

# Adirondack Common Ground Alliance Forum



Seventh Annual  
Adirondack Common Ground Alliance Forum  
July 18, 2013

Forum Documentation



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*About this Document*

This document summarizes the feedback and ideas that we received through the group process at the Adirondack Common Ground Alliance (CGA) Forum in Newcomb, NY on July 18, 2013. Corrections or additions can be sent to Jim Herman ([jim12942@gmail.com](mailto:jim12942@gmail.com)).

The cover is a “word cloud” produced by the participants during the Forum.

We thank everyone for their enthusiastic participation in the Forum.

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## Forum Agenda



The theme of this year's Forum was Progress through Collaboration. The agenda was therefore designed to maximize the opportunity for networking and smaller group discussions. The morning was a series of brief, usually 5 minutes, presentations. Then over lunch, participants were encouraged to go find speakers from the morning with whom they wanted to continue the conversation.

Each participant was given a feedback card to use in evaluating the morning sessions, documenting the discussions over lunch, and proposing new topics for next year's forum.

After lunch, we provided an update on the scenarios as well as a demo of a new software application for exploring the scenario dataset and gathering more input on relative desirability and importance of various scenarios and their associated event paths. Then Bob Bendick provided the keynote address on "Creating the Future of the Adirondacks".

In addition, there were two other ways to participate at the Forum. We conducted an informal poll on whether we are making progress in key areas. We also asked participants to submit words or phrases that expressed their reactions to the Forum and these were compiled into a 'word cloud'.

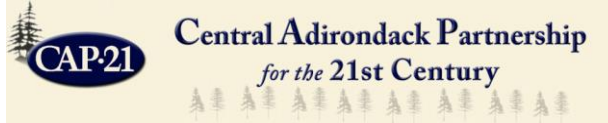
The Forum was held in the Newcomb Central School this year to give us better projection and sound than the outdoor venue previously used in Long Lake. We wish to thank Skip Hults, Superintendent of Newcomb Central School and his staff that helped us in every way to make the event successful, especially Barry Bocinski and Autumn Goerner. We also wish to thank the Town of Newcomb and its Supervisor George Canon for their welcoming support of the Forum.

## Our Sponsors

We wish to thank our sponsors who were essential to making the Forum possible.







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## Executive Summary

This year's Forum was a celebration of progress through collaboration. Almost 200 people gathered on a hot summer day to continue to address the problems of the region and to find ways to move forward together. There was a palpable sense of energy and forward progress. An informal poll showed consensus that we are moving forward in important areas, although there remains concern about addressing water quality issues and adaptation to climate change. Most importantly, there is agreement that the region's self-esteem is definitely on the upswing. The morning sessions highlighted progress in important areas of tourism development, community sustainability and water quality improvement. All emphasized the collaborative efforts taking place throughout the Park. We presented a summary of the year's events in terms of each of the six scenarios. For the most part, our preferred scenarios are happening and the ones we want to avoid are not, but there is a long way to go still to fully realize them. The day ended with Bob Bendick offering a vision of creative conservation, where entire communities and regions take up the preservation of our natural resources together with a shared sense of the benefits.

Thanks to all who participated and have remained engaged in the Common Ground process.

You can download the [presentation we made](#)<sup>1</sup> from the ADK Futures website ([www.ADKfutures.org](http://www.ADKfutures.org)).

At the Forum, the ADK Futures project released an [updated version of its vision](#)<sup>2</sup> for the next 25 years for the Adirondack Park.

Overall feedback on the event's morning sessions is summarized in this table.

Session	Rating (1 to 5)
Overall	4.3
Albany	3.3
Tourism	4.1
Sustainability	4.1
Water Quality	4.3
ADK Partnership	4
Networking	4.1

## Progress Poll

Before the Forum got started and during the morning break and lunch the participants used dots to record their views on six poll questions. In each case we asked them to tell us where the Adirondacks were on the issue five years ago (red dot), where it is today in their opinion (green dot), and where it will be five years in their expectations (blue dot).

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<sup>1</sup> The presentation file can be found at:

<http://adkfutures.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/presentation-for-cga-2013.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> The vision file can be found at:

<http://adkfutures.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/adk-futures-vision.pdf>

The first poll was on whether collaboration and partnering was rare, occasional or widespread. The chart shows clear progress from little partnering to widespread partnering and fairly good separation between the three timeframes. This indicates a sense of real movement on this in this 10 year period.

