



CALL OF THE LOON

Adirondack Council Newsletter | Spring 2023

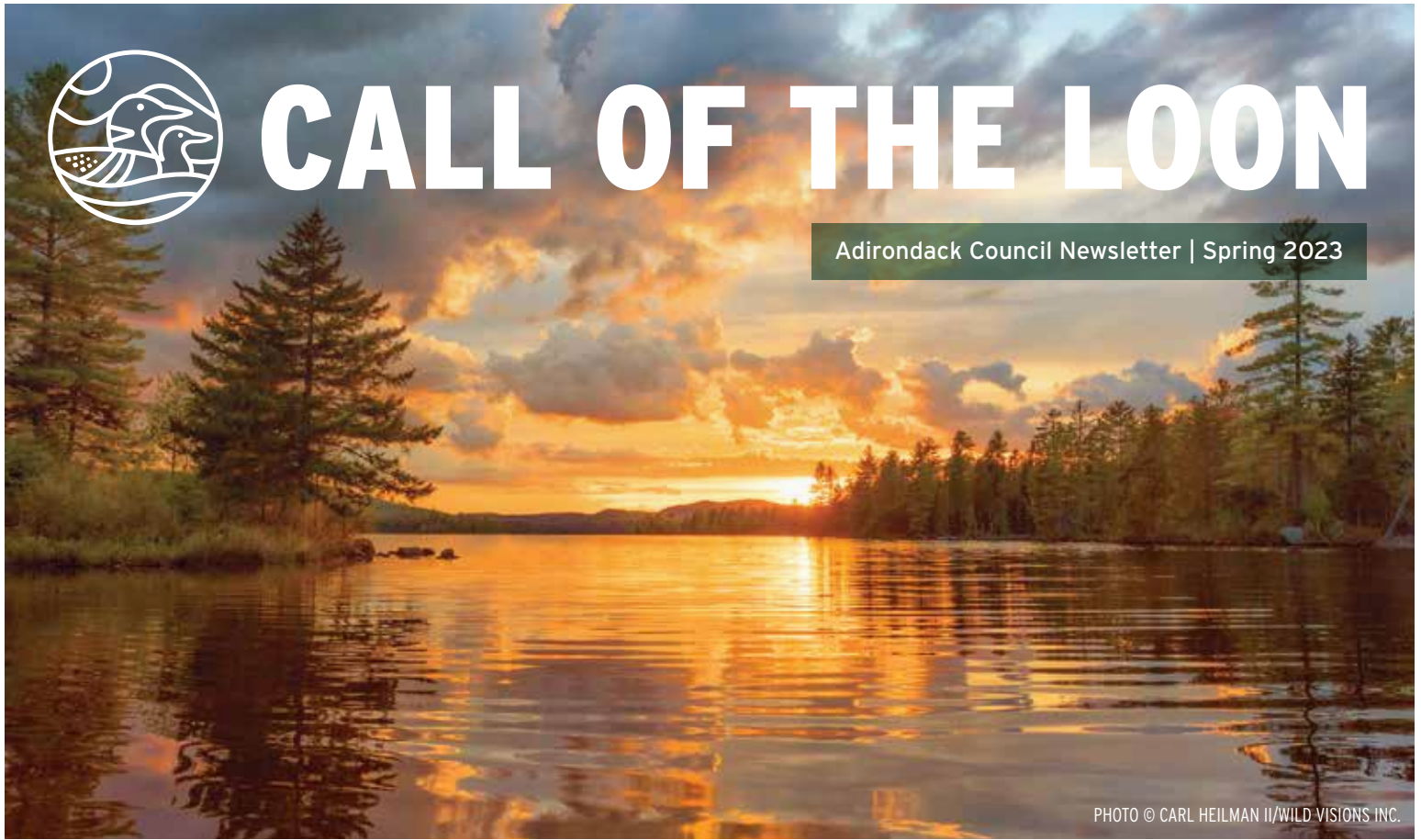


PHOTO © CARL HEILMAN II/WILD VISIONS INC.

Legislature Supports Climate Oriented Lake Survey

The state budget was still being negotiated at press time, but there were reasons to be optimistic about the fate of a multi-year proposal for a comprehensive Survey of Climate and Adirondack Lake Ecosystems (SCALE).

