



CALL OF THE LOON

Adirondack Council Newsletter | Spring 2024



Wildlife Crossings at a Crossroads

Hundreds of Adirondack Council supporters acted this spring to help ensure that a bill, which was too good not to pass, made its way to the governor's desk. The Wildlife Crossing Act, a win-win for people and the Forest Preserve, successfully passed both houses.

The Wildlife Crossing Act directs the NYS Department of Transportation to identify and prioritize places along New York's roadways where wildlife crossings would be most beneficial. A wildlife crossing helps animals of all sizes - from moose to salamanders - safely traverse the roads that cross wildlife habitat. From large bridges to strategically placed culverts, wildlife crossings can take on a wide variety of shapes and sizes, but each will help restore and protect habitat connectivity for our wild neighbors.

The Wildlife Crossing Act benefits wildlife by providing safe pathways across habitats and it benefits people by preventing wildlife-vehicle crashes. Wildlife crossings not only cut down on these collisions, they also help local and state road crews by reducing hazards on the roadway. The enactment of the bill would also allow New York to claim some of the hundreds of millions of dollars in federal funds that are available to construct wildlife passages.

Thank you to everyone who sent emails of support to policymakers, and thank you to the elected leaders in Albany who voted in favor of the bill's passage. Join us in urging New York Governor Kathy Hochul to sign the bill in to law.

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Members' Meeting



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

Adirondacks Abuzz



Raul J. Aguirre
Executive Director

Dear Supporters and Friends,

June is when the pace of life picks up across the Adirondacks. The hum of insects, burst of birdsong, and number of people heading to trailheads tell of the busy season to come. The pace of work also accelerates in Albany this time of year as the legislative session comes to an end. The end of this session was packed with last-minute negotiations and, during an eventful conclusion, a number of important Adirondack related issues came to resolution.

One of the most important pieces of legislation that came out of Albany this year was the Wildlife Crossings Act. Passed by both houses, it now awaits the signature of Gov. Kathy Hochul, who we urge to sign this critical legislation. It would allow New York to access federal funds for capital projects that provide pathways across high traffic roads, helping to protect wildlife from automobiles and increase motorist safety. In a landscape as ecologically rich and contiguous as the Adirondack Park, this legislation will benefit people and wildlife in meaningful ways as has been demonstrated by wildlife crossing projects in other areas of the country.

In this session, funding to continue the Survey of Climate in Adirondack Lake Ecosystems (SCALE) project and the Timbuctoo Climate Science and Careers Summer Institute was also secured. The data collected by regional SCALE partners on aquatic conditions across the Park will be used to track the impacts of a changing climate and help inform policymakers on the regulatory measures needed to protect this national treasure. The connection Timbuctoo high school students make to the Park and climate career pathways will help inspire the next generation of environmental leaders and advocates. These programs underscore our long-standing goal to help keep the Adirondack Park forever wild for everyone.

As you prepare for summer travel and consider trips to those places you are most connected to and care about, within the Park and farther abroad, I hope you can enjoy life at a slower pace. One that allows you to appreciate the power that our open spaces and wild places have to effect positive change and shift our perspectives. With your continued support, the Adirondack Council will continue to advocate on behalf of the Park and work to keep the Adirondacks wild, welcoming, and safer - for humans and wildlife alike.

Sincerely,

Raul J. Aguirre
Executive Director

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CAPITAL MATTERS

Science & Environmental Program Funding Restored in the Final State Budget

Critical decisions are made at the New York State Capitol every year that can have positive or negative consequences for Adirondack waters, wildlife and communities. The Adirondack Council is celebrating a strong conclusion to this year's state budget making process, with the final budget restoring headline environmental programs, some of which were slated to be cut in the Governor's Executive Budget proposal that was issued in January.

