



CALL OF THE LOON

Adirondack Council Newsletter | Spring 2021



Photo © Carl Heilman II/Wild Visions, Inc.

Wilderness Preservation Actions Begin In Earnest

In March, the New York State High Peaks Wilderness Overuse Advisory Group issued final recommendations calling for immediate actions to manage overuse to preserve wilderness and protect public safety in the Adirondack High Peaks Wilderness Area.

Created in 2019, this group was comprised of state agency appointees, local businesses, local government, wilderness experts, and tourism organizations. The Council's former Deputy Director Rocci Aguirre and staff from the Adirondack Mountain Club were members. The Council applauds actions that have already been taken to enact some of these recommendations and urges continued efforts. The consensus recommendations cover topics from specific suggestions for education efforts already underway to long-ranging plans to build infrastructure, stakeholder engagement, and increase funding and staffing across the High Peaks.

The Council appreciates that the state has recognized the overuse problem, initiated a response, and released comprehensive recommendations that prioritize the protection of wilderness and public safety as paramount.

The recommendations recognize the unacceptable physical and social impacts of overuse on wilderness, visitors, and communities. One key recommendation is to use the federal Visitor Use Management Framework (VUMF) as the preferred tool or process to coordinate actions, address overuse, and manage for capacity limits. This recommendation is a commitment to fix problems comprehensively rather than in a piecemeal fashion.

The Adirondack Park Agency and Department of Environmental Conservation have recently released a draft Management Guidance on Visitor Use Management and Wildlands Monitoring of Forest Preserve Lands

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

Emerging Opportunities



William C. Janeway
Executive Director
@WillieJaneway

Dear Members and Friends,

The big hemlock trees in an Adirondack Wilderness area are perhaps 300 years old. I love these trees and try to hug one, but can't get my arms around it. This tree, as with the others around it, and nearby waters are protected, but they are not safe.

We are emerging from the worst of the pandemic, an economic shock, and an administration that attacked science, clean water, clean air, and environmental laws, including those that protect the Adirondacks and trees like those hemlocks. Together with partners and our dedicated brothers and sisters leading and working at the state's environmental agencies and serving in the legislature, we moved past this set of threats.

But we still face other threats, including climate change, the overuse crisis, air and water pollution, new invasive species, over-development, underfunded and understaffed state agencies, and outdated or ignored legal protections.

As the public's love for, the popularity of, and visitation to the Adirondack Park set new records, the cracks in Park protections became more obvious. And the long-standing need to foster more diverse, welcoming, safe, and vibrant communities here and beyond received needed attention.

I am optimistic. We were tested. We emerged stronger than ever.

During these times, the Adirondacks served as a refuge, physically, for millions. For millions more who couldn't visit, they took comfort in just knowing the Park was here. We have been reminded that the world-class clean water, clean air, and wildlands of the Adirondack Park are truly valued. And our elected and public agency partners heard that and are responding.

The Adirondack Council team is starting to return to our offices across the Park and in Albany, partially scaling back remote work. As we emerge, we find ourselves in a unique moment in time with opportunities to create a better Park for wildlife and people. Thanks to you, we have a team and the resources to act aggressively on this. And we will, preserving those hemlocks, and keeping the Adirondacks forever wild, for everyone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Willie'.

