



STATE OF THE PARK 2015



- POISED FOR CHANGE -

THE ADIRONDACK PARK

The Adirondack Park is the world's largest intact temperate deciduous forest. It is also the largest park in the contiguous United States. It contains six million acres (9,300 square-miles), covers one-fifth of New York State and is equal in size to neighboring Vermont. The Adirondack Park is nearly three times the size of Yellowstone National Park.

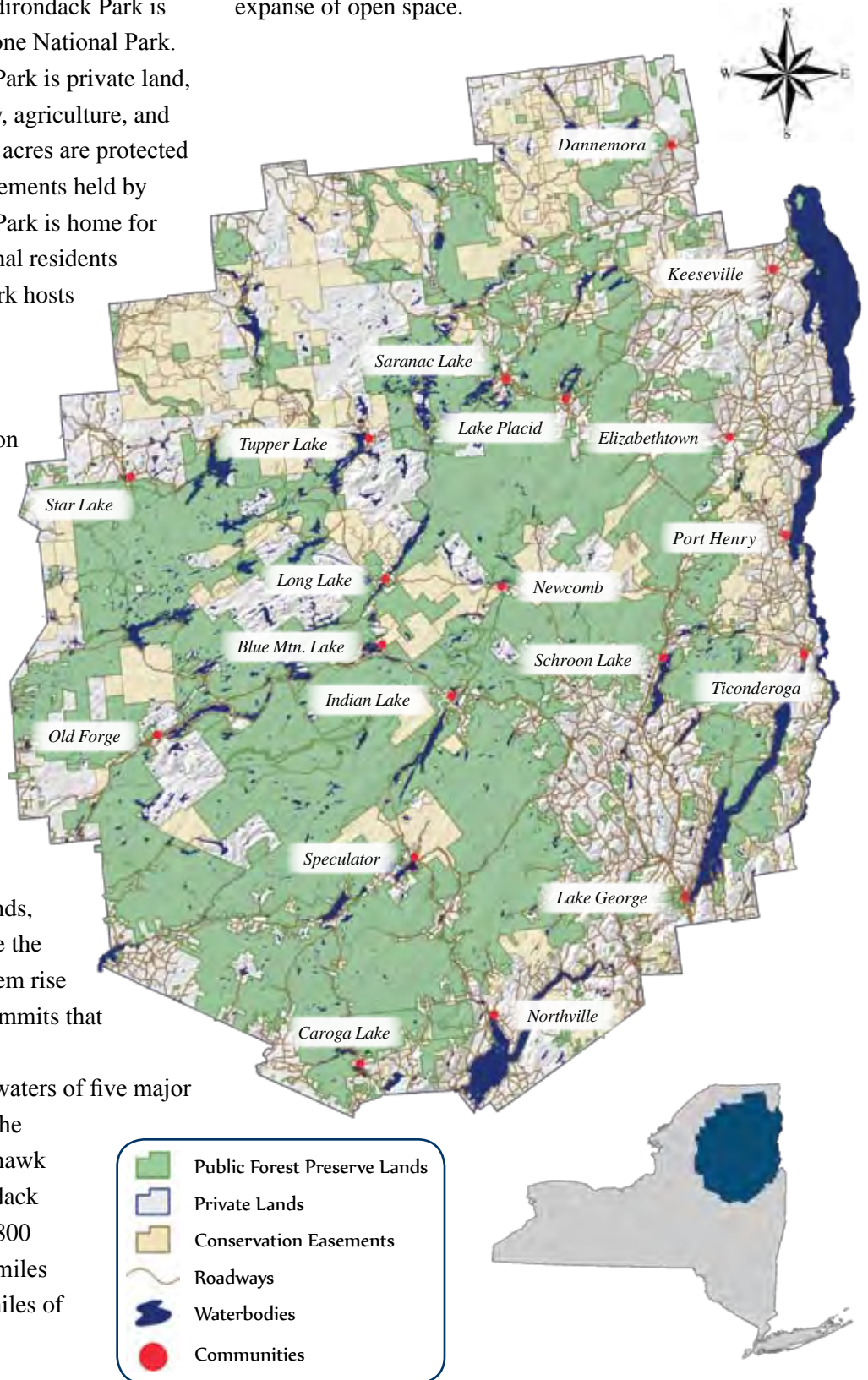
More than half of the Adirondack Park is private land, devoted principally to hamlets, forestry, agriculture, and open-space recreation. Nearly 775,000 acres are protected from development by conservation easements held by the state or private organizations. The Park is home for 130,000 permanent and 200,000 seasonal residents in 120 hamlets and 10 villages. The Park hosts 10 million visitors yearly.

Nearly half of the Park is publicly owned Forest Preserve, protected as "Forever Wild" by the NYS Constitution since 1894. About 1.1 million acres of these public lands are protected as Wilderness, where non-mechanized recreation may be enjoyed. Most of the public land (more than 1.4 million acres) is Wild Forest, where motorized uses are permitted on designated waters, roads and trails.

Plants and wildlife abound in the Park. Old growth forests cover more than 100,000 acres of public land. The western and southern Adirondacks are gentle landscapes of hills, lakes, wetlands, ponds, and streams. In the northeast are the forty-six High Peaks. Forty-three of them rise above 4,000 feet and 11 have alpine summits that rise above the timberline.

The Adirondacks include the headwaters of five major drainage basins. Lake Champlain and the Hudson, Black, St. Lawrence, and Mohawk Rivers all draw water from the Adirondack Park. Within the Park are more than 2,800 lakes and ponds, and more than 1,500 miles of rivers, fed by an estimated 30,000 miles of brooks and streams.

Through public education and advocacy for the protection of the Park's ecological integrity and wild character, the Adirondack Council advises public and private policymakers on ways to safeguard this great expanse of open space.



STATE OF THE PARK 2015

A REVIEW OF ELECTED AND APPOINTED GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS' ACTIONS AFFECTING THE ADIRONDACK PARK

Written and Edited by Adirondack Council Staff

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The mission of the Adirondack Council is to ensure the ecological integrity and wild character of the Adirondack Park for current and future generations. We envision an Adirondack Park with clean water and air and large wilderness areas, surrounded by working farms and forests and vibrant local communities.

Using science, we *educate* the public and policymakers; *advocate* for regulations, policies and funding to benefit the Park's environment and communities; *monitor* proposals, legislation and policies impacting the Park; and, when necessary *take legal action* to uphold constitutional protections and agency policies established to protect the Adirondack Park.



STATE OF THE PARK 2015

Dear Members and Friends:

The Adirondack Park is poised for change and we have an opportunity to make history. Your engagement and support is making a difference.

Loons, moose and bobcats are coming back, and the Adirondack economy has improved. We saw progress with this year's pro-Adirondack budget and the state's acquisition of new Forest Preserve. But there are challenges, including aquatic and terrestrial invasive species, which could undermine the ecological resiliency, economic vibrancy and political sustainability of the Adirondack Park.

In this report, we evaluate select government actions affecting the Adirondack Park over the past year. We also celebrate 40 years of remarkable progress of protecting water, wildlife, wilderness, and communities since the Council's founding in 1975.

The coming year will be a momentous one. There is the historic opportunity to acquire over 20,000 acres and the Boreas Ponds for future wilderness. Grants will be available to communities for clean-water infrastructure and green projects that will boost the economies and vibrancy of local communities. But, there are also threats to the Adirondacks' legacy and clean water, like invasive species, climate change, poorly planned private subdivisions, off-road vehicles, expanded motorized recreation, increased cutting on private forests, and oil trains.

The biggest threat is also an opportunity.


This year, the state's leadership will make a choice. They can choose to maintain the status quo and "politics as usual" with underfunded and understaffed state agencies and proposals that undermine the law and weaken the "Forever Wild" Clause of the NYS Constitution. The other recommended choice is for stakeholders to unite and seize opportunities to defend the constitution and strengthen laws and policies that protect the Adirondack Park's wild character and natural resources while increasing the investment in the stewardship of state owned lands, the tourism and eco-tourism industries and, world-class tourism infrastructure.

New York's chief executive has broad powers over policy and budgetary matters that affect the Adirondack Park. Gov. Andrew Cuomo's decisions and leadership are crucial to the future of the Park's water quality, wildlife, wilderness, and communities.