In March, the NYS Senate proposed a budget containing \$5.5 million for the survey. The Assembly budget plan proposed \$4 million. The Governor's budget didn't include the SCALE effort. The current state budget contains \$500,000 to create and design the survey program, but lacked operational funding. This project needs \$6 million in state funding.

The survey would improve scientific understanding of how all life in and around Adirondack lakes responds to changes in air pollution and a warming climate. Air and water data collected in the Adirondacks has proven essential to federal litigation defending communities suffering from asthma and other respiratory illnesses.

The Adirondack Council thanked leaders of both chambers, the new environmental conservation committee chairs in both houses, and the Caucus of Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislators for their support of the lake study.



(L-R) EPA Region 2 Administrator Lisa Garcia, joins Assemblymember Michaelle Solages and Water Quality Research Manager Phil Snyder at the Adirondack Lakes Survey Corp. this past fall

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page 4

Advocates Campaign for the Park at Lobby Day

Page 6

Diversity Initiative Gets New Executive Director

Page 9

Landmark Agreement on Preserving Biodiversity



ADIRONDACK COUNCIL
PRESERVING WATER, AIR AND WILDLANDS

A Season for Change



Raul J. Aguirre
Acting Executive Director

Dear Supporters and Friends,

Spring can be fickle in the Adirondacks. Sunny skies one day, gray brooding clouds and heavy snow the next. The seasonal shifts always seem to carry a bit more weight in the North Country as we watch the transition from deep freeze to spring thaw and mud season. Soon the black flies will be out and the brown landscape will turn electric green as leaf-out creeps up the mountain sides.

Transitions are also underway at the Adirondack Council. After a decade of leading this great organization, Willie Janeway has decided the time was good for him to step away from running the Council. We wish Willie all the best as he embarks on new adventures in the wildlands that he has spent so long fighting to protect.

In stepping into the Acting Executive Director role, I look forward to providing continuity and a smooth transition over the coming months as the Board of Directors begins a national search to fill the role permanently. With over 28 years working in large protected landscapes, including the past 10 with the Council as

Conservation Director and Deputy Executive Director, I am excited about the opportunity to help write a new chapter for the Council at this critical inflection point for both the organization and the Adirondacks.

Change is not always easy but we are a resilient bunch at the Council. We excel at navigating and addressing the challenges facing the Adirondack Park, whether they be budget delays in Albany, shifting political priorities in Washington, or challenging regional policy decisions that impact the ecological integrity and wilderness character of Adirondack public lands. Our team is hard at work this budget cycle securing the essential funding for the SCALE study, a major increase in the EPF, continued dedicated Forest Preserve stewardship funds, additional funds for the Adirondack Diversity Initiative, and a larger, more diversified Forest Ranger force.

Organizational transition such as this only highlights how talented and professional your Council team is and the amazing work they do day in and day out. I ask for your continued support as we all step up to take on the critical challenges facing the national treasure that is the Adirondack Park.

Sincerely,

Raul J. Aguirre
Acting Executive Director

Directors

Chair, Sarah C. Hatfield
Vice-Chair, Liza Cowan
Treasurer, Curtis R. Welling
Secretary, Ethan Winter

Kurt Abrahamson
Mary Bijur
David E. Bronston
Charles D. Canham, Ph.D.
Ann E. Carmel
Georgina Cullman, Ph.D.
Diane W. Fish
Philip R. Forlenza
Michale Glennon, Ph.D.
Rush Holt, Ph.D.
Robert J. Kafin
Eric W. Lawson
Jerome Page
Justin Potter
John Reschovsky
Brian Ruder
Kate Russell
Daniel J. Ryterband

Douglas Schultz
Noah Shaw
Laurel Skarbinski
Douglas Stewart

Staff

Raul J. Aguirre
Acting Executive Director
Jackie Bowen
Director of Conservation
Elaine Burke
Director of Operations
Kevin Chlad
Director of Government Relations
John Davis
Rewilding Advocate
J. A. Tyler Frakes
Membership Director
Lisa M. Genier
Program Analyst