William C. Janeway
Executive Director



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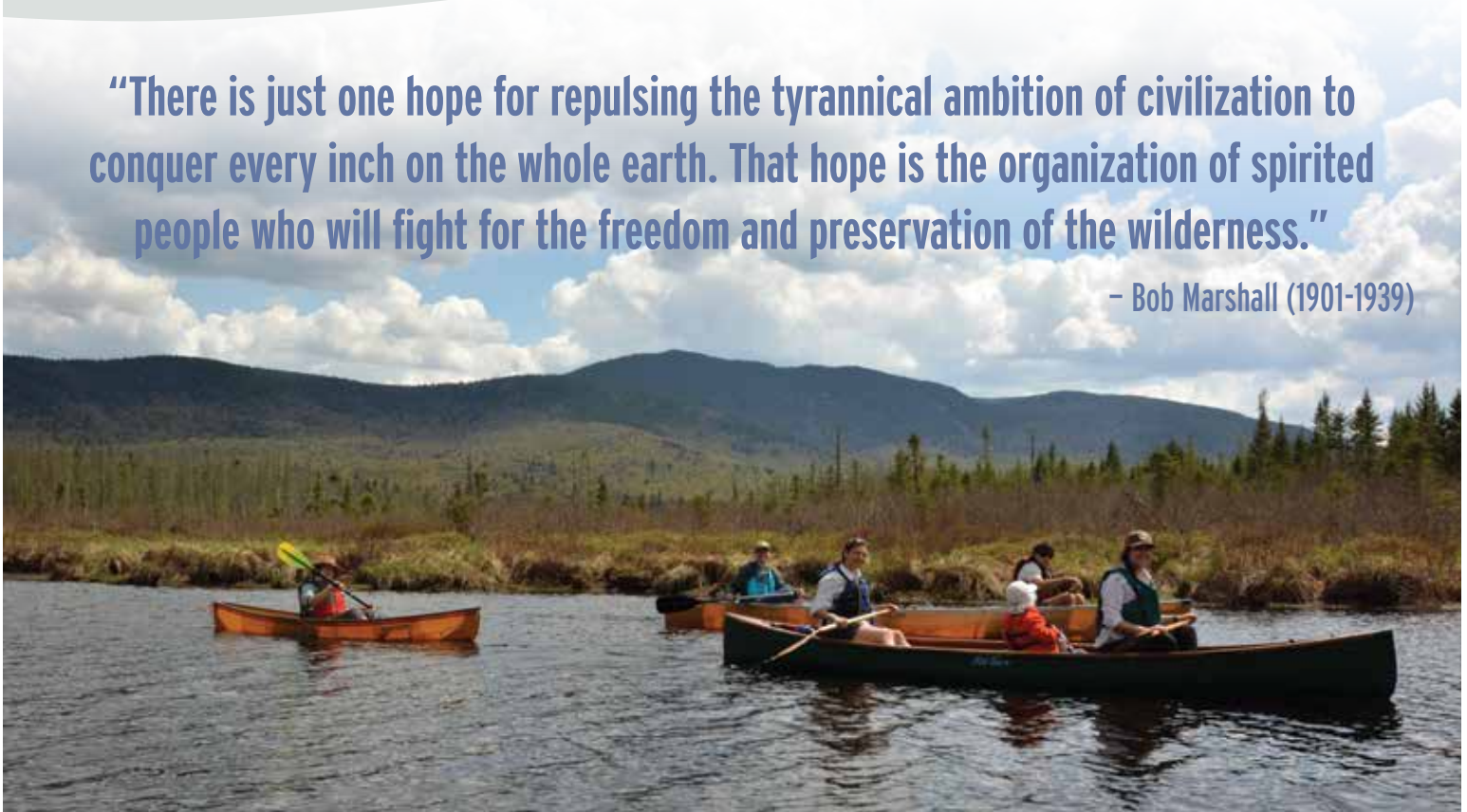
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“There is just one hope for repulsing the tyrannical ambition of civilization to conquer every inch on the whole earth. That hope is the organization of spirited people who will fight for the freedom and preservation of the wilderness.”

– Bob Marshall (1901-1939)





Historic Budget Funding for Clean Water, Wilderness, and Communities

The New York State Budget was approved on April 7, authorizing new funding to address overuse, pay for water infrastructure, increase broadband access, and fight climate change. The Governor and Legislature agreed to record funding to address overuse, with \$1.55 million for the Adirondacks and Catskills, to implement recommendations from the High Peaks Wilderness Overuse Advisory Group, including the operation of an Essex County shuttle system,

placement of trailhead educators and porta john facilities at popular trailheads, and the hiring of outside expertise to support new state efforts to implement a Visitor Use Management Framework, a process that has been used at many of our country's busiest national parks.

A \$3 billion environmental Bond Act awaits voter approval in November of 2022. If approved, the "Restore Mother Nature" bond act will create thousands of jobs while protecting

Adirondack communities from the impacts of future climate change-induced storms like tropical storms Irene and Lee (2011). Additionally, Adirondack communities benefited from new legislation tasking the Public Service Commission with mapping the availability, affordability, and reliability of broadband internet service in New York State. This important achievement was a step toward ensuring universal broadband access in the Adirondacks.

