



NEWS IN AND ABOUT THE SIX-MILLION-ACRE ADIRONDACK PARK

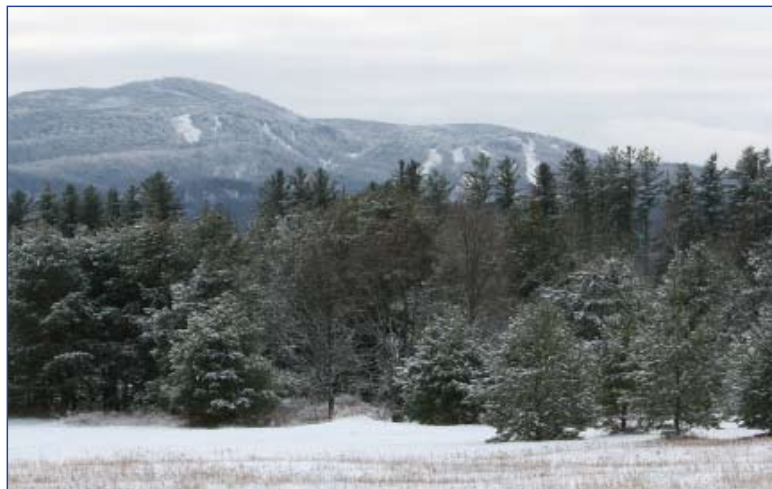
INSIDE

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Adirondack Park Agency Approves Permit For ACR

Council evidence leads to improvements

In mid-January, the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) approved a permit for the development of the Adirondack Club and Resort (ACR) project in Tupper Lake, the largest development ever to come before the Agency. The project proposes to redevelop the Big Tupper Ski Area and build 700 housing units, an inn, and a marina. As a result of the Council's consultations with the project design team, the formal mediation process, and expert hearing testimony, objectionable components of the project were eliminated or modified, including the removal of the shooting school, the elimination of a highly visible ridge-top subdivision, the location and size of the great camp lots, and restrictions on future subdivision. The permit stipulates benchmarks that the developer must meet as the project moves forward, and includes conditions related to water quality, wildlife habitat and wild character. Given the modifications to the original design and additional requirements attached to the permit, the Adirondack Council supported the APA's final 10-1 approval. The project still needs several other permits before construction can begin.



The Big Tupper Ski Area on Mt. Morris is the center attraction of the proposed resort project.

Reforms Needed at Adirondack Park Agency

Many policies and procedures have been unchanged for nearly 40 years

At the conclusion of the ACR decision, one thing that both proponents and opponents could agree on is the need to reform the way the APA operates. Clearly, the project review process, along with several other facets of the Agency's work, need to be amended. The Council is urging government officials to strengthen the Agency's environmental standards while also increasing its efficiency. Some of our recommendations include granting the APA ability to charge a sliding scale fee for large projects, providing a mechanism for the APA to deny a project before going through the full hearing process, better coordination of project review by multiple state agencies, and better definition of cluster development and wildlife assessment. Other improvements needed at the APA are better enforcement against violations and more long-term planning initiatives.

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Newsletter photos by Adirondack Council staff
unless otherwise noted.



Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Joe Martens spoke to Adirondack Council supporters at the home of Margot and John Ernst in January. The Commissioner shared his priority objectives for the Adirondack Park and answered questions on a variety of conservation issues. L to R: Brian Houseal, Council Executive Director; Ann Carmel, Board Chair; Joe Martens, DEC Commissioner; John Ernst, Council Board member.

Dear Adirondack Council Friends and Supporters,

Thank you and congratulations to Adirondack Council members who urged our congressional delegation to replace the funding for U.S. Geological Survey flood-warning gauges on nine rivers in and just outside the Adirondack Park. In combination with the Adirondack Council's statewide media campaign, your calls and letters helped to save these devices, which are vital to public safety and management of trout fisheries.