Nicholle L. Gotham
Assistant Director of Development

Jessica H. Grant
Conservation Associate

Jess Kelley
Donor Database Manager

Dillon Klepetar
Adirondack Farm Advocate

Justin Levine
Communications Associate

Aaron Mair
Forever Adirondacks Campaign Director

David J. Miller
Clean Water Program Coordinator

Blake Neumann
Clean Water Advocate

Deborah J. Pastore
Development Director

Aimee Privitera
Legislative Advocacy Assistant

Karyssa Pryce
Executive and Operations Assistant

John F. Sheehan
Director of Communications

Clarence Petty Intern

James Emmenegger
Legislative Intern

Project Consultants

The Parkside Group
SKD Knickerbocker
(Government Relations)

Sean Donahue, Esq.
Donahue & Goldberg, LLP
(Federal/Clean Air)

Phil Gitlen, Esq.
Robert Rosborough, Esq.
Whiteman Osterman & Hanna LLP
(Legal/Article XIV)

Scott B. Goldie, Esq.
Conboy, McKay, Bachman, and Kendall LLP
(Legal/ATVs)

Matthew Melewski, Esq.,
The Boutique Firm
(Legal/Rail Corridors)

J. Michael Naughton, Esq.
Young/Sommer LLC
(General Legal)

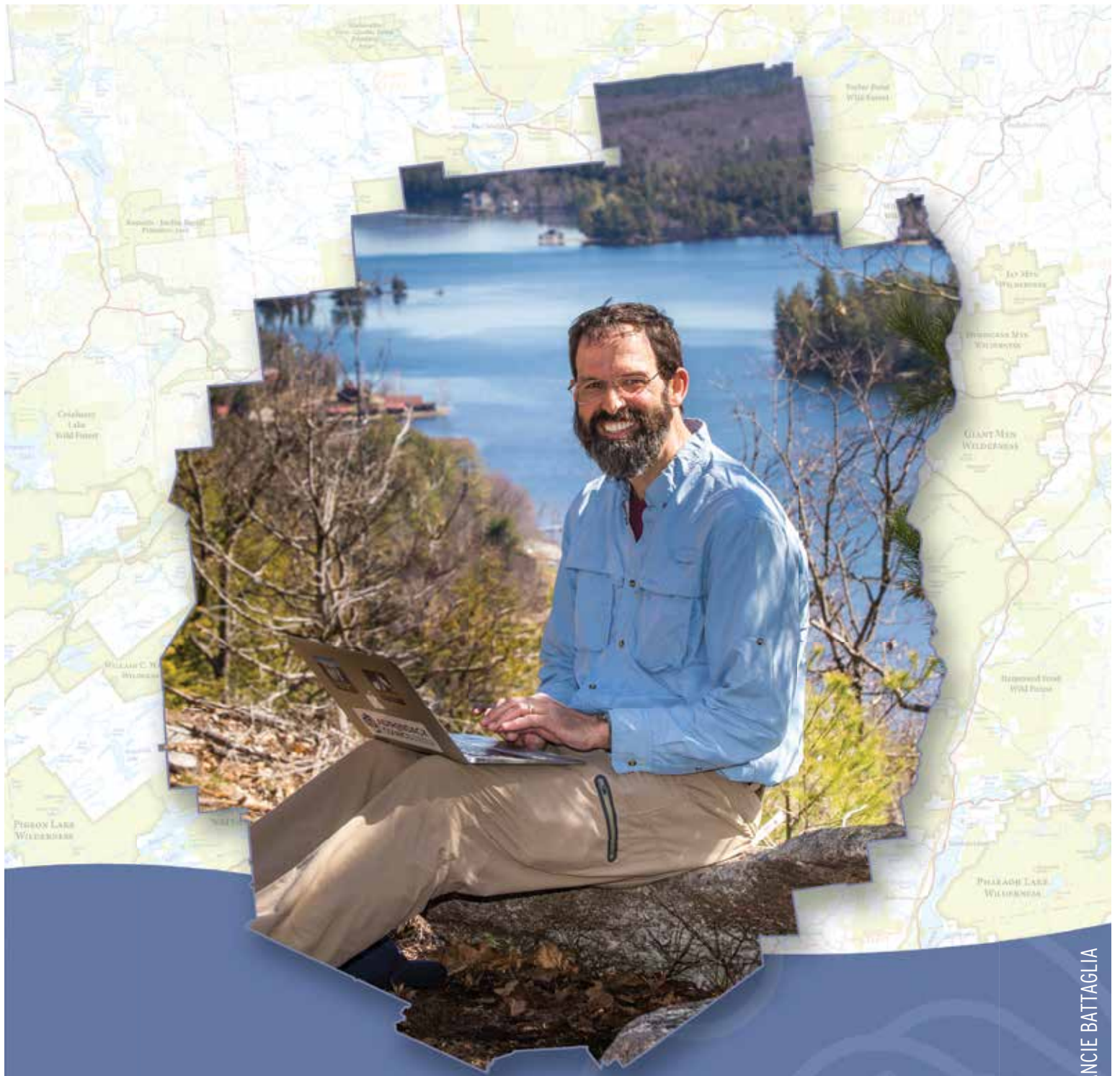


PHOTO: NANCIE BATTAGLIA

THANK YOU WILLIE,

for being a champion of Adirondack conservation and for a decade of successful leadership as the Executive Director of the Adirondack Council! We look forward to hearing about your adventures on the waters and wildlands across the six-million-acre Adirondack Park that you have fought so hard to protect.

CAPITAL MATTERS

State Budget Late, but Adirondack Needs Remain

Governor Hochul and the Legislature continued to negotiate the details of the New York State budget for fiscal year 2023-24 at the printing of this update, but there is hope that the process will conclude before the end of April. The Adirondack Council and partners have mounted a vigorous campaign in Albany in support of priorities that will protect clean water, preserve wildlife habitat, fight climate change, and help Adirondack communities in their efforts to be safe, welcoming and vibrant.

Nearly 100 advocates came to Albany on a snowy day in February to advocate for the Adirondacks and it had a tremendous impact. The Adirondack Council is fighting for a minimum of \$4 million for a Survey of Climate and Adirondack Lake Ecosystems (SCALE), which will study more than 300 lakes to assess how Adirondack waters combat and respond to the impacts of climate change. SCALE is led by a consortium of partnering institutions, teaming up to leverage their expertise in providing the best available science for Adirondack lakes. The resulting data will serve as a public resource for decades to come.



Advocates from across New York traveled to Albany to participate in the Forever Adirondacks Lobby Day

