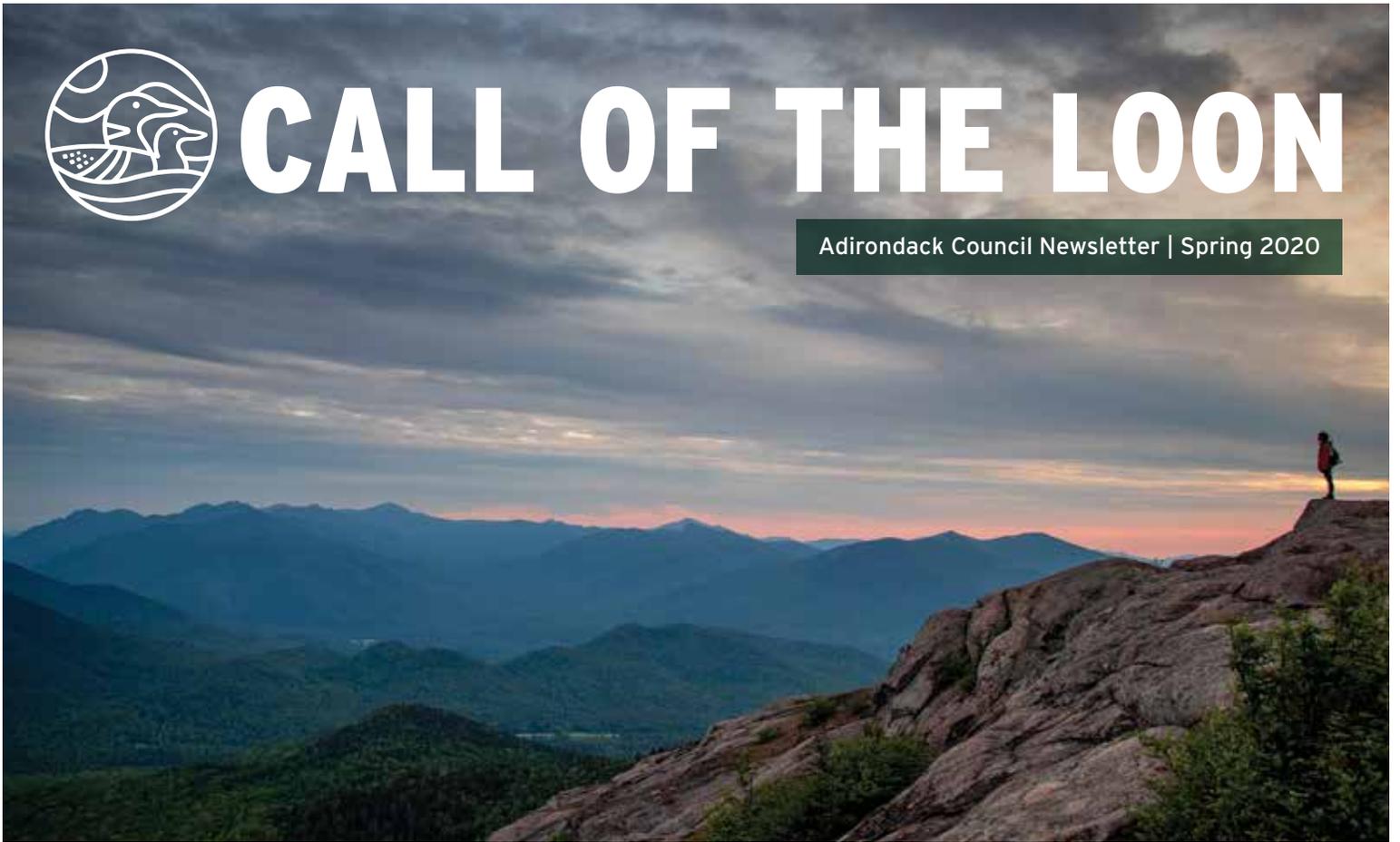




CALL OF THE LOON

Adirondack Council Newsletter | Spring 2020



COVID-19 Impacts the Adirondacks

The Adirondack Park's wild, natural beauty has made it New York's most visited rural area, a national treasure and a global destination for travelers and a place of pride for many. Now, more than ever, it is needed as a place of solace and refuge - a place and a source of healing.

