



# CALL OF THE LOON

Adirondack Council Newsletter | Autumn 2019



## Preserving Wilderness and Helping Rangers

**A**dirondack Park Wilderness and the Adirondack Forest Rangers exemplify the legacy of the Adirondacks, protecting clean water, wildlife and wild places. They provide opportunities for people to learn about and enjoy nature in its untrammled and primitive state. Both benefit the economy of Adirondack communities by supporting the experiences, scenery, adventure, and solitude that draw individuals, friends and families to the Adirondacks as visitors and year-round residents.

We need more Rangers, as educators, natural resource protectors, and backcountry stewards, as part of a comprehensive solution to overuse. There was a certain sadness captured in a recent photograph of a dedicated Wilderness Ranger writing tickets for illegally parked cars rather than doing proactive education and outreach. The ordinary administrative enforcement task was depressingly incongruent with the Rangers' specialized training and their skills, strength and commitment.

As part of the advocacy effort to increase the number of Forest Rangers and other staff, it's important that we also advocate for the traditional role of the Rangers and continue to defend the definition of Wilderness as a place untrammled by man, having primeval character, and providing outstanding opportunities for solitude. By supporting and helping Rangers and others more effectively focus on the traditional roles of educator and protector, we can better preserve and manage our shared legacy of Adirondack Wilderness for all.

Thank you for your commitment to both Wilderness and Rangers, strengthening the legacy of the Adirondacks for future generations.

**Help Adirondack Forest Rangers today! Take action online at [AdirondackCouncil.org/RangerAction](https://AdirondackCouncil.org/RangerAction)**

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**ADIRONDACK  
COUNCIL** PRESERVING WATER,  
AIR AND WILDLANDS

# Preserving the Park: Fighting Climate Change



Photo: Nancie Battaglia

**William C. Janeway**  
Executive Director  
@WillieJaneway

Dear Members and Friends,

One of the Adirondack Council's priorities is to minimize the impact of global climate change on the Adirondack Park's forests, waters, wildlife, and communities.

We cheer the Governor and Legislature for passing the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. We look forward to working with state officials to meet the challenges of a net-zero carbon economy.

In Adirondack Park communities, hydro-power is already our number one source of electricity. We should welcome solar and geothermal projects on private lands. And we should discuss revolutionary ideas to address transportation and home heating

while better incentivizing carbon sequestration by private owners of forests and farms.

However, the most important thing we can do when it comes to fighting climate change is supporting and maintaining forests and wilderness. Simply respecting the "Forever Wild" status of the Adirondack Forest Preserve and letting the trees grow is our most effective tool for absorbing and sequestering carbon. Science continues to confirm that healthy, mature, undisturbed forests absorb more carbon than any other type. A young and/or recently harvested forest doesn't sequester carbon as a mature stand does.

So when the Adirondack Council goes to court or to Washington, or lobbies the Legislature to protect the wilderness character of the Adirondack Forest Preserve, we are also fighting to calm a rapidly changing climate and preserving the Adirondack Park's globally unique legacy wilderness.

Thank you for your support,

William C. Janeway  
Executive Director

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**Above:** (L-R) Fred Cowan, Board Chair Michael Bettmann, Deputy Director Diane Fish, Board Member Liza Cowan, Linda Cowan, Executive Director William Janeway, and Development Director Deborah Pastore

### Cover: Sunrise above Big Slide Mountain

Photo © Carl Heilman II/Wild Visions Inc





## Water Quality is a Top Priority for the 2020 Legislative Session

The Adirondacks include the headwaters of five major drainage basins, hosting 2,800 lakes and ponds, and more than 1,500 miles of rivers, fed by an estimated 30,000 miles of brooks and streams. To protect our Adirondack clean water legacy, we must remain vigilant and speak up for our Park when it is vulnerable. The decisions our representatives make in Albany each year are directly tied to the future of our Adirondack Park.

Clean water in the Adirondacks is threatened by **road salt pollution**, invasive species and poorly planned development. Actions by the Governor and Legislature are expected in 2020 to address these threats. New science demonstrates

that road salt is polluting private drinking wells. In October, Assemblymen Billy Jones and Dan Stec and Senator Betty Little stated that they would be working on legislation to address road salt pollution in the Adirondacks. More details on the legislation should be available in the coming months. At the end of last session, Senator Todd Kaminsky and Assemblyman Steve Englebright, Chairs of the legislature's Environmental Conservation Committees, extended for one year **a law supporting a voluntary boat inspection and decontamination program**. After the Adirondack Council and partners pushed over the last year to make this law mandatory, the legislators declared that they intend to strengthen the policy in 2020.

