

# STATE OF THE PARK

Landscape of Hope | 2020-2021



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

# Reflecting on 2020 and Looking Ahead

Dear Members and Friends,

Please accept our sincere thanks for everything you have done to help preserve the Adirondack Park. This is a vast landscape filled with fragile niches of solace and refuge. In the face of a global pandemic, economic challenges, systemic racism, polarizing politics, and climate change crises, the Park has become more important than ever.

The progress addressing these crises in the past few months has been encouraging. That's because people who love the Adirondacks pulled together. Rather than trying to shut out the rest of the world, the Adirondacks remained a "Landscape of Hope" open to all. The Park remains a place where people come together to solve problems and work to make the Adirondacks more welcoming and inclusive - even if we have to socially distance from one another for a while.

One of those problems that people of all backgrounds and beliefs continue to work on and care about is the overuse of and wear and tear on our most popular wilderness lands and waters. Governor Cuomo, the Department of Environmental Conservation and the state Legislature responded by recognizing the problem, identifying recommended changes in management, and by providing additional funding.

Part of the money to pay for these changes will come from the \$300 million Environmental Protection Fund; which will aid both wilderness preservation and the economy.

Please enjoy this annual review of elected and appointed officials' actions affecting the Adirondack Park's clean water and clean air, wildlands, and communities over the last 12 months. This is the only comprehensive account of the state of the Park and includes a 2020 "report card" and 2021 priorities.

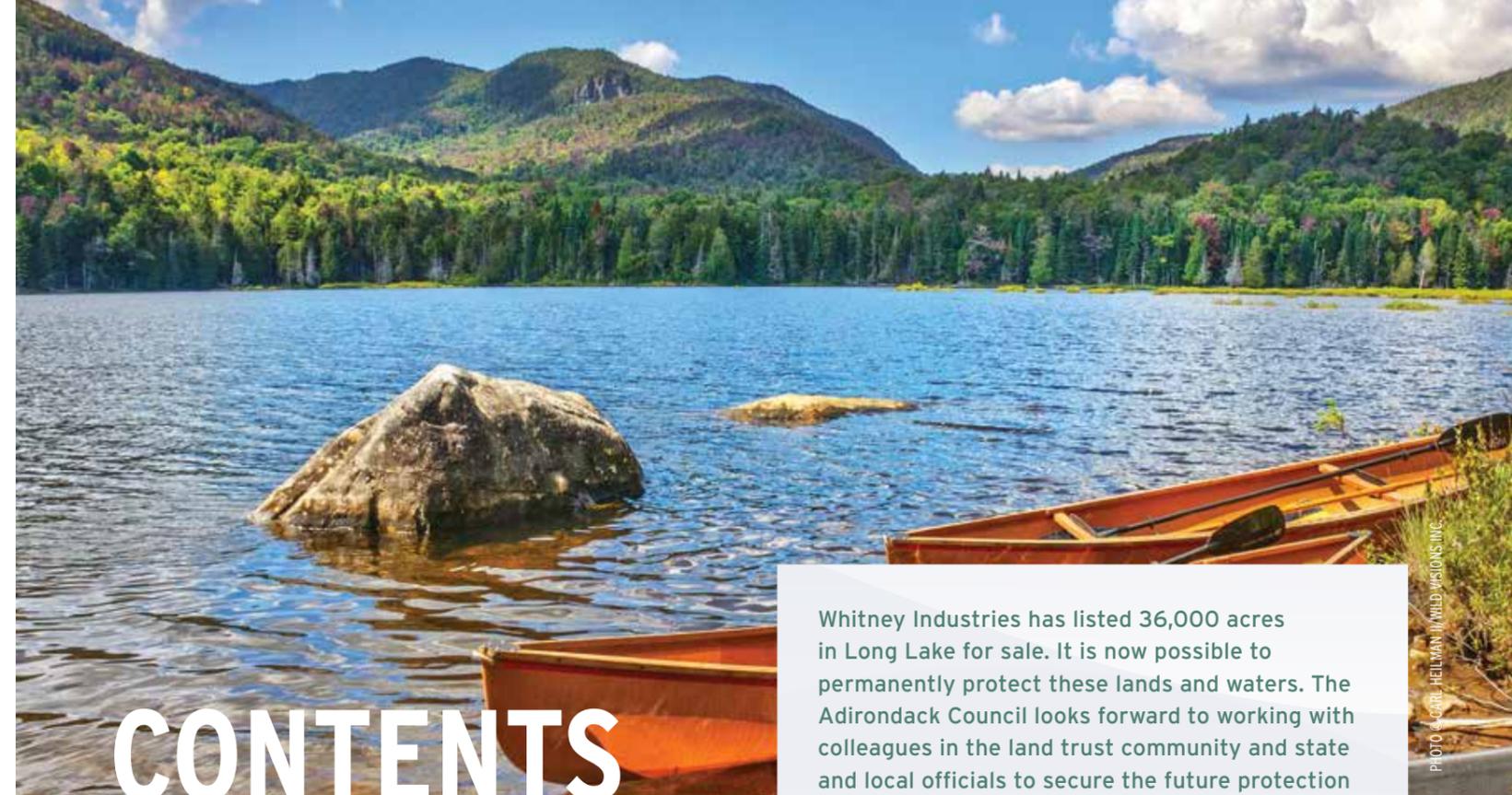
In 2020, you and our partners accomplished a great deal on behalf of the ecological integrity, wild character, and people of the Adirondacks.

Thank You,

  
William C. Janeway  
Executive Director



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



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Whitney Industries has listed 36,000 acres in Long Lake for sale. It is now possible to permanently protect these lands and waters. The Adirondack Council looks forward to working with colleagues in the land trust community and state and local officials to secure the future protection of these lands, listed as priorities in our 2020 VISION research series and in the NYS Open Space Conservation Plan.



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## Our Mission

The mission of the Adirondack Council is to ensure the ecological integrity and wild character of the Adirondack Park for current and future generations.

Written and Edited by Adirondack Council Staff  
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Cover: Lake George from Cat Mountain PHOTO © CARL HEILMAN II/WILD VISIONS INC.

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# ABOUT THE PARK

# 2020 REPORT CARD

PHOTO © CARL HEILMAN II/WILD VISIONS INC.

The **Adirondack Park** is the world's largest intact temperate deciduous forest. It is also the largest park in the contiguous United States. It contains six million acres (9,300 square miles), covers one-fifth of New York State and is equal in size to neighboring Vermont. The Adirondack Park is nearly three times the size of Yellowstone National Park.

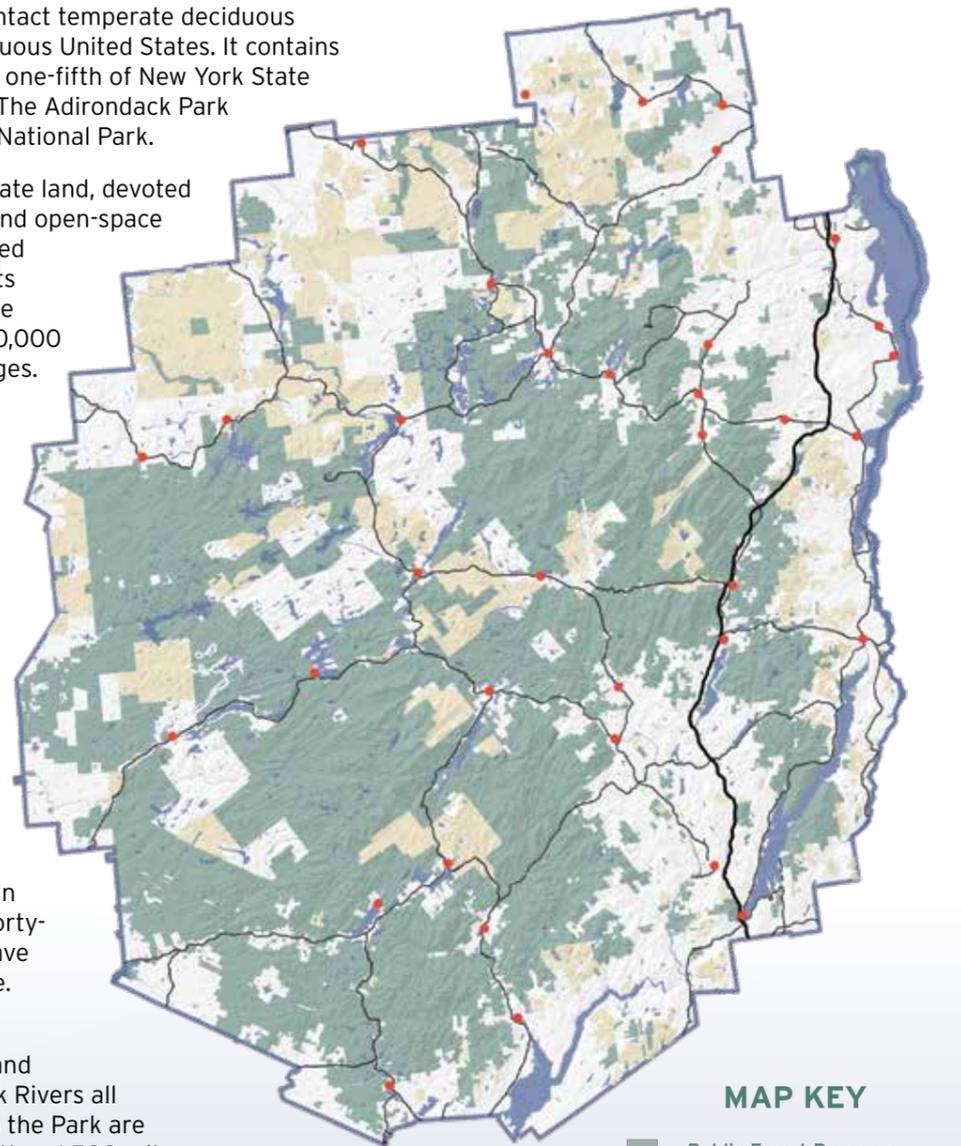
More than half of the Adirondack Park is private land, devoted principally to hamlets, forestry, agriculture, and open-space recreation. Nearly 775,000 acres are protected from development by conservation easements held by the state or private organizations. The Park is home for 130,000 permanent and 200,000 seasonal residents in 120 hamlets and 9 villages. The Park hosts 12.4 million visitors yearly.

Nearly half of the Park is publicly owned Forest Preserve, protected as "Forever Wild" by the NYS Constitution since 1894. About 1.1 million acres of these public lands are protected as Wilderness, where non-mechanized recreation may be enjoyed. Most of the public land (more than 1.4 million acres) is Wild Forest, where motorized uses are permitted on designated waters, roads and trails.

Plants and wildlife abound in the Park. Old growth forests cover more than 100,000 acres of public land. The western and southern Adirondacks are gentle landscapes of hills, lakes, wetlands, ponds, and streams. In the northeast are the forty-six High Peaks. Forty-three of them rise above 4,000 feet and 11 have alpine summits that rise above the timberline.

The Adirondacks include the headwaters of five major drainage basins. Lake Champlain and the Hudson, Black, St. Lawrence, and Mohawk Rivers all draw water from the Adirondack Park. Within the Park are more than 2,800 lakes and ponds, and more than 1,500 miles of rivers, fed by an estimated 30,000 miles of brooks and streams.