Chief among those victories are \$500 million for clean water infrastructure and \$400 million for the Environmental Protection Fund. Within the Environmental Protection Fund, the Adirondack Council is celebrating another \$2 million investment in a Survey of Climate Change in Adirondack Lake Ecosystems (SCALE), a new study of hundreds of lakes in the Adirondacks that will teach us about the ability of Adirondack waters to adapt to and protect against climate change. A total of \$4.5 million has been invested in SCALE to date, but more funding will be needed.

In addition, \$10 million has been approved for Adirondack and Catskill Wilderness Protection and



Visitor Safety projects to mitigate impacts on overused trails. The Timbuctoo Climate Science and Careers Summer Institute was awarded \$1.2 million, a \$900,000 reduction from last year, but the program will continue and expand its reach this summer. The Adirondack Diversity Initiative received \$420,000 once again this year, allowing its important work to continue.

Your participation and support make these gains possible and we thank you!

Tighter Soot Pollution Standard Will Improve Air Quality and Protect Human Health

With encouragement from Adirondack Council members and activists, the US Environmental Protection Agency recently approved a new air quality standard for fine particles of soot that will decrease the harmful effects of soot pollution by 25% or more. Soot particles are a product of combustion, with most soot in the U.S. coming from burning fossil fuels.

The new health standard will improve from current allowable levels of 12 micrograms per cubic meter of air to 9 micrograms. Soot particles of 2.5 microns and smaller harm human health by lodging in the lungs, where they are too small to be coughed out. Once they

enter the bloodstream, soot can cause a host of health problems. The EPA predicted that the tighter standard will prevent up to 4,500 premature deaths and 290,000 lost workdays, yielding up to \$46 billion in net health benefits in 2032, when the rules go into full effect. For every \$1 spent from this action, there could be as much as \$77 in human health benefits in 2032, EPA said.

Soot pollution also darkens snow and ice, causing it to melt more rapidly, contributing to global warming. Soot contributes to the haze that limits visibility in scenic areas such as the Adirondack Park.

IN & ABOUT THE PARK

1. Eclipse Went Without a Hitch

The weather was perfect in much of the Adirondacks during the total solar eclipse on April 8. Prior to the eclipse, the Adirondack Council, Adirondack Mountain Club, and Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism (ROOST) promoted safety messages for backcountry adventures and eclipse watch events in local communities. Each organization generated social media and widespread press coverage reminding visitors about unpredictable conditions and the potential for ecological damage from hiking during early spring. As a result, there was only one rescue reported by Forest Rangers. With thanks to all who heard and heeded these safety messages, we hope the eclipse created positive memories for you and loved ones.

2. Communities Benefit from Affordable Clean Water Grants

Helping Adirondack communities upgrade their aging wastewater treatment plants and sewer systems remains a top priority of the Adirondack Council. Great progress has been made but towns in the Adirondacks still face over \$200 million in infrastructure improvement needs. The good news is that communities can apply for funding through the New York State Clean Water Fund Grants Program. The Council was successful in its advocacy to increase NYS's share in grants to towns from 25% to 50% of these clean water project costs, making it more affordable for all communities. The Adirondack Council provides application support for local towns seeking grant funding for sewer project needs.

TICONDEROGA WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY | PHOTO © CARL HEILMAN II/WILD VISIONS INC.

3. Visualizing the Headwaters

A broad collaboration that began over the winter is now paying dividends as the Adirondack Council and partners are releasing a series of videos highlighting the Blue Mountain Lake, Long Lake, and Raquette Lake associations, as well as the headwaters and watershed areas these lakes are a part of. The three lakes are tied together hydrologically, but also by people's desire to preserve and protect them. The collaboration includes the Council, Northern Forest Canoe Trail, five students and two advisors in the University of Rochester's Digital Media Studies program, and the three lake associations. Video footage was also graciously provided by ROOST.





4. Forever Wild Day 2024

Join us on Saturday, July 13 at the beautiful Heaven Hill Farm overlooking the majestic Adirondack High Peaks in Lake Placid, NY. Forever Wild Day will include lunch and award presentations, an optional outing on the Heaven Hill Trails, and time to share your love of the Adirondack Park with friends and fellow conservation advocates. The Adirondack Council is excited to honor the Northeast Wilderness Trust as Conservationist of the Year and give special recognition to dedicated environmental and social justice activist Benita Law-Diao. Find more information about Forever Wild Day at AdirondackCouncil.org/events.

