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Beaver Lake bioblitz uncovers 828 species

Wednesday, June 02, 2004

MARK WEINER ENVIRONMENT NOTEBOOK

The results are in from last month's bioblitz at Beaver Lake Nature Center in Lysander, where scientists and students attempted to count every living species they could find in 24 hours.

Students, faculty and staff from the state College of Environmental Science and Forestry worked with staff from Beaver Lake, a county park, to count the plants, animals and fungi.

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By the time they were done, 828 species had been discovered in the woodland, meadow, bog and pond areas of the park.

Last year, in what is believed to be Central New York's first bioblitz, 661 species were counted in Elmwood Park in Syracuse.

Scientists expected to find more species in the 650 acres that make up Beaver Lake Nature Center, but this year's effort was held back by thunder, lightning, high winds and rain.

Limiting ATVs

The state Department of Environmental Conservation has proposed limiting use of all-terrain vehicles on certain roads within the Adirondack Park.

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DEC Commissioner Erin Crotty said she wants to make sure that ATV access on state forest preserve lands will conform to the state vehicle and traffic laws, as well as the Adirondack State Land Master Plan.

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"As the stewards of nearly 3 million acres of land in the Adirondacks, we are committed to preserving the region's unrivaled resources so that they may be enjoyed by generations of New Yorkers," Crotty said last week.

Before making its recommendation, the DEC evaluated the 54 roads that are currently open to ATV access within the Aldrich Pond, Independence River, Black River and Watson's East Wild Forest areas. The department suggested that all such roads should be closed to unlimited ATV access by the general public.

Under the plan, five roads would be open by seasonal permit for up to three years.

The proposed amendments will be available for public comment until the Adirondack Park Agency considers the proposal at its July meeting.

### **A green school**

A Syracuse school that uses Elmwood Park as a classroom might soon be recognized for its achievements by the National Wildlife Federation.

First- and third-graders at Roberts School, 715 Glenwood Ave., have explored the park and nearby fields and forests of Corcoran High School as part of their course work.

Now Joan Siple's first-grade class, and the third-grade inclusion class of Adele Toney and Nina DeFio, have asked for "schoolyard certification" from the National Wildlife Federation.

To recognize their effort, Syracuse Parks Commissioner Patrick Driscoll will talk to the classes at 9:30 a.m. Thursday at the Elmwood Park Pavilion.

The designation recognizes schools that work on schoolyard habitat projects. Those projects create wildlife habitats and hands-on learning opportunities for pupils.

Among other things, the certification requires pupils to show they have taken steps to restore native plants and animals. The two classes documented the needs of the extended schoolyard habitat and came up with a plan to help maintain and improve the area.

The Centers for Nature Education's Neighborhood Opportunity Based Environmental Learning program coordinated many of the activities for the pupils on both the Elmwood and Corcoran land.

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