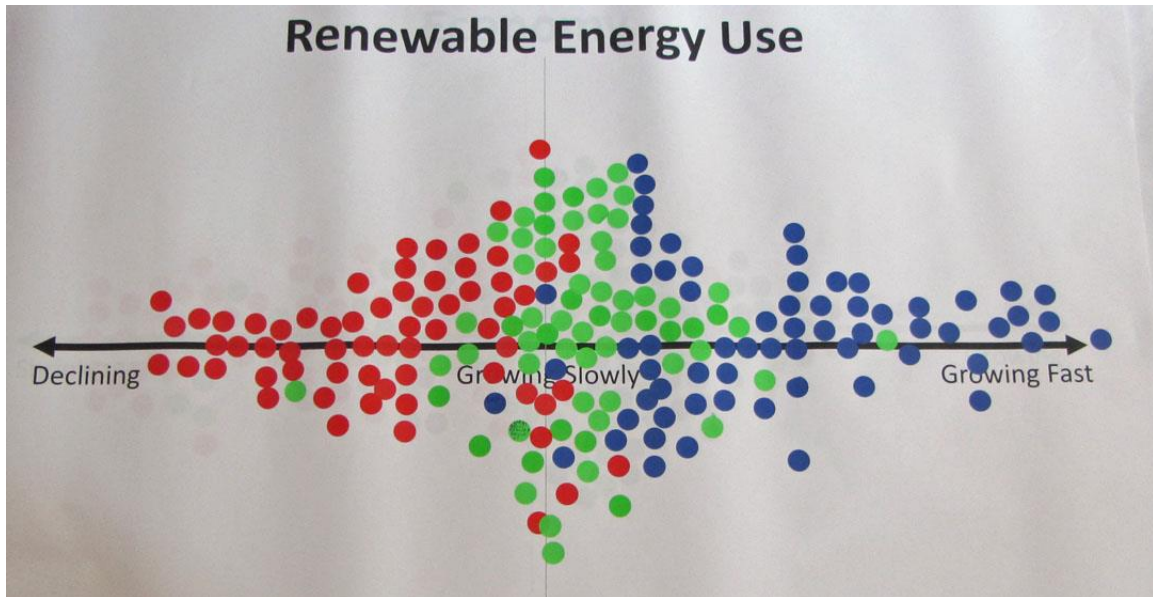


The second poll was on whether the economy was shrinking, flat or growing. The chart shows less separation of the three timeframes and is clustered more in the middle. But for the most part it indicates progress from shrinking to at least flat and maybe some growth.



The third poll was on whether our use of renewable energy was declining, growing slowly or growing fast. Here there is clearer separation of the three timeframes and the dots are spread out indicating this is an area of good progress.

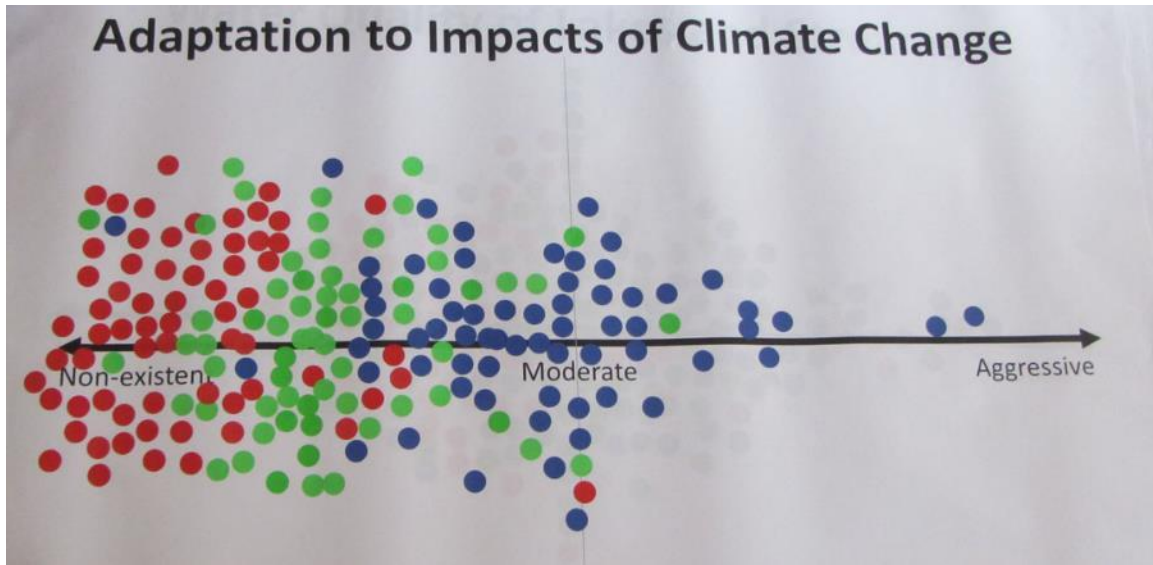




The fourth poll was on whether the water quality of lakes and streams was poor, in danger, or pristine. Here the dots are fairly clustered and intermixed. There are some cases where the dots move to the left indicating deterioration while in other cases they moved right. The result here is not universally positive.



The fifth poll was on whether our adaptation to climate change is non-existent, moderate or aggressive. Here the dots are shifted strongly to the left indicating that we are starting from close to zero and it is not clear that we can make much progress in only 5 years.



The last poll was on whether our regional self-esteem was low, recovering or high. Here the dots are spread out and fairly well separated indicating good progress toward a more positive identity.



# Summaries of the Morning Sessions with Feedback

## Welcome to Newcomb

**George Cannon, Supervisor of the Town of Newcomb** kicked things off with a few remarks and his welcome. He commented on how well the joint planning work by the five towns around the newly acquired State lands is going. He said it has been a pleasure to work together and that the towns are united in their vision for what would be most beneficial for their part of the Park.

## Overview of CGA History – Starting New Conversations, Making New Connections

**Brian Houseal, departing member of the CGA Core team**, provided a short history of the Alliance. He explained that their first accomplishment, other than getting people talking, was the development of the Blueprint for the Blue Line, which was intended as a way for the region to speak to Albany with one voice. And, indeed, Albany listened. It changed the tenor of the conversation about the region. Now there are many organizations that are collaboratively moving the region forward: Adirondack Harvest, number Lake and River associations, the Adirondack Nonprofit Network, the efforts to control invasive species, and of course the North Country Regional Economic Council (NCREDC). Now the Adirondack Partnership is up and running and can carry a lot of this work forward. We are making a difference.