Together with the governor and local, state and federal officials, we can create a future with clean water, abundant wildlife, pristine wilderness, and vibrant communities. We can move from being poised for change to securing the Adirondack Park as a national treasure.

Thank you to the Adirondack Council team, our partners in government and friends. Working together in a collaborative, and respectful manner we can achieve positive results that will make history.

Happy Trails,


William C. Janeway
Executive Director

On the Cover: Boreas Ponds and the High Peaks Wilderness. Photo © Carl Heilman II/Wild Visions, Inc.

Above (L-R): Executive Director William C. Janeway and former DEC Commissioner Joe Martens.



THE GOVERNOR



Pro-Adirondack Budget

Gov. Andrew Cuomo negotiated a pro-Adirondack budget that increased the Environmental Protection Fund from \$162 million to \$177 million, which included increases of \$4.9 million for open space protection (to \$26.5 million), \$1.15 million for public land stewardship (to \$18.5 million), an increase of \$200,000 for Smart



Growth planning grants to communities (to \$600,000), and a \$1.15 million increase in the Invasive Species control programs (\$5.85 million), with new funding for an Adirondack Park wide invasive species prevention strategy. The Dept. of Environmental Conservation gained 36 more staff for spill response and habitat protection, as well as an academy for new Forest Rangers and Environmental Conservation Officers. Also, the state's oil spill fund increased from \$25 million to \$40 million.

Above: Ice accumulating on the shoreline of Lake Champlain at Noblewood Park in the Town of Willsboro, Essex County.

Photo © Carl Heilman II/Wild Visions, Inc.



Capitalizing on Clean Water

The budget approved by the Legislature and the Governor contained a \$200-million, three-year grant plan for clean water infrastructure. Under the new program, the state will cover up to 60 percent of municipalities' drinking water infrastructure project costs, with a cap at \$2 million per municipality per year. For wastewater projects, it will provide up to \$5 million in individual, one-time grants or 25 percent of a project's total cost.



RGGI Funds Raided

The Governor's budget included a \$41-million raid on the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) green energy fund, diverting it into the state's general fund. The RGGI program is a nine-state cooperative pollution control program aimed at reducing carbon emissions from electric power plants. Money collected through the sale of RGGI carbon allowances has always been reinvested into energy conservation and renewable energy development. Additional revenue generated this year should have been invested in the state's use of clean, renewable sources.



Repelling the Invaders

In March, the Governor announced an agreement with 53 conservation organizations, local governments and lake associations to fight the spread of aquatic invasive species. Invasives harm native plants and animals and are costly to remove from infested areas. Also, the agreement resulted in the opening of 12 new Adirondack boat inspection and decontamination stations in July. In addition, boat launch stewards were stationed at 41 boat launches to educate boaters on the signs of invasives on their watercraft and trailers, and at decontamination stations, to clean boats. Boater participation is voluntary yet strongly encouraged.



Preserving Additional Land

The Governor continued to fulfill his pledge to purchase 69,000 acres of former Finch Pruyn lands from the Adirondack Nature Conservancy by closing on the 12,700 acres near the High Peaks. *See page 12 for additional information.*

No Longer Tappan the Loan Fund

Reversing a “thumbs down” rating in State of the Park 2014, the Governor in May dropped his plan to use \$256 million from the federally backed Clean Water State Revolving Fund on the Tappan Zee Bridge project.

Park Agency Still Needs Help

Once again, the Governor has not acted to establish science-based updates to the Adirondack Park Agency’s (APA) outdated rules and regulations for development. The need for reform was illustrated this winter when the APA approved a 24-lot, 1,100 acre subdivision around two wild lakes in Fulton County. Reforms should include new conservation design models that discourage new development on the wildest landscapes, while providing incentives for developing in established communities. The Governor’s leadership is needed on this issue.

Greening Our Energy

The Governor approved a new state energy plan in July that sets a greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030, with a final goal of 80 percent cuts by 2050. Also by 2030, the plan calls for the state’s power companies to make 50 percent of our electricity with clean, renewable sources of energy. By then, the state’s buildings are expected to use 23 percent less energy than they did in 2012.

Small Grants, Smart Progress

In April, the Governor awarded \$443,000 in Smart Growth grants to eight Adirondack communities that will bring economic benefits and improve the quality of life for Park residents and visitors. Funds will help general revitalization efforts, refurbish historic properties and develop recreational trail connections to public Forest Preserve lands to sustain and enhance tourism.

Group Efforts on Renewable Energy

In July, the Governor’s Public Service Commission approved new rules for electricity customers called Shared Renewables that allow renters, homeowners, schools, and businesses to join together to set up shared renewable energy projects, such as solar and wind projects. Each member’s share of total production would appear as a credit on their monthly utility bill.

ANCA IS ENCOURAGED BY TWO IMPORTANT TRENDS GAINING MOMENTUM IN THE PARK: THE GROWING NUMBER OF COMMUNITIES INVESTING IN CLEAN ENERGY PROJECTS AND THE RESURGENCE OF THE SMALL FAMILY FARM. THESE ARE IMPORTANT INDICATORS THAT OUR LOCAL ECONOMIES ARE DIVERSIFYING FROM A LONG-STANDING RELIANCE ON A FEW KEY INDUSTRIES AND DEVELOPING NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT, COMMUNITY, AND WELL-BEING.

~ KATE FISH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ADIRONDACK NORTH COUNTRY ASSOCIATION (ANCA)

The Vision to Seek Darkness

In December, the Governor signed a bill that regulates outdoor lighting to protect sensitive wildlife and preserve dark night skies in the Adirondack Park and other rural areas. The state will now be required to use low-profile lighting whenever it installs or replaces light fixtures at its facilities. The bill was sponsored by Sen. Carl Marcellino, R-Syosset, and Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal, D-Manhattan.



Whoopie for the Park!

The Governor continued his participation in outdoor activities to promote the Adirondack Park as a vacationer’s paradise with his Adirondack Summer Challenge and Winter Challenge. He combined that effort this year with new celebrity-narrated television ads aimed at bringing attention to the Park’s many charms. Commercials featuring Mets third-baseman David Wright and actors Whoopie Goldberg and John Leguizamo touted Adirondack forests, waters, getaways, and historic sites.

Diesel Clean-up Delayed

This year’s state budget delays for another year the state’s plan to retrofit heavy diesel vehicles owned or leased by the state with new emissions control devices. Diesel exhaust is a significant source of nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide and fine-particle air pollution. Federal studies show it causes and worsens lung disease and contributes to acid rain.

Below: The night sky and aurora borealis over Brant Lake in the Town of Horicon, Warren County.


Photo © Carl Heilman II/Wild Visions, Inc.





STATE LEGISLATURE

BOTH HOUSES



Positive Budget for the Park

Legislative leaders negotiated a pro-Adirondack budget that increased the Environmental Protection Fund from \$162 million to \$177 million, which included an increase of \$4.9 million for open space protection (to \$26.5 million). Public land stewardship increased by \$1.15 million to \$18.5 million; Smart Growth planning grants to communities went up from \$400,000 to \$600,000; and Invasive Species control programs increased by \$1.15 million to \$5.85 million, with money for a new Adirondack Park-wide invasive species prevention strategy. Staffing increased by 36 at the Dept. of Environmental Conservation including spill response, habitat protection and an academy for new Forest Rangers and Environmental Conservation Officers.



Clean Water Investment

The state budget contained a \$200-million, three-year capital investment plan for clean water infrastructure. The state will set aside \$50 million this year and \$75 million in each of the next two fiscal years to pay for matching grants to communities. Under the new program, the state will cover up to 60 percent of municipalities' drinking water infrastructure project costs, with a cap at \$2 million per municipality per year. For wastewater projects, it will provide up to \$5 million in individual, one-time grants or 25 percent of a project's total cost.



RGGI Funds Raided

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Transfers and Reforms Stalled

No progress was made on introducing legislation to advance science-based reforms including transfer of development rights (TDRs), clustering and smart-growth incentives for landowners and communities. Conservation design and clustering reduces the footprint and environmental and economic costs of development. TDRs allow more concentrated development in a location that is appropriate for higher density while reducing development in a more sensitive location.

