

**ADIRONDACK COUNCIL TO HONOR KEEPING TRACK AS PART OF ANNUAL GATHERING  
AT ESSEX LIGHTHOUSE AUGUST 5**  
*Group Focuses Efforts on Wildlife and Habitat Conservation throughout Champlain Basin,  
including Migratory Paths between Green Mountains & Adirondacks*

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ESSEX, N.Y. – The Adirondack Council will honor the work of Susan Morse, founder of Keeping Track, at the Council's annual midsummer gathering at the Essex Lighthouse on Whallons Bay here on August 5.

"Susan is a naturalist, forester and tracker and has been a conservation leader in the Champlain Basin for decades," said Adirondack Council Executive Director Brian L. Houseal. "Susan is the founder of Keeping Track, a grassroots, citizens' science organization monitoring wildlife movement at hundreds of places around North America, including many in the Northeast.

"This work is vital to understanding which areas are essential to the survival of specific birds, fish and mammals, so we can make room for them when we are planning our communities and our commercial developments," Houseal said. "If we want to keep healthy populations of animals that need big ranges, for example, we need to understand what areas they require for movement and for raising young. For example, if we build a suburb in black bear habitat, the ensuing conflicts would be bad for both bears and homeowners. It is likely to be worse for the bears.

"The work of groups such as Keeping Track will gain in importance in the near future, as climate change alters and shifts wildlife habitat across the landscape, and as state and federal governments are generally cutting the funds they formerly allocated for open space protection and habitat management," Houseal said. "Keeping Track makes excellent use of volunteer help, public involvement and education."

Morse helped launch the Chittenden Uplands Conservation Project, as well as Keeping Track programs in Charlotte, Jericho, Lewis Creek, and elsewhere in the Champlain-Adirondack Biosphere Reserve.

She has tracked and taught in the Split Rock Wildway – an area of conservation concern linking the wildlife habitats of the Adirondack Park's High Peaks region with the its Champlain Valley to the east. This range varies from the Lake Champlain shore, just hundred feet above sea level, to the mile-high peaks of the Park's interior. Most of the valley is privately owned forest and farmland.

"More often than we'd like to believe, the places we choose to live or to build are the same places where wildlife has lived and thrived," Houseal said. "It is difficult, but we must alter our thinking about what constitutes appropriate development, and expand our vision beyond that which is most convenient to people. As much as anyone in the Champlain Basin, Susan Morse is making sure that the Champlain Valley is not given over to sprawl that degrades our natural surroundings."

The August 5 gathering is sponsored by lighthouse owner Gary Heurich, a former trustee of the Adirondack Council and former owner of the Split Rock Wild Forest, which he sold to the state for inclusion in the "forever wild" Forest Preserve in 1994.

The Adirondack Council is a privately funded, not-for-profit organization whose mission is to ensure the ecological integrity and wild character of the Adirondack Park. At 9,300 square miles, the Adirondack Park is the largest American park outside of Alaska. The Council carries out its mission through research, education, advocacy and legal action. The Adirondack Council has members in all 50 United States and the District of Columbia.