Through public education and advocacy for the protection of the Park's ecological integrity and wild character, the Adirondack Council advises public and private policymakers on ways to safeguard this great expanse of open space.



## Elected and appointed government leaders made decisions late in 2019 and in 2020 that affected the legacy of the Adirondacks. Here is a report on the 2020 State of the Park priorities (issued Sept. 2019).

### **Defend the East's Greatest Wilderness**

The Governor recognized the problem of overuse. The state dedicated more funding, reassigned a few Forest Rangers, and embraced recommendations to better preserve world-class wildlands, protecting visitor safety, natural resources, and the visitor's opportunity for a wilderness experience. A poorly designed amendment to constitutional protections for "Forever Wild" on Cathead Mt. was set aside.

### **State: Combat Climate Change and Acid Rain**

New York dedicated new funds and staff for and started to execute the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act; fought acid rain in court; promoted clean energy and closed the state's last coal-fired power plant.

### **Federal: Combat Climate Change and Acid Rain**

The Trump administration policy changes at the Environmental Protection Agency rolled back progress combating climate change and acid rain. The Adirondack Council and others successfully challenged some of these changes in court.

### **Protect Clean Water and Reduce Road Salt Pollution**

The state provided a total of \$1 billion this year for clean water grants to communities; provided a larger grant for Lake George; and the Senate and Assembly passed bi-partisan legislation to establish a state task force to address road salt pollution and keep roads safe.

### **Strengthen the Adirondack Park Agency**

The Governor and Senate get credit for agreeing on a new, improved full slate of nominees to the APA board, including new and returning board members with needed expertise. However, while the Agency can function, it has not indicated that it is stronger and remains underfunded, understaffed, and ill-equipped with outdated conservation tools.

### **Update Invasive Species Protections**

The state extended, but did not strengthen, the law against the transport of invasive species; advocates have another year to persuade state leaders to require that boats and trailers be decontaminated at state inspection stations prior to launch in Adirondack waters.

### **Support Working Forests and Farms**

The state recognized the need for but did not significantly improve incentives, regulations, funding, or policies to help the Park's ecologically sustainable, climate-friendly working forests and farms. The state authorized \$2.5m for climate-resilient farms, again, but none for the Adirondack Park.

### **Improve Community Communications**

The state did not require telecom companies to provide universal broadband access in the Park; or improve cell coverage with incentives for "substantially invisible" infrastructure in communities and on major highways.

### **Expand Conservation Funding**

The state authorized expanded funding including a \$3-billion "Restore Mother Nature Bond Act" and a \$300 million Environmental Protection Fund together protecting pure water, air, wildlife, and wildlands, and addressing climate change, overuse and pollution. In an historic action, Congress fully funded the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

# THE GOVERNOR



PHOTO © CARL HEILMAN II/WILD VISIONS INC.

## Steady at the Helm

Gov. Andrew Cuomo's handling of the Coronavirus pandemic was a master class in public administration. He calmly confronted the reality of a wave of infections that flooded into New York City from Europe, while repeating a message of unity and perseverance. His daily briefings were a reassuring source of calm for listeners from coast to coast, which stood in stark contrast to voices in Washington. Overall, he led the state from the highest rates of infection to the lowest in about two months. He also used this platform to denounce police brutality and call for racial justice and equity.



CUOMO

## Bonding Economy to Ecology Cancelled

In April, the Governor and Legislature approved a \$3-billion Restore Mother Nature Bond Act, ostensibly showing that environmental protection can be a source of economic recovery in these times of social and financial strain. But in late July, the Governor withdrew it from consideration by the voters, citing a lack of federal support during the COVID-19 crisis and a faltering economy. If it had been approved by voters in the November election, the Bond Act could have provided capital projects funding to address climate change, clean water, overcrowding/overuse on the Forest Preserve, and created jobs. State investments in clean water would bring new filtration and treatment plants and much-needed relief to local property taxpayers. The COVID-19 crisis has placed unusual

pressures on the state budget this year. Given its potential for local economic stimulation, the Adirondack Council urges the Governor and Legislature to pass and present a new bond to the voters as soon as possible.

## Overuse Task Force: Strong Actions Needed

In November 2019, Governor Cuomo and the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) created a task force to develop plans to address the ecological, public safety, and community issues associated with overuse on the Park's most popular trails. Released in June 2020, the group's initial report called for limits in trail and parking capacity (beginning with a pilot project), better sanitation, improved public interaction, and more comprehensive planning. A more detailed report came out in August. Adirondack Council Deputy Director and Director of Conservation Rocci Aguirre is a member of the task force.

## Panel to Form Climate Plan

In February, Governor Cuomo made the final two appointments to his 22-member Climate Action Council, which is responsible

for planning how the state will comply with the requirements of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act of 2019. The Act, which is the most ambitious climate law in the country, requires New York to reduce economy-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent by 2030, and by at least 85 percent by 2050 (based on 1990 levels).

## Investing in the Future

In his proposed budget, the Governor did not seek to reduce the amount committed to environmental projects through the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF). In a difficult state budget year, the EPF remained at \$300 million during budget negotiations with the Legislature. The fund dedicates \$31 million for parks and open space. The "state land stewardship" part of the EPF increased to \$34.4 million from \$33 million and includes funding for the Governor's effort to curb overuse and overcrowding in the High Peaks Wilderness Area and other popular Forest Preserve destinations. For the first time in years, the budget didn't include a raid on funds from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.



PHOTO: NANCIE BATTAGLIA

*"There's a real question of what's the maximum use of the resources without damaging the resources and a balance between tourism, economic development and preservation is needed."*

- Governor Cuomo addressing overuse

## Great Plan, Who's Doing the Work?

Despite advances in planning and policy objectives, the Governor's commitment to controlling overuse and overcrowding on the Forest Preserve can only come to fruition through the deployment of adequate personnel. So far, he has rearranged the Forest Ranger force, but has not added the positions needed to carry out their work. More Forest Rangers, planners, land managers, trail crews, scientists, and engineers are still needed.

## Park Agency Nominees Slate Much Improved

In June, the Governor nominated a full slate of candidates for the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) board that included individuals with experience in environmental law, science, planning, and wilderness preservation. Nominated and confirmed by the Senate were environmental scientist Zoe Smith, former Supervisor for the Town of Fine Mark Hall, Supervisor for the Town of Johnsbury Andrea Hogan, and retired Central New York Regional Director for the DEC, and lawyer, Ken Lynch. Re-nominated to new terms were Elk Lake Lodge owner and environmental philanthropist John Ernst, former Lake Pleasant Town Supervisor Dan Wilt, and Lake Placid resort owner Art Lussi. Wilderness preservation author and college professor Chad Dawson's term had not yet expired at the time of the nominations but did on June 30, 2020. That leaves Dawson as the only member of the board without the protection of a defined term.

## Agency Rules Antiquated, Staff Decimated (x2)

The Governor didn't strengthen the Adirondack Park Agency's outdated rules for development, nor did he replace the staff lost to budget cuts made more than a decade ago, during the Great Recession. Environmental science has advanced significantly since the Agency's regulations were last updated in 1987. The APA had 72 employees under Gov. George Pataki. Today it has 54.

## Says Goodbye, Good Riddance to Coal

Governor Cuomo closed the last coal-fired power plant in New York in March, retiring Somerset Station on the shore of Lake Ontario in Barker, Niagara County. The 675-megawatt plant was opened by New York State Electric & Gas Corp. in 1983. The Town of Somerset plans a park on part of the 1,800-acre parcel. Coal-fired power plants are a primary source of acid rain.

## Seeking Diversity in Troubled Times

For the second year in a row, the final budget included \$250,000 for the Adirondack Diversity Initiative (ADI), which seeks to make the Adirondack Park a more welcoming, diverse, equitable, and just place for visitors and residents alike. Nicole Hylton-Patterson of the Bronx was hired in 2019 as the ADI's first executive director. She works for the Adirondack North Country Association, a not-for-profit community- and economic-development organization, and is also supported by a team of volunteers. When Hylton-Patterson was targeted with hateful racially oriented graffiti in Saranac Lake in July 2020, the Governor backed up his commitment by ordering a criminal investigation.

## Smarter Communities and Visitors

In the final budget approved by the Legislature and the Governor, the EPF included funds to help Park communities. It provides \$2 million for community smart growth grants, of which \$600,000 was slated for Adirondack communities. Also included is more than \$10 million for Climate Smart Communities, plus another \$4.5 million for "Climate Resilient Farms." Funding for invasive species controls remained at just over \$13 million and Lake George will get \$450,000, as it did in 2019. The EPF provided \$300,000 split between the Paul Smith's and Newcomb Visitor Centers, and \$2.1 million to promote local culture, trails, and parks in Warren, Essex, and Hamilton counties.

## Cleaning Up the Queen

The Governor added \$9.4 million to a \$3-million Water Infrastructure Improvement Act grant to the Village of Lake George, plus a Department of Environmental Conservation \$2.5-million Water Quality Improvement Project grant, bringing the total state investment to \$14.9 million in a new sewage treatment system. The remaining cost of the project will be covered by a zero-interest loan from the Environmental Facilities Corporation. This investment will result in a total savings to village taxpayers of nearly \$25 million.



Beachgoers are greeted with a warning of elevated E. coli bacteria in Lake George.

## Reality Calls, Collect

In response to calls for better cell phone coverage statewide, the Governor in September 2019 appointed a task force to assess the coverage gaps and propose solutions. Rather than seeking a cooperative solution, some local Adirondack officials have pressured the Governor to abandon the state's successful policy of screening cell towers and other tall structures from view (adopted February 2002). Officials claimed that the Adirondack Park had been left behind when it comes to coverage, while the rest of Upstate was connected. The task force quickly dispelled those notions. It studied the costs of better cell coverage across Upstate New York and found it would require \$633 million to fill coverage gaps outside of the rough terrain and sparse populations of the Adirondacks and Catskills. It has not reported an estimate for the cost of full coverage inside the two parks. Fixing the problem Park-wide will require special funding and state supervision. ■

# STATE LEGISLATURE



PHOTO © CARL HEILMAN II/WILD VISIONS INC.

## BOTH HOUSES

### Acting to Preserve the Environment & Create Jobs

In April, the Legislature approved a \$3-billion Restore Mother Nature Bond Act. The Bond Act would have provided capital projects funding to address climate change, clean water, and overuse on the Forest Preserve. State investments in clean water would bring new water purification and treatment plants, and the people to run them. Clean energy investments would mean new jobs building, improving and maintaining solar, wind, and hydro-power facilities. Energy conservation projects bring new jobs in building and installing modern heating and cooling equipment, and in buttoning up leaky, older buildings. Bond Act monies could also be used for much needed recreational facilities as part of a comprehensive plan to combat overuse. In July, Gov. Andrew Cuomo withdrew the Bond Act from consideration by voters, citing a lack of federal aid during the COVID-19 crisis and a sagging state economy.

### New Funds for Wilderness

In a difficult state budget year, the Legislature approved a \$300-million Environmental Protection Fund (EPF). The final budget agreement also removed a provision that would have paid state staff salaries from the EPF, which is reserved for capital projects only. For the first time in several years, the budget didn't include a raid on the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. In addition to \$31 million for parks and open space, the fund is slated to pay for parts of the Governor's effort to curb overuse and overcrowding in the High Peaks Wilderness Area and other popular Forest Preserve trails via "state land stewardship,"

which increased to \$34.4 million from \$33 million. An additional, \$1.2 million for "Essex County Overuse" was included in the land protection and management funding for the Adirondack Forest Preserve.