Above: Sunset reflections on Lake Durant, Town of Indian Lake, Hamilton County.

Photo © Carl Heilman II/Wild Visions, Inc.



No Solution for ATVs

This session, the Legislature did not act to establish new rules for all-terrain vehicle (ATV) use. Off-road ATV use should be focused on private and non-state lands while inappropriate ATV use should be prohibited on "Forever Wild" Forest Preserve lands. Fragile vegetation, wetlands, streams, wildlife, and solitude seeking, non-motorized users should not be negatively impacted by off-road ATV users. The Council will continue to advocate for ATV reforms to protect the Park's ecology and economy.



Overdue Land Swap

Both houses approved a bill to carry out the Constitutional Amendment allowing a Forest Preserve land swap that was approved by voters in November of 2007. The bill authorized the state to accept 12 acres of new public Forest Preserve adjacent to the Blue Ridge Wilderness in exchange for the one acre of Forest Preserve given to the Town of Long Lake for a drinking water well for the hamlet of Raquette Lake. The bill was sponsored by Senator Elizabeth Little, R-Queensbury, and Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee Chairman Steven Englebright, D-Setauket.



Progress Handcuffed

Federal criminal charges alleging public misconduct ousted the leaders of both houses of the NYS Legislature this year, bringing deliberations to a halt on a wide array of issues that affect the Adirondack Park's water, wilderness, wildlife and communities.

SENATE



Finding a Balance

In April, Senator Little praised the Governor's purchase of the MacIntyre East parcel, adjacent to the High Peaks



Wilderness. In her statement the Senator said, "working together, our local communities and the Department of Environmental Conservation are doing a very good job of finding a balance of

ecological conservation and recreational access important to the environment and supportive of our tourism-dependent Adirondack economy." The Council will continue to work with Senator Little to benefit the Park's natural resources and communities.



Above: The MacIntyre East parcel will offer new opportunities for paddlers on five miles of the Hudson River, seven miles of the Opalescent River, Sanford Lake, and Upper Twin and LeClair brooks.

Photo © Carl Heilman II/Wild Visions, Inc.



Pollution of Lakes and Rivers Continues

Senate Environmental Conservation Committee Chairman Thomas O'Mara, R-Big Flats, sponsored Attorney General Eric Schneiderman's program bill to curb the use of plastic microbeads in consumer products but the legislation, which passed the Assembly, didn't pass out of committee in the Senate. The Attorney General's proposed legislation would protect lakes and rivers from tiny bits of plastic used in soaps, toothpaste, and other personal care items. Most wastewater treatment systems cannot filter out microbeads. Nor can septic systems, so they flow into waterways intact. Microbeads can harbor toxins and can be mistaken for food by wildlife.



Above: Tiny microbeads pollution found in personal care products threaten wildlife.

Photo courtesy of Alliance for the Great Lakes



Let's Not Do That Again

During budget negotiations in March, Sen. Brad Hoylman, D-Manhattan, sponsored a hostile amendment to the



state budget that would bar the Legislature from raiding funds generated by the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. RGGI generates income from the auction of carbon dioxide emissions

allowances to electric power plants. Since it was created, RGGI's New York proceeds have been earmarked for energy conservation and renewable energy development. This year, the Governor and Legislature removed \$41 million from RGGI's fund balance, sending it to the state's general fund where it could be used for any state purpose. Unfortunately, Hoylman's amendment was rejected.

ASSEMBLY



Great Pick by New Speaker

Newly elected Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, D-Bronx, appointed veteran legislator and conservationist Steven



Englebright as chairman of the Environmental Conservation Committee. Englebright replaces Robert Sweeney, D-Lindenhurst, who served as chairman from 2007 to 2014.



Less Pollution for Lakes and Rivers

The Assembly passed a bill proposed by Attorney General Eric Schneiderman that would ban the use of plastic microbeads in consumer products. The bill was sponsored for the Attorney General by Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel, D- Great Neck. The bill is designed to protect lakes and rivers from plastic microbeads used in soaps, toothpaste and other personal care items. The microbeads can be mistaken for food and eaten by fish and wildlife.

“THE DIVERSITY OF LANDSCAPES, WILDLIFE AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN THE ADIRONDACKS IS LEGENDARY. BUT THE FUTURE OF THIS UNIQUE JEWEL MUST BE ABOUT HUMAN DIVERSITY TOO. THE ADIRONDACK PARK WILL BOTH THRIVE AND FULFILL ITS VITAL PROMISE IN THE WORLD BY BEING AN INCLUSIVE, WELCOMING AND LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE FOR PEOPLE FROM ALL CULTURES, RACES, GENDERS, IDENTITIES, AND WALKS OF LIFE.”

~ PETE NELSON, COORDINATOR
ADIRONDACK DIVERSITY
ADVISORY COUNCIL

COURTS



Court Lets EPA Rule Stand

In July, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit refused to vacate the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) landmark rule meant to curb air pollution drifting across state lines. Rather than throw out the entire program, the court ordered the EPA to rework the air pollution limits for some states. The rule will continue to protect 240 million Americans from upwind smokestack pollution in 28 states.

I HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED BY RECENT EFFORTS TO DIVERSIFY THE APPEAL OF THE ADIRONDACK PARK BY PEOPLE WHO ARE REACHING OUT TO URBAN AND MINORITY COMMUNITIES TO WELCOME IMPORTANT NEW FACES AND NEW VOICES TO THE DISCUSSION.

~ AARON MAIR,
PRESIDENT, SIERRA CLUB



Keep Poisoning Air, Water and Fish

A sharply divided U.S. Supreme Court ruled in June that the Obama administration acted improperly when it regulated power plant emissions of mercury, arsenic and other toxic air pollutants. The court's 5-4 decision required the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to reconsider the costs the regulations will impose on power producers. The court held that the EPA unfairly emphasized public health benefits over polluter costs. The decision sent the case back to a lower court for reconsideration.

ATTORNEY GENERAL



Stoking Up Emissions Controls

Following through on a lawsuit that won him a thumbs-up in State of the Park 2014, Attorney General Eric Schneiderman led a coalition of states in reaching a court-ordered settlement in February with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). It required EPA to finalize new air pollution standards for residential wood heaters, a major source of fine-particle air pollution in rural areas.



Schneiderman



Setting the Standard

In the fall of 2014, the Attorney General's staff played an important role in a regional acid rain conference held in Saratoga Springs supported by the Kirby Foundation and organized by the Adirondack Council and Environmental Defense Fund. Staff at his Environmental Protection Bureau helped scientists, advocates, attorneys, and policymakers understand recent court decisions and their impact on the Clean Air Act. The work will help to establish scientifically sound standards for reducing upwind emissions impacting the Adirondack Park and other sensitive natural areas.



Lakes Can Live Without Them

The Attorney General proposed a program bill again this session designed to curb the sale and manufacture of plastic microbeads in consumer products. The measure would protect lakes and rivers from tiny bits of plastic used in soaps, detergents, toothpaste, and other personal care items. The beads can harbor toxic substances and can be mistaken for food by fish and wildlife. The bill did not pass the Senate.

Above/Below: Cirrus clouds over the High Peaks from Hopkins Mountain.

Photo © Carl Heilman II/Wild Visions, Inc.



LOCAL GOVERNMENTS



Taking Oil Trains to Task

This spring, Clinton County Legislator Colin Read and other local officials founded the Clinton County Oil Train Task Force to help Champlain Valley communities express deep concern over millions of gallons of Bakken crude oil transported through them each day. Read and others have called on state and federal officials to communicate with local leaders when dangerous cargo is being shipped and to find safer means of transport.



A Weaker Article XIV

Some local government representatives have supported an initiative to weaken the NYS Constitution's Forever Wild Clause (Article 14, Section 1) and authorize projects beyond the limited, specific and narrow-in-scope proposals which are considered when there is a demonstrated public need and a clear net benefit to the Forest Preserve. The Adirondack Council supported amendments in the past, such as Township 40, that benefit the Forest Preserve, help address legitimate public needs and support local communities.

Above: Overlooking the picturesque Village of Mayfield and the Great Sacandaga Lake, Fulton County.

Photo © Carl Heilman II/Wild Visions, Inc.



