay real property taxes.

2. Why did The Nature Conservancy buy the property?

Follensby Pond has long been recognized as a conservation priority. It contains high-quality forests, wetlands, and waters, including 11.5 miles of undeveloped shoreline on Follensby Pond and 10 miles along the Raquette River. After 56 years of ownership and careful stewardship, Mr. McCormick, felt it was time to sell. His goals for the property's future have been consistent with the Conservancy's; we worked together over several years to get to this point.

3. Is it The Nature Conservancy's goal to buy all available lands in the Adirondacks?

No. All of our conservation programs, including land purchases, are guided by science. In any given year, the Adirondack Chapter gets dozens of inquiries from private landowners interested in selling and protecting their lands. We turn away far more opportunities than we take on, measuring each inquiry against a list of ecological criteria and our current stewardship and land protection capacity.

4. Isn't there enough protected land in the Adirondack Park?

No. The six-million-acre Adirondack Park is unique: within its boundaries is a combination of public and private lands, wild country and rural towns. Today about 43% of the land is protected as publicly-owned forest preserve and 13% is privately-owned and protected by conservation easement. The remaining 44% includes many ecologically-significant places unprotected and vulnerable to damaging alterations. The Conservancy has completed an extensive analysis—sifting through broad data sets like the condition and status of the world's temperate deciduous forests and, the more specific, rare species habitat needs and locations in the Park—to identify the most important forests and ecosystems to protect. Those are the places on which our science-based conservation efforts are focused. There is enough space in the Adirondacks for people and nature to co-exist in a sustainable way.

5. Why isn't Follensby open to the public? What about to TNC members?

Hunting clubs currently lease the property. We anticipate that the public will have access to this special property in the future. Until then, unauthorized access is considered trespass. Our primary goal is to preserve ecologically-important lands and waters. While those efforts often result in wonderful public recreational opportunities, we are not equipped to manage for public access—TNC member or not.

6. Are you selling Follensby to New York State?

What we've done through this purchase is secured an opportunity to add a very special property, listed as a priority in the New York State Open Space Conservation Plan, to the Adirondack Forest Preserve.

7. Is the Conservancy overextending itself by purchasing Follensby Pond so soon after purchasing 161,000 acres of former Finch, Pruyn lands?

With nearly four decades of successful conservation efforts in the Adirondacks, we were able to secure loans to buy both conservation-priority properties. We couldn't have predicted that the timing of the purchases would be so close to one another. We acted quickly to keep the lands intact and avert development threats.

8. How is The Nature Conservancy paying for all of this?

Our ability to undertake two such important purchases is dependent upon the success of our \$35 million private fundraising campaign called Heart of the Adirondacks. We've gone out on a limb before to pursue our conservation mission and people have demonstrated through their generous financial commitments that our work is important to them. We are confident and hopeful that others will contribute generously toward our historic land-saves.

9. Have the forests at Follensby been harvested for timber?

Yes. The McCormick family has harvested timber over the years.

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