

# Adirondack Daily Enterprise

## **Alumnae reunite on Upper Saranac Lake to reminisce, raise awareness of G.S. camp closings**

UPPER SARANAC – Dozens of former campers and staff of Eagle Island Camp will meet at Gilpin Bay for a Paddle Up around their camp at 11:30 a.m. Sunday.

Eagle Island has been shuttered since 2009 when the Girls Scouts Heart of New Jersey closed it as part of a nationwide plan to divest the Girl Scouts of summer camps.

The Paddle Up is the kickoff for a series of nationally coordinated hikes by various “Friends” groups around the country in October.

The multigenerational participants support the Friends of Eagle Island Inc., a 501(c)3 established in 2011 to restore and reopen the camp for girls on Upper Saranac Lake.

The camp operated continuously for 70 summers, from 1938 until the GSHNJ closed it following the merger of three New Jersey councils in 2008. Residents of the Upper Saranac Lake community will join the paddlers.

In 2011, the GSHNJ listed the 33-acre island property with a Lake Placid realty company. Soon after, the Friends made an offer for the property that was not accepted.

From Alabama to Minnesota and coast to coast-in at least 28 states-G. S. councils have sold or are threatening to sell their camps. Local troops and alumnae oppose these sales. Some have filed lawsuits. Boycotts of G. S. cookie sales, petition campaigns and fall hikes are among ongoing efforts to stop the “fire sale” of camp properties. The movement has garnered nationwide media attention.

In June 2012, FEI, Inc. filed suit against GSHNJ. The suit maintains that GSHNJ is not acting lawfully in attempting to sell the island since it was gifted in 1937 by the Graves family of New Jersey to the Girl Scouts of the Oranges, N.J. with the specific intent that the camp be run in perpetuity as a place for girls and young women to learn about the great outdoors, enjoy the camaraderie of their peers, and acquire leadership skills that would serve them throughout their lives.

The next hearing is scheduled for 10 a.m. Aug. 30, in the Franklin County Courthouse, 355 W. Main St., Malone.