The Park and the people here are not escaping the impact of COVID-19, and the need for healing. In March, as the global pandemic led to stay-at-home orders from Gov. Andrew Cuomo and his public health team, signs of strain emerged between year-round and seasonal residents. Some expressed worry that people coming from COVID-19 hot spots would spread the virus to Adirondack communities. Others encouraged people to stay home, wherever that is, or to keep traveling to the Park while observing proper protections. The Adirondack Council called on everyone to follow public health recommendations, regardless of their location,

to remember that we are part of the same Adirondack community, and to do our best to get through this together.

The Council also called for a significant new state investment in local health care facilities as key to the future of the Park's communities and awarded more funds for an expanded micro-grants program for local farmers impacted by COVID-19-related changes. See *more on page 5*.

This summer will be different. The plan is for the Park's recreation amenities to remain open and many institutions will have virtual openings. The Adirondack Council will continue to work with others to protect the Adirondack Park for all and inform people of major news and public health developments. Everyone should be working together to make informed choices, practice social-distancing and stay healthy and safe.

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ADIRONDACK
COUNCIL PRESERVING WATER,
AIR AND WILDLANDS

Building a Better Park for All



William C. Janeway
Executive Director
@WillieJaneway

Dear Members and Friends,

At a time when COVID-19 is changing the ways we interact with one another, we are reminded how valuable the Adirondack Park is. Just the thought of a wild and healthy Adirondack Park can lift our spirits and help us cope with our new-found social isolation and anxiety. We all need the Park, and the Park needs us.

When I wrote to you in last spring's newsletter, we had no experience with global pandemics or the need to self-isolate and "flatten the curve." Now we are bracing for record numbers of visitors and a new wave of threats to Adirondack wilderness and communities.

This crisis is shining a spotlight on those with real character and means, an Adirondacker from Seattle pointed out to me. This includes health care professionals,

generous leadership donors and others who are stepping up in unprecedented ways to help the Adirondacks during this crisis. Not everyone can. The Council team is inspired by those who are taking creative and generous actions to make sure the Adirondack Council can help build a better, stronger post-virus Park for all.

As always, our dedicated staff will be here to protect the Park from the climate crisis, changing rural economics and sources of water pollution, including road salt and acid rain. With your continued support, the Adirondack Council will make sure we build an Adirondack Park prepared to meet those challenges in the months and years ahead.

On behalf of the board and staff at the Adirondack Council, I send wishes for good health and well being to you and your family, friends and community.

Sincerely,

William C. Janeway
Executive Director

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Racey Henderson discusses local food affordability at the third annual food justice summit at the Wild Center

Photo: Dan Rivera





State Budget Positive for Adirondack Waters and Wilderness

Despite the ongoing public health and financial challenges facing the state, Governor Cuomo and the legislature approved a budget on April 1 that includes historic investments for the Adirondacks. After instituting remote voting protocols to practice safe physical distancing, policymakers approved a \$3 billion “Restore Mother Nature” Bond Act. If passed by voters in November, the Bond Act will fund projects in the Adirondacks and across the state to fight climate change, protect open space, build sustainable recreation infrastructure, and help communities adapt to more frequent and intense storm events.

The Environmental Protection Fund was approved at \$300 million and included \$34.4 million for state land

stewardship projects. The Adirondack Council and partners worked with policymakers to establish new budget language to authorize the use of this category for additional trail crews and other projects intended to preserve wilderness and address overuse in the Adirondack and Catskill Parks. From this, \$1.2 million has been dedicated specifically to Essex County for its efforts to address overuse. The state continued its work to help preserve clean water in the Adirondacks by providing a new \$500 million for infrastructure projects, amounting to \$1 billion in clean water investments this year.