The Adirondack Council has also championed \$2.1 million for the Timbuctoo Climate and Careers Institute, following a successful effort last year to secure initial investment. This project will expose high school students from frontline communities to environmental careers, with the Adirondack Park serving as a backdrop. Additional priorities include a \$400 million Environmental Protection Fund, \$500 million for Clean Water Infrastructure, \$10 million for Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserve stewardship, \$400,000 for the Adirondack Diversity Initiative, and a doubled and diversified Forest Ranger force. Thank you for your advocacy! The Adirondack Council will continue to fight for every dollar until the state budget making process concludes.

Former Prisons Ideal for Transformation

Concerned stakeholders, including environmental leaders and local and state elected officials, have been pushing New York to not let former prison sites such as the Moriah Shock facility get mothballed. As the Adirondack Park has a dire need for attainable housing and training facilities for new green jobs, facilities like the one in the Town of Moriah are ripe for transformation into something that will benefit the Park and local communities. Pressure from the coalition has kept the lights on at the facility so far, but more needs to be done to ensure a public good from the now-shuttered facility.



(L-R): Town of Moriah Supervisor Thomas R. Scozzafava, NYS Senator Dan Stec (R-Queensbury), Forever Adirondacks Campaign Director Aaron Mair, Acting Executive Director Raul J. Aguirre, and NYS Assemblymember Billy Jones (D-Chateaugay Lake) gather in front of the former Moriah Shock Incarceration Correctional Facility



EPA Issues Final Good Neighbor Rule for Ozone

After eight years of resistance from fossil fuel companies, other polluting industries and the Trump administration, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in March issued a final Good Neighbor Rule for ground-level ozone pollution, also known as smog.

Smog poses a serious health risk to humans and animals. It harms forests, soils, water quality and fisheries as a component of acid rain. Smog also impacts visibility, turning the sky brown or gray. The new standards will save thousands of lives a year and will reduce the impact of acid rain in the Adirondacks.

The new rule is based on ozone standards approved during the Obama Administration. Obama's EPA issued a draft rule, which was challenged in court by polluters and by Midwest states upwind of New York. In 2017, the Trump administration intentionally delayed issuing a final rule. Polluting states now have three years to show the EPA how they will meet the new standards, and begin making cuts.