NYS BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS - FY 2021-22



\$300 MILLION ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FUND

- \$1.55 million in funding for Adirondack and Catskill Visitor Safety and Wilderness Protection
- \$250,000 for the Adirondack Diversity Initiative



\$1 MILLION FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY ACT



\$500 MILLION IN WATER INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT GRANT FUNDING



\$3-BILLION "RESTORE MOTHER NATURE" BOND ACT *(Goes to voters in Nov. 2022)*

- \$550 million - Open Space Land Conservation and Recreation
- \$700 million - Climate Change Mitigation
- \$1 billion - Habitat Restoration and Flood Risk Reduction
- \$550 million - Water Quality Improvement and Resilient Infrastructure



Aquatic Invasive Species Law Hangs in the Balance

The current law asking boaters to take reasonable precautions to clean, drain, and dry their boat before launching in New York State waters is set to expire June 1, 2021, presenting an opportunity to strengthen the law as part of its reauthorization. The Adirondack Park has a robust and well-staffed system of voluntary aquatic invasive species inspection and decontamination stations strategically located throughout the Park. * The voluntary nature of the current law has resulted in the inspection of only a fraction of the boats entering Adirondack waters each year, leaving many remaining pristine lakes vulnerable.

Environmental groups have written NYS Senators and Assemblymembers in support of strengthened legislation that makes the current state law permanent, while also allowing the Department of Environmental Conservation to order inspections and decontaminations in the Adirondack Park, and to place a seal between the boat and trailer to show that the boat has been inspected. Currently, 17 states have the statutory authority to inspect watercraft for aquatic invasive species contamination. Furthermore, 14 states currently have the statutory authority to decontaminate watercraft suspected of harboring invasive species.

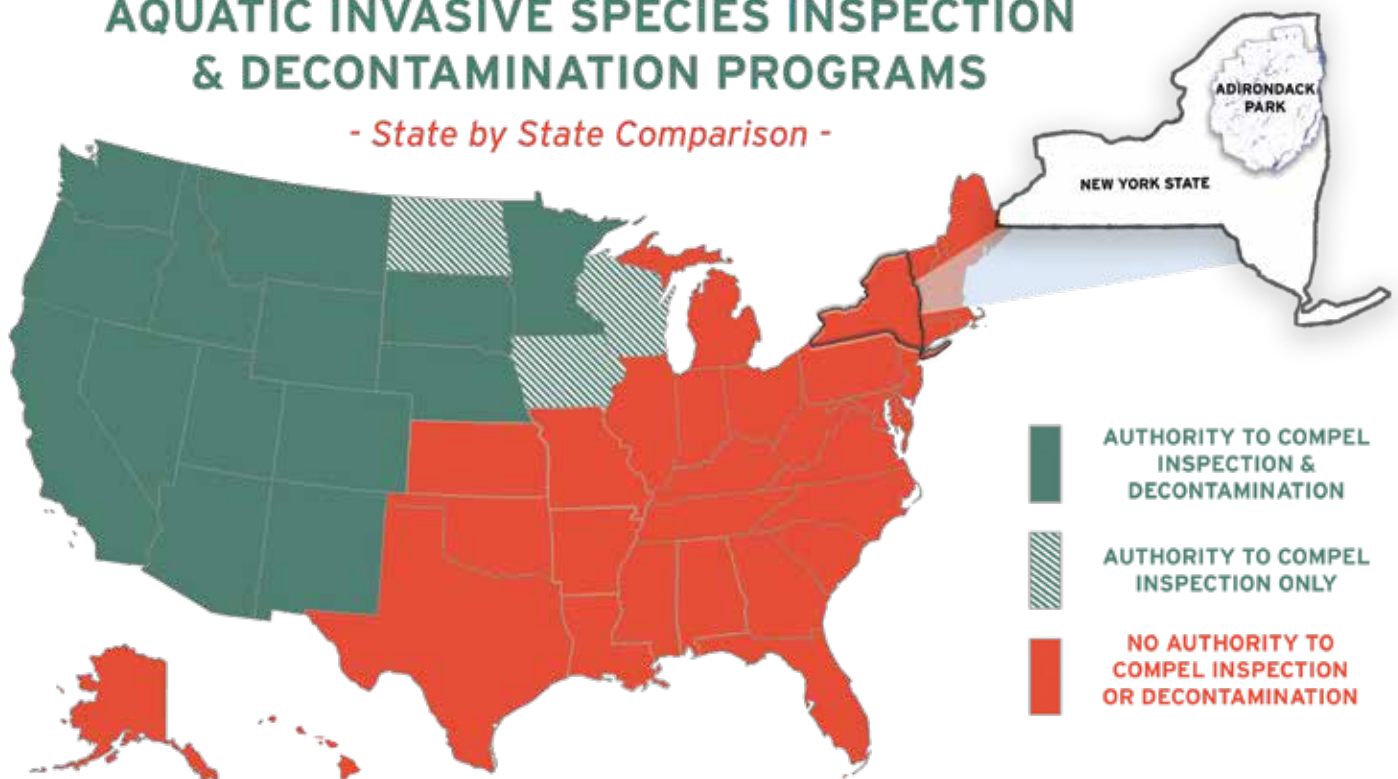
Clean water is the lifeblood of its residents and visitors, and important to the people and the economy of the entire state. Clean water is a central attraction that brings more than 12 million visitors to the region, benefiting hotels, restaurants, marinas, fishing guides & outfitters, and retail stores.

