



CALL OF THE LOON

Adirondack Council Newsletter | Winter 2021



Photo © Carl Holman II/Wild Visions, Inc.

Northeast Waters and Forests Climate Project

The Adirondack Council is leading an interstate coalition of scientists and clean-air advocates who are urging Congress to add \$5 million in the FY22 appropriations cycle to modernize and upgrade the nation’s air quality data collection systems and to support water quality data collection across the Northeast. These funds are needed to protect the region’s iconic landscape from upwind smokestack pollution that contributes to the climate crisis and harms people, businesses and the forests, lakes, and rivers of the Northeast.

More than 30 years have passed since the Clean Air Act was last amended in an effort to curb acid rain, smog, haze, mercury, and fine particles of soot. A great deal of progress has been made in reducing air pollution since then. Many areas of the nation are seeing fewer unhealthy air days and real ecological recovery in their forests and waters as a direct result of pollution reductions under the Clean Air Act Amendments of

1990 and Cross-State Air Pollution and Mercury and Air Toxics rules. Progress was made because good scientific data led the way to good regulations.

Today, we have the data to justify setting a new national standard for nitrogen-based air pollution. That data has been collected over more than 30 years to document the effects of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. Based on that data collection and analysis effort, we now know the thresholds over which additional air pollution causes biological harm - **the critical load** - for the nation’s most sensitive forests and waters.

A variety of mountainous locations in the Northeast are recovering from air pollution more slowly than was projected in previous federal and state reports. At their current pace, many Northeast and Adirondack watersheds and lakes may require 400 years or more to fully recover.

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

Aggressive Action Will Help Preserve the Park



William C. Janeway
Executive Director
@WillieJaneway

Dear Friends of the Adirondacks,

We all know that what happens in Washington or Albany impacts the Adirondack Park's water, wilderness, and towns, for better or worse. During times like these, with climate, public health, overuse, and other crises, it is more important than ever that we better protect the Adirondacks and ensure the Park is open and accessible to everyone.

We applaud commitments and actions by the new Biden administration and Congress to reverse over 100 of the previous administration's rules that attacked science, threatened public health, and degraded our Adirondack forests, lakes, and rivers. We celebrate that the United States is back in the Paris Climate Accord and launching a series of more aggressive actions to address environmental, social, and economic problems.

In Washington, we are advocating for climate science funding for the new Environmental Protection Agency

(EPA) and expect the EPA to enforce the Clean Air Act's "good neighbor" policy. In contrast, we and partners sued the prior administration's EPA because it refused to protect New York from deadly increases in smog caused by coal-fired power plants in upwind states.

In Albany, we are advocating for a budget with funding for Wilderness protection, Forest Rangers, clean water, and diversity. In addition to budgetary items, our priorities include strengthening New York's aquatic invasive species law and helping the Adirondack Park Agency. We oppose calls to defund the agency.

We were greatly disturbed by election violence and attacks on democracy. The Adirondack Council stands ready to work with leaders who speak the truth, believe in science, and support the rule of law. Without democracy and respect for law and facts, we don't have the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act that stopped acid rain, or an Adirondack Park.

Thank you for your continued generosity, engagement, and encouragement. You are part of progress.

Sincerely,

William C. Janeway
Executive Director

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Governor Signs Road Salt Task Force into Law

In early December 2020, Governor Cuomo signed the Randy Preston Road Salt Reduction Act into law. This law establishes a task force that brings together state agencies, scientists, engineers, highway managers, local government leaders, and legal experts to develop recommendations for the state and local governments and businesses on how to reduce road salt pollution.

Under the statute, a Park-wide salt reduction pilot program will implement the task force recommendations, subject to state budget funding in subsequent years.

Appointments to this 14 member task force will be made by the Governor and Legislative leaders.

The Adirondack Council thanks Governor Cuomo for taking this important step toward protecting Adirondack waters before it is too late. Additionally, this legislation would not have been possible without the leadership of Senator Tim Kennedy (D-Buffalo) and then-Senator Betty Little (R-Glens Falls), and Assemblyman Billy Jones (D-Plattsburgh) and then-Assemblyman Dan Stec (R-Queensbury).