### Invasive Species Transport Law Extended to 2021

Senate Environmental Conservation Chair Todd Kaminsky, D-Long Beach, and his counterpart in the Assembly Steven Englebright, D-Setauket, agreed to a one-year extension of the law banning the transport of invasive species from one waterbody to another. The ban requires boaters to ensure that their crafts are clean, drained, and dry before entering state waters. The law was set to expire in 2019 but was extended to 2020 by a similar agreement. It is now set to expire in June of 2021. This allows advocates such as the Adirondack Council another opportunity to seek an amendment that requires boat inspections prior to launch, throughout the Adirondack Park. The state has already created a network of free boat inspection and decontamination sites around the Park.



A boat steward inspects a motorboat before launch

### Low Sodium Diet for Adirondacks

Sen. Tim Kennedy, D-Buffalo and Sen. Elizabeth Little, R-Queensbury, joined with Assemblymen Billy Jones, D-Chateaugay, and Daniel Stec, R-Queensbury, to pass the bipartisan "Randy Preston Road Salt Reduction Act." This legislation aims to reduce road salt contamination in wells, especially along state highways in the Adirondacks. It would establish the Adirondack Road Salt Reduction Task Force and direct the departments of Transportation, Environmental Conservation, and Health to conduct a three-year, road salt reduction pilot program on every state road in the Park. Recent testing by the Adirondack Watershed Institute at Paul Smith's College showed that 64% of tested drinking water wells downhill from state roads were found to have sodium levels exceeding the federally recommended health limit of 20 parts per million. The legislation now requires the Governor's approval.

### Budget Boosts Adirondack Diversity Effort

Understanding that diversity, equity, and inclusion are important in every corner of the state, the Legislature approved the \$250,000 proposed by the Governor this year for the Adirondack Diversity Initiative (ADI). The ADI, a program of the Adirondack



KENNEDY



JONES

North Country Association, has a new executive director, Nicole Hylton-Patterson of the Bronx. She hopes the organization can help make the Adirondack Park a more welcoming and just place for visitors and residents. Several Adirondack communities held vigils and protest marches in June to denounce police violence and systemic racism following the murder of George Floyd in Minnesota and subsequent protests.

### Coming for a Firsthand Look

Environmental Conservation Committee Chairs Englebright and Kaminsky made special trips to the Adirondack Park following the 2019 Legislative Session to better understand issues facing the Park and its communities. Both know and value the Adirondacks and the laws that protect its natural resources. They met with environmental organizations, Park residents, local officials, and visited local businesses. They also found time to unwind in the woods, on the water, and on the trails.



L-R: Kaminsky, Janeway & Englebright

### Strengthening Regional Food Systems

Assembly and Senate Agriculture Committee Chairs, Donna Lupardo, D-Binghamton, and Jen Metzger, D-Middletown, sponsored legislation to establish New York State Food Supply Working Group. The legislation (A.10607-A/ S.8561-A) is designed to improve the resiliency of New York's food supply chain as the COVID-19 pandemic exposed areas for opportunity. Through a stakeholder process the working group is looking to reduce the vulnerability of New York's food supply chain and strengthen regional food systems. The legislation passed both houses and is pending the Governor's signature.

### Lifting a Legal Stigma

Sen. Peter Harckham, D-South Salem, and Assemblywoman Didi Barrett, D-Poughkeepsie, introduced legislation that would remove a significant barrier for those seeking to sell a conservation easement to the state that includes public recreation on private property. The bill would remove any liability for landowners and leaseholders arising from injuries by those using hiking trails on properties covered by a conservation easement. Conservation easements are agreements in which landowners give up certain property rights (such as development and recreation rights) but retain ownership of the land and the rights to farm, harvest timber, etc. Some potential sellers have been reluctant to include recreational rights in their agreements due to concerns over personal injury lawsuits.



HARCKHAM

### May, Fahy Adapt FDR's Playbook

In an attempt to help jumpstart the economy in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Sen. Rachel May, D-Syracuse, and Assemblywoman Patricia Fahy, D-Albany, sponsored a bill to create a new Works Progress Administration in New York. The program would put people to work on much needed public infrastructure projects, which would aid the economy and conservation at the same time. Areas of concentration would include: contact tracing, conservation and climate change projects, projects to boost New York's creative economy, and projects that enhance the agricultural sector.



FAHY

### Protecting Endangered Species

Both houses passed legislation (S.8750/ A.4077-A) sponsored by Senate EnCon Committee Chair Todd Kaminsky and

Assemblywoman Didi Barrett that enhances protections for certain endangered species. Currently, there are many endangered species that would be at risk of losing protection if the United States Department of Interior were to remove species from its list of protected species. This legislation would provide New York State the authority to review these actions prior to a species losing its protection and make a decision in the best interest of its wildlife. The legislation is pending the Governor's signature.

### Closing a Loophole

Both houses passed legislation (A.2655/ S.3392) sponsored by Assemblyman Steven Englebright and Senator Rachel May, that will regulate oil and natural gas waste in New York as "hazardous waste." Despite New York's ban on high-volume hydraulic fracturing, there was a loophole which did not regulate the transportation, treatment, storage and disposal of oil and natural gas waste as "hazardous waste." The new law will ensure toxic and harmful oil and natural gas waste is handled with the utmost caution and does not contaminate New York's air and water. The Governor signed the legislation into law in August making New York the first in the Nation to close the hydraulic fracturing waste loophole.



ENGLEBRIGHT

### More Work Needed on Key Issues

In a year overshadowed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the massive call to action for racial justice, lawmakers had their hands full. Still, there are several issues the Legislature should take action on if it comes back to session in 2020. They include bills that would create incentives for better private forest and farm management, legislation to address the misuse of ATVs and UTVs, and a law to prevent the destruction of the Park's most sensitive private wildlife habitat, via new, conservation-minded subdivision rules.

## SENATE

### 👍 Bond Act Would Benefit Economy & Environment

Senator Kaminsky and Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, D-Yonkers, championed the passage of the Restore Mother Nature Bond Act, guiding it to easy approval in their house. The Bond Act would have helped both the economy and the environment by financing projects that create jobs and sustain eco-tourism while improving water quality, preventing erosion, and protecting wildlife habitat. In July, Gov. Andrew Cuomo withdrew the Bond Act from consideration by voters.



STEWART-COUSINS

### 👎 Eyesores Won't Improve Coverage

In late 2019 and 2020, Senator Little joined with some local Park officials in a call to abandon the Adirondack Park Agency's (APA) successful policy of concealing cell towers from view. Making towers taller and uglier won't help expand coverage. Contrary to complaints, cell companies report that the APA's standard has not delayed deployment of towers. Most locations with limited cell coverage lack sufficient potential subscribers to attract vendors. Newer technologies that will allow more coverage of communities and travel corridors use equipment that doesn't require stand-alone towers. Deployment of these technologies in rural areas may require state incentives.

## ASSEMBLY

### 👍 On the Soap Box

Assembly Environmental Conservation Chairman Englebright and Speaker Carl Heastie, D-Bronx, led their support of the \$3-billion Restore Mother Nature Bond Act, guiding it to easy approval in their house. The Bond Act would have helped both the economy and the environment by financing projects that create jobs and sustain eco-tourism while improving water quality, preventing erosion, and protecting wildlife habitat (See *Acting to Preserve the Environment & Create Jobs* on pg 8). They also rallied support in their chamber for the Environmental



HEASTIE

### Senator Little Retires

State Senator Elizabeth Little, R-Queensbury, will retire from the Senate at the completion of her term on December 31, 2020. She has represented the 45th District since 2003.

Little previously served seven years in the State Assembly after having been elected in a special election in 1995 to represent the 109th District. When Senator Ron Stafford announced his retirement in 2002, Little ran for and won the State Senate seat. Little said her greatest legislative achievement has been the approval of five state Constitutional Amendments to address matters specific to the Adirondack Park. In each case, she collaborated with the Adirondack Council to ensure the amendment would meet with the approval of conservationists and citizens statewide. The 45th Senate District includes six counties, two cities, 83 towns, 20 villages and the U.S. portion of Akwesasne, the indigenous Mohawk Nation that straddles the Canadian border.



LITTLE

### Farewell to Eco-Champion Brodsky

Retired long-time Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee Chairman Richard Brodsky - winner of the Adirondack Council's Legislator of the Year and Conservationist of the Year awards -- passed away in April of 2020. A Democrat from Greenburgh in Westchester County, Brodsky served in the Legislature from 1983 to 2010. Brodsky helped create the Environmental Protection Fund (1993) and the Clean Water Clean Air Bond Act (1996) as well as legislation to curb acid rain and discourage New York power plants from selling pollution allowances to upwind coal-fired power plants. Brodsky was a candidate for state attorney general in 2006 and 2010. Brodsky dropped out of the 2006 race to be a kidney donor for his then 13-year-old daughter. He retired from public office in 2010.



BRODSKY

Protection Fund, insisting that it remain funded at \$300 million or more, while also ensuring that it included funding to relieve overuse and overcrowding on popular trails in the Adirondack Forest Preserve.

### 👎 For ATVs, Bigger Isn't Better

Assemblyman John Salka, R-Oneida, sponsored a bill that would allow dune-buggy-like Utility Task Vehicles (UTVs) to be registered for use for the first time in New York. The bill would raise the current weight limit for all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) eligible for registration from 1,000 to 1,500 pounds. The current limit ensures that only smaller (up to two riders) ATVs are allowed on public lands. The higher weight limit would permit much larger UTVs (a.k.a. side-by-sides) which can hold up to six riders and do more damage to roads and trails than smaller ones. ■

# THE COURTS

### 👍 Federal Court Upholds Anti-Pollution Rule

In September 2019, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia upheld a strengthened version of the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule. This rule is a landmark emission standard under the Clean Air Act's "Good Neighbor" policy, designed to protect downwind states such as New York from coal-fired air pollution from upwind states. It reduces sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, and the resulting soot, smog, and acid rain. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates this rule will prevent more than 67,000 asthma attacks each year and will provide American families with over \$12 in health benefits for every dollar invested. The Council was a party in this case.

### 👍 Court Orders Trump EPA to Protect NY, NJ

In July, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia told the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that they must carry out their obligation to stop states from allowing smog-causing air pollution emissions to blow into New York and New Jersey, preventing us from meeting air quality standards. The ruling is expected to prevent thousands of premature deaths, due to lung diseases, and it will also help to curb acid rain. Under the Clean Air Act's "Good Neighbor" policy, it is illegal for any state to create enough air pollution that it causes a public health hazard in a downwind state. The court agreed that NY and NJ receive excess summertime smog from 350 coal-fired power plants and other sources in nine different states. It also agreed that the EPA should be ordering those plants to turn on their already-installed summertime smog controls, as

required under the Clean Air Act. Since September 2017, the Trump administration refused to enforce the "Good Neighbor" policy. The Council was a party in this case.



Wild and remote section of the Upper Hudson River

PHOTO © CARL HEILMAN II/WILD VISIONS INC.