The Adirondack Council partnered with scientists, local governments, the forest products industry, and private landowners to develop consensus legislation in 2019 aimed at **making the clustering of development mandatory** for the Adirondack Park's largest subdivisions. Modern science supports the finding that the spatial pattern of development is even more important than the density of development when it comes to protecting water quality and wildlife habitat. We expect this legislation to advance in the 2020 session.

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**Below:** Brendan Wiltse Science & Stewardship Director at the AuSable River Association measures stream flow and takes water samples for testing on the Boquet River.



# IN & ABOUT THE PARK

## 1. Council Sues Town Over Illegal ATV Trail

In October, the Adirondack Council filed a lawsuit in NYS Supreme Court seeking to overturn a law in the Town of Clare that authorized an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) trail on a stretch of the Tooley Pond Road in the Grass River Wild Forest. This trail violates the state's Vehicle and Traffic Law and endangers the adjacent public "Forever Wild" Forest Preserve lands where ATV trespass has caused damage in the past. This case is nearly identical to lawsuits the Council has recently won against similarly designed ATV trail systems in the Town of Forestport and Lewis County.



## 2. Environmental Conservation Chairs Visit Adirondacks

In September, the Adirondack Council hosted Senator Todd Kaminsky and Assemblyman Steve Englebright, Chairs of the Legislature's Environmental Conservation Committees for a visit to the Adirondack Park. Together, they worked with the Governor to pass the strongest climate legislation in the country in 2019. While in the Park, we discussed the need to strengthen invasive species prevention measures, enhance the work of the Adirondack Park Agency, and bolster funding to address the overcrowding of busy regions such as the High Peaks Wilderness. We hope they will help build upon our Adirondack legacy in 2020.

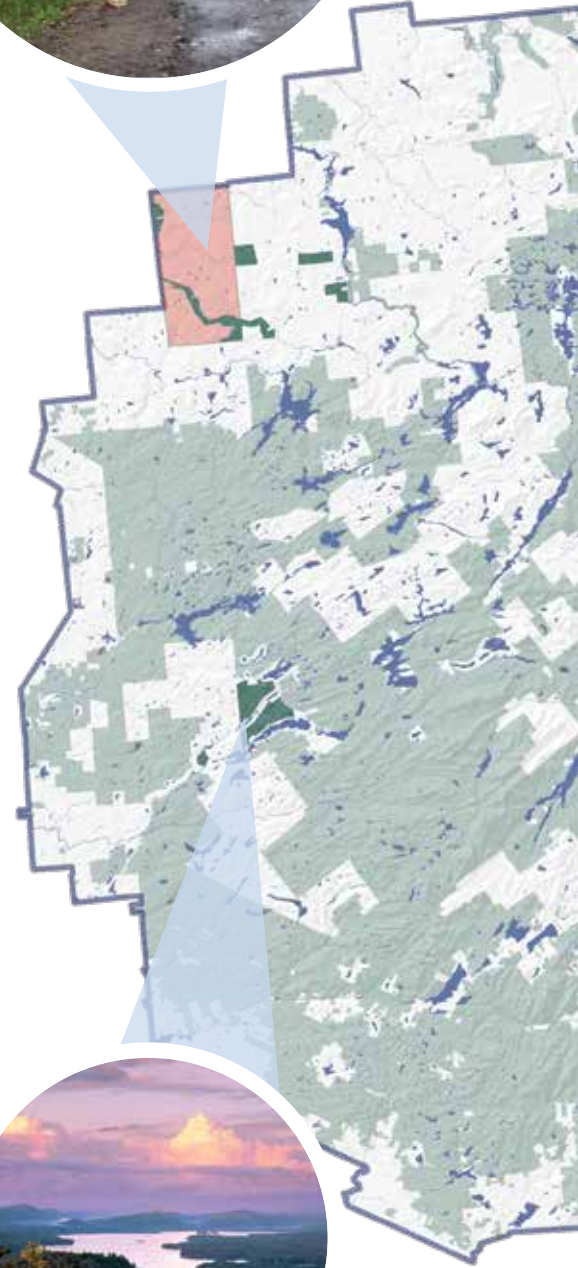


Photo: Nancie Battaglia

## 3. DEC Updates Fulton Chain Management Plan

The Fulton Chain Wild Forest is located in the southwestern part of the Park. The unit contains a multitude of water and land-based recreation opportunities, including the popular hiking trail Bald Mountain. In August, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) requested public input on possible revisions to the unit management plan (UMP), the plan's first update in 25+ years. The Council provided input calling on the DEC to assess and update scientific and resource inventories of the unit, conduct carrying capacity assessments for land and water resources, and evaluate all-terrain vehicle and snowmobile use in and around the unit.

