

Deal preserves camp's tradition

By CAROL DEMARE Staff Writer

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The Open Space Institute has acquired the beloved Camp Little Notch, a former longtime Girl Scout camp in the southern Adirondacks, and plans to continue its use as a wilderness retreat for recreation and education, it was announced Tuesday.

The sale seals a pact that had been in the works for more than five months and that camp supporters had hoped would keep the 2,346-acre site safe from development.

The Open Space Conservancy, OSI's land acquisition affiliate, purchased the property from the Girl Scouts of Northeastern New York to ensure its protection.

In June, supporters of the camp talked about saving it under a tentative \$4 million sale to the conservation groups. At that time a sale contract was awaiting approval by the OSI board.

OSI is joining with the Friends of Camp Little Notch, a new nonprofit organization created by former Little Notch campers, counselors and supporters from around the United States and abroad that intends to operate the camp as an outdoor education facility.

"This has been a place of inspiration for generations of women," Caity Creitz, president of the Friends of Camp Little Notch, said Tuesday. "Little Notch has so much to offer -- simplicity and serenity for those who seek it, an incredible space for growth and adventure, and a vibrant community of supporters who want to sustain something beautiful in the world."

"We are so grateful that OSI created this opportunity for the Friends of Camp Little Notch to realize our first goal of conserving the land," Creitz said. "Now, comes the hard work to ensure the camp stays in operation." The camp has been closed since 2004.

OSI is working with a timber company to manage the forestland on the property, creating jobs and tax revenue for the town of Fort Ann.

Plans call for the camp -- which opened in 1939 -- to reopen for the 2012 summer.

"Camp Little Notch has been an important recreational and educational facility for seven decades," OSI President Joe Martens said.



The acquisition of the camp "ensures the long-term protection of an important ecological corridor, promotes sustainable forestry and provides for its continued use as a recreational and educational resource."

The site connects a largely intact forested corridor between Lake George and Lake Champlain and sits directly between two of the parcels that OSI helped the Nature Conservancy acquire as part of the landmark Finch, Pruyn transaction three years ago.

Located west of Route 22 near Comstock in the Adirondack Park, the camp has an 80-acre lake, a ropes course and hiking trails and a variety of rustic camp structures. The property includes a historic former iron smelting furnace and artifacts.

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