### 👎 NY High Court Weakens Wild River Protections

The NYS Court of Appeals misinterpreted state law when it ruled 4-3 that the Dept. of Environmental Conservation (DEC) could open a new public snowmobile trail on a formerly private road next to a "Wild" section of the Upper Hudson River. Wild river corridors are supposed to be managed as motor-free Wilderness. Prior to the state's purchase, the Chain Lakes Road in Indian Lake was used for snowmobiling only by private club members and their guests.

Sadly, the court deemed this use by a few hundred people a year to be essentially the same as allowing anyone to use it. There are tens of thousands of registered snowmobile users within a half-day's drive of this site. The DEC relied on an exception to the Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers Act that allows existing uses to continue. The Council was a party in this case.

### 👎 Federal Court Initially Misapplies Pollution Rule

In May, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia incorrectly deferred to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) when it rejected Maryland's and Delaware's appeals for protection from upwind air pollution. Coal-fired smokestacks on 36 power plants upwind of these states cause acid rain all year long. Each plant has pollution controls installed to curb sulfur- and nitrogen-based smoke. However, those controls aren't sufficient in spring and summer to prevent nitrogen pollution from mixing with heat and sunlight to create smog. So these plants also have a second set of controls that they must turn on, but only when the EPA orders them to. Prior EPA administrators routinely granted petitions from states seeking relief from upwind pollution. But in 2017, the Trump administration began denying all such petitions and started requiring downwind states to meet an unreasonable and unscientific burden in proving harm. New York, Connecticut, and New York City filed similar petitions in 2017. The Council was a party in this case. The victory in the New York case effectively reversed the loss in this case. ■

PHOTO © CARL HEILMAN II/WILD VISIONS INC.

# ATTORNEY GENERAL

# TIP OF THE HAT

PHOTO © CARL HEILMAN II/WILD VISIONS INC.

## James Lawsuit Will Save Lives

Attorney General Letitia James saved many lives when she persuaded the three-judge panel of U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia in July to issue a unanimous decision to force the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to protect New York and New Jersey from smog emitted by other states. Under the “Good Neighbor” policy in the Clean Air Act, it has been illegal since 1990 for any state to emit enough smog-causing air pollution to cause a public health risk in another state. The court said the EPA was obligated to force more than 350 power plants in nine upwind states to turn on already-installed pollution controls. The EPA estimates that the summer smog controls prevent thousands of premature deaths each year in the Northeast, most of them in NYC and NJ and help prevent a return of acid rain. The Trump administration was the first to refuse relief to New York.



JAMES



Junk oil-tanker cars lay idle next to the Boreas River in the heart of the Adirondack Park - After public outrage the junk cars were removed by owners Iowa Pacific in the spring of 2018

PHOTO: BRENDAN WILTSE

## Reclaiming Railroad Through ‘Abandonment’

Attorney General Letitia James’ staff pressed ahead with efforts to persuade the U.S. Surface Transportation Board to declare a section of railroad “abandoned” between North Creek and Tahawus. The designation would prevent future rail car junkyards on the site by taking control away from Iowa Pacific Holdings of Chicago, which was storing dozens of derelict oil tankers there. Local and state officials could then seek public input on the best public uses for the corridor. Part of the railroad was built on state Forest Preserve by order of the federal government in the 1940s to extract minerals needed for fighting World War II. The mine has been closed for roughly 50 years. More recently, rail bike excursion businesses have used part of the line.

## Suing to Save Water, Birds, and Amphibians

In May 2020, the Attorney General sued the Trump administration over its weakening of the Clean Water Act. This Act regulates water quality by making it illegal to discharge pollutants into U.S. waters without a permit. The changes the Trump administration finalized in April weakened the requirements of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System and eliminated protections for seasonal tributaries and vernal pools that are important to amphibian and reptile reproduction. The Adirondack Park Agency Act does a better job than federal law of protecting Adirondack waters from pollution. However, water in other areas of New York will suffer from Trump’s actions. Migratory birds and other wildlife can be affected by the quality of waters outside of the Park. ■



Coal-fired power plant along Lake Erie

PHOTO: ISTOCK

## PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS

Each year the Adirondack Council recognizes individuals and not-for-profit organizations whose work has advanced environmental protection and shown how nature and people can thrive together in the Adirondack Park.

In October, the Adirondack Mountain Club hired Michael Barrett, an attorney who served in the NYS Assembly Codes Committee and for two governors, to replace a retiring Neil Woodworth as Executive Director.

The Adirondack Diversity Initiative (ADI) hired Nicole Hylton-Patterson as its first Executive Director.



L-R: ADI Executive Director Nicole Hylton-Patterson and DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos

The Adirondack Foundation and Cloudsplitter Foundation issued special grants in 2020 to help families, communities, and businesses address the COVID-19 and economic crises.

The Environmental Defense Fund and the Sierra Club joined with the Adirondack Council to intervene on behalf of New York State, New York City, and Connecticut in a suit petitioning the Environmental Protection Agency for smog relief.



Oxbow on the Raquette River, Tupper Lake

PHOTO © CARL HEILMAN II/WILD VISIONS INC.

In November 2019, the Wild Center published a tool kit that will allow others to duplicate its successful Youth Climate Summits.

In the face of economic pressure brought by New York’s free tuition program at SUNY colleges in 2019, Clarkson University moved its Adirondack Semester program out of downtown Saranac Lake and on to the Paul Smith’s College campus, helping both private institutions.

In October 2019, the Adirondack North Country Association launched a new grant to fund projects (\$2,500 to \$45,000) designed to strengthen local farms, food entrepreneurs, food hubs, and cooperatives.



Beet harvest at Juniper Hill Farm in Wadhams

PHOTO: BEN STECHSCHULTE

In 2019, the Ausable River Association completed a three-year rehab project to repair trout habitat on the Dream Mile between Wilmington and Black Brook. The Association also warned that Mirror Lake had become so contaminated by road salt, it was no longer turning over in the spring and fall, which will lead to an oxygen-depleted dead zone at the bottom.

The Adirondack Land Trust paid \$200,000 for five acres on Indian Carry and Indian Point on Upper Saranac Lake, which will be added to the Saranac Lake Wild Forest Area of the publicly-owned “Forever Wild” Forest Preserve.



Upper Saranac Lake

PHOTO © CARL HEILMAN II/WILD VISIONS INC.

In the summer of 2019, a state boat launch steward trained by the Adirondack Watershed Institute stopped an infestation of the invasive plant hydrilla into Lake Champlain. In 2020 a boat with zebra mussels was stopped and cleaned before entering Lake Placid. Well-trained stewards are doing an outstanding job of spotting and removing unwanted plants and animals from boats and trailers prior to and following launching on Adirondack waters. ■

# PRESERVE WHITNEY!



PHOTO © CARL HEILMAN II/WILD VISIONS, INC.

## ICONIC, 36K-ACRE WHITNEY PROPERTY FOR SALE

### Whitney History

Founded in 1897, the Whitney's Adirondack estate in the Town of Long Lake is nearly as old as the Adirondack Park (1892). It was established by William C. Whitney, Secretary of the Navy during the Cleveland administration and a member of a sportsmen's club on Little Forked Lake. He purchased about 80,000 acres.

William C. Whitney was the grandfather of Cornelius Vanderbilt "Sonny" Whitney. Sonny Whitney also cared deeply for the local landscape, returning whenever he could to oversee his timber operation and preserving important fisheries. In 1958, he married actress Marie Louise (Marylou) Schroeder. He sold pieces of the estate to neighbors and associates over the years. He passed in 1992. In 1997, Gov. George Pataki bought for \$17 million a 15,000-acre tract containing Little Tupper Lake, which was until then the largest private lake in a single ownership in America. Pataki combined these 15,000 acres with the adjacent Lake Lila Primitive Area to create the William C. Whitney Wilderness Area.

Marylou bequeathed the remainder of the property on her passing in 2019 to her widower John Hendrickson. He has placed the entire estate up for sale. Today, the 36,000 acres or 57 square miles is equal in size to Staten Island, or 2.5 times the size of Manhattan. The property includes the historic Great Camp Deerlands, a 17-bedroom, 11-bath rustic-style mansion with outbuildings including a two-story boathouse on Little Forked Lake built by William West Durant.

### An Ecological Paradise

The Whitney property contains more than 30 lakes and ponds and hundreds of miles of brooks and streams, a series of interconnected waterways. Its possibilities as a paddler's paradise are unrivaled on the East Coast. More importantly, its waters contain sensitive trout habitat, much of which is now in better shape than it was 20 years ago when acid rain was causing daily harm. Vast wetlands serve as the

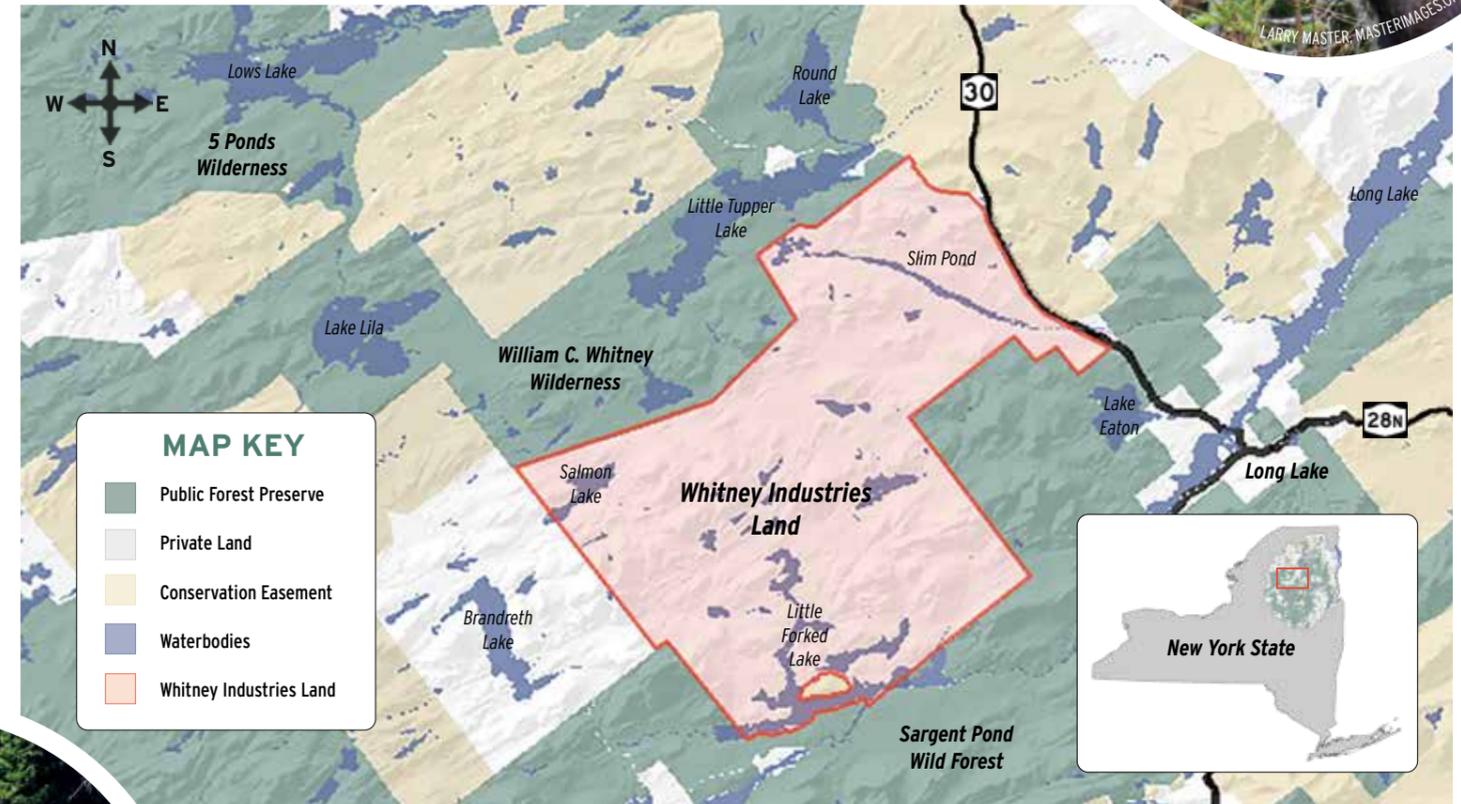


**"ADIRONDACK FOREVER WILD IS FOREVER INCOMPLETE WITHOUT WHITNEY"**

- William C. Janeway, Adirondack Council



LARRY MASTER-MASTERIMAGES.ORG



wildlife nurseries to the region, providing protected habitat for local and migratory birds, fish, amphibians, and reptiles whose homes are threatened elsewhere. Perhaps most important of all, the Whitney property's limited development and lack of public highways allow it to connect a broad array of Adirondack wildlife habitats and ecosystems. These uninterrupted connections will be crucial to wildlife survival as climate change forces species to move from current locations to newly suitable homes.