The Council is working with a coalition of more than 100 organizations statewide to safeguard and increase the NYS Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) this spring. Gov. Andrew Cuomo's budget proposal calls for the same level of funding as last year. We appreciate the difficult budget situation in the state and applaud the Cuomo administration for not proposing further cuts to the EPF. The EPF pays for the state's environmental capital projects, including land acquisition.


Adirondack Council calls and letters were also important when the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) suggested the agency doesn't have the staff to enforce new state permit requirements for businesses that use more than 100,000 gallons of water per day. The DEC said it could take five years or more to phase in the program. The Council will seek increased funding for DEC personnel, as well as funding for more staff at the Adirondack Park Agency (APA). The APA has lost 30 percent of its staff (from 72 down to 54) in the past five years.

Governor Cuomo created the Spending and Government Efficiency (SAGE) Commission to identify ways to align and right-size government agencies and services in a more cost-effective and efficient manner. The Council has made recommendations to the Governor and SAGE Commission on governance and policy reforms that are urgently needed at the APA to better protect backcountry lands and wildlife habitat. Reforms are also needed at the DEC and other state agencies so they will begin treating the Adirondacks as one Park and one region. This should replace the highly fragmented approach currently in use that results in uneven policies and law enforcement.

Finally, following the APA's seven-year review and January 2012 decision to approve the 6,400-acre Tupper Lake Adirondack Club and Resort development, we are acutely aware of needed reforms to ensure better protections for wildlife habitat and water quality, while also encouraging vibrant communities. While this project is still fresh in everyone's memories, we have an opportunity with the Governor, his agencies and the SAGE Commission to accomplish game-changing reforms that will improve the APA's policies and procedures.

We intend to accomplish a lot in the coming year. And with your continued support, I am more confident than ever that we will succeed.

All the best,


Brian L. Houseal
Executive Director

Go to our website – www.AdirondackCouncil.org – for more information.

CAPITAL MATTERS: ALBANY



Governor Cuomo's Budget Keeps Spending Flat

No new cuts, but no sign of future improvements

In his second annual budget presentation, Gov. Cuomo proposed to keep funding for environmental programs and agencies at nearly identical levels to last year. While it is good to have a governor who is generally supportive of the environment and is not proposing large reductions, more environmental spending is needed this year. The Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) is proposed at \$134 million, the same as last year, with \$17.5 million for land protection. Unfortunately, the EPF is about 40 percent lower than it was four years ago and there is no indication of a repayment of the \$500 million that was "borrowed" from the EPF for other programs. In addition, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) also have budgets that closely mirror last year's spending. The staff at both agencies continue to have tremendous workloads, including the DEC's new water withdrawal permitting system and the need for strengthening compliance with APA regulations. We are hopeful that Gov. Cuomo and the Legislature will work to find new sources of funding for the EPF this year and work to bring back some of the 25 percent of the staff lost at the APA and DEC to help fulfill their missions.



Governor's Reform Agenda Matches Council's

SAGE Commission looks at agency regions, citizen one stops

Governor Cuomo's Spending and Government Efficiency (SAGE) Commission formed last year put forward a series of recommendations for 2012. Two of those proposals are similar to ones put forth by the Adirondack Council. First, the SAGE Commission called for state agency regional boundaries to be adjusted and the number of regions to be decreased to better utilize resources. Two agencies specifically mentioned are the departments of Transportation (DOT) and Environmental Conservation (DEC). The DOT has three regions that encompass the Adirondack Park, while the DEC has two. Neither agency's regions coincide with each other or the Park boundary. The Council has called for new DEC boundaries to match the Adirondack Park boundary line for over a decade. SAGE also proposes "Citizen One Stops" where the public can receive customer service from multiple state agencies in the same physical location. The Council had also recommended that the Adirondack Park Agency be a "one stop shop" for such activities within the Adirondack Park. For more on the Council's reform recommendations, scan this code or visit www.adirondackcouncil.org/RealignAgenciesPR_12012.pdf.



