

ADIRONDACK VISION 2050



Project Achievements & Recent Progress

The initial planning and launch phases of the VISION 2050 project resulted in important deliverables and achievements. Working with the NY Natural Heritage Program, we completed an analysis and report on the recommendations of the Council's earlier 2020 VISION series. The report shows the many successes of land protection efforts over the past 40 years and key parcels that still warrant preservation through public or private actions. We also, with allies, transformed the way the state, town governments and partners are thinking, talking about, planning and funding actions to advance preservation of Adirondack Park Wilderness and address state land stewardship needs and overuse.

Focus on Future Park Preservation

During the last six months, the VISION project has focused on the area of *Management of the Park*, one of three subject areas of the project along with *Preserving Natural Communities*, and *Fostering Vibrant Communities*. To-date, we've invested in consulting with experts on the governance of the Adirondack Park and separately on preservation of the Park's public lands. Significant progress has been made, both in laying a path for the future, and in achieving important milestones in the short term.

Governance

In looking at the governance of the Adirondack Park and thinking about how to strengthen structures to lead to better outcomes for residents, visitors, and the natural world, interviews were conducted throughout the summer and fall of 2019. Experts ranged from original authors of the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) Act to past and present local government officials, to former APA Commissioners and staff, former Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) staff, environmentalists, and scientists. All provided valuable insights, which were compiled to be used in formulating the VISION project report.

Preserving & Stewarding Public Land

Several key events and projects took place, both to address the current challenges with Forest Preserve overuse and to look ahead to the future. First, the Council engaged with the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics (LNT) as part of a week-long event drawing attention to overuse in the High Peaks Wilderness. Second, as part of the VISION project, the Council brought Leave No Trace in as a consultant to look at ways to use education to reduce recreational impacts across the entire Adirondack Park. The culmination of this work was the creation of a report, *Managing Recreation-related impacts in the Adirondack Park and Building a Culture of Wildlands Stewardship*, that has been shared with the DEC and the High Peaks Strategic Working Group.

Implementation of the LNT recommendations has begun, including hosting a meeting of all Adirondack stewardship program directors to work on consistent educational messaging and creating a website with basic Leave No Trace and Adirondack Park information for all tourism entities to share and use. These efforts are already having a positive impact on overuse in the Adirondacks.

Looking Ahead

In the next 6-12 months, the VISION project will produce narratives providing an aspirational vision for the Adirondack Park for 2050. Expert and key stakeholder input will be sought in articulating goals to help achieve that vision through a series of workshops, tentatively scheduled for late summer or fall 2020. These workshops will help inform the final VISION report, which will include narratives and broad goals for each of the three project areas (Preserving Natural Communities, Fostering Vibrant Communities, Managing the Park). Additionally, over the next few months, final reports will be completed on Stewardship of Public Lands and on Addressing Climate Change within the Park.



Willie Janeway with Ben Lawhon of LNT and Seth Jones of Adirondack Mountain Club