Above: Whitney for sale offers potential for this gate to open, and public paddling on waters closed for over one hundred years

### State Open Space Conservation Plan Recommends Protection

The Whitney property comprises the northeastern corner of the Adirondack Council's proposed 408,000-acre Bob Marshall Great Wilderness or Wildlands Complex, which would be large enough and wild enough to host the return of large Adirondack natives such as the moose, timber wolf, and someday, the cougar. The last moose and last cougar recorded as shot by hunters in the Adirondacks were shot on Whitney property. In 1993, the Council's plan was incorporated into the NYS Open Space Conservation Plan, which guides the state's strategic fair market value investments in open space preservation. ■

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT

PHOTO © CARL HEILMAN II/WILD VISIONS INC.

## Overuse Hurts Economy Too

The Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages (AATV) called on the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation to address the problem of overuse in the High Peaks Wilderness Area and other popular Forest Preserve destinations. The AATV's 2020 political agenda identified the problem as serious and getting worse. Local government support helped to persuade state officials to improve parking enforcement, increase public information, and conduct some preliminary trail improvements. The Governor also appointed a task force to make short-term and long-term changes in management.



A boat steward wears a face mask and maintains proper social distancing while educating a boater on aquatic invasive species prevention

## Spreading the Solution, Not the Invaders

The AATV joined Adirondack conservation organizations in the winter and spring of 2020 to call for a more comprehensive boat inspection program inside the Adirondack Park. The Association noted that more inspection stations would help curb the spread of invasive species and remind boaters to stop for an inspection before launching.

## Cut Us Loose from Iowa Pacific, Please

In January 2020, the Warren County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to ask the U.S. Surface Transportation Board to declare the railroad tracks between Hadley and North Creek to be abandoned. An abandonment ruling would remove control of the tracks from insolvent operator Iowa Pacific Holdings, of Chicago. It would also allow the county to stop spending money maintaining the line for nonexistent traffic while a future use is settled. New York State is seeking a similar abandonment of the tracks just north, from North Creek to Tahawus in Essex County.

## Freight Rail Outweighs Actual Fate

In May, Essex County officials opposed the abandonment of the railroad between North Creek and Tahawus, claiming it was still viable for freight. The line runs between an abandoned iron mine ghost town in Newcomb and the village that hosts Gore Mountain Ski Center. Abandonment would not preclude future freight or passenger traffic. It would only remove the bankrupt current operator and give the state, local officials and other stakeholders the option to decide the line's future.

## Seeking Clean Up from Former Operator

In September 2019, Warren County sued the Southwind Rail Travel Limited of Wilkes-Barre, a railroad company that has left rotting railroad cars on county property in Johnsburg for more than eight years. The county filed a lawsuit in NYS Supreme Court in Warren County seeking a trespass finding and court order to have

an abandoned locomotive and coach rail car removed from tracks at the county-owned rail station in North Creek.

## Serving up Sanitation Sense in Old Forge

Understanding that the lack of public restrooms for visitors and recreationists can quickly become a public health hazard impacting water quality, in 2019 the Town of Webb built public restrooms in Old Forge using a \$100,000 smart growth grant from the state.



Visitors in Old Forge, Town of Webb

## Sweet Views on Swede Summit

In February 2020, Warren County officials announced that they had worked with landowner Lyme Timber Co. to gain public access to the summit of 1,896-foot Swede Mountain. The mountain is near the Hague-Horicon town line. The summit has great views and a 101-year-old fire tower closed since 1968. The county is working with state officials on a rehabilitation plan for the tower and trails.

## Cathead Proposal Discounts Alternatives

Advocates pushed for a Constitutional Amendment to authorize a road and vehicle access through the Silver Lake Wilderness and up Cathead Mountain for access by Hamilton County and a private club. The state pays for and has rights to access and maintain existing radio tower infrastructure for the State Police and Department of Environmental Conservation. There are faster, less expensive, more reliable, and environmentally friendly alternatives that can quickly establish dependable county emergency communications on Cathead Mountain and deliver better coverage for the Route 30 and Benson Road corridors that have not been fully evaluated. The Adirondack Council supports improved emergency communications infrastructure for the County, but these needs can be met with alternatives that don't require an amendment alienating the publicly-owned "Forever Wild" Forest Preserve to permanently benefit a private party.



A helicopter accesses a remote, off-grid radio communications network site in Maine

PHOTO: ALPHA ENERGY

## Park-wide Appeal for Broadband

The AATV 2020 agenda calls upon state officials to provide broadband internet coverage throughout the Adirondack Park. Large areas of the Park remain without services because there are too few potential subscribers to lure commercial operators. It is up to state officials to close the gaps in ways that are affordable for Adirondack residents. Broadband must be universal or rural residents will lag behind the rest of the state economically for the foreseeable future.

## Please Discard 16 Years of Success

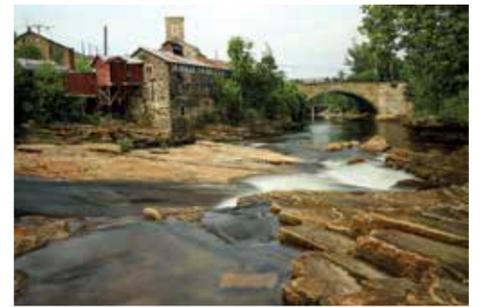
Over the objections of some members, the Warren County board of supervisors passed a resolution in 2020 urging the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) to abandon its successful policy governing the siting and construction of cell towers and other tall structures. Since 2004, the APA's policy has been to screen towers from view to protect the Park's magnificent wild scenery and natural landscapes. Cell companies have said the policy posed no significant hurdle to providing coverage. The APA has never denied a cell tower permit request.

## Other Ways to Get There

The AATV dropped its call for expanded float plane access to lakes in Adirondack Forest Preserve in 2020, after having pressed the issue in their annual legislative agenda for many years. The matter has largely been settled by the courts, which ordered the Adirondack Park Agency to remove such access from all lakes surrounded by lands designated as Wilderness. This is a positive step towards preserving the quiet and solitude of Wilderness lakes.

## Let's Be Safe Out There

Keene Town Supervisor Joe Pete Wilson has exhibited leadership on the issue of overuse of the High Peaks Wilderness Area, pressing state officials for assistance in controlling summer crowds that jam trailheads and gobble up public parking in his town. Though challenging, he continues to seek creative ways to ensure public safety while safeguarding the amazing Wilderness areas to which Keene is a gateway community. This spring, rather than risk public health for short-term economic gain, Wilson suspended the operation of its hiker shuttle during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Anderson Falls and historic stone arch bridge in Keeseville, Town of Chesterfield

## Conservation-Smart Subdivisions? Not Now

The AATV's 2020 agenda dropped its support for a compromise "Conservation Design" bill, which clustered development and included transfers of development rights and density bonuses, aimed at improving the Adirondack Park Agency's protections for remote, wildlands and waters where major subdivisions are proposed. The Adirondack Council and partners worked with AATV to negotiate a bill that they could support. The AATV's 2019 agenda said it would work with the Adirondack Common Ground Alliance to achieve such a bill. In 2019, the Alliance endorsed the Conservation Design bill sponsored by Assembly Environmental Conservation Chairman Steven Englebright, D-Setauket. In 2020, the bill languished in committee.

## Legal Deja Vu in Clare

In 2019, the Town of Clare chose not to oppose the Adirondack Council's lawsuit which asked a NYS Supreme Court justice to throw out the town's new ATV trail because it was an illegally converted public roadway. The Council tried to prevent the town from taking the illegal action, warning that it would sue and was confident of victory, as it had won similar lawsuits against Lewis County and the Town of Forestport, Oneida County. However, in July 2020, town officials announced that they were proposing basically the same unlawful route as before. The Council will continue to monitor and is keeping all options on the table going forward. ■

# DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

## Half-Century of Conservation

The NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation (DEC) celebrated its 50th Anniversary on Earth Day of 2020. The agency was created by Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller, replacing the former Conservation Department. The current Commissioner is Basil Seggos (pictured right with Executive Director William Janeway).



## Overuse is Real and We'll Try to Fix It

In February, DEC Commissioner Seggos told members of the Legislature holding state budget hearings that overuse of the High Peaks Wilderness Area and other popular destinations in the Adirondack Park was a serious issue that requires attention. He promised to dedicate more of his own staff to solve the problem and work with other state agencies to improve conditions for visitors and protect natural resources. Seggos said good planning was needed to ensure that local communities would benefit from increases in tourism.

## Action to Preserve Wilderness

In June, Commissioner Seggos endorsed the work of his High Peaks Wilderness Advisory Group, which advised him to take action in seven distinct areas of Wilderness management. The state appointed the group in response to widespread concern over record numbers of visitors and damage to natural resources from overuse of popular hiking trails. These recommendations, which included imposing limits on trails and parking capacity to protect water, wildlife, and fair access to the solitude of true wilderness, were meant to provide an action plan for this summer. Another set of recommendations for longer-term use in future years is expected out later in 2020.

## Building More Sustainable Trails

In response to concerns expressed by the Adirondack Council and others, the DEC continued two major trail reconstruction efforts in the High Peaks Wilderness Area in 2019. New, more gently sloped and more sustainable trails are under construction at Mt. Van Hoevenberg and Cascade Mountain, two of the Park's more popular summit destinations. Like most of the trails in the High Peaks, these paths were not sustainable in the face of increased levels of use. Trail sections suffer from serious erosion and water damage. The Council identified 130 miles of trails that are too steep, wet, or otherwise unsustainable in their current state within the High Peaks alone.