Downgrading Natural Resource Protection

Some local government representatives have asked for adjustments to the State Land Master Plan to accommodate recreational uses on new parcels of public land, and other changes that would weaken protection of water, wildlife and wilderness. The current Master Plan is clear in its intent. "If there is a unifying theme to the Master Plan...it is that the protection and preservation of the natural resources of the State Lands within the Park must be paramount. Human use and enjoyment of those lands should be permitted and encouraged, so long as the resources...are not degraded." Page 1 - Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan.



Common Ground Dialog Continues

In July, local government and state officials joined environmental, conservation and recreation advocates, including the Adirondack Council, and many other stakeholders for the 9th Adirondack Common Ground Alliance Forum in Long Lake. When people who care about the future of the Adirondacks get together and talk it's a good thing. Previous meetings have identified priorities that unify stakeholders and make it easier for leaders from Albany to help the Adirondacks.



Expanding Motorized Recreation

Local officials are continuing to increase pressure on the state to approve new public snowmobile use on a previously temporary, private bridge over the Hudson River. Fortunately, at the May Adirondack Park Agency (APA) meeting, after reviewing concerns from the Council and others, the decision for a controversial proposed snowmobile route was delayed. For years the Council has opposed new public motorized use of the Hudson River corridor and in remote portions of the Forest Preserve.



(L-R): Adirondack Council Board Member Lee Keet and the Lieutenant Governor of New York Kathy Hochul share a moment at the 2015 Common Ground Alliance Forum.

Weakening Wilderness Protection

As the Adirondack Council and others advocated for more wilderness to better protect clean water and wildlife, and provide a base for expanded ecotourism and investment in hamlets and communities, some local government advocates expressed opposition to establishing any new additional wilderness with motor-free protections. Others proposed allowing motorized recreation in existing Wilderness areas, which would harm the Park's waters, wildlife and communities.

Loosening ATV Controls

A reasonable proposal to reform the state's all-terrain vehicle (ATV) laws failed in the Legislature, in part, due to objections from local governments. The compromise would have generally banned ATVs off-road or on trails in the Forest Preserve and on most state forest lands. It would have also increased funding for education, enforcement and the development of new ATV access on private commercial timberlands (where the state holds public access rights - usually through an easement). ATV access for persons with disabilities and for search and rescue is already allowed.

Dam Removal Nets an Opportunity

In September 2014, the Willsboro Town Board voted to remove the sagging Saw Mill Dam from the Boquet River. When complete, this section of river will benefit fish, wildlife and the economy. The town retained a fish migration device that should allow salmon to migrate upstream to spawning grounds, while allowing the retention pond to revert to a wetland. The move is expected to make the community less vulnerable to flooding.

Lake George Flushes Septic Rules

Despite having served as a model for many lakeside towns seeking to protect water quality, in June, the Lake George Town Board repealed its septic system ordinance and replaced it with generic state standards for individual household systems. The new rules are less stringent than the previous ordinance. The change affects designs for systems that will handle less than 1,000 gallons per day. The state's standards are a one-size-fits-all approach and were not designed to afford the special protections needed in a thin-soiled, steep-sloped watershed surrounding a potable water supply.

Tuning In To The Whole World

In May, Town of Thurman Supervisor Evelyn Wood and the town board launched a new kind of broadband network that gives clear internet connection signals to remote locations without using tall towers. The network employs an unused band of the digital television spectrum, known as whitespace, to transmit and receive information that can penetrate forests and rough terrain. Often, the cost of the towers needed to transmit signals exceeds the potential company profit in a region with a sparse population. Thurman found a solution that makes sense for small towns.

No Sorting, More Recycling

The Keene Town Board adopted a zero-sort recycling program at the request of local residents that expanded the scope of what gets recycled and increased participation by making recycling easier for residents. Town officials also expected trash disposal costs to decrease due to the success of the recycling plan. The Town of Jay also benefits because it cooperates with Keene on recycling.

Local Waste to Local Energy

The Town of North Elba will build a small-scale, biodigester designed for source-separated municipal food and organic wastes at a regional level. The town expects to collect 900 tons of organic waste annually from local residences, restaurants and grocery stores. Rather than truck it to regional landfills, the town will collect it in a special facility, saving fuel and greenhouse gases. The biodigester will break down the town's food scraps into fertile soil and methane gas that the town can use to heat and power its own buildings.



(L-R): Town of Chester Supervisor Fred Monroe, Town of Thurman Supervisor Evelyn Wood, Adirondack Council Executive Director William Janeway, & Empire State Development Director for Broadband Program David Salway join together for a broadband press event.

“ONCE AGAIN GOVERNOR CUOMO HAS PROVEN THAT COMMON GROUND CAN BE FOUND IN PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT WHILE REALIZING THAT A LAND ACQUISITION SUCH AS THE MACINTYRE EAST MUST HAVE POTENTIAL FOR PROVIDING AN ECONOMIC BOOST. THE CAREFUL AND WELL-THOUGHT OUT DECISIONS BY THE GOVERNOR AND HIS ADMINISTRATION HAVE PROVEN TO BE A WIN-WIN FOR US ALL WHO LIVE, PLAY AND WORK IN THE ADIRONDACKS.”

~ RANDY DOUGLAS,
TOWN OF JAY SUPERVISOR



Douglas Ends Long Career as Essex County Chairman

Upon his retirement from office in May, the Adirondack Council extended its thanks to Town of Jay Supervisor Randy Douglas for his tireless efforts on behalf of the homeowners and businesses displaced by the flooding caused by hurricanes Irene and Lee. Douglas held the position of chairman of the Essex County Board of Supervisors for six one-year terms. A Democrat, Douglas was hailed by his colleagues for his bi-partisan approach. Republican Keene Supervisor and Vice-Chair Bill Ferebee was elected chair after Douglas' departure. Douglas stepped down to take a job in the Cuomo administration.

POISED FOR CHANGE

An Opportunity to Make History

The Adirondack Park is a unique national treasure, a legacy we inherited over 120 years ago that we have to protect for future generations. The Adirondack Council and partners can proudly celebrate critical success in reducing acid rain emissions, improving water quality, supporting Park communities, expanding wilderness, and strengthening private land protections, working forests and family farms. **The Adirondack Council is:**

Protecting Water: Adirondack forestlands provide natural filters for our water and air, so we all get cleaner air to breathe and cleaner water to drink.

Preserving Wildlife and Defending Wilderness: A protected Adirondack Park preserves wilderness to ensure the survival of wildlife. With 95 significant species including 87 that are rare in New York, the Park is home for migratory birds, moose, otter, and numerous types of fish and needs to be protected.

Supporting Communities and People: Protecting the Adirondack Park means helping people and communities. With 130,000 year-round residents, and visits by 10 million people annually, Adirondack Park tourism generated \$1.29 billion in direct spending and \$159 million in state and local taxes last year, supporting over 21,000 jobs and \$590 million in labor income. The Park also provides places for healthy outdoor recreation like hiking, fishing, hunting, and peaceful time in nature.

Here are some of the significant milestones the Adirondack Council celebrated on the journey from our founding in 1975 to this year's 40th Anniversary:

- More than one million acres of the Park protected from development while preserving private timberlands and family farms.
- Emissions that cause acid rain slashed by more than 50 percent restoring clean water and healthy wildlife habitat.
- The Adirondack Park Agency defended from legal challenges seeking to abolish its jurisdiction over private land-use.
- A blueprint created for the Adirondack Park's future with the four-volume 2020 VISION series (1988-2007).
- More than 1,000 miles added to NYS Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Program.
- \$200 million committed to clean water infrastructure grants (2015); plus \$5.7 million since 2007 in smart growth planning and project grants for Forest Preserve hamlets.
- Eight new Wilderness or Primitive Forest Preserve areas protected 89,000 acres.
- Environmental Protection Fund established (1993) and \$3 billion of real estate transfer tax revenue dedicated for environmental projects.
- More than \$2 billion approved for conservation via bond acts (1986 and 1996).
- Defended Article XIV, the "Forever Wild" Clause of the NYS Constitution; adopted amendments with a significant net benefit to the Forest Preserve that also assist communities, the state and the Park.
- Scenic vistas protected from unsightly cell towers while in-park communications improve; the Adirondack Common Ground Alliance and Adirondack Diversity Advisory Council broadened support for the Park; off-road motorized recreation banned from Forest Preserve trails; limits approved on jet skis; lead sinker sales banned to protect loons; and policies adopted helping loons, moose, fisher and a diverse array of fish, wildlife and birds.

defending
WILDERNESS

protecting
WATER

In many ways, the Park is cleaner and greener -- and is a better place to live, work and visit -- than it was when the Council was founded in 1975. Today the Adirondack Park is poised for change. The Governor and other elected leaders are faced with making critical decisions that will affect the very integrity and wild character of the Adirondack Park for all time.

