

Thanks for debunking park development myth

Congratulations to Gazette reporter Bill Hammond for courage and sheer brains! For the last three years, reporters have churned out billions of words to describe the complex debate over the future of the Adirondack Park. But the most important story of all appeared in the Gazette May 17: "1980s saw unexpected slowdown in Adirondack Park development."

That's right: slowdown.

Hammond broke the story that debunked the notion that the Adirondacks are in the midst of a raging "development crisis." Analyzing newly released U.S. Census data, he found that the pace of housing con-

struction in the Adirondack Park actually slowed dramatically in the 1980s — amounting to half of what it was in the previous decade. The story reported that the slowdown in development came as a surprise to environmentalists and state officials.

It is no surprise, however, to permanent residents and local government officials, who for three years have tried to show the media and state legislators that the "development crisis" was a 1980s-style fraud.

Why did the pace of home building slow down?

The Adirondack Park Agency was working. The agency applied its

strict land-use rules and slowed development to a very modest pace. Housing units increased by only 13 percent and population only 5 percent — hardly an "explosion" for an area as large as Massachusetts.

In light of this new information, we hope Gov. Cuomo will re-evaluate his legislation further restricting private land use to be sure that it is based on hard, objective data, not fears and propaganda.

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