With the state revenue uncertainties that lay ahead, the budget director must approve the Bond Act before it goes to the November ballot and has been authorized to make budgetary

changes in the event there are concerns about the financial status of state health and welfare programs.

Finally, policy actions in the budget included extending the voluntary aquatic invasive spread prevention law for an additional year. Lawmakers’ commitment to strengthen this law in the future for Adirondack waters remains. As the legislature returns to work in 2020, in whatever shape that takes, the Adirondack Council will continue to advocate for clean water, a healthy environment, wilderness, and communities in this challenging time.

Below: Advocates gather for Adirondack Environmental Lobby Day at the state capitol in early February

Photo: Ben Brosseau



IN & ABOUT THE PARK

1. Leave No Trace Issues Adirondack Wilderness Recommendations

In fall 2019, the Council hired the Leave No Trace (LNT) Center for Outdoor Ethics and partnered with the Adirondack Mountain Club to recommend ways to use education to manage recreation-related impacts to and address overuse in the Adirondack Park. The LNT recommended 52 actions that could be undertaken by various agencies, organizations and partners to help preserve wilderness and public access by creating an improved culture of wildlands stewardship among recreationists in the Park. These range from actions that are immediately implementable to long-range actions requiring significant investment of time and resources. You can read the recommendations on our website at <https://bit.ly/2WJswcE>.

Photo (L-R): Executive Director Willie Janeway, Ben Lawhon of LNT and Seth Jones of Adirondack Mountain Club



2. Draft Croghan Recreation Management Plan Limits ATVs

In April, the Council submitted comments on the recreation management plan for the state-owned conservation easement on the 12,816-acre Croghan tract located along the western edge of the Adirondack Park. This plan outlines what public use is allowed on these lands. The Council strongly opposes the development of any all-terrain vehicle (ATV) connector route through this area. The tract shares a 7.1-mile border with the Pepperbox Wilderness

Area and, as the plan noted, illegal trespass on adjoining Forest Preserve lands is a concern. The draft plan limits ATVs, which is good. The Council also continues to call on the state to develop a comprehensive policy to address unlawful and inappropriate motor vehicle use, including ATVs, Park-wide.



3. NYS Climate Change Council Starts Work

New York's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA), passed in June 2019, is the nation's most ambitious climate legislation. It has provisions to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions statewide by 2050, and bold targets in the electric sector to achieve 100% emissions-free energy by 2040. The CLCPA also establishes the Climate Action Council (CAC), a panel of stakeholders that will prepare a plan to implement the Act. The CAC held its first meeting in March and will meet over the next two years to develop recommendations for renewable energy implementation and emissions reduction strategies.





4. 2020 Farm Micro-Grants Awarded

The Adirondack Council and Essex Farm Institute awarded over \$37,000 in micro-grants to Adirondack farmers and producers this year. The Klipper Fund, Hamill Family Foundation and others supported grants to enhance the environmental health of local farms and help farmers with the impacts of COVID-19. Thirteen grants were awarded for a range of projects, including supplies for a local meal delivery service, stormwater runoff management, rotational livestock grazing, fuel-efficient and plastic minimizing greenhouse, and crop diversification. The 2020 grant cycle marks the 5th year of the micro-grant program and the awarding of over \$129,000 to 85 projects.

Harvest at Oregano Flats Farm in Saranac | Photo: Ben Stechschulte

5. State Budget Funds Community Needs

In this year's state budget, the Governor and legislature provided a variety of funding that will benefit communities across the Adirondacks. Supported by the Adirondack Council and others, the budget included \$2 million for community smart growth grants, \$10 million for climate-smart community grants, \$4.5 million for climate-resilient farm grants, and \$300,000 for the SUNY ESF and Paul Smith's Visitor Interpretive Centers. Adirondack Diversity Initiative funding of \$250,000 was also included to continue work to help make the Adirondacks more welcoming and inclusive for its residents and visitors.

AuSable Forks | Photo © Carl Heilman II/Wild Visions, Inc.