Photo: iStock

The Road Salt Task Force will develop recommendations on how to reduce road salt pollution in the Adirondacks

This is the Year for Adirondack Clean Water

This year presents a unique opportunity to advance sensible policies and investments that protect public health and spur the economy.

The law asking boaters to voluntarily take “reasonable precautions” to clean, drain, and dry their boats of invasive species is set to expire on June 1. The Adirondack Council

and partners continue to call for a mandatory motorboat inspection law in the Adirondacks. Experts acknowledge that only a fraction of the boats entering Adirondack waters are currently inspected. Strengthening this statute would not cost additional money, and would help prevent future costly mitigation efforts for local governments and lake associations.

During the FY2021-2022 state budget process, there is a special opportunity to fund a Survey of Climate Change and Adirondack Lakes Ecosystems (SCALE). This new comprehensive survey of Adirondack waters would assess the impacts of climate change, acid rain, nitrogen and phosphorus runoff, invasive species, road salt, and more. A new baseline data set

will benefit the state and partners in developing modern policies to protect water and air quality for all New Yorkers.

If the FY2021-2022 state budget context permits, the Adirondack Council and fellow members of the “New Yorkers for Clean Water and Jobs” coalition are hopeful that a \$3 billion Clean Water and Jobs Bond Act will be included in this budget cycle. A recent study showed that the environmental bond act would support 65,000 jobs and result in \$6.7 billion in project spending on projects that tackle climate change, conserve natural resources, protect clean water, and deliver benefits to disadvantaged communities.



Photo: AWI

Adirondack Welcome Center boat inspection and decontamination station

IN & ABOUT THE PARK

1. New, Improved Raquette Boreal Proposal

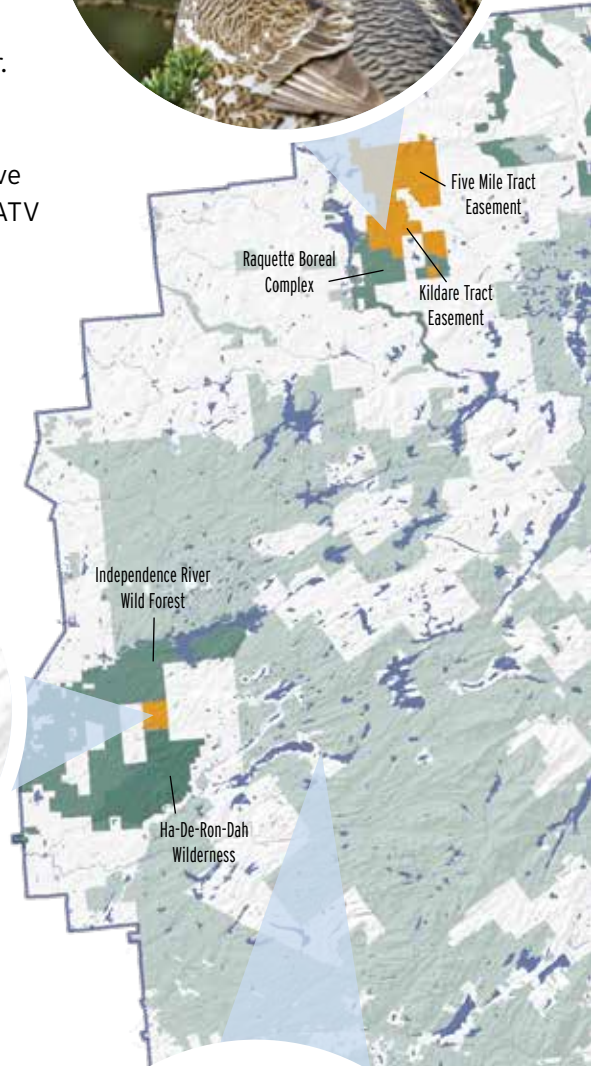
The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) revised its Draft Amendment to the Kildare Tract and Five Mile Tract Conservation Easements Recreation Management Plan portions of the Raquette Boreal Wild Forest Unit Management Plan. These areas are located in the towns of Hopkinton, Colton, and Piercefield in St. Lawrence County. This revision better balances public access and protecting natural resources and managing for wild character. The Kildare Tract will be included in the Pilot Adirondack Ecological Monitoring and Scorecard program being developed by the DEC and SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry. The Council encouraged the DEC to improve and strengthen commitments to monitoring and management plans for illegal ATV use and trespass, invasive species, and protected Spruce Grouse populations.