## The View from Albany

**Dan Stec, State Assembly Representative for the North Country** briefly commented on the importance of the CGA effort and the momentum achieved by the North Country over the past couple of years. He said that awareness of the Adirondacks in Albany is much higher due certainly to the Governor's interest in the region, but also due to things like Adirondack Day in the Legislative Office Building earlier in the year that went very well.

Other State Government representatives were required to attend the Community Reconstruction Zones conference in Albany and so Mr. Duffy and Senator Little were not present this year at CGA.

## Feedback

Great to see so many State orgs – need more elected officials present.

Good to have representatives at the Forum.

Didn't learn anything.

## Panel: Community Tourism Development

**Bob Stegemann, DEC Region 5 Director** moderated this panel. He started with an announcement of a \$500,000 grant to help in the development of the destination plans for the newly acquired State Land.

**Jeremy Evans, Director of Community Development for the Village of Saranac Lake** talked about the various collaborate efforts underway in Saranac Lake, including about Saranac Lake's Forest Preserve. Yes, the Saranac Lake community is taking ownership and responsibility for leveraging McKenzie Mountain Wilderness, Saranac Lake Wild Forest, High Peaks Wilderness, and the St. Regis Canoe Area to improve the quality of life for Village residents and attract visitors. To accomplish this there are four



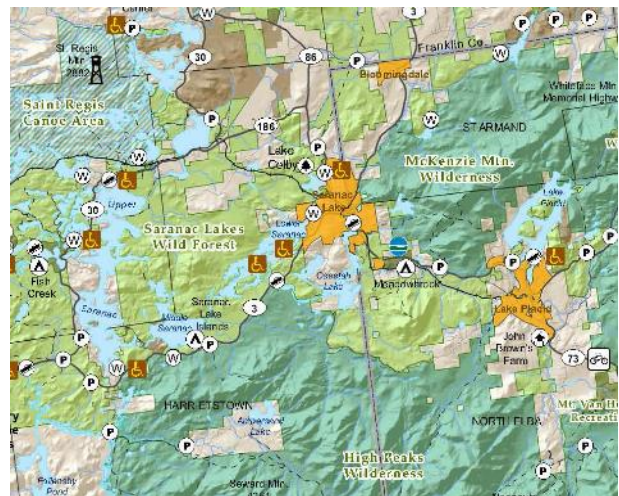
primary initiatives the Village is engaged in: (1) Implementing the recently adopted Saranac Lake Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail Master Plan, (2) Advocating for the timely completion of the Saranac Lake Wild Forest UMP and the inclusion of mountain biking trails in the plan, (3) Improving and expanding tourism infrastructure in the Village and enhancing our beautiful and vibrant downtown to attract visitors into town before or after a day on the lakes or in the woods, and (4) the Saranac Lake 6er's.

The Saranac Lake 6er's was the idea of Mayor Clyde Rabideau. Hikers who climb all six major peaks around Saranac Lake (McKenzie, Ampersand, Scarface, St. Regis, Haystack, and Baker) are designated as Saranac Lake 6er's and receive a patch, sticker, and certificate and earn the right to ring the 6er bell in Berkeley Green in Downtown Saranac Lake. The program has drawn attention to and interest in Saranac Lake's forest preserve but it has also resulted in money spent in our community. Our trail guide and website show directions to each trailhead from Downtown Saranac Lake. The 6er bell was purposefully placed in Berkeley Green so that hikers have to visit downtown to ring the bell. We have partnered with a couple of local businesses to license and sell Saranac Lake 6er merchandise. A local guide service arranged a package that included guided hikes up each peak and accommodations at White Pine Camp on Osgood Pond.

The following partnerships have helped make the Saranac Lake 6er's successful: (1) a mayor and board of trustees that believe in identifying opportunities and acting on them. (2) The Village has a dedicated staff willing to go above and beyond the minimum required. (3) APA provided their expertise to develop the trail guide map. (4) NYS DEC has been a terrific partner as well. In anticipation of 6er weekend on May 25th, DEC trail crews cleared all trails on the 6 peaks (although they forgot to cancel the torrential rain and the snow). They are distributing 6er trail guides at local campgrounds, and they are publicly supporting the effort.

The Saranac Lake 6er's concept was modeled after the Adirondack 46er's. The Cranberry Lake 50 celebrates the diversity of lakes, ponds and woods of the Northwest Adirondacks. By finishing the 50 miles loop around Cranberry loop hikers also earn a patch.

**Mitch Lee, Director of Parks and Recreation for the Town of Inlet and Assistant to the Director of Tourism**, spoke about their work at positioning the town as a sustainable eco-tourism portal for the region. It has only 425 year-round residents and yet it is a success story. Every community is different, but the Forest Preserve is there as a resource for all Park communities. Inlet focused on snowmobiling. It is a way to get people into the forest in a low impact way (it's all frozen in winter) and develop a four season economy. Through the 1970's snowmobiling in conjunction with the Town of Web, "Old Forge" to help make our four season economy vital, and we invested heavily in this, in terms of infrastructure, support staff, grooming machinery and NYS DEC TRP'S and Stewardship in



the Moose River Plains. From this first Partnership grew many more. The building of trails for Mountain biking, Canoe portage, Primitive Camping, and Hiking were all done in partnership with the DEC, DOS, APA, ADK Club, area residents and Stewards. Projects to date are picnic tables, storyboards, bridges, water bars, road maintenance, ski and snowmobile trail grooming, and weekly trail maintenance. And Invasive Water and Land Identification and Eradication.