The legislative session is scheduled to conclude on June 10, leaving lawmakers with little time to resolve this outstanding matter. Failure to act will leave Adirondack waters in a vulnerable state.

* Lake George and Loon Lake in Warren County have mandatory aquatic invasive species boat inspection requirements.

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES INSPECTION & DECONTAMINATION PROGRAMS

- State by State Comparison -



IN & ABOUT THE PARK

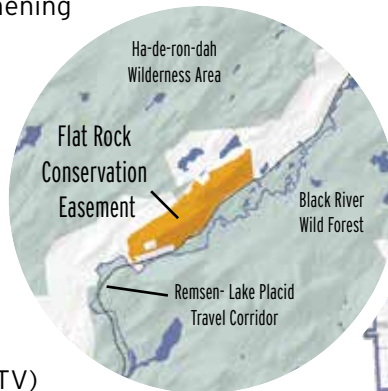
1. New York's Highest Court Saves Forest Preserve

In May, the New York State Court of Appeals ruled in a 4-2 decision that the Department of Environmental Conservation may not build a new class of snowmobile trails on the Adirondack Forest Preserve without permission from the voters through a Constitutional Amendment. The court said that the thousands of trees proposed for removal to accommodate wider, flatter trails would constitute an unlawful destruction of the public's timber, which is expressly forbidden under the "Forever Wild" clause of the NYS Constitution. The Adirondack Council submitted a friend of the court brief in support of Protect the Adirondacks, which filed the successful lawsuit. The Council filed two similar suits, starting in 2010, which were dismissed as "unripe" because the tree-cutting had not yet begun.



2. New Recreation Management Plan for Flatrock Conservation Easement

The Council submitted comments to the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) with suggestions for strengthening an overall good Recreation Management Plan for Flatrock Conservation Easement, located in the Town of Webb. The Council supports the DEC's inclusion of informational kiosks with responsible recreation messaging at several new parking areas, as well as construction of a new lean-to for people with disabilities. However, the Flatrock Conservation Easement (511-acres) borders the popular Remsen-Lake Placid travel corridor which makes illegal all-terrain vehicle (ATV) trespass a concern. The Council continues to advocate for a comprehensive solution to address illegal ATV use throughout the Park.



3. APA Disappoints With Subdivision Approval

In May, the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) approved the Woodward Lake subdivision located in the towns of Mayfield and Northampton. The project will subdivide approximately 1,170 acres of Resource Management and Rural Use lands, the most protective private land classifications, into over 30 building lots that will be concentrated around Woodward Lake. The Council opposed this development for probable impacts to the shoreline, habitat fragmentation, resource disturbance, and more. As the test case for the APA's large-scale subdivision application, the project does not align with the permit's intent to protect open space, wildlife, and habitat resources. The approval of the subdivision reinforces the need for state-level conservation design legislation.





4. Updated Regulations for Trout Fishing

Earlier this year, the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) approved new regulations regarding trout fishing in New York. The rule changes are generally positive, and the DEC's desire to simplify regulations so that angling can be more accessible is to be lauded. The new rules simplified more than 20 separate regulations and should be easier for the public to understand. However, the new rules would also allow trout fishing year-round, not just in the traditional season of April 1 through mid-October, where there are daily limits on the number of fish anglers can harvest. While this period is catch-and-release only, and artificial lures must be used, this will add pressure to trout populations and is cause for concern.