Priorities for 2016 include:

- **Wilderness and Wildlife:** Protect the 20,000-acre Boreas Ponds tract, the Upper Hudson and surrounding wildlife habitat as Wilderness while expanding public access and recreation and linking communities with a multi-use trail. Defend Article XIV, the “Forever Wild” Clause of the NYS Constitution.
- **Invasive Species:** Combat invasive species. Provide permanent increased state funding and policy support for Adirondack Park-wide education, prevention, coordination, early detection, rapid response and invasives management efforts.
- **A Transformational Pro-Environment Budget:** Restore state funding for clean water, clean air, open space and community infrastructure. Adopt a schedule for a fully-funded, \$300-million Environmental Protection Fund.
- **Vibrant Communities:** Award an initial \$50 million in clean water grants to communities. Address legitimate road utility infrastructure needs while honoring and protecting “Forever Wild.”
- **Adirondack Park Agency:** Restore critical staff positions at the Adirondack Park Agency (APA). Adopt science-based conservation reforms of the APA’s 1970’s era rules for development and clear-cutting.
- **Climate Change:** Support full implementation of the Clean Power Plan to control greenhouse gas emissions nationwide; and keep improving air quality standards and combating acid rain via the Clean Air Act and with a critical loads standard.
- **Agency Actions:** Address the challenges of increased off-road motorized recreational pressures, unsafe oil trains, science-based unit management planning, and safe winter roads while decreasing the use of road salt.

preserving
WILDLIFE

supporting
COMMUNITIES

Going forward, the Council is focused on using our knowledge of the political process, respect for diverse views and fact-based advocacy to address the Adirondack Park’s 21st century challenges and opportunities. We are working with many partners, promoting diversity and finding common ground when possible. Together we carry on the legacy of early conservation leaders and ensure the Adirondack Park is known and protected as a national treasure.



Since 1975, the Council’s advocacy has made a positive difference for the water, wilderness, wildlife and communities of the Adirondack Park. But, we haven’t come this far alone. Thanks to growing engagement from the public, increased collaboration, and generous support from YOU, the Council will be able to do even more for Adirondack Park conservation during the next 40 years. **Please visit our website, AdirondackCouncil.org, to make a contribution today!**



DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION



12,700 High Peaks Acres Protected

In May 2014, New York State purchased the MacIntyre West parcel from the Nature Conservancy, protecting 5,770 acres including the 3,081-foot Mount Andrew and 16-acre Lake Andrew. In April, the state purchased the 6,800-acre MacIntyre East parcel, which includes more than five miles of the Hudson River and seven miles of the Opalescent River. Both parcels are in western Essex County, adjacent to the High Peaks Wilderness Area, and most of each would make outstanding wilderness additions.



The state purchase of the MacIntyre West parcel will improve recreational access to Mount Andrew, Lake Andrew and the Santanoni Range.

Photo © Carl Heilman II/Wild Visions, Inc.



A Good SWAP

The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is in the process of updating the Adirondack portion of the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP), which serves as guidance for state agencies, non-profits and other conservation partners in managing wildlife and their habitats. This update ensures that New York will receive federal funding for scientific research on Adirondack species, such as the common loon, spruce grouse and the brook trout. Council members asked the DEC to add a specific section to the plan on climate change to better address its negative and long-range impacts on vulnerable species and habitats such as wild brook trout and lake trout. The state was also urged to keep wolves and cougars in the plan. The DEC is amending and finalizing the plan.



Standard Bearers

The DEC played an important role in a regional acid rain conference held in Saratoga Springs, NY in the fall of 2014, by helping scientists, advocates, attorneys, and policy makers understand state and federal regulatory options and opportunities for additional pollution cuts. Information from the conference will help to establish scientifically sound standards for controlling acid rain upwind of the Adirondack Park and other sensitive natural areas.



Throttling Up On Recreation

The DEC has been proposing, in rapid succession, amendments to Forest Preserve unit management plans that advance motorized access and more intense recreation. The fast pace of amendment proposals being sent to the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) created overlapping public comment periods and deadlines, challenging APA's reduced capacity and inhibiting citizen participation in the decision-making process. Unit management planning should take a holistic approach, which sets environmental protection goals first, as the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan states, then adapts recreation plans accordingly.



Faster Not Always Better

The DEC's rush to gain the Adirondack Park Agency's approval for the Essex Chain Lakes Complex Unit Management Plan led to mistakes that caused the Department to withdraw the plan for revisions. Although, the delay frustrated a variety of stakeholders who sought more snowmobile trails and mountain biking, the process and the plan need to be done carefully and legally.

Above: Nesting loon on Brant Lake, Town of Horicon, Warren County.

Photo © Carl Heilman II/Wild Visions, Inc.

Rail Corridor Decision

In June, after sorting through thousands of public comments, the state released a proposed final plan for the 122-mile travel corridor from Remsen to Lake Placid. The plan calls for removing the railroad tracks between Lake Placid and Tupper Lake while maintaining and enhancing rail service between Big Moose and Tupper Lake. The Council had asked the state to develop a plan that would maintain the corridor, protect water quality, wildlife, and surrounding Forest Preserve and create an economic boost to communities along the trail. The plan largely does that, while allowing part of the corridor to become a trail, without harming the legal integrity of the travel corridor.

Old Road Closed... Again

In July, DEC Commissioner Joe Martens ruled that the Old Mountain Road was legally closed to motor vehicles and could remain a trail after a former commissioner concluded the road was not legally closed. The Adirondack Council and Adirondack Park Agency intervened in the case. Martens ruled that the prior decision should have recognized that the towns abandoned the road and that the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan, which guides all land use on the Forest Preserve, does apply. The Master Plan requires public roads in areas of the Forest Preserve protected as Wilderness, Primitive or Canoe to be closed to motorized traffic. The popular hiking and ski trail is within the Sentinel Range Wilderness Area between Keene and Lake Placid.

Positive Plan for Fisher

The DEC is finalizing a new science-based, 10-year management plan for the fisher, the Adirondack Park's largest native weasel. The Council largely supported the plan, as it had some good proposals for fishers, like shortening the trapping season in the Adirondack Park from 46 to 22 days. Also, the Council urged to DEC to gather more data on population trends and make further adjustments if needed. The DEC agreed that public education and outreach is critical for protecting, managing and enjoying fishers into the future.



A young fisher in captivity.

Photo courtesy of Larry Master, masterimages.org

Twelve Thumbs Up

Reversing a series of “thumbs down” ratings over a period of years, the DEC came to an agreement with the Town of Long Lake over the land swap authorized by a constitutional amendment approved by the voters in 2007. In the swap, the state gave the town an acre of Forest Preserve to drill a drinking-water well for the hamlet of Raquette Lake whose reservoir needed to be replaced. This spring, the DEC accepted 12 acres of new public Forest Preserve adjacent to the Blue Ridge Wilderness in exchange.

A Bridge Causing Trouble

The DEC proposed allowing new public snowmobile use on the so-called Polaris Bridge, which was previously a temporary bridge built for logging purposes over the Hudson, a Scenic River. Thankfully, after reviewing concerns from the Council and others, the Adirondack Park Agency pulled for later consideration the controversial proposed snowmobile route that would have used the bridge.

Developing Wilderness

The DEC proposed a controversial plan to establish a trail and build a lean-to in the Pepperbox Wilderness Area, which is the Park's only unit of the “Forever Wild” Forest Preserve intentionally free of permanent recreational infrastructure. The Pepperbox is near the Park's western edge, in Herkimer and Lewis counties.

New Road Built in Forest

The DEC built two miles of new road off Black Creek Road part way to Gull Lake in the Black River Wild Forest. The Department smoothed the area, laid gravel, installed culverts, and removed trees. This should be a foot, or snowmobile trail, not a two-mile access road.



