

Cornell studies revitalization of Adirondack hamlets

ITHACA, N.Y. - Bypassed technology and frozen in time, communities in New York State's majestic Adirondack region face such a severe economic slump that it will take major planning and investment to revitalize the area, according to a new study directed by a Cornell University researcher.

Equal in size to Vermont, the six-million-acre Adirondack Park, as the region is called, is the largest park in the continental United States and the biggest wilderness area east of the Mississippi River. About 40 percent of the land remains a "forever wilderness" forest preserve.

Nestled high in this alpine region are 135 hamlets with a combined population of about 125,000. The "forever wild" land of the Park has been safeguarded since before the turn of the century, but what has gone unattended is planning for the future of the settled areas of the Park. At stake, in fact, is the very survival of the residents in the region.

"The majority of the Adirondack communities are either too small, too poor, or too disorganized that they alone cannot do much about their dilemma," says Roger T. Trancik, a landscape architecture professor and specialist in urban design and environmental planning in the New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell. Trancik headed the study group.

Now in the final stage, the Adirondack study is a joint effort of Cornell and four Adirondack counties--Clinton, Essex, Hamilton, and St. Lawrence. Supported by the Adirondack Park Agency and the New York State Council of Arts, the project is a master plan for the future of settlements in the Adirondacks and is one of the most comprehensive studies of the park undertaken to date.

In Trancik's view, the problems confronting the Adirondack residents and the challenges ahead to better their conditions are enormous. The study points out that many communities lack the ability to deal with the complexities of development planning. Compounding the situation are

unstable local economies, below poverty income levels, and chronic high unemployment, among other factors.

Based on a multitude of issues and problems facing the Adirondack communities, the study team is developing wide-ranging planning and investment strategies geared to generate economic development opportunities for all the hamlets in the region.

Among steps considered vital for revitalizing the hamlets, as spelled out in the study, are:

-Waterfront revitalization. Waterfronts are a critical resource in most Adirondack hamlets, yet these communities have not taken full advantage of this resource as an "open space amenity" for attracting investment. Steps should be taken to improve the economic value and utilization of waterfronts as well as their visual and physical quality. Such waterfront revitalization programs should include development of river trails, water power, beaches, commercial marinas, and waterfront parks.

-Recreation and tourism. Based on the region's natural, cultural, and historic resources, recreation and tourism are the backbone of the Adirondack economy. Efforts to promote tourism should be stepped up. More tourist centers at the gateways of the Park could substantially increase year-round tourist activity. The strategic location of such centers could be the cornerstone for the revitalization of selected hamlets within the region.

-Industrial development. The study calls for expansion of wood products beyond the primary processing of timber into lumber, luring into the region a range of small-scale manufacturing companies as well as research and development (R&D) facilities, establishment of agriculture and food processing facilities, encouragement of the handicraft industry, relocation of more state government facilities into the area, introduction of data processing facilities, and development of privately-owned seasonal homes.

-Historic resources. Many structures and sites in the Adirondack Park are historic resources, which take many forms, including buildings, sites, landscapes, districts, or waterways. Preservation of such resources is the key to the redevelopment strategies for the hamlets. A creative method of marketing a community's historical resources is essential for attracting more visitors to the region.

-Infill sites. "Infill development" means the renovation and reuse of older existing structures in hamlets. Infill sites exist in the form of vacant lots along or near a main street, or large areas within residential neighborhoods. Some of the development opportunities involve single lot development, renovation of vacant buildings, and development of land areas.

-Public spaces. Attractive public spaces in a hamlet enhance local

community pride that provides an incentive for residents to improve and maintain their properties. A hamlet with an attractive environment is much more marketable to prospective industrial developers. Improving public spaces represents one of several strategies for attracting investment and reversing the tide of economic decline in the region.

-Water and sewer systems. A hamlet's economic vitality and growth capability are, in part, dependent on the ability of the hamlet to provide an adequate supply of high quality water. Over the next 10 years, three-fourths of the public water supply systems in the Adirondacks will have to undergo a major overhaul. Meanwhile, many hamlets lack modern sewage systems; construction of small decentralized wastewater systems is encouraged.

Commenting on these planning and economic development

strategies as suggested in the study, Cornell's Trancik says: "Each village and hamlet in the Adirondack Park is unique physically and culturally, but common problems and opportunities exist among many hamlets that could be shared."