Under the Trump administration, upwind states were encouraged to submit inadequate mandatory implementation plans by signaling that these plans would be accepted regardless if their emissions reductions were sufficient to comply with existing law or not. Trump's EPA also refused to enforce the previous Good Neighbor Rule, which is less protective than the new final rule. The Adirondack Council, Environmental Defense Fund and NY Attorney General Letitia James had to sue the Trump EPA to compel it to enforce the law.

The Good Neighbor Rule is part of the federal Clean Air Act. It prohibits any state from creating so much air pollution that it causes a public health hazard in another state. Every five years the EPA is obligated to examine the rules and the current science to determine whether the nation's ambient air quality standards should be updated.



Special thank you to our advocates who responded to our action alert in March and emailed over 600 comment letters urging the Environmental Protection Agency to strengthen soot pollution standards to better protect our clean air and water, improve public health, and safeguard the Adirondack Park!

IN & ABOUT THE PARK

1. Adirondack Diversity Initiative Hires New Executive Director

The Adirondack Diversity Initiative (ADI) hired Tiffany Rea-Fisher as its new Executive Director earlier this year. Rea-Fisher lives in Saranac Lake with her family, and spends time in Harlem and Lake Placid teaching dance. ADI is a program under the Adirondack North Country Association that works to make the Adirondack Park more open and welcoming to all. Rea-Fisher brings a unique perspective to the role and as a resident she is familiar with the various issues facing the Adirondack Park.



2. Micro-Grant Program Supports Local Farms & Producers

The Essex Farm Institute, a program of the Adirondack Council, continues to partner with local producers through its Micro-Grant program. Farms and value-added producers within the Adirondack Park use grants to support innovative environmental solutions including equipment, supplies and labor associated with energy efficiency, alternative power, sustainable infrastructure, and climate-smart management practices on Adirondack working lands. This year's grant program accepted joint proposals from local producers and processors working to bridge the gap between raw agricultural products and the food, beverage, and fiber or wood products industries.



Photo (L-R): NYS Dept. of Agriculture Commissioner Richard Ball and Farm Advocate Dillon Klepetar

3. Grants Support Raquette Lake Community & Environment

The Adirondack Council partnered with the Raquette Lake Preservation Foundation earlier this year to award community grants totaling more than \$18,000. Three Raquette Lake groups received funding for technological upgrades: the Raquette Lake Volunteer Fire Department, Raquette Lake School, and St. Williams on Long Point. The grants are meant to benefit year-round residents of the Raquette Lake area and the environment by increasing public engagement and education across the community and region. These grants underscore the Council's commitment to strengthening not only the health of Adirondack lakes and forests, but the communities of the Adirondack Park through local partnerships.





4. Court Rejects APA Approved Marina Expansion Over Wetlands

Earlier this year, the Appellate Division reversed an Essex County Supreme Court decision for a proposed marina expansion near Saranac Lake. The marina had applied for two Adirondack Park Agency (APA) shoreline variances on Lower Saranac Lake, and then applied for an APA wetlands permit at the Annex site. A shoreline owner challenged the issuance of the permits. After reviewing the Agency's wetlands regulations, the Appellate court found that the APA incorrectly assigned a wetland value rating for the Annex site. Wetland value ratings determine the degree of legal protection different wetlands are afforded; it was found that the Annex wetlands should have received a value rating of 1, the most protected. Given the Agency's incorrect interpretation, the court annulled the permit.

Another important element was whether the APA should have required the applicant to carry out a more in-depth carrying capacity study to assess how the expanded marina would impact the ecological and recreational qualities of the lake. While the court found the state's inaction to comply with the State Land Master Plan to be inexplicable, the court ultimately decided the issue was outside the scope of the proceeding given the permit and variance applied to private land and waters.

5. APA Herbicide Permits Halted

In 2022, the Adirondack Council filed a friend of the court brief in support of the Lake George Association's legal challenge opposing an APA permit to use the herbicide ProcettaCOR to kill Eurasian watermilfoil in Lake George. The Council objected to the APA reaching this decision without first holding a formal hearing. Recently, a Warren County judge nullified the APA's approval of the herbicide permits, finding the APA board's decision to be arbitrary and capricious. Regarding the presentation of the proposed project to the board, the judge wrote, "presumably the APA requires these presentations to be balanced and impartial. Here that simply was not the case. The presentation was largely one-sided ... Without the benefit of all the public comments - and the necessary time to review them - the board members could not adequately evaluate the project using their expertise." The court also found that information conveyed to the board that its only option was to vote on the matter before them was inaccurate. The board could have decided to hold an adjudicatory hearing before voting if it deemed a hearing necessary. Once commonplace, an adjudicatory hearing has not been held by the APA in more than 14 years.