A new gravel road in the Black River Wild Forest. Photo courtesy of Jeff Huther

Martens Returns to OSI - Gerstman Acting in Stead



Martens

In July, Joseph Martens stepped down as Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). He showed true commitment to Governor Cuomo, clean water, air and land, and the health of all New Yorkers. The Adirondack Council thanks Martens for his service, dedication, professionalism, and civility. Martens has returned to the Open Space Institute (OSI), where he was president before being appointed commissioner in 2011.

The Governor appointed Marc Gerstman as the Department's Acting Commissioner effective July 23. He previously worked under Commissioner Martens as Executive Deputy Commissioner from August 2011. From 1982 to 1995, Gerstman worked at the DEC as Deputy General Counsel & Director of Legal Affairs and then as Deputy Commissioner & General Counsel. From 1995 to 2011, Gerstman managed his own law practice, specializing in environmental, natural resource, land use, zoning, administrative, and municipal law.



ADIRONDACK PARK AGENCY



Community Planning

In July, the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) announced its new Hamlet Economic Planning and Assistance program designed to help local municipalities create economic development strategies to invigorate communities. The program will help identify new business opportunities, revitalize existing community assets and, where feasible, establish connections to Forest Preserve resources. The APA recently completed a pilot project with the Village of Northville and the Town of Northampton in Fulton County.



Downtown Northville in the southern Adirondack Park.



APA Defends the Law

In May, APA Commissioner Dick Booth strongly defended the integrity of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Booth argued against project segmentation and urged his colleagues to delay consideration of a controversial segment of a proposed Community Connector Snowmobile



Booth

Trail that would open the Polaris Bridge over a protected section of the Hudson River to public snowmobile use. Booth and the staff reaffirmed the arguments made by the Adirondack Council and others who questioned the legal theory the state was following by advancing the plan. The state agreed to delay the proposal and consider it as part of the Essex Complex Unit Management Plan.

Above: Fall colors from Moxham Mountain, Town of Minerva, Essex County.

Photo © Carl Heilman II/Wild Visions, Inc.



Expedited Emergency Recovery

In June, the APA approved two processes to respond to emergencies such as the flooding caused by hurricanes Irene and Lee. The emergency certification provides documentation acknowledging the emergency and emergency project. The emergency recovery authorization is for additional work once an emergency is over, to recover from the emergency or to correct work done during the emergency. The Agency has two business days to respond to certification requests. An emergency recovery authorization is required before work may commence, but the APA said it will be expedited. An APA review is not required for anyone undertaking emergency projects that are immediately necessary for the protection of life or property.





Chronic Cluster-phobia

In January, the APA approved a 24-lot subdivision around two wild lakes in Fulton County at the former 1,100-acre Woodworth Lake scout camp. The APA has the authority to require more compact development, but instead, the approved plan dispersed the footprint of homes, roads and driveways across the majority of the tract. New conservation design models should be used to allow similar numbers of new homes, with privacy, while consuming less of the clean water and wildlife habitat that keep the Park's forests, waters and communities diverse and healthy.

THE ADIRONDACK PARK NEEDS BETTER RULES TO PROTECT WATER QUALITY AND WILDLIFE FROM SUBURBAN-STYLE SUBDIVISION AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE PARK'S WILDEST PLACES.

~ WILLIAM C. COOKE, DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, CITIZENS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT



For sale signs and subdivisions point to a park poised for change.



Removing an infestation of phragmites with partners from the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP).



Rapid Response to Invaders

The APA approved two general permits in July that will assure qualified invasive species management organizations can quickly respond to invasive species infestations on land and water, using updated science-based best management practices. One permit authorizes certain state agencies and not-for-profit organizations to manage terrestrial invasive species without obtaining a permit from the APA for each project. The other authorizes state agencies, qualified lake associations/organizations, municipalities, certified lake managers, and experienced lake managers approved by the APA to use benthic barriers and hand harvesting techniques to control aquatic invasive species. As part of the permit conditions, each authorized entity will be required to submit annual reports to the APA documenting their activity.



Wilderness Protections Delayed

The APA has yet to classify the Casey Brook, the MacIntyre West and the MacIntyre East tracts that New York State acquired from the Nature Conservancy in April 2013, May 2014 and April 2015 respectively. The 1,587-acre Casey Brook parcel is adjacent to the Dix Mountain Wilderness Area, and the MacIntyre West (5,770 acres) and MacIntyre East (6,800 acres) parcels both adjoin the southern border of the High Peaks Wilderness. The APA should not delay any longer and classify most of this land as Wilderness.



Good Job on Great Sacandaga

In February, the APA voted unanimously to protect a sensitive portion of the shoreline on Great Sacandaga Lake in the Town of Northampton, Fulton County. At the request of its staff, the Adirondack Council and others, the APA denied a zoning variance that would have allowed the expansion of an existing waterfront development. Staff cited alternatives that would not have required a variance and detailed the natural resource limitations of the site. The decision preserved the applicant's right to seek a more modest variance, but sent a signal that shoreline protection remains an important component of the APA's conservation duties.



Timber Limbo

Since 2013, after the withdrawal of its controversial clearcutting general permit proposal, the APA has been conducting a stakeholder process aimed at updating 1970s-era forest management rules in the Park. The effort has focused on how the APA should incentivize sustainable, science-based forest management, protect natural resources and viewsheds, timely respond to permit requests from timber companies, and create a better, comprehensive public review process. This is good, but since 2013, the Agency has approved seven permits authorizing clearcutting on portions of 2,195 acres. The APA stakeholder's group should embrace a new system of tracking the scope and intensity of this expanded timber harvesting to better address cumulative impacts. Commercial timberlands comprise roughly a quarter of the Park.

THE FOREST PRODUCTS INDUSTRY HAS CHANGED DRAMATICALLY OVER THE PAST 40 YEARS WITHIN THE PARK. OUR CUSTOMERS HAVE CHANGED AND THEIR DESIRE FOR FOREST PRODUCTS HAS EVOLVED. WE'VE LEARNED THE VALUE AND IMPORTANCE OF FINDING WAYS TO SURVIVE, BY PURSUING CREATIVE APPROACHES TO OUR SHARED DESIRE TO HAVE THE ADIRONDACKS REMAIN A NATURAL LANDSCAPE.

~ ERIC CARLSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, EMPIRE STATE FOREST PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT



Greenhouse Plan Sets Global Pace

In August, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released its final Clean Power Plan, setting tough new standards for controlling greenhouse gas emissions from power plants. The plan will reduce carbon emissions by 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030, which is a nine-percent deeper cut than the draft plan. The final plan allows all states the flexibility to design and submit their own plans by September 2016 to meet the pollution targets.



Mercury, Arsenic Not OK

In April, the EPA's Administrator Gina McCarthy released the Mercury and Air Toxics Rule, which would reduce mercury emissions by power plants by 75 percent. This was the nation's first regulation to curb mercury and other toxic air pollutants from power plants by requiring them to install equipment to remove the toxins from their smokestack emissions. Sadly, the rule was vacated in June by a 5-4 decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, which held that the EPA unfairly emphasized public health benefits over polluter costs. Mercury pollution continues to be a significant source of contamination in aquatic ecosystems.



McCarthy



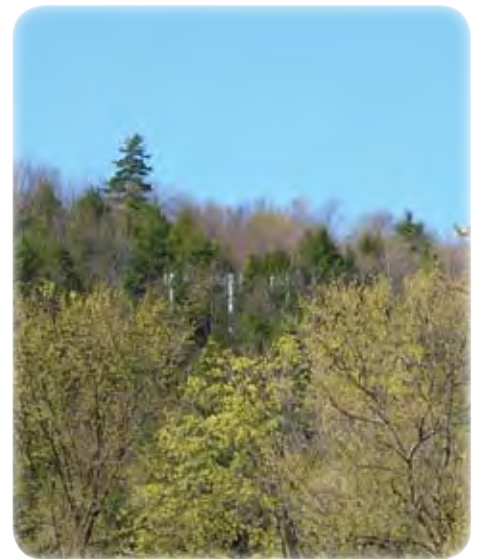
Clear Victory for Scenic Vistas

In October 2014, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) amended legislation that will allow the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) to retain the right to regulate the size, shape and visibility of communications towers. The FCC received thousands of letters urging it to reject the idea that expansions of 10 percent or more in the height or width of communication towers would not have any impact on the scenic beauty of the Adirondack Park. Proponents of a new rule wanted blanket permission for such expansions. This change retains the APA's jurisdiction over telecommunications towers and its 2004 standard requiring them remain "substantially invisible."



