



# CALL OF THE LOON

Adirondack Council Newsletter | Spring 2025

## Join Us! Forever Wild Celebration

*Honoring 50 Years of Adirondack Conservation and Advocacy*

**W**e are happy to announce our Forever Wild Celebration which will take place Saturday, July 19, 2025 (4pm - 7pm) on the beautiful shores of Lake George at the historic Silver Bay YMCA. This special, 50th anniversary event promises to be a time for connection, cocktails, and conservation.

Founded in 1975, the Adirondack Council is honoring the legacy that has helped shape the Adirondack Park, while continuing to look forward to a resilient future. We hope you will join us to celebrate the partnerships that have played a critical role in advocating for and conserving the

Adirondacks over the past five decades. Additionally, we will present Robert J. Kafin with a lifetime achievement award for his dedication to the Adirondack Park and recognize the leadership of other partners.

Enjoy good company, stunning scenery, heavy hors d'oeuvres, cocktails, live music and the camaraderie of Adirondack advocates. We hope to see you there!

**Please purchase event tickets by calling us at 877.873.2240 or online at: [donate.adirondackcouncil.org/FWCelebration25](https://donate.adirondackcouncil.org/FWCelebration25)**

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for Lobby Day

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

# Honoring History. Focused on Forever.



**Raul J. Aguirre**  
Executive Director

Dear Members and Friends,

**F**ifty years is a remarkable milestone – one that speaks to a legacy full of victories and setbacks, breakthroughs and challenges, and meaningful conservation outcomes since our founding in 1975. As we mark our 50th anniversary, it is important to take stock of our history and look ahead to the next 50 years of advocacy for the Park.

This moment is also about celebrating you – our dedicated supporters. Whether you've been with us as a staff member, board member, volunteer, donor, or member, your contributions have made our work possible. The Council's role as a catalyst for change in the Adirondack Park over the past half-century is a direct result of the passion and commitment of those who care deeply about this extraordinary place.

As I travel through the Adirondacks, I'm reminded – especially amid today's news headlines about deregulation and funding cuts – just how vital our work remains. At the national level, we are witnessing regulatory and political shifts at a scale and pace rarely seen before – developments that could undermine

hard won gains and have profound, long-term consequences for public lands, natural resources, and the people who advocate on their behalf.

Yes, these are serious and urgent challenges. They are also a powerful opportunity. For all of us who believe in using our voices, this is a generational moment, a call to action to speak up on behalf of the places we love and the communities that rely on them. We are entering a new era, one that demands renewed energy, shared responsibility, and collective resolve.

While the full impact of today's changes may take time to unfold, one thing is clear: our voice is more essential than ever. For half a century, we've defended what makes the Adirondack Park so special. This anniversary is not just a celebration – it's a reminder of why our work matters.

Let us stay vigilant, informed, and committed to the mission and vision of the Adirondack Council. We will honor that commitment, the legacies of key conservationists and organizations, and how far we have come together on July 19 at the Silver Bay YMCA. **We hope you will join us.**

With gratitude,

**Raul J. Aguirre**  
Executive Director

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# CAPITAL MATTERS

## State Budget Delivers Big Wins for the Adirondacks

The newly approved New York State budget delivers major investments in the Adirondacks, including a record \$425 million for the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) and \$500 million for clean water infrastructure and septic system replacement. The budget affirms the state's commitment to environmental protection and community resilience in the Park.

Highlights include \$2 million in funding for a climate and lake ecosystem study (SCALE), \$1 million for a carrying-capacity study on the Saranac Chain of Lakes, and \$2 million for a new African American history exhibit at the Adirondack Experience Museum. The Timbuctoo Institute, which connects urban high school students with environmental career pathways and an introduction to the Adirondacks, received \$1.675 million in the budget through a combination of EPF and SUNY funding. Forest Rangers achieved long-sought improvements to retirement benefits, reducing their retirement term from 25 to 20 years and removing the age cap, bringing them in line with other law enforcement officers. Additional funding includes \$42 million for open space protection, \$50 million for state land stewardship, and \$10 million for Adirondack/Catskill visitor safety and wilderness protection. The Adirondack Park Agency also secured \$10 million toward its new headquarters.

The Adirondack Council praised the state's leaders for prioritizing the region's environmental and cultural health during a challenging budget year.