5. Ticonderoga Solar Project Approved - Benson Mines Solar Announcement

Solar development is increasing in the Adirondack Park. Within the last few months, the Adirondack Park Agency has approved three 5-megawatt solar projects located on agricultural lands in the Towns of Ticonderoga and Moriah. In April, Governor Cuomo announced that Benson Mines in St. Lawrence County will become the site of a 20-megawatt solar project. Through a land-lease agreement with the New York State Energy Research and Development Agency, 130 acres of Benson Mines, Inc. land will be used for the development. Once constructed, the solar project will provide electricity to around 4,500 homes. The Council supports this project.



Benson Mines, Star Lake | Photo © Carl Heilman II/Wild Visions, Inc.

6. Keeping Human Waste Out of Waters

With local laws already on the books in several towns, Warren County is moving to enact a county-wide law requiring existing on-site wastewater treatment (septic) systems to be inspected before a home is sold, given away, or transferred. Current state law requires inspection only at the time of construction. When these systems are working, they break down wastes before they can reach lakes or rivers, or percolate into ground waters. The Warren County law would only apply to properties on the shores of Lake George, Schroon Lake, Schroon River, Brant Lake, Loon Lake, Lake Luzerne, and the Hudson River. Individual towns may elect to opt out. The towns of North Elba, Inlet, Chester, Bolton, and Queensbury already have these transfer laws in place.

Brant Lake | Photo © Carl Heilman II/Wild Visions, Inc.



Conservation Team Additions Welcomed

Megan Phillips was hired early this year as Vice President for Conservation, replacing Raul “Rocci” Aguirre. Megan has more than a decade of experience in the conservation field, most recently working as Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s Senior Policy Advisor for Energy and the Environment, where she oversaw 12 state agencies and authorities and implemented the administration’s policy initiatives.



Photo: Nancie Battaglia

Megan Phillips, Vice President for Conservation

Megan also brings experience in field and lab work, and holds Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in conservation biology and water resources management.

Jackie Bowen returned to the Adirondack Council assuming the role as Associate Conservation Director after a brief interlude at a regional non-profit. Jackie previously worked at the Council as Conservation Associate for several years. She now takes on greater responsibility liaising with state agencies like the Adirondack Park Agency and the Department of Environmental



Jackie Bowen, Associate Director of Conservation

Conservation and with an internal management role as well. She is also increasing the Council’s focus on climate change.

Wilderness Preservation Actions

(continued from page 1.)

in the Adirondack Park. This document incorporates many of the key pieces of the federal VUMF, and is a tremendous step forward. The Council believes that greater clarity around stakeholder engagement in the process and the engagement of a third-party expert facilitator would strengthen this guidance further. Both were key recommendations in the Advisory Group report.

The Council and generous donors have offered to assist with and help fund a public-private partnership for this initiative. Other recommendations include a pilot reservation system, currently in place at the Adirondack Mountain Reserve (AMR), supporting green infrastructure; supporting social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts; using science and best management practices to influence decisions; using an established methodology to monitor and respond to resource conditions; committing to a transparent process; addressing parking and pedestrian safety along the Route 73 corridor, creating a pilot shuttle service, adding new portable toilets, increasing

support for steward programs and education efforts including “Leave No Trace” principles; and securing a commitment by the state for necessary funding to inventory, maintain, and rebuild trails.

The Council commends the members of the Wilderness Overuse Advisory Group for their work. The work now falls to all of us to implement the rest of these recommendations.





Micro-Grants Benefit Farms & Producers

On Earth Day, the Adirondack Council awarded 21 micro-grants totaling \$29,601 to local farmers and value-added producers, to build a climate-friendly local economy in the Adirondack Park. Value-added producers develop new, lightly processed products (like pickles, jams, and bread) from raw agricultural products (like fruit, grains, and vegetables).

Awarded projects included portable solar-powered fencing for rotational grazing, composting units for local food waste recycling, an electric-assist cargo-bike, cover cropping, energy-efficient equipment, and more. Supporting projects that adapt and mitigate the impacts

of climate change helps preserve clean water, clean air, wildlife, and communities in the Adirondacks.

In the last six years, the micro-grant program has awarded \$158,997 to 88 local farmers and small business owners in nearly every corner of the Park who want to reduce their environmental impact. Last year, Taylor DeFayette of Oregon Flats Farm in Saranac purchased an electric tiller with their micro-grant funds.

The successful micro-grant program has been made possible by the generous support of the Klipper Family Fund and other donors.

“The Adirondack Council micro-grant allowed us to try something new without having to pay out of pocket. It [the electric tiller] has truly been a game changer, better for the environment and far better for us.”