Spruce Grouse | Larry Master, masterimages.org



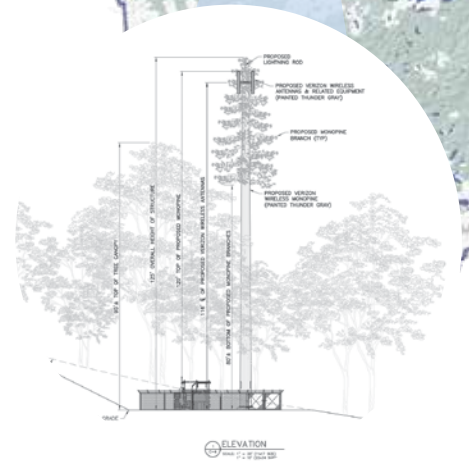
2. Recreation Planning for Three Lakes Tract Conservation Easement

The Adirondack Council submitted comments to the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) on its Draft Recreation Management Plan (RMP) for the Three Lakes Tract Conservation Easement. This privately-owned parcel is located in the Town of Webb, Herkimer County and shares borders with Wilderness, Wild Forest, and other conservation easements. The state owns the recreational rights on the tract. The Council recommended that the draft RMP prioritize natural resource protection, plan for long-term management and monitoring, outline how the DEC will address illegal ATV use and trespass, and use the opportunity to incorporate complex planning into the management of the 3,210-acre parcel.



3. Poorly Sited Cell Towers

The Adirondack Council urged the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) to substantially modify or reject two permit requests for poorly screened cell towers near Indian Lake and Inlet in Hamilton County. Both proposed towers will be visible, and not just in the Hamlets. Previously, since 2002, the APA enforced a very successful policy on tall structures and towers requiring that they be “substantially invisible.” The APA reinterpreted this policy when it approved the Inlet tower. The Council supports improvements in communications, broadband infrastructure, and cell coverage, using new technology and other techniques to protect scenic Adirondack vistas.





4. Debar Wild Forest Changes Considered

Recently, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) sought public comment on its Debar Mountain Complex Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS) and Unit Management Plan. The DEC proposed reclassifying approximately 41 acres of Debar Mountain Wild Forest to Intensive Use and removing the Debar Lodge and other buildings and replacing them with a day-use picnic area. The Council believes the DGEIS is incomplete in that it lacks critical information about potential impacts and mitigation measures. The Council does support considering the Debar Pond Institute's recent proposal to preserve the historic Debar Lodge via a constitutional amendment, as was done for Great Camp Sagamore.



5. Key Champlain Wildway Protected

The Open Space Institute (OSI) purchased 2,229 acres from Bar MH Timber LLC in the towns of Chesterfield and Lewis in Essex County. The property is expected to be purchased by the state to become part of the "Forever Wild" Forest Preserve using monies from the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF). This acquisition links two previously unconnected parcels of protected land: Taylor Pond Wild Forest to the east and Eagle Mountain Wilderness Preserve to the west. This land will provide wildlife habitat, public recreation opportunities, and climate benefits by capturing and storing large amounts of atmospheric carbon.

6. Army Agrees to Training Ground Rules

The U.S. Army has scaled back its proposal for military training exercises inside the Adirondack Park and agreed to keep them off the "Forever Wild" Forest Preserve, following a series of meetings with conservation organizations and state agencies. Army officials at nearby Fort Drum want to use part of a nine county-region that includes the western and central Adirondacks as an area for ground troops and treetop-level helicopter flight training. The Army will limit any Adirondack sites chosen as base camps to private lands, will choose no more than two sites (instead of the six it proposed), and won't use any site twice in the same year.