### Adirondack Park Lobby Day Success

In late February, more than 150 supporters of the Adirondacks gathered in Albany for the annual Adirondack Park Lobby Day. A collaborative effort that involves 20+ partner organizations, the event is structured so that lawmakers in Albany can hear directly from stakeholders who are working to create a better Adirondack Park. The gathering included Timbuctoo Climate and Careers Institute leaders, and staff from the Adirondack Council, Adirondack Mountain Club, and Adirondack Wild. In addition to providing this unique opportunity for volunteers to lobby and educate lawmakers, it's a powerful showing with attendees sporting the now-classic red and black plaid scarves that have become synonymous with the lobbying effort. Attendees met with more than 80 elected officials and their staff to advocate for state funding of water and air quality research, diversity programs, clean water infrastructure, Forest Preserve protection, and more.



*"My favorite part of the time that I spent with Timbuctoo was the week we spent in the Adirondack mountains. The change of pace and environment grounded me, and allowed me to build a connection that I rarely get to have back in Brooklyn."*

*- Umi, Timbuctoo Alumna who spoke at Lobby Day*



SCALE research in the Adirondack Park

### Assembly Recognizes 50th Anniversary

During the annual Adirondack Park Lobby Day, Assemblyman Billy Jones (D-Chateaugay) introduced a bipartisan resolution honoring the Adirondack Council's 50th anniversary. The resolution was cosponsored by members of both parties from across New York, including Assemblyman Matt Simpson (R-Queensbury), and Assembly Environmental Conservation Chair Deborah Glick (D-Manhattan). In addition to passing the resolution, Jones invited and recognized members of the Council's Board of Directors and Executive Director Rocci Aguirre on the Assembly floor. The full Assembly resolution can be read at [AdirondackCouncil.org](http://AdirondackCouncil.org).



# HISTORY OF ROAD SALT ADVOCACY



Since the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, New York has used salt to keep roads 'safe' during the winter. The harmful effects of excessive road salt on clean water, infrastructure, and public health are well documented. Thanks to statewide advocacy and technological advances, winter road maintenance has improved, and less salt is now being applied – though there is still progress to be made in reducing road salt pollution.

**1987:**

The Adirondack Council's State of the Park

Report commends the NYS Dept. of Transportation for its design modifications on the Route 74 reconstruction project that prevented road salt and silt contamination of the streams flowing into Paradox Lake.



**1992:**

The Council supports a \$6-million appropriation by U.S. Rep. Gerald Solomon, R-Glens Falls, for Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's new Darren Freshwater Institute in Bolton Landing, to conduct research into the impacts of acid rain and highway runoff (road salt and silt) on the ecosystems of the Lake George/Lake Champlain basin.

**2001:**

Assemblymember Richard Brodsky, D-Elmsford, is presented the Council's Conservationist of the Year Award, in part for his sponsorship of legislation that would create a state Road Salt Task Force to study how to reduce salt use near Adirondack lakes and streams.



**2003:**

The Council supports legislation proposed by Sen. EnCon Chair Carl Marcellino, R-Syosset, that would reduce road salt use in the Adirondacks in favor of less destructive alternative deicing measures.

**2005:**

The Council supports legislation sponsored by Sen. Hugh Farley, R-Schenectady, for a municipal salt storage facility in Northville to prevent contamination of local drinking water and the Great Sacandaga Lake. The Council also supported state grant funding for a study of salt contamination in the Upper and Lower Cascade Lakes, conducted by Clarkson University. The study discovered a dead zone at the bottom of both, where heavier salt water did not mix with surface waters in spring and fall and therefore lost its oxygen content, rendering it unlivable for most aquatic organisms.



Cascade Lakes along Route 73 between Keene and Lake Placid



**2007:**

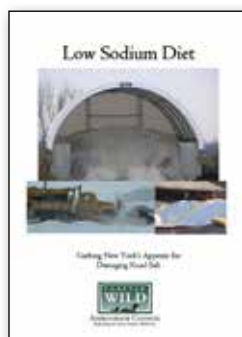
The Council's State of the Park Report

applauds the Town of Lake George and Warren County for a \$4.2-million investment in a highway runoff prevention program that converted the former Gaslight Village amusement park into a wetland designed to remove silt, road salt and other contaminants from streams flowing into Lake George.



**2009:**

The Council published the "**Low Sodium Diet**" report, analyzing winter road maintenance practices, the negative impacts of salt pollution, and recommending alternatives to reduce road salt usage.