## Don't Rush 'Forever' Decisions

The DEC waited until late July to provide the Legislature with three proposed Constitutional Amendments, each seeking to amend the "Forever Wild" clause (Article 14, Section 1). The clause protects Forest Preserve in the Adirondack and Catskill parks from logging, sale and development. The subjects of the proposals were important - an emergency radio tower, new winter sports facilities and the sale of surplus state buildings. All deserve a full and open public discussion, not a frantic, last-minute effort at deal making.

## Inching Toward Capacity Limits

The DEC has made modest advances in controlling illegal parking and consequent overcrowding of trails in popular destinations adjacent to NYS Route 73 in Keene. By striping the parking spaces, erecting signs banning roadside parking, and enforcing the ban, the DEC made progress in curbing the impact of too many visitors in the Park's most popular locations. The DEC said the size of parking lots at Wilderness trailheads coincide with its best estimate of how many visitors could recreate there at the same time without causing lasting damage. While the rate of increase slowed for a couple of the popular trailheads, at most peaks, use increased and foot traffic was roughly twice the Wilderness resource capacity limit.



Cars parked on the shoulder of NYS Route 73 near the Roaring Brook trailhead in Keene

## Has the Authority, Won't Use It

Since 1999 when the first Unit Management Plan (UMP) was approved for the High Peaks Wilderness Area, the DEC has had the authority to limit the total number of hikers and campers that use the trails and campsites in this area of the Forest Preserve. The same UMP authorized the DEC to mandate the use of bear canisters,

ban open fires, and set new group size limits. Even though visitation to High Peaks continues to rise and the Wilderness becomes impacted from this overuse, the DEC has not implemented limits on hikers. It has now been advised by several Adirondack organizations, Leave No Trace and the DEC's own advisory group that limits are needed (See *Action to Preserve Wilderness* on pg 18).

## Forests Curb Climate Change; Slow the Cutting

In February, the DEC released its draft NYS Forest Action Plan for public review and comment. This 10-year strategic plan provides long-term, comprehensive, and coordinated strategies for addressing the challenges facing the state's forests today. This is essential at a time when forests are needed to play a key role in New York's overall plans for curbing the effects of accelerating climate change. In preparing the plan, the state worked with federal officials and determined that the current rate of forest harvesting in certain areas of the Adirondack Park is higher than the growth rate and not sustainable. It was also discovered that the Forest Preserve, where logging is banned by the NYS Constitution's "Forever Wild" clause, is far more effective at absorbing carbon from the atmosphere than Adirondack commercial forests. Its higher biomass also allows it to outpace commercial forests outside of the Park, where overharvesting has not been a problem.

## Stegemann Retires

In March, Robert Stegemann retired as DEC Region 5 Director. In the job, Bob oversaw the regional operations on the eastern two-thirds of the Adirondack Park and was based in Ray Brook. He also served as Commissioner Seggos' designee on the Adirondack Park Agency's decision-making board. Bob steps down after nine years as Regional Director. He came to the DEC after working as a spokesman for the Empire State Forest Products Association and for 18 years as manager of sustainability at International Paper Co.



STEGEMANN

## Lifting a Cloud of Soot

The DEC approved new emissions standards for so-called "peaker" power plants in the New York City metro area, where the mostly diesel turbines are used to create electricity when demand is greatest. Decreasing emissions from peakers will decrease soot and fine particle pollution and prevent lung and heart damage in NYC, Long Island, and Westchester County, while diminishing a small source of acid rain Upstate.



A forest ranger interacts with a hiker  
PHOTO: NANCIE BATTAGLIA

## Support for Forest Rangers

The Commissioner and the DEC reaffirmed support for the unique and important role of the state Forest Rangers, as a complement to the Environmental Conservation Officers (ECOs). The DEC continued to maintain the Forest Ranger force at or near historic "fill levels." Forest Rangers fulfill a unique and important role as a key element of the DEC's care, custody, and stewardship of state forest lands across New York and in the Adirondack and Catskill Parks.

## Nope. We're Good Without More Staff

In April, Commissioner Seggos, as he has done many years in a row, told state Legislators holding budget hearings that he had enough staff to care and protect the Adirondack Park. Proper care of the overused High Peaks Wilderness Area alone will require more Forest Rangers and Assistant Rangers, Environmental Conservation Officers, land managers, planners, trail crews, and engineers. As the Leave No Trace team discovered during its whole-Park survey, the High Peaks are not the only location in need of more attention.

## Sometimes the Best Path is No Trail at All

In an effort to protect some of the wildest terrain in the High Peaks region of the Park, the DEC's recently approved Unit Management Plan (UMP) for the Sentinel Range Wilderness Area keeps a 10,000-acre portion of it as trailless. Located in the Essex County towns of Jay, Keene, North Elba, and Wilmington, the Sentinel Range sits northeast of the High Peaks Wilderness Area and contains such summits as Kilburn and Pitchoff, as well as the Jackrabbit Ski Trail. The UMP includes a clear prohibition of ATVs in the unit, and a moratorium on the use of fixed anchors for rock climbing until a working group is convened. The DEC is recognizing that access to Wilderness is important for the public to understand, appreciate it and protect it, but there are some wildlife and plant species that cannot sustain contact with people. Trailless Wilderness areas get few human visitors and thus preserve niches for the most sensitive species.

## Keeping Salt in the Shaker

In January, the DEC granted the Village of Lake Placid \$225,000 to construct a salt shed for the highway department. Uncovered salt piles lead to water contamination. The Village of Lake Placid contains Mirror Lake and Lake Placid, as well as sections of Chubb Brook and the Ausable River. The grant came from the NYS Water Quality Improvement Project fund, a program that awards monies to improve water quality and protect drinking water.

## Better Plan on Deer Feeding

In December 2019, the DEC improved its policy on feeding wild deer when it modified its current ban to allow feeding for the purpose of inoculating deer herds with insecticides that repel and kill ticks. Deer ticks are the top vector for Lyme disease and other tick-borne neurological ailments in humans and dogs. The DEC has banned deer feeding by the public in an effort to curb Chronic Wasting Disease, which deer can transmit to one another when feeding in groups.

## 👍 Helping Hand for Snakes, Frogs & Bats

In September 2019, the DEC proposed changes to its Endangered and Threatened Species Regulations. The changes are intended to clarify and improve the stringent rules protecting endangered and threatened species, while also helping to reduce potential project delays when the species are present in a construction or agricultural project area. Identifying and addressing potential impacts to endangered and threatened species and their habitats early in the planning process has proven to be the most successful way to avoid harmful impacts from construction and other new development. The plan's focus on forest habitats protect timber and Eastern massasauga rattlesnakes, cricket frogs, tiger salamanders, Indiana and Northern long-eared bats, and spruce grouse.



Northern Myotis  
PHOTO: LARRY MASTER,  
MASTERIMAGES.ORG

## 👎 Won't Do its Duty on ATVs

Unlike prior administrations, the Cuomo administration's DEC has not taken charge to enforce state policy and law against ATV use on public lands and/or roads. Under the Pataki administration, for example, the DEC sued the Warren County Town of Horicon to stop it from using roads on the Forest Preserve as part of an ATV trail network. More recently, the DEC has abdicated this task and private citizens have had to step up to defend the Forest Preserve and their own homes from ATV damage and trespass. The Adirondack Council has worked with local residents to stop unlawful ATV trail expansions in Lewis County, the Oneida County Town of Forestport and in 2019 the St. Lawrence County Town of Clare.

## 👎 Some ATV Trails are Just Bad Ideas

The DEC has not publicly opposed the creation of an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) connector trail through the Croghan Tract Conservation Easement in Lewis County. While the Adirondack Council has supported limited ATV use on some easement lands, a new trail at this location is inappropriate. The Croghan Tract shares a seven-mile border with the trailless Pepperbox Wilderness Area, one of the quietest corners of the Adirondack Forest Preserve. An ATV trail here would facilitate trespass into this area and add to the ATV-related damage already suffered in this part of the Park. Also, ATVs are not designed for road use.

## 👎 Could Help the Cause, But Won't

When the Lake George Park Commission and towns around the lake wanted to require that anyone launching a boat first get it inspected and decontaminated, it had to overcome opposition from the DEC. Now that the Adirondack Council and others are calling for comprehensive inspections prior to launch anywhere in the Adirondack Park, the DEC is again not supporting the effort. The network of free inspection stations is already in place, but the program leader has said, "our stewards only inspect a fraction of boats launching into Adirondack waters." Council staff counted trailered boats passing the new inspection station at Exit 18 on the Northway during Memorial Day and the July 4th weekends and found that more than 85% passed without stopping.

## 👎 Antiquated Data Yield Obsolete Policies

The DEC's update of the 30-year-old Fulton Chain Wild Forest Unit Management Plan (UMP) has attempted to accommodate additional or more intense uses without conducting the research needed to determine the impact. Located in the southwest part of the Park between Inlet and Old Forge, the unit is very popular with visitors. While the DEC proposes efforts to address overuse at Bald Mountain, it failed to conduct a science-based review of all of the unit's land and water resources and their capacity to withstand public use. The DEC should

not make decisions on how to manage the area over the next decade or more based on 30-year-old data. This has been an unfortunate pattern across several unit plan revisions in the past decade. In August 2019, the Council provided recommendations on proposed revisions to the UMP.

## 👎 Cow Still Loose, Barn Door Missing

In January 2020, the DEC amended the Unit Management Plan for the Sentinel Range Wilderness Area without closing the Jackrabbit Ski Trail to motorized traffic. The trail sits atop a former town road that the DEC closed when it created the Wilderness area in the Essex County towns of Keene and North Elba. Wilderness areas are supposed to be motor-free. In 2018, the DEC lost a lawsuit in which it offered several justifications for its decision to close the road, but none were found to have extinguished the town's right to the road. However, the judicial panel took the unusual step of offering the DEC a solution. They wrote that Highway Law 212 "vests DEC with the authority to order the abandonment or discontinuance of a road passing over or through lands within the Forest Preserve..." The DEC declined that opportunity as well.

## 👍 Invasive Insect Found in the Park

In August, the DEC confirmed that it had discovered an infestation of the invasive insect Emerald Ash Borer inside the Adirondack Park, in Warren County. This is a success of monitoring but a failure to keep a destructive invasive bug out of the Park. The ash borer digs into the trunk and lives below the bark, causing a D-shaped hole as it emerges. It interrupts the transport of water and nutrients from roots to crown. Leaves yellow and die and the tree expires quickly. The affected trees were found by Department of Transportation personnel at the Warren County Canoe Launch on the Schroon River in the Town of Chester. A sample was sent to Cornell University Insect Diagnostic Lab for further review. Ash trees account for about 7% of all New York forests, DEC said, but a smaller percentage inside the Adirondack Park. Ash trees are deciduous, provide shade and shelter for wildlife and are a source of strong-yet-light wood products including tool handles, furniture, and baseball bats. ■

# ADIRONDACK PARK AGENCY

## 👍 Management Plan Preserves Unique Area

The Adirondack Park Agency (APA) worked with the Dept. of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to bring about some important conservation gains in the Unit Management Plan for the Sentinel Range Wilderness Area it approved in January 2020. The plan includes more than 10,000 acres that will remain trailless in an effort to protect wildlife and rare plant communities. The Agency also secured a DEC commitment to important monitoring, rehabilitation and restoration efforts, including trail reroutes and parking area closures, to protect the unit's natural resources.