Just Ignore Climate, It'll Go Away

In March, U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-KY, told states to just ignore the EPA and refuse to comply with its Clean Power Plan. The plan is designed to curb climate change by reducing carbon pollution from power plants. McConnell told states they could simply fail to file a State Implementation Plan as required by the rules. However, the rules say if states don't file their own emissions reduction plan, the EPA will design one for them.



A properly sited communications tower protects the Park's scenic vistas.



More Power Plant Pollution

U.S. Rep. Elise Stefanik, R-Willsboro, voted in June for a bill that would take the McConnell approach one step further. The bill would create a new law allowing power plants to avoid compliance with the EPA's Clean Power Plan altogether. Fellow upstate Congressman Chris Gibson, R-Kinderhook, who is retiring after this term, voted against the bill. The President said he would veto the bill.

Above: Fourth Lake from Bald Mountain, Town of Webb, Herkimer County.

Photo © Carl Heilman II/Wild Visions, Inc.

Timely Warning Issued

In June, a report by the EPA warned that the Adirondack Park's brook trout and salmon stream fisheries could disappear by the end of the century without action to prevent the climate from overheating the Park's rivers and streams. However, the EPA's study stated that if action is taken now to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, with regulations like the Clean Power Plan, 70 percent of the trout and salmon that are threatened could be saved. The report "Climate Change in the US: Benefits of Global Action" is a summary of a peer-reviewed study that also predicts damage to public health, clean water, electricity grids, roads and bridges, forestry, agriculture, and coastal communities.



A rapidly changing climate poses a great risk to native brook trout fisheries.

Photo courtesy of Larry Master, masterimages.org

Oil Trains Keep Rolling

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) has been slow to respond to pleas for better safety regulations from communities, environmental organizations and school groups who are concerned about a huge expansion in Bakken crude oil traffic through the Adirondack Park via the CP Rail lines on the edge of Lake Champlain. The USDOT should re-consider whether it is appropriate federal policy to allow the shipment of fuel or other hazardous materials through a park, endangering wildlife, communities and the drinking water for more than 180,000 people (Lake Champlain).



Persistent Advocate of Oil Train Safety

U.S. Senator Charles Schumer, D-NY has been a national leader in urging the U.S. Department of Transportation and other federal regulators to better protect New York's environment and communities from a vast expansion of crude oil train traffic. The Adirondack Park's easternmost rail road now hosts millions of gallons of explosive Bakken crude oil each day on its path from North Dakota to eastern seaports and refineries.



Bi-Partisan Support for Conservation

Congresswoman Elise Stefanik, Congressman Chris Gibson, and U.S. Rep. Paul Tonko, D-Amsterdam, supported permanent funding for the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The LWCF, which provides funding for projects that conserve land and water and secure public access for hunting, fishing and recreation, is due to expire in September. The LWCF is funded by oil and gas royalties paid to the federal government.



Tonko Seeks Water Grants

In March, as water mains were shattering from the combination of age and frigid temperatures, Congressman Paul Tonko held meetings with officials from upstate municipalities and the Adirondack Council to determine the need for additional federal assistance for clean water infrastructure. Tonko is working toward a cooperative omnibus bill to solve persistent and expensive infrastructure problems.



Gauging the Flood Danger

In November 2014, U.S. Senators Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, D-NY, provided \$1.5 million in federal grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for the installation of rain and stream gauges along the Mohawk River and Upper Hudson River. Stream gauges measure rainfall and stream levels in areas at risk of flooding, and are used by scientists, boaters and fishery managers to monitor water levels in rivers and streams.



New Wells, New Cap on Emissions

In August, the EPA proposed rules that would cut methane emissions from new oil and gas production by requiring energy companies to install new technologies. The proposals were part of a broader EPA goal to cut methane emissions from all oil and gas production by as much as 45 percent from 2012 levels over the next decade. Methane is a significant greenhouse gas, which EPA says is 25 times more efficient at trapping heat in the atmosphere than equal amounts of carbon dioxide.

Green Energy, Bat Conservation

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is requiring that the applicant for a 260-megawatt pumped-storage hydro-electric power plant in former iron mines in the Town of Moriah, Essex County, submit more water studies and wildlife surveys to determine how the project can be built without negatively impacting endangered bats and water quality. The site has great potential for clean, renewable power generation if water quality, wildlife and community safety can be assured.

THE ADIRONDACK PARK IS A MODEL FOR THE WORLD. A MODEL THAT STILL NEEDS TO BE PERFECTED.

~ DICK BEAMISH, FOUNDER
ADIRONDACK EXPLORER

OTHER AGENCIES



Lending Nature a Helping Hand

The NYS Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) has been employing science to combat acid rain's impact on the Adirondack Park on multiple fronts. Its well-known research on energy efficiency helps curb pollution. Its analyses of pollution-monitoring and biological studies have been critical to understanding acid rain damage in the Adirondack and Catskill parks. In addition, the authority is identifying watersheds in the Adirondacks where nature needs help to recover from human error. Working with the state and federal agencies, academic institutions, private clubs, and lake associations, NYSERDA is studying tributary chemistry and flow, brook trout and macroinvertebrate populations and the health of forests and soils. The goal is to accelerate the rate of recovery for chronically acidified watersheds as upwind air pollution subsides.



Hole in Railroad Safety Checks?

For some reason, the DOT has not issued any railroad track safety-inspection reports for the Canadian Pacific Rail line through the Adirondack Park. This line transports millions of gallons of Bakken crude oil per day on trains loaded in North Dakota. The DOT has issued reports for the entire rail network on which crude oil is hauled except for a 100-mile stretch along Lake Champlain between Port Kent and Fort Ann, NY.



Less Salty Solutions

The NYS Department of Transportation's (DOT) recently undertook the Adirondack Snow and Ice Pilot Test to reduce salt application practices in the Adirondacks and across the state, while keeping roads safe. It used magnesium chloride-treated salt in place of conventional road salt, reduced initial application rates by 10 percent, reduced truck speeds to minimize de-icing materials bouncing off pavement, monitored to ensure application rates, and expanded salt brine production for pre-storm anti-icing operations. The DOT is now in a position to expand these practices to protect water quality throughout the Adirondack Park. The DOT is also part of the Road Salt Working Group along with the Adirondack Council, ADKAction.org and others.



Cleaner Wood Heat in Reach

NYSERDA is working with a coalition of businesses and institutions including Paul Smith's College, the Olympic Training Center in Lake Placid, North Country Community College in Saranac Lake, the Indian Lake School District, and the North Country School in Lake Placid to create multi-building, combined heat and electric power systems using wood fuel. These renewable biomass systems will provide electric power and steam heat using local fuels at a lower cost and with less environmental impact than conventional fossil fuels.



More Hands on DEC

In December of 2014, Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli issued a report that spurred budget increases in April resulting in authorization for 36 new staff at the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). The Comptroller's report said the size of the DEC workforce declined 10.4 percent, from 3,256 full-time staff in 2003-04 to 2,917 in 2014. Programs such as enforcement, air and water quality management and solid and hazardous waste management experienced significant cuts, the report noted.



DiNapoli



Watching the Cookie Jars

The Comptroller's December 2014 report also noted that over the years more than \$500 million has been raided from the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) and the Hazardous Waste Oversight and Assistance Account combined, via agreements between governors and legislators, and used elsewhere in the state budget. Gov. Andrew Cuomo is the first governor not to raid the EPF since its creation in 1993. Although previous governors and legislative leaders have vowed to repay the EPF raids, none have been repaid.

Above: The High Peaks looking north from the central Adirondacks.

Photo © Carl Heilman II/Wild Visions, Inc.