7. Air Forces Cause Stir

The summer and fall of 2020 were characterized by a significant increase in military jet training traffic over the Adirondack Park. Air guard units from Massachusetts and New Jersey caused concerns by creating sonic booms over the Lake Placid/Saranac Lake and Raquette Lake/Old Forge areas. Other flights caused sonic booms over the Great Sacandaga Lake. Loud, unexpected noises can be harmful to wildlife habitat, people, and old and historic structures. Alternative training options are available.



Council, Allies Defending “Forever Wild”

On Feb. 11, the NYS Court of Appeals granted the Adirondack Council’s request to submit a “friend of the court” brief to protect the Adirondack Park’s wild character and prevent the substantial removal of trees from the “Forever Wild” Forest Preserve.

The Council was joined by Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve and Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter, both of whom support a lower court ruling, in which another organization, Protect the Adirondacks!, prevented the state from cutting down thousands of trees to build road-like oversized snowmobile trails.

Destruction and removal of trees from the Preserve is banned under Article XIV of the NYS Constitution, but limited exceptions were made to allow the state to build and maintain recreational trails when the cutting is minimal and the wild character of the Forest Preserve is protected.



In reaction to the lower court’s ruling, the state mistakenly claimed it was now unable to build or maintain trails. That was corrected in testimony in front of the legislature. But the state is still seeking to overturn limitations on cutting that required trail construction to be carried out with great care. The Adirondack Council is supporting the Protect the Adirondacks! effort to defend the constitutional protections of the Adirondack Forest Preserve.

Heavy machinery used to construct snowmobile trails on the Forest Preserve

Northeast Waters and Forests Climate Project, continued...

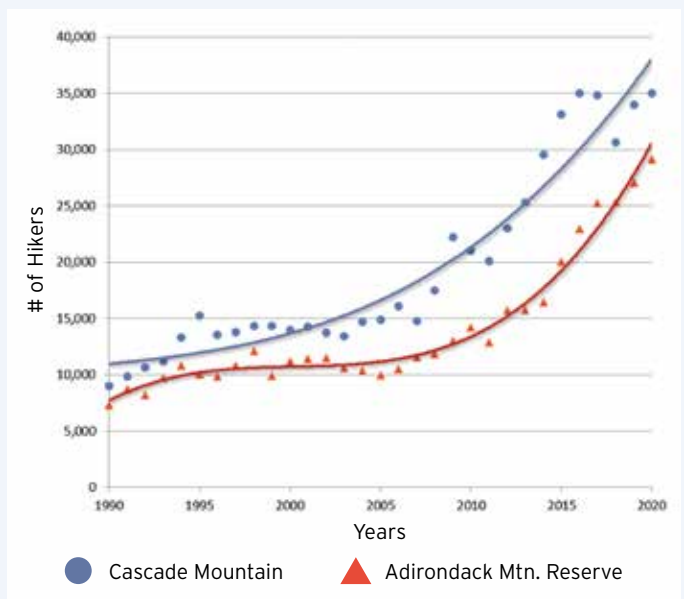
Meanwhile, mercury contamination of the forest and aquatic food chains remain widespread. These effects are expected to linger long after acid rain damage has halted. It is imperative to accelerate recovery from acid rain soon.

At the same time, climate change has emerged and grown significantly as a complicating factor in air pollution and acid rain recovery, exacerbating it in some places, changing the ecosystems in others, and threatening to reverse our victories over acid rain.

In November 2020, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a report stating that the nation’s air quality monitoring system is antiquated and is losing its ability to keep track of the damage being done.

Former members of Congress Rush Holt (D-NJ) and John McHugh (R-NY) are the co-chairs of a broad-based, bi-partisan committee of friends of the Adirondacks in Washington D.C. advocating for action now.

Growth in High Peaks Overuse



During 2020, the Adirondack Park’s most popular destinations were negatively impacted by new record levels of overuse. In response, the Adirondack Council recommends improved education, trails, and visitor use management. Additional support for Forest Rangers, who are working to preserve access and to protect Adirondack Wilderness, is greatly needed.