Depending on the age range one might hear, to paddle waters, hike the back country, camp, bike, boat, snowmobile, fish or just view the mountains from the porch of a cozy cottage. Our diversity of outdoor activities was our great strength and 90% of the real Property in the Town of Inlet is owned by the People of the State of NY. This Forest Preserve is accessible to visitors and our greatest asset. Very early on we cultivated the partnerships with our forest preserve NYS DEC representatives. Now let me share our real success story: We did it! After 100 years of tourism we had really reached people with our efforts to make a place that served all their eco-tourism needs. Our unique events on forest preserve lands were the final piece of the puzzle. The Black Fly challenge Mountain Bike race (photo below), the NYS Sled Dog Championships, and continued stewardship through UMP and TRP Partnerships to keep up infrastructure all paid off.

Inlet is a survivor. The West Central Adirondacks are a Sustainable Eco-Tourism Portal. Its downtown is packed. Every community needs to create a comprehensive master plan that identifies partners, assets (trailheads, bodies of water, etc.) and then the infrastructure needs to make those assets accessible and usable such as parking, bridges, ADA accessibility, signage, visitor information centers, etc. Silo thinking and lack of collaboration the big impediment for many towns.

**Paul Hai, Program Coordinator, SUNY-ESF's Northern Forest Institute**, talked about various partnerships underway in the region, including the Northern Forest Institute (NFI), Adirondack Interpretive Center(AIC), the planning for the newly acquired lands, the Masten House restoration, the work at Santanoni, the symposium on ethics and land use. He suggested the greatest barrier to further progress was lack of trust among parties, although this was definitely improving.

Paul discussed their work creating and building the Northern Forest Institute, a project that began in 2008. NFI as an entity has been defined by a wide range of collaborations and partnerships, through which it has grown and generated 4 full-time positions in the town of Newcomb. As we look forward, particularly considering the State acquisition of the former Finch Lands, we see great opportunities for continued, creative partnerships resulting in economic benefit to Newcomb and nearby communities.

NFI has a mission to provide education and outreach to 3 core audiences, academic (k-16), professional, and public. I'll briefly share some background and examples of





partnerships associated with NFI, and how that works builds towards greater tourism and economic development in Newcomb:

NFI – NFI is an initiative that grew out of partnership between ESF, OSI, DEC and the town of Newcomb. This mix of public institution, private organization, state agency, and a municipality coalesced around the recognition of educational and economic benefit that would accrue to all partners as a result of collaboration. More educational and recreational programs in Newcomb means more “traffic” in Newcomb, which means more \$ in Newcomb.

AIC – This is a well-known, but bears repeating because it represents partnership between ESF and APA, and subsequently the Town of Newcomb. Each recognized the AIC is a valuable community and regional asset and keeping it open was important on educational and economic scales. This was a strategic investment in local resources and community capacity recognizing the existing role the AIC plays for tourism, recreation and education but also looking at how that role will expand – and economic impact with it – with the opening of the Essex Chain and other lands in Newcomb. We will be partnering with DEC and others to explore and expand the educational and economic impact of AIC.

Science and the Humanities –NFI is committed to an interdisciplinary approach in our programs and content. We feel one of the most powerful disciplinary intersections is between science and the humanities. This work, led by a specially created and regionally unique position of Environmental Philosopher, has resulted in partnerships on state and national levels, including with the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the NYS Council on the Humanities. How does philosophy create tourism? We created and hosted the Adirondacks first Land Use and Ethics symposium, which we have held in each of the last two years, which has brought to Newcomb participants from more 30 different academic institutions and 3 foreign countries. Almost across the board, Newcomb was Terra Incognita for all participants, and several have expressed interest in returning to conduct work, or vacation in town.

Leadership Training – We are beginning this year to roll out the next stage of our programmatic growth, focusing more energy on the leadership component of our mission. We are partnering with the SUNY Leadership Institute, Cornell University and 2 private consultancies to create training for students and professionals. The Essex Chain, as well as Santanoni and other state-owned lands in town represent an incredible resource for designing leadership and training excursions and exercises highly attractive to facilitators and participants alike. We are looking to increase the volume of this work in the coming years, including collaborations with businesses to bring more participants, and \$ to Newcomb.

Former Finch Lands – While we don’t know what is to come with the classification recommendation, we do know we will be working with diverse partners to conceive, design and implement partnerships adding value to the forest preserve experience for stake-holders across a wide range of uses (recreational, educational, etc.) while adding value to the economy of Newcomb and surrounding towns.

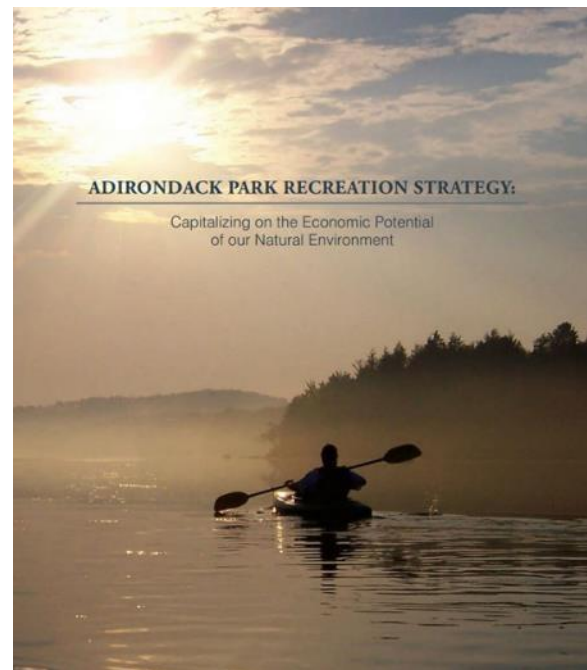
As for impediments to progress, obviously funding is the answer people expect, but that is a) universal, and b) not going to change, so to get distracted by the challenge of funding is to lose sight of the goal, which is to advance where we are today for the sake of creating more sustainable future Park. So what