**2017:**

An Adirondack Watershed Institute study of 358 private wells across the Adirondack Park reveals that road salt used for de-icing was contaminating groundwater and seeping into private wells at an alarming rate.

**2019:**

The Council collaborated with state legislators and partners to draft and advance the **Randy Preston Road Salt Reduction Act**, aiming to establish the Adirondack Road Salt Reduction Task Force and a pilot program to reduce road salt usage while maintaining road safety.



**2020:**

The **Randy Preston Road Salt Reduction Act** was signed into law, officially creating the Adirondack Road Salt Reduction Task Force to develop strategies for reducing road salt application in the region.

**2023:**

The Adirondack Road Salt Reduction Task Force released its final report, containing recommendations that, if implemented, would significantly reduce road salt pollution entering Adirondack waters.



**2025:**

The Council urges the state to develop an action and implementation plan for the Adirondack Road Salt Reduction Task Force report recommendations. During state budget testimony, the Council calls for the creation of dedicated "salt czar" staff position in the Governor's office to lend support and accountability.

## ACT NOW! Safeguard Clean Water

Send an email and urge policymakers to support new legislation (A.4481-A/S.6976-A) that would establish the New York Road Salt Reduction Council and help develop common-sense limits on overall road salt use while ensuring safe conditions for drivers.

**ADD YOUR VOICE:**  
**[ADIRONDACKCOUNCIL.ORG/TAKEACTION](https://ADIRONDACKCOUNCIL.ORG/TAKEACTION)**



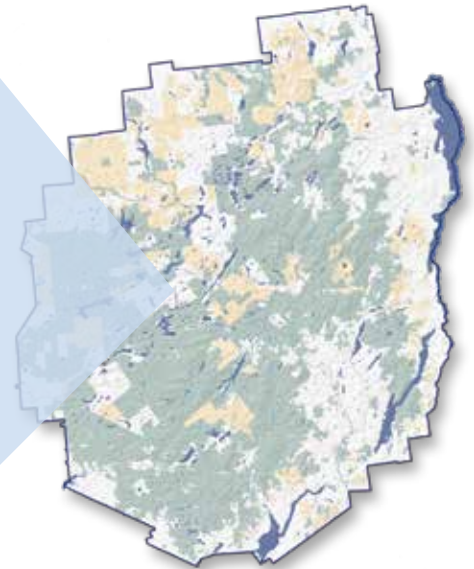
# CONSERVATION MATTERS

## APA Slows Down its Plan for Motor Vehicles in Wilderness

The Adirondack Park Agency (APA) continues to review more than 1,000 public comments it received in December 2024 opposing its plan to amend the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (SLMP) and change a key definition that would allow loopholes for increased motorized recreational access to motor-free Wilderness Areas. At the time, the APA said they planned to amend the SLMP as soon as January to allow Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices (OPDMDs) to be used in Wilderness and wilderness-like areas the APA previously deemed too sensitive for vehicle use. Powered wheelchairs made specifically to assist people with disabilities are allowed anywhere on the Adirondack Forest Preserve. As currently defined, OPDMDs would include all-terrain vehicles, cars and trucks. In addition to public opposition, the APA received a joint letter opposing the amendment from seven Adirondack conservation organizations, including the Adirondack Council. The APA also received letters opposing the plan from state Senate Environmental Conservation Committee Chair Pete Harckham (D-Peekskill) and from the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, and Asian Caucus of the NYS Legislature, representing more than 70 of its 212 members.



WATERS AND WILDLANDS OF THE 36,000 ACRE WHITNEY ESTATE | PHOTO © CARL HEILMAN II/WILD VISIONS INC.



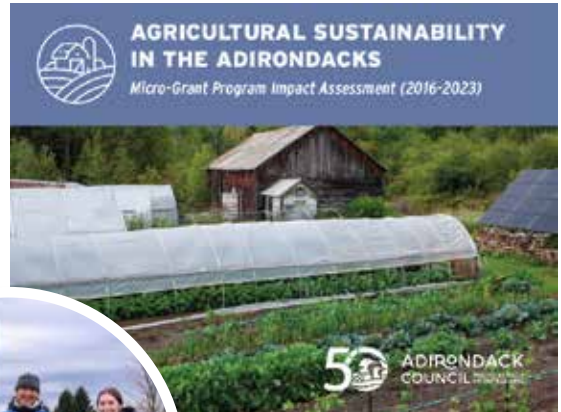
## 36,000 Acre Whitney Estate Sale Would Benefit Town