The objective of the planning approach for the region is to strike a balance between economic development and environmental preservation, Trancik points out. The ultimate goal is to encourage investment in the settlements of the area by people inside and outside of the region.

Initiated a year ago, the Adirondack study has resulted in a publication titled **Hamlets of the Adirondacks**, a descriptive survey and analysis of 135 hamlets in the region. A companion publication, **Hamlets of the Adirondacks II**, which discusses specific planning, marketing, and investment strategies for the hamlets, will be available in early 1985.

Dairy management workshops by Cornell professors

ITHACA, NY - A group of animal scientists from Cornell University will brave the snow and frigid weather in January to bring farmers up to date on state-of-the-art dairy production and management techniques.

To accomplish the task, seven dairy specialists from the New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell will travel to Oneonta, Latham, Syracuse, and Jamestown to offer a two-day "crash" course in each location on dairy management for farmers.

The "1985 Winder Dairy Management Schools," which start January 7, will focus on the latest Cornell research-based recommendations on dairy management. Lectures will center on feeding, dairy herd improvement (DHI) and business management, reproduction, housing and milking management, and breeding and genetics.

The Cornell professors on the

team who will expound on these subjects and field questions from participants are Charles J. Sniffen, Larry E. Chase, Terry R. Smith, R. David Smith, William G. Merrill, David M. Galton, E. John Pollak, and Robert W. Everett, all in Cornell's department of animal science - the sponsor of the events.

Open to all dairy farmers throughout New York State, the 1985 Winter Dairy Management Schools will take place on the following dates:

January 7-8 - Oneonta (Holiday Inn, Route 23).

January 9-10 - Latham (Albany Airport Holiday Inn, U.S. Route 9).

January 21-22 - Syracuse (Holiday Inn, Fairgrounds area, Thruway Exit 39).

January 23-24 - Jamestown (Holiday Inn, West 4th Street).

Similar regional schools were staged by Cornell for the first time last January on a trial run. Encouraged by the initial results, Cornell has decided to hit the road again, according to Professor Everett, the program chairman for the school.

Along with Wisconsin and California, New York is among the nation's top three dairying states. Its dairy industry is the backbone of the state's agricultural industry that now approaches the \$3 billion mark in annual gross farm income.

For more information about registration and the program for the January schools, contact Robert Everett, B22 Morrison Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853, or call (607) 256-4416.



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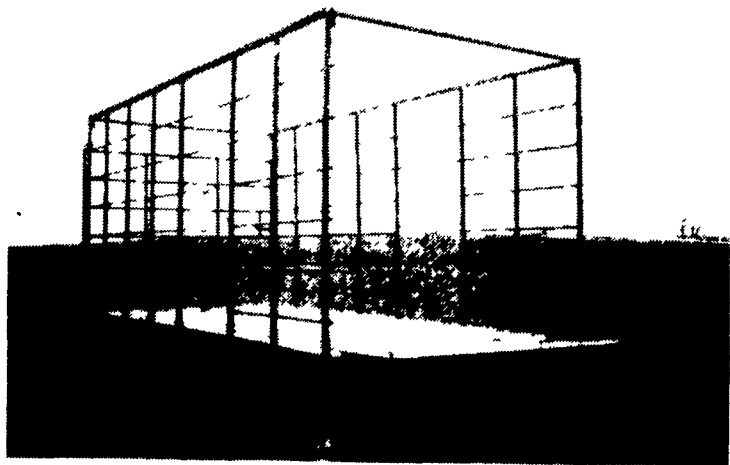
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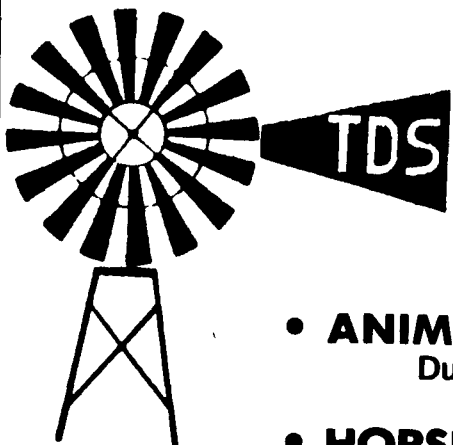
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