are impediments to advancement? Trust and time. And I believe, as exemplified by CGA broadly and this panel specifically, we are building more trust on a daily basis. That is both impressive, based on where we were just 5 and 10 years ago, and important because it creates a road map for how to get to the vision so many of us share for an Adirondack Park that is vibrant, accessible and sustainable for natural and human communities. Time, well, there is never enough, and frankly, the impediment here is the opportunities for partnering are increasing to the point where it is getting very difficult to manage them all. To a very serious degree, this is a great problem, because for me, it means more jobs. When I have to hire more staff to keep projects moving, that's a good thing; a good thing for me, ESF, our partners, Newcomb, and the Park.

**Jim McKenna, Executive Director of the Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism**, spoke about the [Adirondack Park Recreation Strategy](#)<sup>3</sup> that looked at the whole Park and how to position it to take advantage of the growing markets for outdoor recreation that is sustainable. It is a great example of a Park-wide collaborative project that produced a result relatively quickly. No place in the US offers what we do on a year-round basis. Indoor experience is our issue. Economic gain happens where there are facilities, appropriately scaled to the community and a critical mass of small to medium businesses, rather than one or a few blockbusters.

He spoke of the need to understand the revolution in marketing ushered in by the Internet and social media. Today's travelers use the wisdom of friends and peer trust that they have practically real-time access to via their smart phones.

This will require investment. Save what needs to be saved, build what needs to be built. Create Destination Master Plans, as will be done with the \$500K grant from TNC around the newly acquired lands. Use the NCREDC process. He expects that a community transformation tourism fund will be available by year end. Tourism destination area nomination book. Identifies what you need to be successful in tourism. Now that we know what we need, but now we need to show a decent ROI. Take it to the investment community. Entice it and help this move forward. People in the park need to do the investment in the park. Outside money shouldn't control our destiny.



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<sup>3</sup> The document can be found at:  
[adkfutures.files.wordpress.com/2012/08/adirondack-park-recreation-strategy.pdf](http://adkfutures.files.wordpress.com/2012/08/adirondack-park-recreation-strategy.pdf)

### *Feedback on Tourism Panel*

History, pre-history, archeology

Continuing progress towards promotion of the region – fewer silo issues.

Too narrowly focused.

### **Panel: Community Sustainability Efforts**

**Kate Fish, Executive Director of ANCA** started by showing how the [North Country Sustainability Plan](#)<sup>4</sup> had been created as a partnership across 7 counties. It builds on the North Country's Regional Economic Development Vision and Strategies, detailing a roadmap to achieve the greenest and most self-reliant energy economy in the State and embracing the creation of strong local economies that will attract investment based on abundant natural and community assets. The plan focuses on the following subject areas: energy, transportation, land use and livable communities, waste management, water management, economic development and agriculture/forestry. Along with announcing the Plan's completion, Gov. Andrew Cuomo has announced \$30 million in the first round of funding for projects that are aligned with its implementation goals.

**Fred Monroe, Supervisor Town of Chester**, spoke about their solar project that produced 190 kilowatts of power. They used an approach that required no capital. They moved quickly and had the panels up in 4 months at a number of locations around town. They are guaranteed a minimum of 10% savings on the electric costs and more if they can conserve and reduce their demand. ANCA was a partner with them on the project that included SolarNovar and Edge Design.

**John Culpepper**, Director of Facilities and Sustainability North Country School/Camp Treetops spoke about the various sustainability projects at the school that are environmentally friendly, increase local employment, use less fossil fuels, create a more healthful indoor and outdoor environment and lower CO2 emissions. North Country School is an independent, not-for-profit school and summer camp on approximately 200 acres of land, with approximately 150,000 square feet of building space spread over many structures. We also manage another hundred acres or so of neighboring forestland. For approximately 100 years North Country School and Camp Treetops has been committed to doing business in an environmentally responsible manner. In the past half dozen years we have made a commitment to be a leader in sustainability. For us, we define sustainability as practices that:

- Support local economies
- Employ environmentally friendly practices
- Reduce our use of fossil fuels
- Create more healthful indoor and outdoor environments
- And lower our carbon footprint

Our organization currently has a number of initiatives that help us meet these goals. Examples include raising tens of thousands of pounds of produce and meat annually on our campus farm, installing almost

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<sup>4</sup> The report can be found at: <http://www.adirondack.org/f/docs/green/Final-Report-6-14-13.pdf>

20,000 Watts of solar electric capacity, purchasing one of the first electric maintenance trucks in the area, and moving rapidly toward LED lighting systems.

We have found that some sustainability efforts have a rapid return on our investment and significantly reduce our carbon footprint, while other efforts significantly reduce our carbon footprint but don't have a positive economic benefit for us. The effort that best fits the first category is our use of biomass to heat our buildings and their domestic hot water needs.