SUPPORTING THE COUNCIL



Ring That Bell!

Thanks to six generous couples who put forth an \$80,000 year-end challenge match, over 1,000 supporters not only met but exceeded that goal by contributing over \$125,000! We are truly grateful for the outpouring of deep appreciation and care for the Adirondacks expressed by so many members. From new and continued generous supporters, to the many who were able to increase their investment in the Adirondack Council's work, thank you! We are excited about the work ahead that you make possible to ensure the Adirondack Park we enjoy today is well-stewarded for generations to come.



Donor Testimonial - Why I Give

"I have given generously to the Adirondack Council for over 30 years, because as a scientist, I know they are smart and effective with how they invest gifts to fight climate change and preserve all that is special about the Adirondack Park."

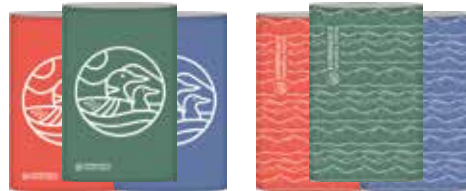
- Ray Johnson Ph.D. retired organic/analytical chemist, Founder & Director of the Institute of Climate Studies USA, and "Climate Science" columnist for Plattsburgh Press Republican

Support Adirondack Conservation

Whether you are in the Adirondacks or elsewhere, you too can show your support for preserving the water, air, and wildlands of this national treasure. Visit our online shop at donate.AdirondackCouncil.org or call us at 518.873.2240 to purchase a variety of branded merchandise. All proceeds support our daily advocacy for the Adirondack Park.

Neck Gaiters | \$20

Available in three colors (blue, green, or orange) two designs (loon logo or mountains) and two styles (lightweight or insulated). Measures 9.5" x 15.5"



Tri-Blend Tees | \$20

Slim fitting loon logo tees, available in cranberry, gray (shown), grass green, coffee, & indigo (shown). Sizes: S, M, L, XL, 2XL



Canvas Tote Bag | \$15

Made from 10oz sturdy, 100% cotton canvas, 19"W x 15.5"H x 5" gusset & long handles. Double sided print with Council loon logo.



Handmade Loon Mugs | \$25




Handcrafted in the USA, 12oz capacity, microwave & dishwasher safe. Available in teal, sage (shown) or burgundy (shown).



Round Decal, Magnet, or Bumper Sticker | \$5



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It's easy to join our email list! Sign-up at AdirondackCouncil.org or send your email address by text message:

Please text
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to 22828 to get started.



Council Says Goodbye to Beloved Staff

After 20 years, Diane Fish has retired. During her tenure, four Executive Directors, and many Board Chairs, Board Members, supporters, and staff have been inspired by her infectious energy and dedication to the Adirondacks and the Council's mission of preserving the ecological integrity and wild character of the Park. We are forever in her debt for her leadership, support, passion, professionalism, and dedication.

"I so appreciate the work of the Council and the people that have built the organization over the years. I have been inspired by the meaningful work I have been fortunate to do and all the interesting, committed, intelligent and generous people that I have been blessed to work with, all with a clear-eyed purpose of preserving this beautiful and special place."



Photo © Carl Heilman II/Wild Visions, Inc.

- Diane Fish

After eight years, Rocci Aguirre leaves the Council to become Executive Director of Policy, Advocacy and Science at Scenic Hudson. This is a well-deserved opportunity that is a reflection on both Rocci and his work with the Council. This important, new position

brings him closer to family, even as he leaves a place he has cherished and helped leave much stronger and connected than when he arrived.

"I am so grateful to the staff, board, and membership of the Adirondack Council for the opportunity to work and engage in the one of the most cherished landscapes in America. I am incredibly proud of the work the Adirondack Council does, the way we do it, and the legacy of wilderness values that we will leave behind. I look forward to taking these lessons home with me to the Hudson Valley and the important work that lies ahead for me and my family."

- Rocci Aguirre