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AARCH MATTERS

Your Preservation News for the Adirondack Region.

"Every time you tear a leaf off a calendar, you present a new place for new ideas."
— Charles Kettering

We hope you had a peaceful and joyous holiday and began this new year full of optimism for 2021. Like many of you, we are saddened by last week's attacks at the Capitol, a building that embodies the American ideals of democracy, justice, and principled and peaceful debate and we strongly condemn such attacks on these principles and this institution.

As we prepare for our summer programs and special events, we are excited by the unfolding possibilities, and look forward to sharing our enriching, COVID-safe summer programming as it comes together over the next several months.

Foremost on our agenda is continuing our advocacy efforts to save Debar Pond Lodge. There are some important dates to keep in mind. On Tuesday, January 19, 2021, the Adirondack Park Agency will hold a zoom public hearing at 1:30 pm–4: 30 pm and again from 6:00 pm–9:00 pm. Please contact the APA to register to join the meeting. Most importantly, we encourage you to write letters in support of the preservation of Debar Pond Lodge. The deadline for written comments is February 12, 2021. Please see below for further guidance on written comments and for more on AARCH's efforts to save Debar Pond Lodge.

AARCH continues to thank all of you who have given so generously during our annual appeal. Your vital support makes our important work possible.

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Debar Pond Lodge Images courtesy Nancie Battaglia

PRESERVE

Debar Pond Lodge - UPDATE

In November NYSDEC announced its intention, through aDraft Generic Environmental Impact Statement, to demolish Debar Pond Lodge, a National Register-listed Great Camp in the Franklin County town of Duane. Since DEC has not been able to imagine a use for this historic site while in state ownership, it seems that the only remaining alternative to save this Adirondack treasure is through a constitutional amendment.

How would this work? A constitutional amendment is a long process that requires that the state legislature to pass and the voters of New York State to approve an amendment to the state constitution that allows an exception to Article 14. There have been many successful land exchange amendments in the past. Such an amendment to save Debar Pond Lodge would exchange about six acres of land around the lodge for at least 300 acres of new land to be added to the Forest Preserve. The exchange would also ensure that the boundaries of the parcel around the lodge are drawn in such a way to ensure continued public access to Debar Pond and its Forest Preserve surroundings for viewing, picnicking, swimming, boating, hiking, or cross-country skiing.

The lodge property would be conveyed to a nonprofit organization, the Debar Pond Institute, dedicated to preserving Debar Pond Lodge for the education, enjoyment and inspiration of present and future generations and to operate diverse education and recreation programs there that are open to the public. For a description of the vision and process to achieve this, click this link to The Debar Lodge Land Exchange Amendment Questions and Answers document.

Yes – this is a long and tedious process, but this particular land exchange amendment is a win-win solution on many fronts. It would save a magnificent work of Adirondack architecture; allow the property to be used for public education and recreation; enlarge the Forest Preserve by 300 or more acres; maintain public access to Debar Pond and its surroundings; help disburse usage of the Forest Preserve away from the overused High Peaks region; provide jobs and economic benefits to the local community; and save the state hundreds of thousands of dollars in demolition and construction costs.

The bottom line is that this is an important complex of historic buildings, there is a tremendous amount of public support for its preservation and public use, and an amendment to the constitution seems to now be the cleanest way to save the lodge.

The public has another opportunity to comment on the future of this important historic site by writing to NYSDEC and the APA via email at: DebarComment@apa.ny.gov or by writing:

Steven Gugliemi, NYS DEC
1115 NYS Route 8
PO Box 296
Ray Brook, NY 12977-0296

Please speak up about this important issue.

The deadline for comments is February 12, 2021.

A suggested statement of support is:

We support the preservation and public use of Debar Pond Lodge, a National Register listed Great Camp in the Franklin County town of Duane because this is an important group of architecturally significant buildings and has great potential as a cultural, educational and recreational center for the local area and the Adirondack North Country region.

We support the preservation and public use of Debar Pond Lodge through a land exchange amendment to the New York State Constitution, such as is proposed by the Debar Pond Institute, a New York, non-profit educational organization named Debar Pond Institute, which will be ready, willing and able to enter into a land exchange agreement with the state of New York to trade the state at least 300 acres of land in return for six acres of land including Debar Lodge and then refurbish the lodge and operate it in the public interest.

We insist that the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and the Adirondack Park Agency table the state's current plan to demolish Debar Pond Lodge and to allow the constitutional amendment process to proceed.

NEWS

Reflections on 30 Years

By now, you have all heard that our Executive Director, Steven Engelhart, will be stepping down as executive director in September and fully retiring by the end of the year. After 30 years with AARCH and 27 years as our executive director, there are so many accomplishments to celebrate. Steven's work and life have touched thousands of people, hundreds of organizations, and municipalities both in our region and beyond. As we plan several special events and opportunities to thank and celebrate Steven's work, we'd like to ask you, our members and friends, to share your stories, ask Steven your questions, which we will share here each month on AARCH Matters

You can send your stories and questions to info@aarch.org.

ANNUAL APPEAL

In these challenging times we at AARCH are overwhelmed the response we received to our annual appeal.

It is heartening to know that the work we do to preserve the buildings, places and communities resonates with so many.

Consider donating to our Annual Appeal HERE.

This year we have two annual appeal incentives. **Donations of $250 and above will be matched**, up to $8,000 total, through the generosity of some special friends of AARCH, AND will also **receive a copy of the new edition of Harvey Kaiser's *Great Camp of the Adirondacks*.**

Please give as generously as possible so that AARCH can continue to help make the Adirondack region and its communities an incredible place to live, work, and visit.

There is still time to Join our ANNUAL APPEAL!

Our work cannot be accomplished without the generosity and vital support you.

ADIRONDACK ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

Preserving the architecture and communities of the Adirondack region through education, advocacy, and action.

THANK YOU

The mission of Humanities New York is to strengthen civil society and the bonds of community, using the humanities to foster engaged inquiry and dialogue around social and cultural concerns.

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150 Broadway Suite 1700
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We would like to sincerely thank Humanities New York for awarding AARCH a generous Emergency Relief Grant as part of the HNY CARES program. With this vital funding, we are able to expand our virtual programming and create a more robust, accessible digital presence for our organization.

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