Funding for the North Country

\$103.2 million to the Adirondack region

In December, Governor Cuomo announced the awards for the 10 Regional Economic Development Councils (REDCs). Each REDC has appointed representatives who developed an economic strategy and submitted a competitive proposal for state grants. Thanks to the hard work of the REDC representatives, the North Country region celebrated when their effort resulted in the second highest amount awarded. Over \$100 million will support projects in the North Country. Several will benefit the environment as well as the economy. Some of the funding for the REDC grants comes from the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), the main source of capital for environmental projects across the state. Parts of the Adirondack Park are also included in the Mohawk Valley and Capital District REDCs.

ACTION UPDATE

Water Regulations

Member action makes a difference

Thank you to all Council members who submitted comments regarding the Department of Environmental Conservation's proposed water withdrawal regulations. It is a critical time to strengthen the state's protection of water resources. Involvement through your letters and emails are an important part of the public participation process. Thank you!

Please be sure we have your current email so we can let you know when your comments are urgently needed.

Send your name and email to foreverwild@adirondackcouncil.org

IN AND ABOUT THE PARK



Saranac Lake

Volunteers open community store

The community of Saranac Lake received national recognition this winter (see *NY Times*, Nov. 12, 2011) when local volunteers opened the new Community Store.



Photo by Jason Brill

After the town's one department store closed its doors and a big box store project was turned away, citizens raised \$500,000 over the past five years through the sale of investor shares, and opened its doors before the holidays. The store is an example of the citizen ingenuity and commitment to local businesses that many believe is critical to preserving the character and bolstering the economies of the Park's small communities.

Old Forge and Wanakena

New APA Chair and Commissioner

In November, Governor Cuomo announced two changes to the Adirondack Park Agency Board of Commissioners. Lani Ulrich (Old Forge) will serve as the agency's chair and Sherman Craig (Wanakena) will serve as a commissioner. Craig's appointment was confirmed in January by the NYS Senate. Ulrich, a commissioner since 2004, filled the chair's role left vacated when Curt Stiles resigned in August.



Inlet

Program takes on Japanese knotweed

Thanks to the Regional Inlet Invasive Plant Program (RIIPP) and dedicated partners, over 75,000 stalks of Japanese knotweed were treated and exterminated at hundreds of sites during 2011, expanding efforts to eradicate this invasive throughout the Adirondacks. Predominately located in yards and disturbed open areas such as forest edges, river banks and roadways, these fast growing plants have become a rampant and dangerous invasive species. RIIPP volunteers and the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program, as well as the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District have worked diligently to identify sites with knotweed, obtain permissions from property owners, and raise funds to pay certified workers to treat infestations with the herbicide Accord (glyphosate). For more information visit www.noknotweed.org or contact Patty Wittmeyer at clerk@inletny.com or 315.357.5771.