After the untimely death of its former owner, John Hendrickson, it was announced that the proceeds of the sale of the 36,000-acre Whitney Estate in Long Lake will go to the Town. It presents the Hamilton County community with an unprecedented and exciting opportunity when the sale is complete. The Council is working to ensure that there are strong conservation outcomes for this property, which may include a combination of private ownership, conservation easements and/or state ownership. The Whitney Property was identified as critical habitat in our 1989 Vision 2020 report, and remains a priority of Governor Hochul and the Department of Environmental Conservation. With 32 lakes and ponds and its close proximity to vital wilderness areas, it is crucial that any final conservation plan ensures the protection of these ecologically rich landscapes.



## Micro-Grant Impact Report

This year marks the 10th year of the Council's Adirondack Farm & Value-Added Producers Micro-Grant program, which has been strengthened by the Essex Farm Institute (EFI) since it joined the Council in 2018. To celebrate this anniversary, the Council and EFI have produced an in-depth report that captures the environmental and financial impacts of the program from 2016-2023. Through farmer feedback, site visits, and analysis, the EFI report offers a comprehensive look at the effects of the program and compiles almost a decade worth of data and feedback. Grants have been used to increase energy efficiency, reduce the use of fossil fuels, increase business and sales, and help farmers save time and money within their operations. Supporting sustainable working lands is good for the environment, communities and people of the Adirondacks.



L-R: Farm Advocate Dillon Klepetar, Norman Ridge Farmstand owner and micro-grant recipient Chris Neill and Sustainable Farm Intern Martha DePoy

## Clean Water Position Sought

This summer, the Adirondack Council will hire a new Clean Water and Community Outreach Specialist to carry forward the efforts begun by Blake Neumann in the Raquette River and Black River watersheds of the western Adirondack Park. The new advocate will continue to develop relationships with local communities and build ongoing support from the state government to improve water protection efforts and policies. They will seek federal, state, and local funding to protect source waters, prevent contaminated stormwater runoff into lakes and rivers, and help communities afford multi-million-dollar wastewater treatment facilities. The job will also entail work to diminish the damaging impacts of road salt, invasive species, and pollution. Learn more at: [AdirondackCouncil.org](http://AdirondackCouncil.org).

## Adirondack Solar Energy Development

Solar energy in the Adirondack Park presents unique opportunities and challenges. Despite the Park's limited siting potential due to interconnection, topography, and minimal shading, strategic solar planning can and should help harness renewable energy for the benefit of local communities while protecting and minimizing impacts to the Park's farms and forests. The Adirondack Council reviews solar projects subject to the Adirondack Park Agency's review. When the Council looks at a project, we consider several different factors to determine if/how we weigh in. These factors include: scale of project, with a focus on projects over five megawatts, protection of intact forests and wetlands, reduction of carbon emissions, minimization of visual impacts, protection of threatened or endangered species, and other environmental impacts, as well as benefits to local communities. Ideal projects prioritize brownfields, capped landfills, and disturbed lands over prime agricultural lands or forested areas.



Saranac Lake Community Solar Project





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## Fueling the Next 50 Years of Conservation and Advocacy

**F**or 50 years, the Adirondack Council's conservation, advocacy, and education efforts have been powered by generous supporters. Thanks to you and members across the country, we've remained 100% privately funded and independent since 1975. You are vital to protecting Adirondack water, air, and wildlands for future generations.

To celebrate this milestone, we invite you to make a meaningful gift. **Please consider a few, fun ways to help celebrate our anniversary and fuel our next 50 years of Adirondack Park conservation and advocacy:**



- **Give 50 more** - add an extra **\$50** or increase your next gift by 50% (e.g., a \$200 donation becomes \$300)
- **Give 50 shares** of appreciated securities
- Leave a lasting legacy and **include the Adirondack Council in your will or estate plans** (a bequest that multiplies your annual support 50X)
- **Become a sustaining member** or increase your current monthly gift
- **Purchase a \$50 raffle ticket** for a chance to win a Hornbeck Boats New Trick 12 canoe (see details on envelope inside)
- Show off your support with the **purchase of a 50th anniversary mug (\$28), t-shirt (\$30), or trucker hat (\$28)** from our online store. Buy a matching one for someone who loves the Adirondacks!



**THANK YOU FOR KEEPING THE ADIRONDACKS FOREVER WILD - FOR EVERYONE!**