Over the past several years we have installed six biomass systems. Compared to fuel oil, these systems are saving us approximately \$60,000/year and have allowed us to reduce our EPA Scope one and two direct CO2 emissions by about 25%. From a past average of 27,000 gallons of fuel oil per year we are now down to about 5,000 gallons. Our goal is to eliminate the use of fuel oil for space and domestic hot water completely in the next two years.

As important, because biomass is more price stable than oil, moving to biomass has allowed us to predict our fuel costs into the future.

To me, our most exciting recent sustainability initiative is managing our 150-acre plus forest, and those of contiguous neighbors for biomass fuel for our boilers. From several quantitative studies we know that we can harvest enough wood from these acres to meet our needs indefinitely. Plus, if the logging is done thoughtfully, we can and do see improvement to the health of these forested lands from the elimination of diseased trees and trees in overcrowded conditions. In this process we are also managing for better quality trees for lumber.

We offer our experiences to other organizations that might want to learn from us. If you are interested in having a look at some of our systems then please contact me for a phone conversation, or a campus tour.

I'll leave you with this: We are a not-for-profit organization, operating on very thin financial margins. Most of our sustainability initiatives were accomplished within limited operating budgets. If we can move the dial on sustainability within the limitations of our financial model, then I suspect that most of you could as well.

**Rod Campaney, Fourth Coast**, spoke about the collaborative municipal solar project in towns along the St. Lawrence that also included a school and a BOCES. They created a single contract that all the different towns and organizations could use. They use local municipal labor where possible to lower costs. They saved 15 to 30% overall with this approach. Solar works in the North Country and pays back.

### *Feedback on Community Sustainability Session*

Fantastic presentations, very interesting.

Awesome progress.

Too much on solar.

### Panel: Water Quality

**Zoe Smith, Director, Wildlife Conservation Society Adirondack Program** introduced the panel saying that we have an abundant resource in our water but that is perhaps why we aren't as concerned as we need to be about protecting it. She saw a great deal of working going on across the region with a lot of collaboration. It was science-based and hands on not just planning.

**Chastity Miller, District Manager for Franklin County Soil and Water Conservation District and also Chairperson of the Franklin County Water Quality Coordinating Committee (WQCC).** There are coordinating committees like this in each county. Their mission is to assess, protect and enhance the quality of the water resources of the county, using a coordinated, comprehensive, educational and effective interagency approach at the county level. They develop strategies and bring people together and get them the resources they need. A recent project is a cost share septic pump out program that was partially funded from some Aid to Localities funding for water quality improvement in the New York side of the Lake Champlain Watershed. It has completed an update to their Water Quality Strategy with funding from the NYS DEC Water Quality Improvements Program. This is all highly collaborative and there are many organizations involved, including Franklin County Soil and Water Conservation District, Franklin County Cooperative Extension, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, NYS Department of Health, NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee, Franklin County Public Health, St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, USDA Farm Service Agency, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Franklin County Highway Department, Adirondack Watershed Institute, Franklin County Legislators, Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program, Fish and Wildlife Management Board, Franklin County Grange, Mountain View Association, Chateaugay Lake Association, NYS DOS Div. of Coastal Resources, Highway Department, Town and Village Supervisors, CWICNY, Paul Smiths College, North Country Community College, Adirondack Watershed Institute, and Malone Revitalization Committee. Others working the same issues in other geographies include many lake associations, non-profit organization and colleges and universities that participate in the WQCC also. All Soil and Water Conservation Districts have a WQCC committee working on various projects across the region. We also are involved with watershed groups including but not limited to the St Lawrence River Watershed Project (SLRWP), The Champlain Watershed Improvement Coalition of New York (CWICNY), the Mohawk River Watershed Association and many more.

#### Key Topics Important to FC WQCC:

- Invasive species
- Drinking water protection
- Agricultural Environmental Issues
- On-site sewage disposal (alternatives, proper installation, pump-outs)
- Urban surface runoff (storm water)
- Stream bank and road bank erosion
- Proper waste disposal (pesticides, toxics, etc.).
- Point and non-point pollution identification, remediation and prevention
- Land Use Management
- Evaluation of Priority Waterbodies List (PWL)



Many of these issues overlap. Below are some specific issue/focuses to address for each main Issue.

**Hillary Smith, Director Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP)**, spoke about collaborative work to combat invasive species. The impacts of invasive species to water quality, forests, fisheries, recreation, and the character of the Adirondacks are a top concern. Often people don't think much can be done, but, there are opportunities for action, and a lot of great work is underway. APIPP started as a pilot project in 1998 in response to the need for coordinated, regional action. We operate throughout the Park and in northern Franklin and Clinton Counties to the U.S. border. Though originally focused only on plants, we now address all invasive species – aquatic and terrestrial, plant and animal. A comprehensive, integrated approach is essential. We listen to community needs and respond with prevention, education, monitoring, and management programs. APIPP has 3 ½ full time staff: a director, terrestrial coordinator, aquatic coordinator, and seasonal educator.

APIPP at its very core is a partnership program that relies on collaboration. We work with more than 30 cooperating organizations, numerous communities, and hundreds of volunteers. Founding partners are TNC, APA, DEC, and DOT. We also work closely with Paul Smith's College Adirondack Watershed Institute and Lake Champlain Basin Program, as well as with Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Cornell Cooperative Extension Offices, river associations, lake associations, and more. We reach out to local governments, tourism groups, and, recently, the business community. We welcome working with any and all groups and are always looking for new opportunities to partner with interested citizens and organizations. We are open to new ideas for invasive species solutions that can be applied region-wide. Milestones include providing guidance to prevention policies, enhancing a regional boat launch steward program, formalizing a volunteer early detection network, deploying response teams, offering educational programs, and more.