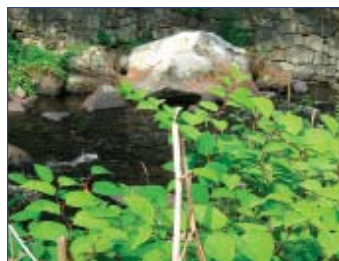
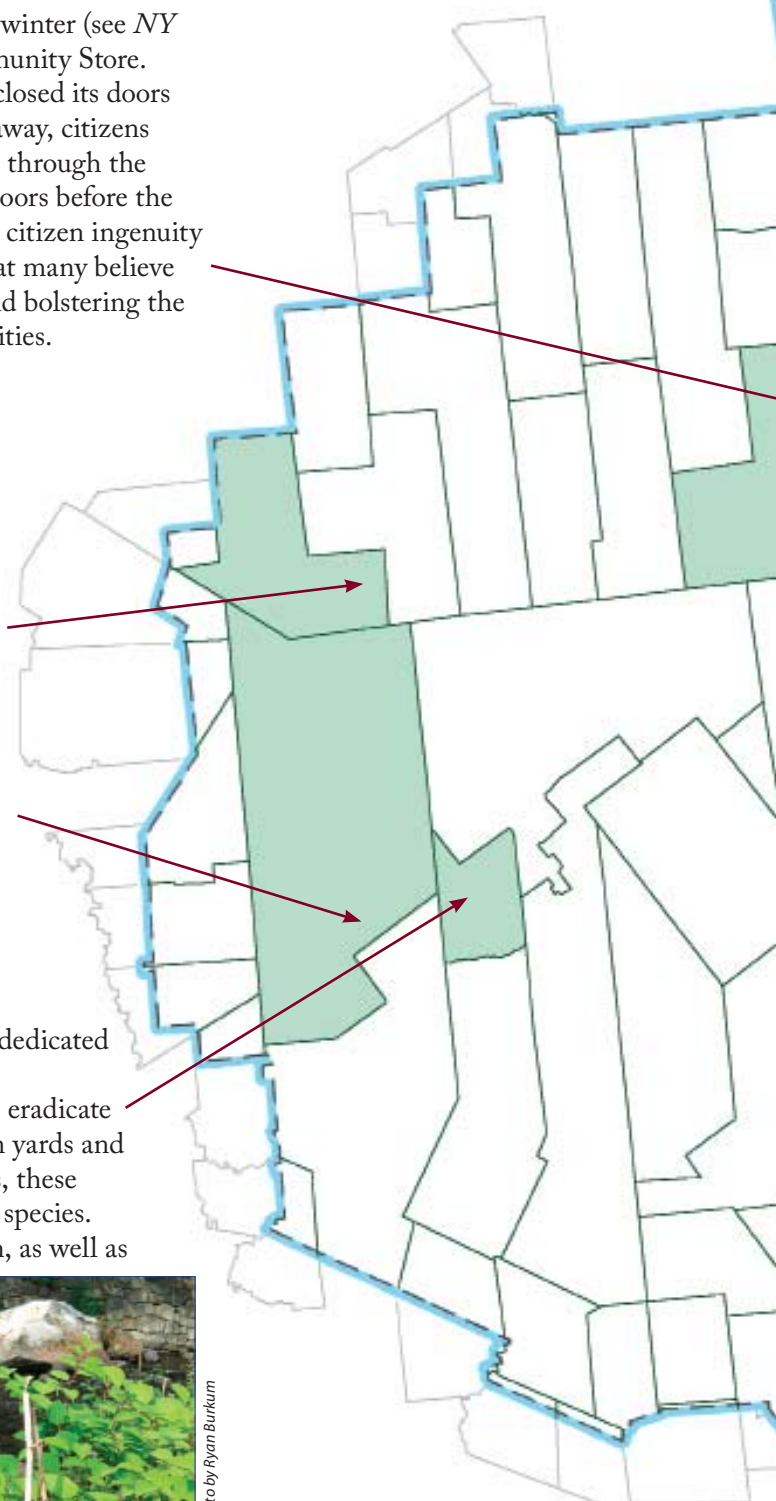


Photo by Ryan Burkum



Au Sable Forks, Jay, Upper Jay, Keene and Keene Valley

Flood recovery efforts continue

Life in the Adirondack towns hit hardest by Tropical Storm Irene have, for the most part, returned to normal. Still, some residents cannot return to their damaged homes and both citizens and towns await federal aid to help with rebuilding. It is unclear what the numerous mountain slides and reshaping of rivers will mean for the usual spring flooding. Local officials with the assistance of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service are working to restore excavated trout streams to their natural contours. To learn how you can support flood relief efforts, please visit www.generousact.org/irene-flood-recovery-efforts.



Au Sable Forks/Willsboro/Crown Point

Senator Schumer saves stream gauges

Not long after Adirondack communities suffered the worst flooding in hundreds of years, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) stream gauges in the region faced elimination due to federal budget cuts. The gauges are used to monitor stream flow and provide an early warning system for flooding.