6. Woodward Lake Over Development Plan Rejected

In 2018, a large-scale subdivision was proposed in the towns of Northampton and Mayfield that would envelop Woodward Lake in piano key-like building lots. While the developer made minor changes to the design plan earlier this year in response, the proposal remains relatively unchanged. The Council called on the Adirondack Park Agency to cluster the development away from the lake, and reject the plan. Although the Agency rejected the plan, it did not request a conservation or cluster development. This project underscores the need for state legislation to mandate the use of modern conservation design standards for large subdivisions on the Park's most sensitive private lands.





Wilderness Overuse Advisory Group Keeps Working

Adirondack Council and Adirondack Mountain Club staff are part of the state-appointed High Peaks Strategic Planning Advisory Group which started meeting last fall. The group is charged with developing recommendations for the state and others that will protect wilderness, visitors, community character, and natural resources from overuse. Amid the shutdown, the group is still meeting virtually almost weekly and plans to release these recommendations early this summer. The working group is accepting comments and is posting meeting summaries online.

What Recreationists Can Expect this Summer

The COVID-19 crisis will have a dramatic impact on where and how people will be able to recreate in the Adirondacks this summer. These impacts are already changing management scenarios across the region for this summer's hiking and visitor season.

In the High Peaks area where overuse has already been a significant issue, the Town of Keene advises to plan ahead and be patient and flexible as scenarios are changing from day to day and week to week. Town shuttles serving the



Garden Parking lot are not running until further notice. Also, services such as parking and bathroom facilities will be restricted as efforts to address critical public health challenges continue with resource limitations. Hikers are encouraged to plan alternative options, maintain social distancing on the trail, wear masks when with others, and hike locally when possible.

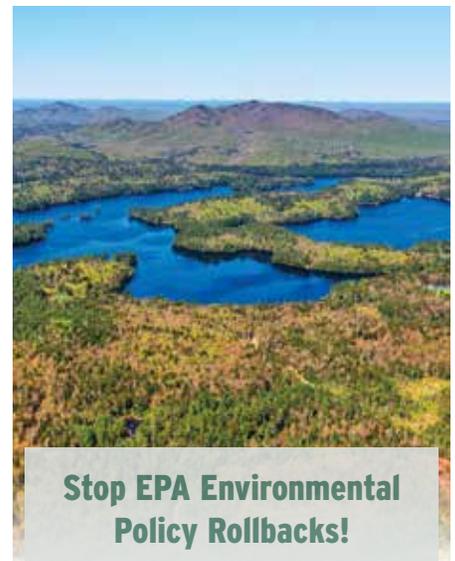
Federal Clean Air Rollbacks in Face of COVID-19

Adirondack Council members answered a call to action in April and May as the Trump administration's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) intensified efforts to weaken clean air and climate regulations amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

The initial alert response resulted in over 1,100 (and still counting) emails and letters to members of Congress, seeking a reversal of the EPA's proposed policy rollbacks. Thank you to everyone who took action! Your voices are being amplified by similar action alerts from the Appalachian Mountain Club, League of Conservation Voters, 350.org, and other organizations.

The EPA's calculations showed the rollbacks would lead to thousands of additional premature deaths in the Northeast, most of them in New York. Those calculations were completed before the COVID-19 crisis began.

Among the enforcement failures cited in the Council's call to action was the EPA's decision to ignore New York State's petition for relief from summer smog caused by coal-fired power plants in upwind states. The Adirondack Council, Environmental Defense Fund and Sierra Club are parties to New York's legal challenge in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit. Oral arguments were due to be completed via telephone in early May.



Stop EPA Environmental Policy Rollbacks!

Send an email to your federal policymakers today! Take action at AdirondackCouncil.org/EPArollbacks

Photo © Carl Heilman II/Wild Visions, Inc.

SUPPORTING THE COUNCIL



Thank You!