Camp site in the High Peaks Wilderness Area

## 👍 Tent Site Standards Protect & Provide Access

In September 2019, the APA approved a plan that sets the standards for primitive tent site development and maintenance in Wilderness, Primitive, Canoe, and Wild Forest Areas of the Adirondack Forest Preserve. Overall, it will minimize impacts to natural resources and improve the user experience by preserving a sense of solitude and establishing standards for maintenance. The Adirondack Council and others provided input into the APA's plan.

## 👍 Son of Frankenspine is Less Scary

In 2019, Agency staff worked with AT&T to expand cell phone coverage in the Elizabethtown region without creating an eyesore on an otherwise natural landscape. Located in the hamlet of New Russia, the tower is situated so it provides coverage with only a small portion rising above treetops, which is disguised as a pine tree. Its location makes it "substantially invisible" to passing motorists on U.S. Route 9. The Agency also approved, in July 2020, a "substantially invisible" cell tower in Newcomb, behind the water tower. The Agency's towers policy is working.

## 👎 Substantially Visible

In January, the APA allowed AT&T to construct a 94-foot monopole cell tower in the Town of Duane, Franklin County but did not require the company to conceal it. Open sky behind the tower will allow it to be seen from public roads.

## 👎 Visual Clutter

In February, the APA approved two "co-located" cell towers to fill gaps in coverage in Raquette Lake, Hamilton County, and along NYS Route 28, where one would have sufficed. Due to their location, both the 90-foot and 85-foot towers were disguised as pine trees, but were left in the open rather than partially concealed by forest. AT&T and T-Mobile refused to cooperate on use of a single structure, so the Agency's "co-location" is really two Frankenpines next to one another.

PHOTO © CARL HEILMAN II/WILD VISIONS INC.



Prospect Mountain, Lake George, towers sited prior to the APA's "substantially invisible" policy  
PHOTO: ADOBE STOCK

## 👍 Returning Drainage to More Natural State

The APA worked with the Ausable River Association to develop a set of permits allowing the organization to systematically replace existing stormwater culverts with much larger ones. Hurricanes Irene and Lee caused the Ausable to jump its banks in several locations, flooding riverside communities and causing millions of dollars in damage. Emergency response efforts by local governments to straighten and widen streams with bulldozers only made flooding worse downstream and ruined trout habitat. The Association is working to restore the natural contours of the river and protect the community with storm drains that won't plug as easily.



Assemblyman Dan Stec with Ausable River Association Executive Director Kelley Tucker

## 👍 We Have a Few Questions this Time

In March 2020, the APA took a step in the right direction on large, backcountry subdivisions when it issued a Notice of Incomplete Application to the developers seeking a 37-lot suburban-style development around Woodward Lake. The project is in the Fulton County towns of Northampton and Mayfield. The APA requested more information on biological surveys, wetlands, building height, maintenance plans, and construction methods. Next, we will see the developer's response and the APA's reaction.



Proposed Woodward Lake subdivision

## 👎 Opposed to Conservation Design

The APA's representatives told the legislature they did not support a "Conservation Design" bill aimed at better protecting water quality, wildlife, and open space in the Park's most remote private forests. For the most sensitive private lands of the Park, the bill would require clustering of development to conserve the greatest amount of wildlife habitat and allow for migration of species as the climate changes. It would also close a loophole that allows some developers to avoid completing wildlife and wetland surveys prior to the APA's acceptance of their complete application. The bill had support from the conservation community, local government officials, and the Common Ground Alliance core team.

## 👍 River Permit Scofflaw Gets Rare Treatment

In February, the APA brought a rare enforcement action against the owners of Brampton Retreat, a resort in Thurman, Warren County, for a series of land use and Wild, Scenic & Recreation Rivers Act violations dating back to 2017. After 20 phone calls, three site visits, one meeting at the APA offices, four staff letters, and three proposed and subsequently ignored settlements, Agency staff recommended the maximum fine of \$1,548,000 for the 1,032 days since the first staff letter was sent alleging violations, with some of the penalty suspended. At press time, the violators had not paid the fine, or attempted to negotiate a settlement. The APA has referred the case to the Attorney General for prosecution.

## 👍 New Housing Needed in Developed Area

In July 2020, the APA approved a map amendment for the Town of North Elba to reclassify about 34.5 acres from Moderate Intensity Use to a Hamlet, which could make possible the creation of new, lower cost housing. The change to Hamlet would lift current limits on the number of principal residences per acre and allow for more intensive commercial development. This paves the way for a conversion of the Cell Science Center property on Barn Road into housing for 2,400 athletes competing in the 2023 World University Games. After the games, it would find a new life as much needed community housing.

## 👍 Solomonic Solution

In May, the Park Agency approved advanced plans to redevelop an historic 119-mile rail corridor connecting Remsen to Lake Placid into a recreational trail for bicyclists, skiers, and snowmobilers to the northeast, and a scenic passenger train for tourists to the southwest. The controversial project has inspired more than 700 public comments to the APA and conflicts between rail enthusiasts and recreationists. The state gave a share to both sides, proposing that the rails be ripped up between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid for a recreational trail, while the line from Tupper Lake to Remsen be fixed up for trains.

## 👍 Lyme Timber Plan Sustainable

In December 2019, the APA approved a timber harvest plan submitted by the Lyme Timber Company for lands in Arietta and Lake Pleasant, Hamilton County, that fits within the scope and management plan of the conservation easement the state owns on the property. The 509-acre "shelterwood overstory removal" and 134-acre "free thinning treatment" are tools for maximizing economic return on commercial forests within the sustainability standards set by the Forest Stewardship Council and Sustainable Forestry Initiative certification programs. The Council has supported individual forest management permits for what the Agency defines as a "clear cut," while raising concerns about cumulative impacts and the need for a comprehensive assessment of harvesting.



Timber harvest in the western Adirondacks  
PHOTO © CARL HEILMAN II/WILD VISIONS INC.

## 👎 Cumulative Impact Not So Clear-cut

The APA continued to approve intensive forest harvesting methods across the Park in 2019, but still refused to count the cumulative impacts of those decisions. While clear-cutting and other rapid removal techniques can fit within an overall management plan, the APA must take account of what is happening on the larger landscape, not just individual tracts. The state forester has warned that the pace of harvesting on Adirondack commercial forests is too rapid and therefore unsustainable, especially in light of emission reductions called for in the 2019 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. ■

# FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

PHOTO © CARL HEILMAN II/WILD VISIONS INC.

## 👍 Bi-Partisan Cooperation on Acid Rain

Despite the shutdown of the federal government complex in Washington, D.C. in March of 2020 due to COVID-19, members of the New York Congressional delegation found time to express support for protecting the Adirondacks from acid rain. U.S. Reps Antonio Delgado, D-Hudson, Paul Tonko, D-Amsterdam, Caroline Maloney, D-Manhattan, and Elise Stefanik, R-Schuylerville, worked together to send letters to House and Senate appropriations committee members. They sought both to protect the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's operating budget and to create a new grant program for acid rain and climate data collection in the Northeast. Federal budget negotiations were continuing at press time.



TONKO



MALONEY

## 👎 Refusing to Lend a Hand

In September 2019, New York State, New York City, and Connecticut sued the Trump administration after EPA Administrator Andy Wheeler denied New York's petition for relief from smog under the "Good Neighbor" policy of the Clean Air Act. The policy forbids any state from causing enough air pollution to create a health hazard in another state. New York's air is polluted by smokestacks in more than a dozen upwind states. Another NY and CT lawsuit, with the Adirondack Council and others, led to a decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, DC reversing this.

## 👍 Land and Water Fund Revived, Permanent

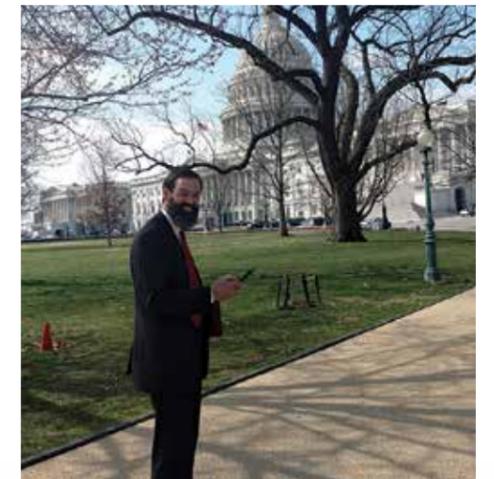
The U.S. Senate and House approved on bi-partisan votes, and the President signed legislation to fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and invest in critical needs within national parks and other public lands. The Great American Outdoors Act, which passed 73-25, restores and makes permanent the \$900 million in annual appropriations for the LWCF, as it was originally created in 1964. In addition, it would provide \$9.5 billion over the next five years to deferred-maintenance projects on public lands managed by federal agencies.

## 👎 Burn Baby Burn

The Trump administration's attempts to re-establish coal as a major fuel source caused air pollution increases of 200% to 323% in the fall of 2019 from coal-fired power plants that cause acid rain and contribute to climate change, harming the Adirondacks and public health. The Park has seen significant reductions in sulfur dioxide air pollution from power plants since 1995. In 2019, as the Adirondacks were nearing recovery from acid rain and making progress on carbon, the numbers begin going back in the wrong direction. Power plants emitted more pollution and caused clouds that pass over the Adirondacks to carry more pollution than the year before. The only reason these changes didn't create a public health crisis is that the COVID-19 economic shutdown took so much traffic off of the highways and slowed so many factories that the air overall got cleaner for many major cities.

## 👍 Helping Hand Much Needed

Congress helped countless rural businesses and not-for-profit organizations survive the early phases of the COVID-19 economic shutdown by providing two rounds of timely Paycheck Protection Program grants to businesses across the nation. These loans helped businesses ride out major challenges, and under specific criteria, are forgivable. Combined with direct relief grants to households, the two programs did much to ease suffering in the Adirondacks and beyond.