Photo © Carl Heilman II/Wild Visions Inc







## 4. Preserving Wild Character

In October, the Council reviewed the compliance of the proposed Sentinel Range Wilderness Area (SRWA) Unit Management Plan with the State Land Master Plan (SLMP). The unit is approximately 24,000 acres and lies opposite Cascade Mountain and the High Peaks Wilderness. The draft UMP proposed many management actions, including the creation of a 10,000+ acre trailless area and trail reroutes for Pitchoff Mountain. While the UMP was compliant with the SLMP, the Council encouraged the Adirondack Park Agency and the DEC to finalize and implement the prospective wildlands monitoring and reporting frameworks as a part of a larger holistic complex planning effort to manage units like the SRWA.

## 5. Defending Forever Wild

The Council and others worked with the Olympic Regional Development Authority and the DEC to modify plans for new recreational facilities at Mount Van Hoevenberg to address concerns that the project violated Article XIV of the NYS Constitution. Also, in the Court of Appeals, the Council filed an amicus brief and argued beside Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve in defense of wild river protections. The Court ruled in favor of the state, legalizing a new snowmobile trail next to a section of the Upper Hudson River. And the Appellate Division of the NYS Supreme Court sided with Protect the Adirondacks! against the state over the scale of tree cutting for a community connector snowmobile trail system.



## 6. Victory Over Railroad Oil Tanker Junkyard

The Dept. of Environmental Conservation, NYS Attorney General and Iowa Pacific Holdings (IPH) reached an agreement in October that will prevent the return of junk oil tanker cars to the remote Tahawus rail line between North Creek and Newcomb. This line crosses the "Forever Wild" Forest Preserve and the Hudson and Boreas rivers. IPH owns the right to operate trains on this line and agreed to voluntarily abandon it, allowing New York State to reclaim the corridor. The agreement was a great victory. Other uses for the rail line such as a recreational trail can now be explored, and railroad use could be resurrected in the future if needed. This fall, the Adirondack Council recognized the efforts of DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos to remove junk oil tankers from the Park.





## Comprehensive Overuse Plan Needed

The Adirondack Park is a national ecological treasure and a world-class destination. It is within a day's drive of almost 80 million people and offers some of the most incredible wildland recreational opportunities found in the world.

As efforts to promote tourism increase and social media raises the profile of the region, protecting these sensitive natural resources, while still providing for a quality visitor experience, requires the implementation of a well-funded, comprehensive strategic plan.

This comprehensive plan that manages uses and activities across the Park should include the following elements:

- (1) expanded education and outreach that incorporates "Leave-No-Trace" teachings,
- (2) front-country infrastructure improvements,
- (3) an investment in backcountry trail improvements and construction,
- (4) an equitable system to limit use, at some locations at certain times, where necessary to preserve Wilderness, and
- (5) dedicated funding and staff needed to manage a six-million-acre park.

This plan can and must be fair and user-friendly, balancing access and recreational opportunities with the protection of globally significant natural resources that make the

Adirondacks an international wilderness conservation success story.

As we went to press, the state announced the creation of the High Peaks Strategic



Planning Advisory Group which is tasked with developing a plan to tackle overuse in the Adirondack High Peaks and protect wilderness. The Adirondack Council's Director of Conservation Rocci Aguirre was appointed to this advisory group.

## Clean Air Rollbacks Threaten Park

In September, Trump's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that it will not help New York State reduce smog and acid rain-forming pollution that blows from other states. In 2018, the state petitioned the EPA to enforce the Clean Air Act's "Good Neighbor" provision, which stipulates that pollution controls must be enforced on coal-fired power plants upwind from states whose air quality is being negatively affected.

The EPA's decision to deny this petition means New Yorkers face an increased risk of serious illnesses and the Adirondacks face an increase in acid rain and other air pollution.

In addition, the Trump administration's efforts to weaken or repeal major air pollution rules has caused air pollution increases of 200% to 323% from coal-fired power plants that cause acid rain and contribute to climate change.

The Park has seen significant reductions (90% plus) in sulfur dioxide air pollution from power plants since 1995. Those gains can be reversed if the EPA refuses to enforce the rules and continues to rollback the progress made since Congress and George H.W. Bush amended the Clean Air Act in 1990.



This fall the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and the Adirondack Lakes Survey Corporation confirmed the presence of brook trout in the once "fishless" Lake Colden.

Brook trout populations in high elevation lakes, such as Lake Colden, have been decimated by acid rain. Healthy populations of trout are indicative of good water quality.

