

NEWS RELEASE



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**ADIRONDACK COUNCIL NAMES U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
2012 CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR FOR CURBING ACID RAIN, MERCURY
*New Cross State Pollution Rule & Nation's First Mercury Standards for Power Plants
Will Help Adirondack Lakes, Forests, Fish & Wildlife to Recover from Decades of Damage***

AUSABLE FORKS, N.Y. – The Adirondack Council said today it would present its highest honor – the Conservationist of the Year Award – to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for its work in curbing air pollution from electric power plants.

The award will be presented on Saturday, July 14 at the historic Asgaard Farm and Dairy here, in the scenic Ausable River Valley. Asgaard was the home of renowned artist Rockwell Kent from the 1920s until his death (1882-1971).

“The EPA has made great strides on behalf of the nation’s air quality in the past year,” said Adirondack Council Executive Director Brian L. Houseal. “The Cross-State Air Pollution Rule and the new mercury standard for power plant emissions will curb acid rain and mercury contamination in the Adirondack Park and across the Northeast. By 2014, both will require power plants to slash their emissions of acid-rain-causing sulfur and nitrogen pollution, while also requiring deep cuts in toxic mercury.

“The Adirondack Council was founded in 1975. For the first time in four decades, we can envision a day in the near future when the daily destruction of acid rain will end for the Adirondack Park, and real healing can begin,” he explained. “Finally, we can look forward to the day when our soils and waters will be pollution-free – when all Adirondack fish are safe to eat again, free of chemical contamination. Without EPA’s work and diligence, this day could never come.”

Each July, the Adirondack Council awards a museum-quality, hand-carved, life-size Common Loon to the Conservationist of the Year Award winner. The Adirondack Council’s annual membership meeting (1:45 p.m.) is free of charge and open to the public, but reservations are required for the awards lunch. Call 1-877-873-2240 for details.

Also at the lunch, the New York State Adirondack Forest Rangers will be celebrated for protecting the public Forest Preserve lands, natural resources and people who use these resources. David Brunner, co-owner of Asgaard Farm and Dairy will be the guest speaker. Brunner and Rhonda Butler acquired the Farm in 1988 and put it back in production in 2003. Today Asgaard is a diversified, family-operated farm with a goat dairy and creamery at its core.

Accepting the award on behalf of the EPA will be Region 2 Director of Clean Water Joan Leary Matthews. Matthews is a former NYS Asst. Attorney General in the Environmental Protection Bureau. EPA Region 2 covers New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. EPA is the 28th annual recipient of the award.

Leary Matthews has worked alongside the Adirondack Council on clean air issues for years, both while in state government and as a private-practice attorney. She was lead counsel for the state's successful defense of its automobile emissions standards when it was sued by auto makers. She was also in charge of New York's successful suit forcing the EPA to adopt more stringent ambient air quality standards. She is a past Chair of the NYS Bar Association's Environmental Law Section.

Cross-State Pollution Rule

On July 6, 2011 the EPA finalized the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule. The rule will speed up the recovery of the hardest-hit areas of the country, such as the Adirondacks. It requires steep cuts in sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions from power plants in 28 states, most of which cause acid rain in the Adirondack Park or smog throughout the Northeast. By 2014, the rule is expected to decrease power plant emissions of sulfur by more than 70 percent and nitrogen by more than 50 percent.

The rule was first proposed in 2010 after a federal court struck down its predecessor, the Clean Air Interstate Rule (CAIR) in late 2008.

Federal public health officials estimate that the rule annually will prevent between 20,000 to 30,000 premature American deaths; reduce emergency room visits by nearly 20,000 and decrease missed work and school days by 1.8 million. The rule was scheduled to go into effect on Jan. 1, 2012, but the U.S. Court of Appeals, D.C. Circuit, has stayed the rule, pending its review.

Mercury Air Toxics Standard

On December 16, 2011 EPA finalized the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS). MATS set the first limits on power plant emissions of mercury, arsenic and metals. The rule carries out requirements of the 1990 Clean Air Act amendments. Within four years, existing fossil fuel plants must lower their mercury emissions by as much as 90 percent. Because most fuels that contain mercury are also high in sulfur, companies cutting their mercury emissions by switching fuels are expected to curb their sulfur dioxide emissions by another 41 percent, beyond the CSPAR requirements.

Aside from contaminating the human food supply by tainting the Adirondack Park's fish populations, mercury emissions are harming nearly all wildlife, including loons and rare native songbirds such as Bicknell's Thrush, and even insects and spiders, as studies on Lake George have shown.

Previous Adirondack Council Conservationist of the Year award winners include:

The Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (2011); Governors George E. Pataki and Mario M. Cuomo; New York Times editor John Oakes; NYS Attorney General Dennis Vacco, NYS DEC Commissioners John P. Cahill and Erin Crotty; Senate EnCon Chairman Carl Marcellino, Assembly EnCon Chairman Richard Brodsky; Assembly En Con Chair Maurice Hinchey; Adirondack Park Agency Executive Director Robert Glennon; Adirondack environmental activists including Peter Borrelli, the late Clarence Petty, the late Paul Schaefer and the late State Senator and Public Service Commission Chairman Harold Jerry; and, Adirondack Harvest.

The Adirondack Council is a privately funded not-for-profit organization whose mission is to ensure the ecological integrity and wild character of New York's 9,300-square-mile

Adirondack Park. The Council carries out its mission through research, education, advocacy and legal action. Adirondack Council members live in all 50 United States.

Financial and in-kind sponsors of the Council's annual Adirondack event include:

Asgaard Farm and Dairy; Fosters' Tent Rentals; Toohar & Barone, LLP; Eastwood Litho, Inc.; Finch Paper, LLC; Integrated Marketing Services, Inc.; The Lyme Timber Company; Martindale Keysor & Co. CPAs; Pearsall Financial Group at UBS; Access Computer Technologies; Adirondack Creamery; Adirondack Dreams; Adirondack Museum; Alpine Club of Canada-Montreal Section; Elk Lake Lodge; International Paper; Open Space Institute; Rayonier, Inc.; Lost Pond Press; Law Office of William M. Finucane; Steven A. Mannato; Champlain Area Trails; The North Face; Black Diamond Equipment; SCARPA; Coleman; Bambu; Nancie Battaglia Photography; Depot Theatre; Mountain Mugs; Pendragon Theater; Plattsburgh State Art Museum; Buck Supply and Distribution; and Loremans' (list incomplete).

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