CONSERVATION MATTERS

Assessing Roads on Wild Forest Lands

The Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (SLMP) outlines nine land classifications that have varying levels of resource protection and allowable uses based on physical, biological and social characteristics of a unit. Wild Forest is a less restrictive land classification whose resources can sustain more levels and types of use. While motorized recreation (snowmobiles) is allowed, the SLMP says it is not encouraged.

In the SLMP, under the Wild Forest classification, Basic Guideline Number 4 states, “there will not be any material increase in the mileage of roads and snowmobile trails open to motorized use by the public in wild forest areas.”

In May 2022, the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) and Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) proposed a policy interpretation, with four alternatives, of this guideline for the first time. The agency is trying to clarify two core elements, 1) what constitutes a road for Basic Guideline No. 4; and 2) what classifies as a material increase in mileage of roads on Wild Forest lands.

While the SLMP defines roads, it is unclear if the DEC’s Commissioner Policy 3 (CP-3) roads are subject to the no material increase standard. CP-3 roads allow certain recreational access for people with disabilities.

Given the ecological impact roads have on a landscape - habitat fragmentation, disruption to species movement,

human recreational enjoyment - the Council believes that all roads that sustain motor vehicle use, including CP-3 roads, must be counted as a road and towards the 15% “material” increase outlined by the APA and DEC.

“there will not be any material increase in the mileage of roads and snowmobile trails open to motorized use by the public in wild forest areas.”

— Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan,
Basic Guideline Number 4



Closed road leading to the Fish Ponds Trail, Wilcox Lake Wild Forest

Road Salt Reduction Task Force Update

The Adirondack Road Salt Reduction Task Force has been working for the last several months on a report that will detail the current state of road salt use and pollution in the Adirondacks, and what possible solutions to this problem could look like. The Task Force is comprised of several state agencies, including the departments of Transportation and Environmental Conservation, the Adirondack Park Agency, and other invested stakeholders. The group met in March to review language and final recommendations for the report, and it is expected to be released this spring.





Landmark Agreement on Preserving Biodiversity

During the largest Conference of the Parties (COP) on biodiversity in more than a decade, nearly 200 countries met and agreed on a Global Biodiversity Framework supported by four goals with 23 targets to preserve biodiversity, use resources sustainably, and share the benefits of genetic diversity on a global scale.

This aggressive package was adopted on December 19, 2022 in Montreal, enabling the Adirondack Council's conservation staff members Jackie Bowen and Jess Grant to engage and amplify the importance of the bordering Adirondack Park within this global context.

The four goals are to:

1. Protect and restore ecosystems and threatened species by 2050, safeguarding genetic diversity
2. Utilize resources sustainably
3. Ensure that benefits are shared with Indigenous partners
4. Secure finances, technical assistance, and technology to accomplish the Framework targets and goals

A highlight of this agreement was the "30x30" target which aims to protect 30% of lands and waters globally by 2030. While the agreement is not completely conservation-oriented and is not legally binding, the Framework indicates an inspirational shift in environmental action to engage Indigenous partners, prioritize ecosystems, and pursue "Financing for Nature" to translate conservation actions into capital investments.



(L-R): Conservation Associate Jess Grant and Conservation Director Jackie Bowen attend the 2022 UN Biodiversity Conference in Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Working for Wildlife

Together with conservation partners, the Adirondack Council has lately taken a few more steps toward stream liberation and large carnivore recovery. With Trout Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, and others, we are looking at two small obsolete dams on the Boquet River in the Champlain Valley for possible removal. With the Cougar Collaborative, we are reviewing expectedly positive results for puma habitat suitability analysis in our region, and surprisingly positive results in social acceptance surveys.

With the Northeast Wolf Recovery Alliance, the Adirondack Council is pressuring the Department of Environmental Conservation to limit the killing of coyotes and keep wolves protected on the state endangered species list, along with promoting fuller protection of the Algonquin to Adirondack axis (A2A) as a wildlife corridor - which might allow wolves to naturally recolonize.