In times like these, we are more grateful than ever for the healing power of nature, the Adirondack Park and wild places. We are also very grateful for your past support of and engagement in the Adirondack Council's conservation and advocacy work. **Thanks to YOU** the Council is in a strong financial position and prepared to weather this storm of uncertainty. We are able to retain our most important asset, our staff of 16 professionals dedicated to the future of the Adirondacks. We are creating a plan for the months ahead, including regularly scheduled times to re-evaluate our priorities and financial situation, and preparing to recalibrate as needed.

We hope the Park's beauty, quiet and community spirit bring you calm and hopefulness during this painful and frightening time, whether you are in the Adirondacks or envision them from afar.



Weekly Zoom video conference call with Adirondack Council staff

During this health and financial crisis, now more than ever, the Adirondack Council is committed to continuing our critical work, to working with others, and to leading efforts to preserve all that makes the Adirondacks special. Thanks to you, when the crisis is over, the Adirondack Park will be here, in all its splendor, a safe and welcoming treasure for all to enjoy.

Shop Our Online Store

Visit our online store at: AdirondackCouncil.org or call us at 518.873.2240 to purchase a variety of branded merchandise. All proceeds support Adirondack conservation.



Tri-Blend T-Shirt - \$20

Shown in indigo - other colors/styles are available!

Handmade Loon Mugs - \$25



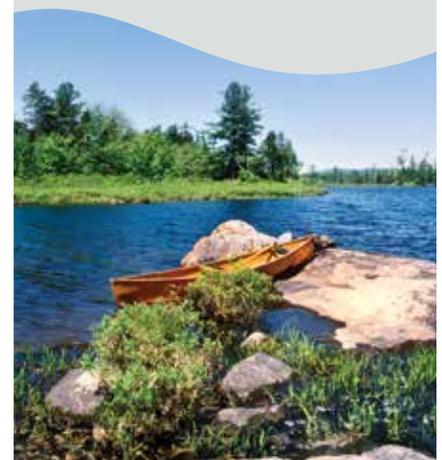
Last Chance To Enter Hornbeck Canoe Raffle!

Support Adirondack conservation and enter our raffle for your chance to win a Hornbeck Boats New Tricks Twelve canoe! The 12' long kevlar and carbon fiber boat weighs just 18 lbs., perfect for portaging through the remote Adirondack wilderness. The drawing will take place on June 30, in time to plan your 2020 summer paddling adventures. You do not need to be present to win.

Raffle Tickets are 1 for \$10 or 3 for \$25

Purchase raffle tickets at donate.adirondackcouncil.org/canoeraffle20 or call us toll-free at 1.877.873.2240.

Special thanks to Peter and Ann Hornbeck for their donation of the New Tricks Twelve canoe.



info@adirondackcouncil.org
www.AdirondackCouncil.org
518.873.2240 | 518.432.1770

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2020 Annual Member Meeting is Going Virtual!

Save the Date | Saturday, July 11 @ 1pm

After careful consideration, we have decided to postpone the traditional Forever Wild Day event until next year. Although we are disappointed, it is the right thing to do. The safety of our members, staff and communities is of paramount concern. Forever Wild Day should be all about celebration and community rather than an additional reason for concern and uncertainty in this frightening time. We hope that we can all come together in July 2021, ready to celebrate each other, Conservationist of the Year recipient Barbara Glaser, the Clarence Petty Intern Program, and the Adirondacks.

Because the Adirondack Council is a membership organization, we must hold our annual meeting and conduct the business of the organization. In the spirit of the traditional Forever Wild Day, we hope you will have your own outing that morning, maybe a picnic lunch and share a photo with us of

your outdoor spot. It will be a fun way to share your outdoor experience with fellow members and to catch glimpses of others' special places in nature.

Please save the date - Saturday, July 11, 2020.

More Information Will Be Mailed to You

Registration and proxy information will arrive in the mail in early June. Following your registration, meeting materials and the online invitation will be emailed to you.

Please be sure to share your preferred email address with us so that we can keep you informed of the annual member meeting plans and the Council's advocacy for the Adirondacks during these changing and challenging times.



Photo © Carl Heilman II/Wild Visions, Inc.