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GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION ON LAKE GEORGE State Purchase Will Protect Habitat and Enhance Water Quality

(Albany, NY) – Governor George E. Pataki today announced the State has purchased 1,310 acres of open space on Lake George in the Town of Bolton, Warren County. The acquisition of the Northwest Bay property will protect valuable lands in the region, helping to enhance water quality in Lake George and critical habitat of the area.

“Lake George has a proud tradition of providing New Yorkers with unmatched recreational opportunities,” Governor Pataki said. “We must continue to support initiatives that improve the health of the lake and its surrounding ecosystem so that future generations will have access to this magnificent natural resource. This acquisition will help protect Lake George, and ensure that local residents and visitors continue to enjoy one of the State’s most treasured regions.”

The Northwest Bay property includes Pole Hill Pond, a pristine, spring-fed pond that drains into the Northwest Bay of Lake George. The property is adjacent to thousands of acres of Adirondack Forest Preserve lands, stretching north to the Pharaoh Lake Wilderness Area, south across Tongue Mountain Range, and to the lake’s eastern shore to include Black Mountain and parts of Washington County. The State purchased the parcel from The Lake George Land Conservancy with \$1.1 million from the Environmental Protect Fund (EPF).

State Senator Betty Little said, “Governor Pataki’s continued commitment to protecting the environment, including the acquisition of this strategic property, helps ensure that future generations may also experience the majesty of this beautiful lake. As we develop a unit management plan for this area, I look forward to the possibility of greater public access to help our tourism industry while safeguarding this important watershed.”

Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Erin M. Crotty said, “This announcement furthers Governor Pataki’s unprecedented commitment to the protection of New York’s environment. This acquisition illustrates the importance of taking an ecosystem approach to achieve conservation goals. By preserving the critical lands around Lake George, we are ensuring the continued health of the lake itself.”

Brian Houseal, executive director of the Adirondack Council, said, “Governor Pataki’s commitment to the ecological health and natural character of Lake George is unsurpassed in the modern era. Not since Herbert Lehman – who left office four years before Governor Pataki was born – has one governor protected so much shoreline and unbroken upland forest on the Queen of American Lakes. As the built-up areas of Lake George grow busier and busier, these lands will only increase in their value to the public, both as a place of refuge and a buffer against water pollution.

Andy Beers, deputy director of The Nature Conservancy, said, “This project represents a major step forward in protecting Lake George’s water quality and scenic beauty, and it will create significant new public recreation opportunities in and around Northwest Bay, which is one of Lake George’s most prominent features. We congratulate Governor Pataki and the Lake George Land Conservancy for completing this important land protection project.”

“For many generations Lake George has been a place of stunning beauty, “ said Lynn L. Schumann, executive director of the Lake George Land Conservancy, the group who transacted the deal. “In 1791, future United States President Thomas Jefferson described Lake George as one of the most beautiful lakes he had ever seen. Much has changed in the intervening centuries, but thanks to Governor Pataki’s foresight, the pure water quality and unspoiled upland forests are protected for generations to come.”

Mary-Arthur Beebe, executive director of the Lake George Association (LGA), said, “As the nation’s first lake association and a pioneer in the conservation movement, Lake George Association applauds Governor Pataki and the State of New York on the acquisition of this critical piece of land, which will create a beautiful corridor of green mountainsides. This process of development, which represents one of the biggest threats to the water quality of Lake George. We are pleased the Governor’s thinking is in line with LGA’s mission of protecting and improving the beauty and quality of Lake George.”

Dr. Carol D. Collins, chairwoman for the FUND for Lake George, said, “When the FUND for Lake George created the Lake George Land Conservancy in 1988, we set in motion work which has led to the acquisition of over 8,000 acres of land for preservation. We are fortunate to find an enlightened leader in Governor Pataki to further this goal. Land acquisition is a vital part of the water quality protection equation. The FUND looks forward to implementing other vital protection measures that will assure future generations the privilege of enjoying our national treasure.”

Maintaining the intact woodland is important to preserving Lake George’s pristine water quality. This land is the watershed of Northwest Bay Brook, one of the largest streams that feeds Lake George. The woodlands and wetlands of Lake George act as natural filters to catch impure nutrients before they reach the lake’s water. The most cost-effective method of preserving water quality in Lake George is to protect the natural lands surrounding the lake.

Under the leadership of Governor Pataki, New York State has preserved more than 412,000 acres of open space, resulting in increased recreational opportunities, preservation of historic resources, strengthening local economies and the protection of valuable ecosystems. Through investments from the EPF and 1996 Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act, New York State has committed more than \$18 million to important environmental programs in the Lake George area.

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