



March 7, 2024

Mr. John Lyman Ernst, APA Chairman
NYS Adirondack Park Agency
P.O. Box 99
1133 NYS Route 86
Ray Brook, NY 12977

Dear Chairman John Ernst:

As members of the Eagle Lake Property Owners Association, we strongly urge the Adirondack Park Agency to reverse the decision to barricade the public boat launch on Eagle Lake, in the Town of Ticonderoga. Our organization and several of our members have written to you about our concerns but have not received replies. We are sending this letter to you, the APA chairperson, in hopes that we will receive a reply so we can be sure you are receiving our correspondence.

There are many reasons we oppose the plan to barricade this boat launch. These include:

- It would effectively bar at least six homeowners, with boat only access, from being able to reasonably get to their homes;
- It would eliminate the only place many homeowners have for launching their boats;
- It could have the effect of reducing property values on the lake;
- It would reduce public access (particularly for the elderly and the disabled) to this valuable recreational resource;
- It would negatively impact the environment of the lake since boats from the launch are used for water testing as part of the CSLAP testing program, fecal monitoring and for our study and lake management planning to address the invasive species and other lake management concerns.

It should also be noted that keeping the launch available for float-on, float-off traffic is supported by the Essex County Board of Supervisors, the Essex County Director of Emergency Services, the Supervisor for the Town of Ticonderoga, the Ticonderoga Town Board, the Ticonderoga Fire Chief, the Chilson Fire Chief, the Schroon Lake Fire Chief, the Eagle Lake Property Owners Association and over 2,000 people that have signed the on-line petition to keep the launch open. We are not aware of any group in favor of barricading the launch.

Barricading this century-old public launch was first proposed as an option in the DEC Hammond Pond Unit Management Plan (UMP). When this plan was presented in a public meeting on May 17, 2019 there were three options offered by DEC;

1. Leave the boat launch as is;
2. Barricade the boat launch to float-on float-off traffic;
3. Perform a series of six studies to determine if the launch should be redesignated from “Wild Forest” to “Intensive Use” If it met the criteria to be redesignated as “intensive use” the practice of float-on, float-off traffic would continue to be allowed. In bold print the DEC listed this option as “...the preferred alternative for Eagle Lake”.

On May 17, 2019 the APA adopted a resolution, included in the UMP, that addressed this issue and included the following provision:

WHEREAS, modifications to the Draft Plan in response to public comment included a proposed study of an existing boat launch on Eagle Lake to determine whether the site should be altered in accordance with the Master Plan or whether those lands should be reclassified to Intensive Use;

The resolution went on to conclude that the UMP **was in conformance with the state land master plan**. Clearly the APA concluded that the 3 options were all in agreement with the state land master plan. We agree.

Despite this, neither DEC nor the APA conducted any of the six studies proposed in the UMP. Some boat use data was collected, as well as vehicle parking data, but no analysis was done with the data. A rather extensive carrying capacity study was done for nearby Paradox Lake that could have provided a model for the study envisioned in the UMP. More concerning is that at the APA meeting on May 16, 2019, Walt Link described a commitment for the APA and The DEC to develop a methodology to do carrying capacity studies across the Adirondack Park (about 2 hours and 52 minutes into the meeting recording). This methodology was to be completed within two years and to be used on Eagle Lake within five years so there would be an established methodology to assess capacity park-wide. Why have the APA and DEC abandoned their commitment to develop a methodology which could benefit the entire park?

Instead, the APA announced in February of 2023 that they adopted option number two and planned to barricade the launch effective October 14th 2024. When questioned by property owners and local officials, both the DEC and the APA have said that since Eagle Lake is under one thousand acres, barricading the launch is the only option consistent with the state land master plan. In a presentation to the APA board on 2/9/2023, Megan Philips presented this incorrect conclusion to the APA board as the reason for deviating from the adopted UMP and barricading the launch. As we have pointed out, this is simply false. The UMP itself outlines two other options which would be allowed, and one option (number 3) which the DEC called “the preferred alternative”.

We believe the statement that barricading the launch is the only option that conforms with the master plan is based on the master plan page 43, item 1 under the heading boat launching sites which says: **1. Boat launching sites will only be provided on large lakes regularly used by motorboats. A large lake is defined as a lake approximately 1,000 acres or more in area,** we understand this supports option 2 of

barricading the lake. However the master plan goes on in item 3 on page 44 to state **3. Existing boat launching sites that do not meet the above guidelines may be retained but their status will be periodically reviewed to determine if their eventual conversion to fishing access sites is appropriate.** This supports the UMP options 1 and 3 and APA's resolution that the UMP does conform to the master plan.

If some negative impact from the launch were being addressed, there would be some logic to the decision to close the launch. But that is not the case. Instead the only reason given to take this action is the incorrect assertion that it is the only way to conform to the master plan. Given the adverse impact this decision has on residents and users of the park this decision should be carefully reevaluated.

We call on the APA to ask the DEC to conduct the six studies which they promised to do in 2019, and to redesignate the small parcel of land at the boat launch to "intensive use". We are simply asking the DEC to keep the promise they made to the people of New York in May of 2019 and for the APA to support, not prevent, adherence to the UMP adopted following due process.

Our board members would like the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this matter further. We can be reached at the above address or by phone at (518) 339-4931.

Sincerely,

Keith Park

Keith Park, ELPOI President