- Taylor DeFayette,
Oregon Flats Farm in Saranac, NY



Photo: Ben Stechschulte



PLAN ON FOREVER

Ensure the Adirondacks forever benefit from your generosity.

Photo: Nancie Battaglia

When you make an estate gift to the Adirondack Council, your gift becomes part of the *Forever Wild Fund* creating a lasting legacy and voice for Adirondack Park protection.

TO LEARN MORE, CONTACT:

Debbie Pastore, Development Director | 1.518.873.2240 Ext 106 | dpastore@adirondackcouncil.org

SUPPORTING THE COUNCIL



You Can Be a Fundraiser!

Did you know that anyone can organize an online fundraiser for the Adirondack Council? You may have seen friends on Facebook organizing fundraisers to celebrate events like a birthday, graduation, anniversary, or wedding. We're here to tell you that it is a simple way to help support Adirondack conservation advocacy. Facebook does not charge any fees for donations to nonprofits, and all donations will go directly to the Council. It is easy, we promise!



Don't have Facebook? No problem! Visit us online at www.donate.adirondackcouncil.org/fundraisers, and click *Create a Fundraiser* to get started

From a desktop or mobile device:

- Log-in to your Facebook account
- Type in "Fundraisers" in the Search Bar
- Click on the Facebook Shortcuts Fundraisers link
- On mobile, click Raise Money and then select nonprofit, on desktop Click Raise money for nonprofit
- Choose the Adirondack Council as the nonprofit
- A new fundraiser page will be created and you can set your fundraising amount, currency, and update any text for your page
- Click create and share with your Facebook friends!

All fundraisers on Facebook are public, and only people on Facebook can donate. Questions? Call Amanda Birchenough, Associate Development Director at 518.918.4198 or email abirchenough@adirondackcouncil.org.

The Park Matters

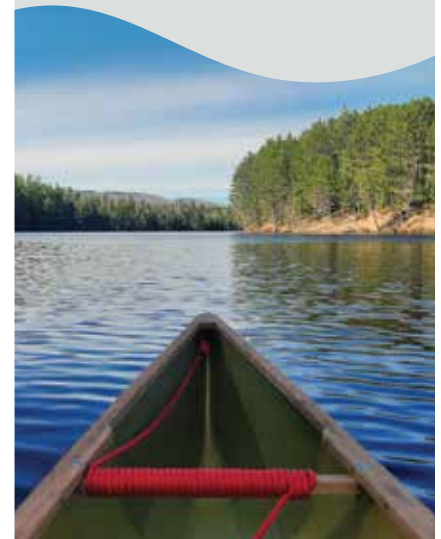
"We are well into the second century of the Adirondack Park. What better time to act than now to make this the true park it has the potential to be, to ensure that the Adirondacks will forever be a wild island of hope for New Yorkers and the world, and to serve as a global model for integrated land use and conservation."

- Gary Randorf (1937 - 2019),
The Adirondacks - Wild Island of Hope



Become an Advocate!

Speak up for the Adirondacks and make a difference in helping preserve this national treasure for generations to come.

Send an email to policymakers or sign a petition on our Take Action page at AdirondackCouncil.org



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2021 Virtual Forever Wild Day & Annual Members' Meeting

Join us on Friday, July 9, 2021 @ 12:00pm via ZOOM

Please join us virtually on Friday, July 9 for our Forever Wild Day & Annual Members' Meeting and celebrate our 2021 Conservationist of the Year recipient Barbara L. Glaser and the Clarence Petty Intern Program.

You will also get to meet new staff, dive into a few of our conservation initiatives, and play your important role in the Annual Member Meeting to review the Adirondack Council finances and vote for the slate of Board of Directors for the organization.



Barbara Glaser, second from left, with Adirondack Council Clarence Petty Interns at the 2019 Forever Wild Day

EVENT SCHEDULE

- 11:45am | Registration
- 12:00pm | Welcome - State of the Park
- 12:30pm | Conservationist of the Year Award - Barbara L. Glaser
- 12:45pm | Members' Meeting
- 1:10pm | Q & A with Executive Director William C. Janeway

Register online at AdirondackCouncil.org or look for your invitation in the mail.

Register for the Annual Members' Meeting or make a donation of \$75 or more to receive a **FREE "Recreate Responsibly" bandana** with helpful tips on ways to minimize your impact on the environment.

