



Eagle Lake
Property Owners, Inc.



– President: Keith Park – Vice President: Chris Hyde – Secretary: Edward Leahy – Treasurer: Rolf Tiedemann –
31 Barkwood Lane, Clifton Park, NY 12065 ~ www.eaglelake1.org
ELPOI is a totally volunteer run 501(c)(3) not-for-profit

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul:

I am writing to you as President of Eagle Lake Property Owners, Inc. (ELPOI) to bring a recent decision of the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) to your attention. Eagle Lake is a 420-acre lake in the Town of Ticonderoga in Essex County. It is a quiet lake that is used by property owners, local residents and tourists for boating and fishing. These users access the lake by a state boat launch that has been in operation for at least 50 years without any ill effect. There is also a day use area, a lean-to and several primitive campsites accessible only by boat at the far end of the lake, approximately 2.5 miles from the launch.

In May of 2019, after careful study and consideration of public input, the APA passed a resolution to adopt a Unit Management Plan (UMP) for the Hammond Pond Wild Forest where the boat launch is located. At this time DEC Commissioner Seggos signed a memorandum stating that "The Plan is consistent with Environmental Conservation Law, and Department Rules, Regulations and Policies and is hereby approved and adopted." In the UMP it was noted that the Eagle Lake boat launch was non-conforming and listed three alternatives to address this non-conformance: 1) No action, allowing the launch to remain as it had for decades; 2) Erect a blockade to prevent continued trailered float on/off launching; and 3) Perform a study of several specific factors to inform a decision whether to reclassify the area for intensive use. The UMP concluded that the best option was option 3 and at the end of option 3 in bold type stated " **Given the context of this particular site, this alternative is the preferred alternative for Eagle Lake.**"

Recently, Megan Philips, APA Deputy Commissioner, took it upon herself to deviate from the UMP adopted by the APA Board and approved by the DEC Commissioner, and not wait for DEC to perform any studies upon which to base a decision on the future of the launch. DEC did do a boat count and count of cars parked at the launch but did no analysis of the results and Ms. Philips was very clear in a meeting with us that it was not considered as part of the decision to erect the barrier. Instead she decided to instruct DEC to erect a blockade to render the launch unusable for float on/off launching at the end of the 2024 boating season. She scheduled separate meetings with ELPOI Board members and Town of Ticonderoga officials to inform us of her decision. Only after Ms. Phillips had already informed us she had decided to close the launch did she inform the APA Board that she had decided not to follow the UMP.

Surprisingly, APA Board members raised no objection that Ms. Phillips overrode a resolution of the entire board to adopt a UMP providing that option 3 was the preferred option. Additionally, Ms. Phillips did not allow public input into the decision to change the plan, which was initially adopted after consideration of considerable public input on the section about the Eagle Lake boat launch.

ELPOI is upset by the closure of the launch, as is the Town of Ticonderoga and the County of Essex, both of which have passed resolutions in opposition to this action and over 1600 concerned citizens that have signed a petition in opposition of the closure. We have enclosed copies of those resolutions as well as copies of letters to Ms. Philips and the APA Board. The local sportsperson association also sent a letter to the APA to voice its objection to this change.

Governor, this launch has been operated without issue for decades, it makes no sense to close this access to the lake. ELPOI members are appreciative of the special nature of the Adirondack Park and support protecting the park. Our members monitor water quality, work hard to prevent transfer of invasive species, participate in the annual loon count and are in the process of becoming designated as a loon-friendly lake. Many of our members are hikers (including winter 46ers), kayakers, anglers and hunters. We want to protect Eagle Lake and the Adirondacks as a whole, but that can be done with good judgment and common sense. There is no need to mindlessly close a facility that does not impinge upon the characteristics of the area.

As the appointing authority of the APA board, we ask that you instruct the board to revisit this decision and allow the DEC to perform the study detailed in the UMP so that a reasoned decision about the future of the launch can be followed.

We thank you for your attention to this matter.

Respectfully,

Keith Park, ELPOI President
For the ELPOI Board of Directors