We also join many conservation groups in calling for New York to ban wildlife-killing contests. During these competitions, hunters target and receive rewards for killing coyotes, crows, woodchucks, and other non-game wildlife species. We will work with these groups and our members to improve the next State Wildlife Action Plan.



We're also helping move Split Rock Wildway 70 acres closer to completion by assisting a land trust partner in securing a key piece of land on Boquet Mountain, part of the Champlain Hills preserve originally proposed for protection by the Adirondack Council in its VISION 2020 report.



SUSTAIN CONSERVATION

and help preserve our water, air and wildlands with your monthly gift.

PHOTO © CARL HEILMAN IV/WILD VISIONS INC.

Consider becoming a sustaining member with a monthly gift! Set up your credit card or your bank account to automatically contribute \$5 or \$10 a month – or any amount you choose. It's a lot easier on your budget because it spreads your support throughout the year. Your monthly gift will be providing the Adirondack Council a steady stream of revenue to help preserve the water, air and wildlands for current and future generations.

Become a sustaining member today by using the enclosed envelope, scanning the QR code or by joining on our secure website at donate.adirondackcouncil.org/givemonthly.



SUPPORTING THE COUNCIL



Join the Next Gen Council

Are you passionate about preserving the Adirondacks and in your 20s or 30s? If so, the Adirondack Council invites you to serve as a founding member of the Next Gen Council!

Members of the Next Gen group will have the opportunity to engage with our work by serving as advocates. Through high-quality interactions with the staff, board, and friends of the Adirondack Council, members will gain valuable experience as volunteers and serve to enhance outreach and education, using tools such as social media, to bolster support for, expand, and diversify the constituency that advocates for preservation of the Adirondack Park's clean water, clean air, ecological integrity, and wild character.

For 2023, applications are being accepted on a rolling basis with a priority being given to those who apply by June 1. For questions or to learn more, visit adirondackcouncil.org/nextgen or contact Nicholle Gotham, Assistant Director of Development, at ngoatham@adirondackcouncil.org.



(L-R): Communications Associate Justin Levine and Assistant Director of Development Nicholle Gotham at the Forever Adirondacks Lobby Day

Support Adirondack Conservation

Whether you are in the Adirondacks or elsewhere, you 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.



Adopt a Loon/Moose | \$35

Help protect an Adirondack loon or moose, with a symbolic adoption. Includes plush toy, re-useable canvas tote bag and personalized adoption certificate.



Trucker Hats | \$25

Two-tone (blue/green), Richardson trucker hats with loon logo in faux-leather, cloth patch or white embroidery

Randorf Photo Archive Update

The Gary Randorf Photo Archive is now available to view online at adirondackcouncil.org/randorfarchive! The archive will continue to grow as the thousands of photos are uploaded and tagged by subject.



If you are interested in helping to tag photos or identify people, please email info@adirondackcouncil.org and put Randorf Archive in the subject line. Gary's photos show decades of the Adirondacks, including everything from remote areas and untouched lakes to the people and communities of the Adirondack Park.



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

The Lake Champlain Bridge and Crown Point State Historic Site overlooking Port Henry | PHOTO © CARL HEILMAN II/WILD VISIONS INC.

FOREVER WILD DAY 2023

Crown Point State Historic Site - Crown Point, NY

Please join us virtually via ZOOM on **Wednesday, July 12 (12:00 to 1:15pm)** for our Annual Members' Meeting. You will have a chance to learn about the organization's major accomplishments for the year, review finances, and vote on a slate of candidates for the Board of Directors.

Join the Board and Staff in-person at **Crown Point State Historic Site on Saturday, July 15 (9:00am - 2:00pm)** to celebrate our 2023 Conservationist of the Year recipient the New York State Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, and Asian Legislative Caucus and Special Award recipient Champlain Area Trails and its Executive Director, Chris Maron. Come early to paddle, walk, discuss, and enjoy time with fellow members who share a passion for preserving the Adirondacks for current and future generations.

Thank you for your support and care for the Adirondacks. We hope to see you virtually or in-person!

Learn more about these events at [AdirondackCouncil.org](https://www.AdirondackCouncil.org) under Events. Questions?

Please contact Assistant Director of Development Nicholle Gotham at 518.873.2240 Ext. 103 or ngoatham@adirondackcouncil.org