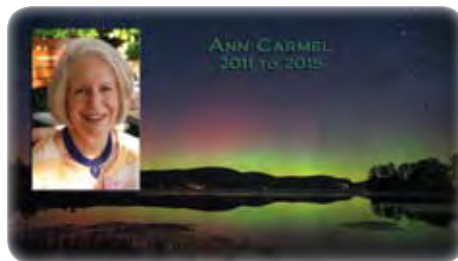
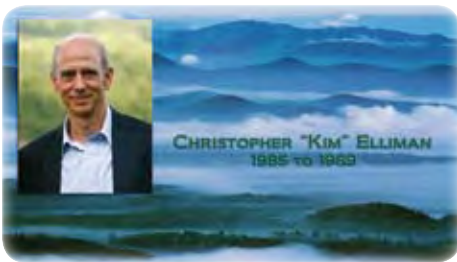
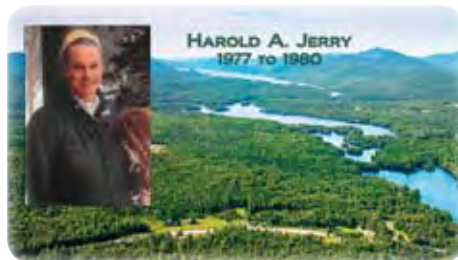
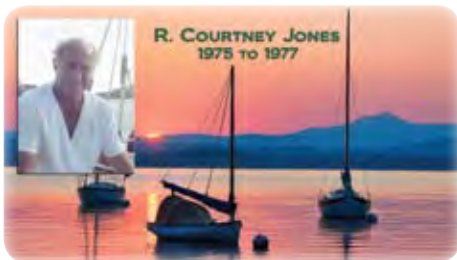


AWARD WINNERS

Council Honors its Former Leaders

The Adirondack Council celebrated Forever Wild Day and its 40th Anniversary on Saturday, July 18 at Heaven Hill Farm in Lake Placid by honoring all 11 Chairs of its Board of Directors, naming each as Conservationist of the Year.

Each of our Board Chairs is a remarkable individual with a long list of accomplishments aside from his or her leadership of the Adirondack Council. Several have taken on leadership positions in other regional and national organizations, or held important government jobs, while working to protect the pure water, wilderness and communities of the Adirondack Park. We are grateful to all of them. The Adirondack Council's 11 Board Chairs are:



Special thanks to Carl Heilman for providing photos and designing the slideshow honoring the Adirondack Council's former Board Chairs.

Above: Morning reflections of Whiteface Mountain from Connery Pond.

Photo © Carl Heilman II/Wild Visions, Inc.



TIP OF THE HAT

Partner Contributions

Each year the Adirondack Council recognizes individuals and not-for-profit organizations whose work has advanced environmental protection and shown how nature and people can thrive together in the Adirondack Park. Those making contributions over the past year include:

The **Environmental Defense Fund** has been working with the Adirondack Council and the **Kirby Foundation** to implement a “critical loads” standard for acid rain control programs that can be tailored to protect specific plant and animal species from harm by upwind air pollution.

The **Adirondack Diversity Advisory Council**, formed in 2014, held its second annual forum in August for discussions about making the Park more welcoming to people of all ages, races, beliefs, orientations, and preferences.

The **Climate Action Reserve** is helping Adirondack landowner **Molpus Woodlands** reap financial rewards for carbon sequestration by selling offsets in the **California Carbon Market**. To do this, Molpus will harvest at a slower rate than its annual tree growth.

The **Adirondack Nature Conservancy** produced a report which outlines the threats to lake trout and other cold-water fisheries from climate change in the Adirondack Park, and identifies vulnerable populations and determines which lakes might serve as lifeboats in a warmer future.

The **Paul Smith’s College Adirondack Watershed Stewardship Program** put 30 full-time and a few part-time paid boat inspectors at major water bodies around the Park this summer to educate boaters about invasive species and to assist with removal of non-native species.

The **Lake George Land Conservancy** negotiated the purchase and protection of the Pinnacle, the Bolton landmark visible from Lake George, which will help preserve the town’s scenic beauty.

Dept. of Environmental Conservation’s Rangers and Environmental Conservation Officers played an important role in the three-week manhunt throughout the northeastern Adirondack Park that led to the apprehension of two murderers who had escaped from the Clinton Correctional Facility in Dannemora.

Dave Mason and **Jim Herman** of Keene Valley created the **Adirondack Futures** project that found there was nearly unanimous desire among all Park stakeholders for a sustainable future. They are now using their new company **Anthros** to discover local, regional and global strategies to curb greenhouse gas and cope with climate change.

For 26 years, the **High Peaks Summit Stewards Program (Adirondack Mountain Club, Adirondack Nature Conservancy, Dept. of Environmental Conservation)** has taught hikers how to avoid damaging rare and sensitive alpine plants and wildlife when climbing the Park’s tallest mountains. The program estimates that since 1990, it has spoken with more than 395,000 visitors on Mt. Marcy and Algonquin Peak.

The **Adirondack Nature Conservancy** provided \$500,000 to the towns of Indian Lake, Newcomb, North Hudson, and Minerva so they could work together to form an Upper Hudson Recreational Hub around the new Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area and Hudson Gorge Wilderness Area.

Adirondack painter **Kevin Raines** of Wadhams created a 78-piece exhibition of his work to promote Adirondack conservation, entitled *Share the Experience: Adventures in the Adirondacks*. The exhibit spent a month at the Lake Placid Center for the Arts and is currently at View Art Center in Old Forge.

Above: A brightly colored circumhorizontal arc, or fire rainbow, over Lower St. Regis Lake, Town of Brighton, Franklin County.



SUPPORT CONSERVATION

Adirondack Gift Shop

Help support Adirondack conservation efforts. Proceeds from the sale of these and other products help us advocate for the Adirondack Park everyday. Visit us online at: Shop.AdirondackCouncil.org, or call us at 1.877.873.2240 to place your order today!



Council Hats ~ Proudly display your support for the Adirondack Council with our loon logo hats. Available in forest green brushed cotton or putty/stone trucker. One size fits all. **\$15**



Loon Car Magnet ~ Don't leave a mark on your car with our removable euro-style oval magnet. **\$5**

Dak Bars ~ Whole food energy bars (meal replacement bars) handcrafted in the Adirondacks using local and regional ingredients. Three flavors available. **\$3.50 each**



Thank You, Adirondack Park Advocates!

This year thousands of Adirondack Council advocates took action on water and air pollution, invasive species, state budget funding, wildlife protections, climate change, and more. Your personal letters, phone calls and emails to policymakers helped secure positive results for the Park. Your continued involvement is essential to our shared goal of protecting the Adirondacks for future generations. Thank you!



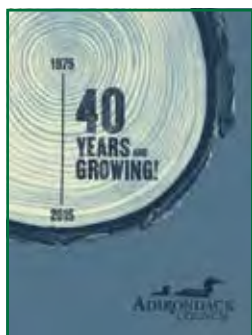
Clean water advocates join together for microbeads lobby day.

Give at the Office!

Support the Adirondack Council by making payroll contributions through EarthShare New York's workplace giving program at numerous private companies, many state and municipal government organizations and in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) by selecting #22101 on your pledge form. To find out more about how you and your workplace can support the Adirondack Council through an EarthShare of New York charitable giving campaign, please visit: earthshareny.org.



Above: Late summer view from Cascade Mountain, Town of Keene, Essex County.



40th Anniversary Poster ~ Celebrate 40 years of successful conservation advocacy with our limited edition poster. Hand silk screened on archival paper. Designed by Aaron Woolf and Ed Morgan. Signed by designer Aaron Woolf. **\$40**

2016 Forever Wild Calendar ~ Enjoy beautiful Adirondack landscapes from photographer Carl Heilman II. **\$13**



Stay Connected With Us

Help the Adirondack Council stay connected with you throughout the year. Email is the quickest, most cost-effective way to communicate with you. **Join our growing online community by signing up to receive email alerts at: AdirondackCouncil.org.**





ADIRONDACK COUNCIL

Defending the East's Greatest Wilderness

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Adirondack Council

The Adirondack Park is the largest park in the contiguous United States. Its wild, natural beauty is a sanctuary for wildlife and people in today's world. The Adirondack Council is the leading voice for Adirondack conservation. We are showing the world how people and nature can thrive together. Not a member yet? Join us! AdirondackCouncil.org

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