BEAR CUB ROAD | PHOTO © CARL HEILMAN II/WILD VISIONS INC.

5. Conservation in Action

In celebration of Arbor Day, five Adirondack Council staff joined Trout Unlimited, Essex County Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Boquet River Association to plant 1,400 trees along the Boquet River in Wadhams, NY. The volunteer-led riparian restoration effort will stabilize eroded streambanks to increase flood resiliency, improve floodplain habitat and bolster community engagement in local conservation efforts. The Council was proud to support our partners in this endeavor, investing in the health and water quality of the Boquet watershed and Lake Champlain basin.



REWILDING ADVOCATE JOHN DAVIS | PHOTO: ERIC TEED

6. Promoting Sustainable, Working Landscapes

The Essex Farm Institute, a program of the Adirondack Council, provided its ninth straight year of grants to Adirondack farmers and producers to help them remain sustainable and viable while they provide jobs, food and a sense of community. In 2024, EFI provided 16 grants totaling \$24,500 to farm businesses within the Adirondack Park, and more than \$240,000 since 2016. These grants help farms shift away from fossil fuels, increase their production and efficiency, and improve water quality. The improvements that are made with the grants will continue to benefit the businesses and Adirondacks for years to come. The successful micro-grant program has been made possible by the generous support of the Klipper Fund and other forward-thinking donors.

L-R: INTERN MARTHA DEPOY AND FARM ADVOCATE DILLON KLEPETAR VIEW THE CROWN POINT FARM AND DAIRY WATER COLLECTION SYSTEM



CONSERVATION MATTERS

Bond Act Funding Supports Ecology & Economy

In November 2022, New York voters overwhelmingly approved the Clean Water, Clean Air and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act. Recently, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) began allocating funds for the \$4.2 billion Bond Act through four primary buckets for capital projects: flood risk reduction, open space land conservation, climate change mitigation, and water quality improvement.

Earlier this year, the Adirondacks received its first grant of Bond Act funding - a \$13.1 million grant for the Adirondack Rail Trail and Saranac Lake Depot project. Funding for recreational infrastructure in the Adirondacks is important to maintaining and upgrading world-class recreational experiences.

The Adirondack Council is proud to be part of the growing movement to free New York's waterways from artificial barriers for aquatic wildlife movement, in order to protect natural and human communities throughout the state's many watersheds. We applaud New York State for increasing funding available for removal of barriers to aquatic organism passage through the Bond Act as much of the infrastructure across New York will need replacement or removal in coming years.

Important opportunities the Council hopes to see addressed through aquatic and health funding include:

Derelict Dams:

Unless these dams have dedicated funding to their long-term upkeep and serve a vital purpose, such as energy production or flood control, they should be allowed to disintegrate in place if made of natural materials. Otherwise, they should be removed if they hinder fish and other wildlife movement or pose a threat to human safety.



Remnants of Marcy Dam, High Peaks Wilderness Area, destroyed by Hurricane Irene

Biological and Ecological Surveys: Conservation biologists and fish ecologists must inform the retrofitting and maintenance of dams still in use for small hydro energy production or flood control. Where dams serve vital purposes, they should be outfitted with fish ladders and/or other wildlife passage structures. Native fish and other wildlife should be free to find ample habitat, including spawning grounds, in all major rivers and in as many tributaries as are feasible to restore. We further suggest priority be given to watersheds still harboring native and cold-water fish (including Brook and Lake Trout, American Eel, Atlantic Salmon, sturgeon, shad, and herring).