In mid-January, US Senator Charles Schumer, D-NY, announced that he had secured federal funding for nine streams in the Lake Champlain basin. Funding for these gauges was slated to expire on March 22 as part of budget cuts within the U.S. Geological Survey. The Adirondack Council and the Lake Champlain Basin Program sounded the alarm in November and December, calling for renewed funding. These gauges were critical to warning the public during 2011 spring flooding and Tropical Storm Irene, which caused widespread flooding in August 2011. Sen. Schumer, along with Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-VT, was able to secure funding for the next year from the Great Lakes Fishery Commission while long-term solutions are examined. Adirondack Rep. Bill Owens, D-Plattsburgh, also worked to restore the cuts to this important program.



Chester, Warrensburg and Lake George

Solar power heats up

The Town of Chester is converting to solar power for all municipal facilities, including the town garage, the recycling center and the health center. The town expects to save 10 to 25 percent on their electricity costs in the next 10 years. Nearby Warrensburg and Lake George are also pursuing municipal solar projects.



Thom Randall/Adirondack Journal

LAND, WATER, AIR



New Acid Rain Report

Cross-State rule needed for recovery
Earlier this year, the National Acid Precipitation Assessment Program (NAPAP) released its new report to Congress, describing the huge environmental, public health, and financial benefits of the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments. It also looked forward to additional emissions reductions in the near future, showing how they would cause additional improvements in the ecological health of the Adirondack Park. In the last 20 years, emissions of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, the ingredients of acid rain, have dropped by more than 60 percent from power plants. For every dollar spent cleaning up pollution, between \$56 and \$143 is saved in human health costs and avoided losses in productivity. The report also suggests that further cuts, such as those proposed in the Environmental Protection Agency's Cross-State Air Pollution Rule are necessary to see full recovery in Adirondack lakes. The rule is currently being stayed by pending litigation. To view the report scan this code or go to http://ny.water.usgs.gov/projects/NAPAP/NAPAP_2011_Report_508_Compliant.pdf.



DEC Names New Director

Critical time for strong leadership

The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) recently named Robert Stegemann as the new Region 5 Director. He formerly worked at International Paper (IP) for 18 years, holding a variety of roles, including the company's manager of sustainability. DEC Region 5 includes three-quarters of the Adirondack Park; over two million acres of Forest Preserve land and 488,700 acres of conservation easement lands. Stegemann replaced Betsy Lowe who resigned in November.



Regional Climate Program Under Attack

Council, NYS fight to keep program in place

In August 2011, the Adirondack Council submitted an affidavit in support of NY Attorney General Eric Schneiderman's defense of New York's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). New York helped lead the efforts to create RGGI in 2008 as the nation's first government-mandated greenhouse gas reduction program. When a few wealthy climate change deniers attempted last summer to derail the entire program, the Attorney General asked for the Council's assistance because of its unique position as the only environmental organization to actively participate in the RGGI auctions. The Council has been buying and retiring RGGI allowances through our *Cool Park/Healthy Planet* program to limit the total amount of carbon emitted in the region.

In January, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) announced it would be permanently retiring nearly 39 million tons' worth of RGGI allowances (1 allowance/credit = the right to emit 1 ton of carbon emissions) that have gone unsold at the last five quarterly auctions. The DEC will use a mechanism similar to the one employed by the Council for the last three years to retire



the credits. We have now called on the DEC and RGGI to reduce the number of allowances available next year when the program is amended. To retire allowances through the Council's program, visit www.adirondackcouncil.org/CoolParkHealthyPlanet.html.

EPA Action Will Reduce Mercury Emissions

New standards will protect human health and the environment

More than 20 years after the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments mandated it to act, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has finally established standards for the emission of mercury from power plants. The new rule will require reductions of roughly 90 percent over the next four years. The Adirondack Park is one of five "hot spots" for mercury identified in the eastern United States and Canada. Mercury has contaminated numerous fish species, causing the NYS Department of Health to issue a blanket health warning to women and children not to eat any of nearly a dozen species. In addition, mercury is harming mountaintop-dwelling songbirds, causes neurological damage in loons, and has been found in elevated levels in spiders on islands in Lake George. The new mercury regulations were finalized in December of 2011.