Photo: iStock

# SUPPORTING THE COUNCIL



## Love The Adirondacks?

The Adirondack Council's advocacy and outreach for the Adirondacks happens because of you! Every dollar and every donor makes a difference.

There are many ways your financial support can strengthen the Council's impact and protect the Adirondacks:

- **Cash Gift** - help us meet our \$70,000 year-end matching gift challenge. Use the enclosed envelope to make a gift and double your impact today!
- **Matching Gift** - does your company have a charitable matching gift program?
- **Appreciated Securities** - avoid capital gains by donating appreciated gifts of stock. (Call us at 518.873.2240 x106 for details.)
- **Start a fundraiser** on Facebook or GoFundMe to raise funds for Adirondack conservation.
- **Shop Amazon?** Use the **Amazon Smile** link and choose the Adirondack Council as your charity.
- **Tribute gift** - commemorate a special someone with a gift in their memory or honor (wedding, special occasion, etc.) or ask friends and family to celebrate your birthday by making a gift for the Adirondacks.
- **Sustaining Member** - sign up to make automatic monthly contributions with a credit card or from a checking account.
- **Legacy Society** - Name the Adirondack Council as a beneficiary in your will or life insurance policy.
- **IRA** - If you are age 70+ or older, you may rollover your annual distribution to Adirondack Council tax-free.

## 'Tis the Giving Season

Educate, inspire and help preserve the Adirondacks this holiday season with gifts from our shop. From gift memberships to Park maps, jigsaw puzzles to hand-crafted mugs, kids books and more, we've got gifts for your special friends or family members! All proceeds support Adirondack conservation.

### 2020 Forever Wild Calendar

12-month calendar featuring the award-winning landscape photography of Carl Heilman II. **\$14.00**



### Nalgene Water Bottles

16 oz. narrow mouth, BPA-free and made in the USA.

Available in colors: (L-R) aubergine, cerulean, slate blue, and clementine. **\$15.00 each**



### Loon T-Shirt - Unisex

Super soft, tri-blend crewneck t-shirt. 50% polyester, 25% cotton and 25% rayon, slim fit (sizes run small) Available in S, M, L, XL & 2XL. Shown in evergreen and also available in athletic grey, cranberry, coffee, and indigo. **\$20.00 EACH**



## Sign the Petition: Protect Wildlife

Nearly 500 animal species, including 87 that are rare in New York, live in the Adirondack Park. As a crucial home for migratory birds, mammals like the majestic moose, reptiles, butterflies, and countless types of fish, it's imperative that we protect the sensitive habitats within the Adirondack Park and preserve its wilderness to ensure the health and survival of this wildlife.

Adirondack wildlife is facing serious new threats every day:

- Climate change
- Ticks and diseases proliferating
- Overuse, poorly planned housing, and road development

Sign our petition to protect Adirondack wildlife and their habitats! Take action today at: [adirondackcouncil/wildlifepetition](https://www.adirondackcouncil.org/wildlifepetition)





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## Helping Towns Address Overuse

The Adirondack Council is working with officials in small Adirondack towns to help them cope with sometimes overwhelming crowds of visitors to the state's most popular hiking trails.

Many towns are being negatively impacted by overuse, and are calling on the state to help develop, staff, fund, and implement a comprehensive overuse solution. The state has said this is a priority. This problem is especially true in (but not limited to) the Town of Keene, as it is a popular gateway into the High Peaks Wilderness Area.

Record-setting crowds have led Keene to host planning meetings, create a shuttle bus service, augment parking, tow illegally parked cars, and provide staff to direct hikers on busy weekends. Blocked roads and driveways, trash, human waste, and pre-dawn races for trailhead parking degrade the visitor experience for community and wilderness alike.



Not far away, the towns of Newcomb and North Hudson, in partnership with the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Open Space Institute, are establishing new connections to the High Peaks Wilderness. The Council is urging state officials to help these communities by re-redirecting some of the traffic, now overflowing in Keene, into these less-visited communities. The new ADK gateway at Exit 29 of the Adirondack Northway (I-87) can help.

The Adirondack Council is supporting long-range comprehensive solutions to overuse, including funding for more Forest Rangers and other staff, education, improved trails, and better user management systems. These will help the Park be welcoming and open to all, and managed to sustain both wilderness resources and vibrant communities.

**Above:** Hikers on the shoulder of Route 73 between Keene Valley and Lake Placid.

Photo: Nancie Battaglia

## WILD -ABOUT THE- PARK

We love seeing your photos from around the Park. Use the hashtag #WildAboutthePark and tag us on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter and we may feature them here in our newsletter or on social media!