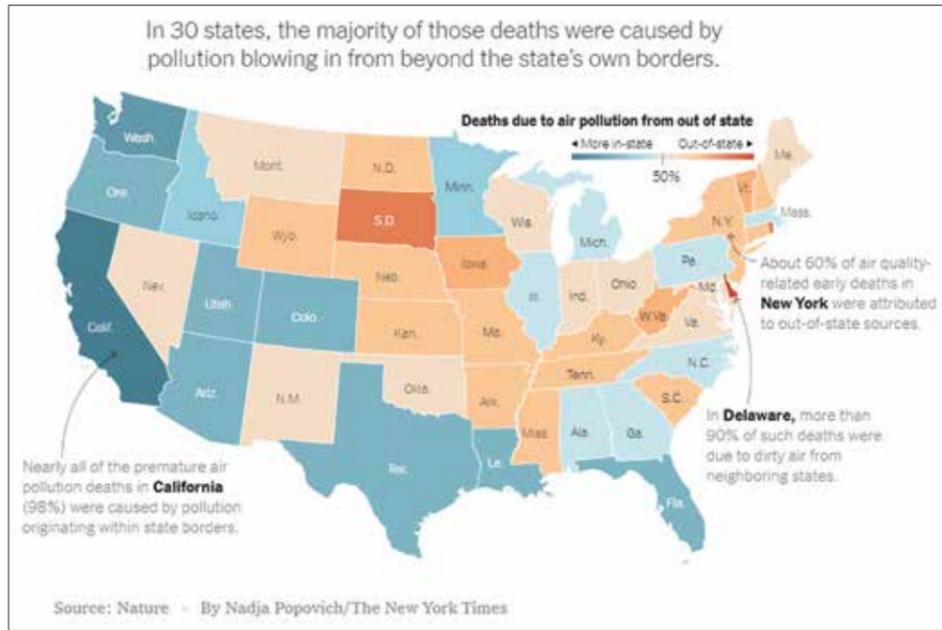


Executive Director William Janeway on Capitol Hill to advocate for the Adirondacks

## 👎 Setting the Standard for Bad Standards

The Trump administration has by far exceeded the most ruthless acts of any prior administration in tearing down and refusing to enforce federal standards that protect the environment and public health. Among the changes in 2019 were

decreased fuel economy standards for the auto industry, temporarily loosened enforcement of regulations for air polluters (if they are facing COVID-19-related challenges that impact monitoring and reporting), eased requirements for ensuring that climate change impacts are considered in the environmental reviews of most infrastructure projects, ceased enforcement of rules that require owners of energy companies and major construction projects to avoid killing rare wildlife and migratory birds, eased controls on coal plants' toxic ash, loosened rules governing mercury emissions; and advanced a rule that makes it harder for the Environmental Protection Agency to use scientific research to inform its decisions and rule-making. More than 1,500 households responded to the Adirondack Council's action alert on this issue this spring.



## Does Climate Really Affect the Environment?

In February, the Trump administration announced that it planned to weaken the landmark 1970 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and its provisions requiring environmental impact statements. A Council on Environmental Quality proposal would allow the review of environmental impact statements without consideration of projected impacts of greenhouse gas emissions and effects on the global climate. If adopted, the 47 pages of revisions would be the most substantive since the late 1970s. They would curtail environmental analyses, limit disclosures to the public, and expedite federal approvals for major projects, including fossil fuel pipelines.



Pharoah Lake Wilderness

## Waters of United States Recede

In April, the EPA and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers finalized a new definition of waters of the United States, weakening the requirements of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System and permits issued for dredge and fill under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). The CWA regulates the quality of water by making it illegal to discharge pollutants into navigable waters without a permit. In 2006, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that this act also included isolated wetlands. The Obama administration expanded the list of regulated "waters of the United States" in 2015 to include some seasonal tributaries and vernal pools that are important to amphibian and reptile reproduction. The Trump administration's rollbacks undo the Obama changes and reduce the scope of the law further than the 2006 decision. In May, NYS Attorney General Letitia James filed a lawsuit to overturn this.



Wood frogs and many other species of amphibians and reptiles reproduce in seasonal wetlands, also known as vernal pools

PHOTO: LARRY MASTER, MASTERIMAGES.ORG

## Statistical Shenanigans

In September 2019, EPA Administrator Andy Wheeler promoted three-year-old (2016) data on Twitter showing a modest dip in power plant emissions nationwide, while he was simultaneously working to weaken or eliminate a host of clean air rules. The Trump administration did not begin until 2017. ■

# OTHER AGENCIES

## ORDA: Clean Up Needed Before Big Games

To accommodate new sports facilities for the 2023 World University Games at Mt. Van Hoevenberg, the Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA) is proposing to amend the "Forever Wild" clause of the NYS Constitution. The amendment would also clean up several existing violations of the clause that date to before the 1980 Olympic Winter Games when ORDA was created. If approved by the NYS Legislature in 2020, the resolution would need to pass again in 2021 and be approved by the state's voters in November 2021. The Legislature must also approve "enabling legislation" to carry out tasks authorized by the amendment.

## Broadening the Region's Appeal

People of color are not often visiting the Adirondacks. With state and federal government investments of more than \$330,000, the Adirondack Experience and Adirondack Wild Center, two major attractions in the Park, are figuring out why and trying to reverse the trend. The effort is funded by nearly \$212,000 from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services and nearly \$130,000 from Empire State Development's Market New York Program. Both institutions have been leaders in seeking ways to make the Adirondack Park more welcoming to all visitors and residents.

## Keeping Eye on the Target

The Lake George Park Commission did an excellent job of continuing its mandatory boat inspection and decontamination program in the spring of 2020 despite a host of challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and economic



Olympic Sports Complex in Lake Placid, the bobsled run at Mt. Van Hoevenberg on the left and the ski jumps on the right

PHOTO: ADOBE STOCK

shutdown. Maintaining a network of trained professionals during a crisis is no easy task. The lake's ecological integrity depends on the Commission's success.

## Audit: Must Do Better to Stop Aquatic Invasives

In July, NYS Comptroller Tom DiNapoli reported that his audit of the Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) boat inspection system revealed many shortcomings in its ability to protect the lakes and rivers of the Adirondack Park from invasive and destructive non-native plants and animals. The auditors found stewards were not inspecting all watercraft launched or approaching boaters they saw leaving the waterbody to ensure their vessels had been properly cleaned. Auditors said required educational signage about invasive species was not always found at launch sites or was hard to find. They also said the DEC



DINAPOLI

was doing a poor job of identifying which construction projects would likely spread invasive species and monitoring those sites for compliance. The Adirondack Council has reported boater-compliance problems at the boat inspection station on the Northway and other sites. The DEC cooperated with the Comptroller on the audit.

## Lake Not-So-Placid Following Gunshots

In September 2019, the State Police frightened homeowners and students and faculty at a boarding school just outside Lake Placid when they held weapons practice at the nearby Mt. Van Hoevenberg biathlon facility. Unlike the quieter, single-shot .22 caliber target rifles used by biathletes, the troopers' high caliber weapons reverberated through the area, alarming those nearby by the unknown source of the gunfire. The Adirondack Council and others reminded the police that the NYS Constitution details how the biathlon facility is to be used exclusively for sports training and competition, and the police training was relocated. ■

# AWARDS



PHOTO © CARL HEILMAN II/WILD VISIONS INC.

## Conservationist of the Year Postponed

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, the Adirondack Council postponed its 2020 Conservationist of the Year ceremony and will present the award at Great Camp Sagamore in Raquette Lake in 2021.



PHOTO: BRIAN STYK

## Kaminsky Shows Leadership

During the summer of 2019, the Adirondack Council presented an award to Senate Environmental Conservation Committee Chairman Todd Kaminsky, D-Long Beach, for his outstanding first year of protecting the Adirondack Park and defending the integrity of the Adirondack Park Agency during the 2019 Legislative Session. The Senator exhibited both leadership and grace under pressure in negotiations over legislation and nominees for public office.

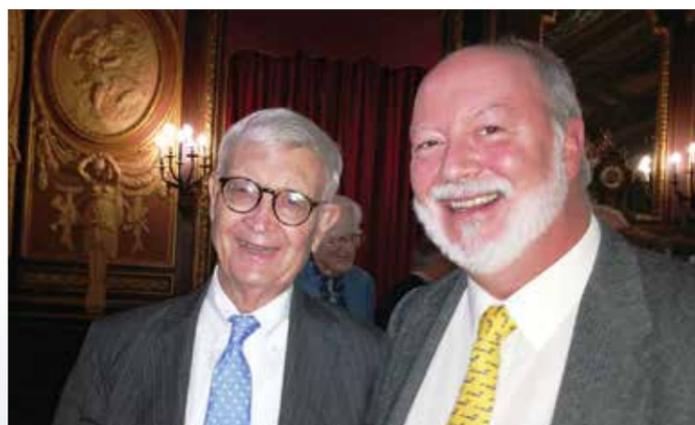


(L-R) Senate Environmental Conservation Committee Chairman Todd Kaminsky and Assembly Environmental Conservation Chairman Steve Englebright visit the Adirondack Park Agency office in Raybrook, NY

PHOTO: NANCIE BATTAGLIA

## After Three Decades, Semple to Semi-Retire

The Adirondack Council and 100 or so of our closest friends joined us in New York City to help honor New York Times editorial board member Robert B. Semple Jr. for his excellent editorial essays on Adirondack issues. For 30 years, Bob advised Governors and Presidents to take better care of the Adirondacks, acquire important conservation lands, protect the Park from acid rain, and reform the antiquated rules governing development. He and Adirondack Council Communications Director John Sheehan have been discussing Adirondack politics regularly since 1991. ■



(L-R) Renowned New York Times editorial board member Robert Semple and Adirondack Council Communications Director John Sheehan

# 2021 PRIORITIES



PHOTO LARRY MASTER, MASTERIMAGES.ORG

Federal and state elected and appointed government leaders will be making critical decisions in the year ahead that will affect the legacy of the Adirondacks for all time. Priorities for 2021 include:

### Preserve Wilderness

Complete and implement plans to address overuse, expand education, build infrastructure, pilot enforcement of Wilderness resource capacity limits and increase personnel, to protect natural resources, and secure community benefits.

### Stop Invasive Species

Achieve comprehensive boat inspection compliance Park-wide.

### Approve Environmental Agency Reforms

Increase funding, staffing, and oversight of the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Adirondack Park Agency, and update planning and conservation tools to better incentivize private land stewardship.

### Support More Vibrant Communities

Provide funds for planning, smart growth, communications, health care, jobs, housing, and recreation.

### Defend the NYS Constitution

Defend the integrity of the "Forever Wild" clause of the state constitution, and secure second passage of the "Environmental Bill of Rights" so voters may approve it in 2021. ■

### Win Conservation Funding

Reauthorize a \$3-billion Bond Act for water, climate, and overuse and fully allocate the \$300-million Environmental Protection Fund, plus \$1 billion for clean water, including funds for the Adirondack Park.

### Expand Park Diversity Equity and Inclusion Efforts

Plan and start to implement actions for a more welcoming, inclusive Adirondack Park that celebrates all kinds of diversity.

### Combat Climate Change and Acid Rain

Promote clean energy and continue implementation of the new climate law, expand renewable energy, restore federal protections against acid rain, and enhance research funding.

The Adirondack Council is committed to our mission, our values and these priorities. We will use the best available science and respect diverse views in order to achieve these results. We will employ our knowledge of the political process to be the leading environmental advocate for the Adirondacks. We work with partners, promote diversity, and find common ground when possible. We carry on the legacy of early conservation visionaries and ensure the Park is known and protected as a national treasure.

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## Adirondack Advocates Making a Difference

At a time when your voice is essential to protecting the legacy of the Adirondacks for future generations, YOU and other advocates responded. Advocates took action to preserve wilderness, address overuse, protect wildlife, reduce road salt and water pollution, stop EPA environmental policy rollbacks, and more! Over 17,000 individual connections with state and federal policymakers were made over the last year. THANK YOU!

Advocates gather for Adirondack Environmental Lobby Day at the state capitol pre-pandemic  
PHOTO: BEN BROUSSEAU, ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN CLUB

## 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](https://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.



Circle Car Decal or Bumper Sticker | \$5



## NEW! 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")



Canvas Tote Bag | \$15



## NEW! 2021 Forever Wild Calendar | \$14

12-month calendar featuring award-winning landscape photographer Carl Heilman II

Loon Logo Hats | \$20



Tri-Blend Tees | \$20

Shown in athletic gray, also available in evergreen, indigo, cranberry or coffee. Sizes: S, M, L, XL, 2XL