APIPP served as a model for seven other regional partnerships operating in NY (Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management - PRISMs). PRISMs are action-oriented partnerships that serve as "go-to" resources for invasive species information and coordinate smart, cost-effective approaches to combat invasive species. Funding for these regional partnerships is provided through the Environmental Protection Fund. By the end of this year, eight PRISMs will be funded across the state. This will create exceptional opportunities for cooperation and for instituting invasive species safeguards. There are also statewide bodies formed to improve collaboration: the NY Invasive Species Council, composed of 9 state agencies, and the NY Invasive Species Advisory Committee, composed of 25 organizations representing academic, industry, environmental, and local government groups. APIPP represents the PRISMs on ISAC, and I am the current Chair. Top issues include implementing prevention programs, like the NY Invasive Species Prevention Act, and a statewide invasive species education and awareness campaign.

#### Fast Facts

- The Adirondacks present a real test case for preventing the spread of invasive species at a regional scale.

- Top species threats include Eurasian water milfoil, hydrilla, Asian clam, quagga mussel, Japanese knotweed, common reed grass, feral swine, emerald ash borer, and Asian long-horned beetle.
- Two out of three waterways are free of aquatic invasive species.
- The average size of a terrestrial invasive plant infestation is less than .08 acres, smaller than a basketball court.
- APIPP has treated more than 300 infestations, protecting thousands of acres of woodlands, wetlands, rivers, and streams.
- APIPP organizes Adirondack Invasive Species Awareness Week each year the 2nd week of July.
- More information is available online at [www.adkinvasives.com](http://www.adkinvasives.com)

**Corry Miller, Executive Director of the Ausable River Association (ASRA)** spoke on the river restoration project at the Rivermede Farm in Keene Valley. The mission of ASRA is to conserve and restore the natural resources of the Ausable River for the ecological and economic value to its communities. It's a 512 sq. mile watershed with 94 miles of river and 70 tributaries. It has a steep drop and floods easily. They received a watershed management planning grant from DOS that identified problem areas like erosion and established priorities for restoration such as flood resilience. Bank erosion is bad for water quality and for flood resilience. The project at Rivermede had been on the list for 20 years. Emerging ad hoc partnership using natural channel design. Replanted 2700 foot of river. Did tree planting. 2500 trees. Hope to turn the site into a town Park someday. Trout Unlimited contributed a lot. Essex Soil and Water brought technical assistance, ASRA did community outreach. US Fish and Wildlife service. Town of Keene. Jay Ward provided major equipment work. Rivermede of course. ASRA brought these other orgs and their expertise into the community.

### *Feedback on Water Quality Panel*

Very interesting, great speakers.

Continuing regional priority.

Needed more discussion of the state of the Park's ecological health.

### *Adirondack Partnership's Economic Strategies Projects*

**Bill Farber, Supervisor of Hamilton County**, introduced this session by explaining how the Adirondack Partnership is the next step in the evolution of the conversation that CGA has started. It is organized to implement the good ideas. The Recreation Strategy is the first example of how the Partnership can pull together people and resources to get something done. Now they have let a contract to a consortium led by Riverstreet Planning and Development of Troy. They will define a set of specific economic strategies for the region, building on the work of the ADK Futures project and the North Country Regional Economic Council strategy. They will produce detailed plans for attracting capital and priority projects to develop needed infrastructure. One of the members of the team is Toole Design.

**Jeff Ciabatti, Senior Planner, Toole Design Group** spoke about some of the ideas they are considering in the area of tourism development. They wish to optimize the tremendous unique asset (the Park) we

have in the region and convince holders of capital that this is a region to invest in and get a good return. A basic idea is to connect people and communities to the resources they want to use. They have a concept of Trail Towns. This is a real opportunity; there is growth in outdoor recreation and what we have is what people want. A good time to take this to next level. Bicycling is second most popular outdoor activity. Boosts the economy. Mountain biking is popular, about half of the activity with hiking.

Trail Town: Keeping development clustered in the town and accessible to hikers, cyclists and snowmobilers. Spoke of the Great Allegheny trail. DC to Pittsburgh. 800,000 visitors per year. Like \$40M in eco activity. B7Bs, bike shops, ice cream shops. You have to qualify to be a trail town.

Old rail corridors. Get people going to these towns again. Regional approach. Reorged the businesses to orient toward the trails. New services for the riders. Promotion package online and in the town centers.

New thematic trails. Use trail system to organize the experience of the Adirondack Park. Need a master plan. With a grand plan it is easier to see the value of investing.

Trails for all. Heritage, architecture, birding, culture, water, hiking, bicycling and more. Weave these together as the system. Sign differently. Web portals have all the info. Where are the gaps in facilities? Connectivity is key. When you connect a trail to another trail or to a community or to other facilities, the value of it all rises exponentially. How do we create a Park-wide approach? Trust is what will transform the Park. National foundations could get interested and encourage innovation.

### **Feedback on the Lunchtime Networking**

During lunch participants could go to find speakers from the morning and have smaller group discussions. Feedback points were:

Lunchtime session in the gym was very productive.

Great idea @ lunch to have topics at tables – actual food situation was weird though.

