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Borrelli to lead Protect! group

By MIKE LYNCH, Enterprise Outdoors Writer

Protect the Adirondacks! has a new leader. Activist and writer Peter Borrelli has been chosen to join the organization as its first president and chief executive officer.

He replaces former executive director Dave Gibson, who was asked to step aside by Protect's board of directors several months ago and take the position of senior conservation officer. Gibson, of Niskayuna, and Keene resident Dan Plumley, who was director of conservation programs, both left Protect several weeks ago.

Borrelli has a long history of working in the environmental field, including many years as an activist. He has worked for the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Open Space Institute and the Adirondack Council, according to the Adirondack Explorer, which also reported he once worked for the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

From 1996 to 2007 Borrelli served as executive director of the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies, where he administered research, conservation and education programs focused on marine mammal conservation and ocean policy throughout Massachusetts waters.

In 2009 Borrelli and his wife Jane, who holds a doctorate from the University of New York at Albany and taught there in the 1990s, returned to New York state and now live in Northville at the southern edge of the Park. Borrelli has since written a book on the national marine sanctuary program and worked as a consultant for several nonprofit organizations.

"The times call for creative thinking and problem solving, collaboration, and a more positive view about what is in the best interest of the Adirondacks now and in the future than has characterized much of the public discussion in recent years," Borrelli said in a press release. "My hope is that Protect will come to be respected not just as a consolidation of two former organizations with their own history and accomplishments but as a new entity with a new vision of how to move forward."

Protect is a consolidation of the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks and the Residents' Committee to Protect the Adirondacks, forming last July. Gibson had been at the helm of the Association since 1987, and Plumley had also worked for that organization.