Brook trout
LARRY MASTER, MASTERIMAGES.ORG

Preserve, Enhance and Restore Habitats: Floodplains and other riparian habitats, which are as integral to streams as is the water itself, and nearby uplands must be conserved and restored to their natural state wherever possible. Natural buffers - the wider and wilder the better - should be established along brooks and rivers and around ponds and lakes wherever possible. Land along waterways need protection for wide-ranging terrestrial as well as aquatic wildlife.



Forested river corridors prevent erosion and keep waters cool

The DEC should work with land trusts to secure, by full fee or conservation easement, riparian and waterfront lands far and wide.

Securing additional Bond Act funding for the Adirondack region will be important for supporting the ecological, economic and human health of the landscape and our communities.

SUPPORTING THE COUNCIL



Calling All Members!

Join the board, staff and fellow members for our **Annual Members' Meeting on Wednesday, July 10 from 4:00 - 5:00 pm virtually on Zoom**. During this time, you'll have the opportunity to celebrate and learn more about recent conservation and advocacy accomplishments, review the organization's finances, and vote on a slate of candidates for election to the Board of Directors.

Registration is required to receive your members' meeting Zoom link. **Please register online at [AdirondackCouncil.org/events](https://www.adirondackcouncil.org/events), call 1.518.873.2240 or scan the QR code.** Members' Meeting information (notable program accomplishments, draft finances and board nominee bios) will be sent via email to registrants before the meeting.



If you cannot attend the members' meeting please use the enclosed envelope to cast your vote for any or all of the following board of director nominees, or choose to designate a proxy. Please return by July 5.

BOARD OF DIRECTOR NOMINEES

Nominated for Re-Election

Nominated for Election



Diane Fish
Keene, NY
Nominated for a 2nd 3-year term



Etienne Boillot
Mamaroneck & Blue Mountain Lake, NY
Nominated for a 1st 3-year term



Michale Glennon, Ph.D.
Ray Brook, NY
Nominated for a 2nd 3-year term



Ellen Kraly
Hamilton & Eagle Bay, NY
Nominated for a 1st 3-year term



Sarah Hatfield
Lambertville, NJ & Old Forge, NY
Serving an officer term



Martha MacGregor
Saratoga Springs & Lake Clear, NY
Nominated for a 1st 3-year term



Noah Shaw
Ballston Spa, NY
Nominated for a 2nd 3-year term






Karen Mintzer
Brooklyn, NY
Nominated for a 1st 3-year term



Ethan Winter
Saratoga Springs & Harrietstown, NY
Serving an officer term

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"I greatly value nature and wilderness and am so proud of our Adirondacks and your efforts to protect it and make it better for all. Keep up the good work!"

– William Forrest, Professor of Astronomy (Research) University of Rochester, portrait shown in infrared light, used to observe and analyze astronomical objects



The Adirondack Council Turns 50!

Join us in 2025 to celebrate 50 years of advocacy and conservation leadership! More than a milestone, our 50th anniversary is a testament to the enduring values that guide our work to preserve water, air and wildlands for generations to come.



This year-long celebration will honor the legacy of the Adirondack Council and the important role your support plays in our success.

To help us celebrate our 50th anniversary, tell us about YOUR most meaningful Adirondack moments - the hikes and paddles, the bugs or wildlife, the glorious views - it all matters. Email our team at: AC50th@adirondackcouncil.org to get started.

Visit Our Online Shop

2025 Forever Wild Calendar | \$15 + tax & s/h

Dive into a kaleidoscope of stunning vistas with our Adirondack landscape calendar featuring Adirondack landscapes from award-winning photographer Carl Heilman II.



Loon Mugs | \$25 + tax & s/h

Our loon mug is more than just a vessel; it's a handcrafted work of art that adds a touch of rustic charm to your morning routine or evening unwind. Made in the USA, 12oz capacity, microwave & dishwasher safe. Available in heritage blue, forest green, cinnamon, or burgundy (not shown).



Adopt an Otter | \$35 + tax & s/h

Help protect an Adirondack river otter, with a symbolic adoption. Includes plush toy, canvas tote bag and personalized adoption certificate.