COLLABORATION AND THE NEXT GENERATION



Adirondack Futures Project

Where will we be in 25 years?

Launched by the Common Ground Alliance in July 2011, the Adirondack Futures Project takes a collaborative scenario approach to stimulate creative thinking about the Adirondack Park 25 years in the future. So far, over 100 people have participated in the two-day workshops or half-day sessions. The workshop leadership, reporting and data analysis are the work of retired consultants Jim Herman and Dave Mason from Keene, who have donated their time and extraordinary skill to the effort. To read the workshop reports, view initial results, see group photos and sign up for future half-day workshops, visit the website: www.adkfutures.org.

Clarence Petty Interns

Meet Krista Tuthill and Bryce Gray

Krista Tuthill is an Adirondack native of Saranac Lake. She graduated in 2010 from Syracuse University with a dual-Bachelor's degree in



International Relations and Spanish and a minor in Global Economics. In the Elizabethtown office, Krista works closely with Conservation Director Allison Buckley on issues such as conservation easements, a Park-wide recreation plan, stream restoration post-Irene, and planning for the proposed Bob Marshall Wild Lands Complex. Krista plans to pursue

a Master's degree this fall focusing on sustainability in emerging economies. Scan this code to view a video of Krista or go to www.youtube.com/user/adkcouncil/featured.



Bryce Gray is a recent graduate of Carleton College in Northfield, MN, where he majored in Environmental Studies and served as the Voice of the Knights on basketball and baseball radio broadcasts.

His search for employment has led him back to his native Voorheesville, NY. He works in the Council's Albany office tracking bills through the legislature that affect the Adirondack Park. Bryce aspires to become a journalist for an environmentally-minded publication such as National Geographic.



Western Adirondack Gateway Communities

Can you get there from here?

Last summer the Council published the Bob Marshall Wild Lands Complex map. The Council is advocating consolidation of the public lands in the region to facilitate new recreation opportunities and more effective management of the natural resources. Meeting with gateway communities surrounding the Wild Lands Complex, the Council hopes to help identify opportunities for expanded recreation and tourism connections, and other economic strategies that are compatible with the nearby wild lands (e.g. scientific research). For a Wild Lands map and more information, visit our website.



Council staff recently met with interested citizens, business owners, community leaders, and government officials in Old Forge and Wanakena to discuss ways that individuals, government and organizations can work together to ensure that gateway communities benefit from their proximity to the Park's wild lands.



Council Communications Director John Sheehan speaks to Environmental Studies students at North Country Community College in Saranac Lake during the fall 2011 semester. The Environmental Studies program began in 2010 and about 50 students are due to earn their associates degrees this spring. Council staff members are routinely invited to lecture at local colleges and universities on current and historic environmental issues. The Council staff enjoys student outreach opportunities as a way to encourage and inform a new generation of Adirondack advocates. Classroom visits also help the Council learn from the next generation about their ideas for effective environmental advocacy and sustainability of the Adirondack Park in the 21st century.



ADIRONDACK COUNCIL

Defending the East's Greatest Wilderness

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Join us for activities, lunch, the presentation of the Conservationist of the Year award, and the annual Members' meeting. Spend the day at the former home of artist, writer, adventurer, political activist and farmer Rockwell Kent. Walk the stunning landscape that inspired many of Kent's paintings and visit his secluded studio in the foothills of the Adirondack Mountains near the community of Au Sable Forks. Tour the family owned and operated farm that produces farmstead cheeses from a boisterous herd of Alpine and Nubian goats, and other products.

Visit www.AdirondackCouncil.org or call 1.877.873.2240 for information about lodging, recreation, and other visitor opportunities in the area.

ADIRONDACK COUNCIL is a member of



CFC #22101

Thank you to Adirondack Council members who contribute through their EarthShare workplace giving campaigns. We appreciate your interest in protecting the Adirondack Park. Contact EarthShare today to talk about bringing EarthShare to *your* workplace!

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