The table I wanted to go to was full the entire time.

A principle benefit of coming.

Lunch was best part, meeting and networking with others.

### **General Feedback on the Forum**

Came as an individual Park seasonal resident – be careful about speakers' assumptions that the audience knows about these organizations and agencies.

Great venue! New space works great, especially with larger audience. I liked the theme, the poll and the word cloud.

All good except networking. I didn't find much interest except among others who are not well connected.

Very well organized, such a wide variety of people. Perfect amount of time in each topic area.

5 minutes was good – it gave diversity of interest.

The practice of collaboration is accelerating.

Super!

## Monitoring the ADK Futures Scenarios

Jim Herman and Dave Mason, Co-Directors of the ADK Futures Project, provided a summary of the positive and negative events over the past year in terms of the six scenarios. Here is the text of their presentation that can be found [here](#)<sup>5</sup>.

### The Wild Park

- Record breaking Finch land acquisitions
  - The civility of the classification hearings has been noted
- 15,000 acres re-classified as wilderness
  - 46 miles of backcountry snowmobile trails closed
  - 2 miles of road closed
- Farm and commercial forest easements in Keeseville and purchase of the Marion River carry
- ACR halted for now
- Lots of water work in process
  - Implementation of watershed plans for Schroon Lake, the Ausable River, and work on stream corridors and storm water in Lake George
  - Non-point source control planning underway for Lake Champlain and Lake George
  - Instrumentation of Lake George
  - Full scale war on aquatic invasives: people, chemicals, machines, smart phone apps --- anything / everything
- Hamilton County population slips a bit more: -1.2% for 2010-2012
  - Essex County was down 1%

### The Usable Park

- The Whole Park recreation plan is done
- A Whole Park Recreation Portal is being built by AATV
- 5 towns working together on Finch land recreation hub
- State puts \$2m into regional tourism promotion
- Governor's whitewater event in Indian Lake
- 12 mile Inlet - Racquette Lake interconnect trail
- Scenic byways project now 14 routes, rail trail issue into UMP review

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<sup>5</sup> The file can be found at:

<http://adkfutures.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/presentation-for-cga-2013.pdf>

- Many outdoor facility upgrades
  - Heart Lake hiker facilities, Finch access infrastructure, playing fields in Lake Placid, upgrades at Camp Colby all funded
  - Waterfront upgrades: Bulwaga Bay Port Henry, Wilmington(3), Inlet, Tupper Lake, Northville, Lake George, Second Pond (SLK)
- New 46'er registrations nearly doubled membership in 2012 alone
- Cycling is growing in several forms, zip lines are appearing
- Adirondack Powder Skier Association formed to boost low impact back country winter activity
- Hotels: New 100 room hotel in LP, Sagamore to be open all year, acquires LP Lodge
- Arts: ADK Lakes Summer Festival funded, digital theater conversions
- Attractions: Grants to Great Camp Sagamore and the ADK Museum for restoration and renewal work. Wild Center gets \$1m grant for tree canopy walk.
- Access: Plattsburgh Airport growing from 3 gates to 9, railroad and bus border processing will be at stations in Montreal, rail service to North Creek successful
- Clarkson, SUNY Plattsburgh and Paul Smiths all offer entrepreneurship programs, and Paul Smiths forestry and hotel/food programs link well to the region
- Health Care
  - Medical Home project showing progress, medical network and electronic records working
  - 40,000 sq. ft. primary care center coming to Warrensburg
  - New assisted living facility in Willsboro
- Negative Events:
  - Nursing homes in turmoil, hospitals being squeezed
  - No work being done to attract retirees, elder care issues are growing
  - Climate change impacts increasingly an issue, winter and summer
  - No casinos will be in the region

## **Sustainable Life**

- Broadband being deployed across the Watertown-Westport trunk, Hamilton County, Lyon Mountain, Jay, Wilmington, Thurman, Bellmont, more
  - ADK Teleworks in Indian lake aims to connect people to telework jobs
- Large numbers of cell towers applications are being processed
- Local energy projects growing
  - North Country Sustainability Plan completed
  - Biomass energy projects: numerous schools, Watertown, Old Forge, Tupper Lake district heating
  - Willow plantations, interest in liquid biofuels
  - Community net metering law up for comment S4722, Betty Little sponsor
- Local Food
  - CSA food arrangements growing rapidly, including school-farm shares, all developing rich volunteer communities



- Small slaughterhouse in Ticonderoga, a mobile chicken unit, Wholshare food distribution to interior areas, new farms, local food restaurants, several community kitchens
  - New craft breweries in Schroon Lake, Tupper Lake, Saranac Lake, and on a Keeseville farm
  - Rolling Hills farm resort project in Westport approved
  - Working farm easement in Keeseville
- Organizing an ADK region venture fund
- Water quality work
  - Sewer system work in Essex, Port Henry, Lake Placid, Saranac Lake and Inlet
  - Science based stewardship coming: the instrumentation of Lake George
  - Large scale invasive control efforts, using people, laws, smart phones, chemicals
- Climate change noted by loggers who need frozen ground to work on – their seasons are getting shorter
  - Climate change attitudes are changing, moving toward action on mitigation and adaptation
- 5 Park high schools rank among the very best in NY
- Lake George , North Elba, Saranac Lake all have revitalization studies underway
- 300 affordable housing units funded
- New version of TDRs has been proposed
- Negative Events:
  - Essex County bus ridership low, even with flag-down service

## **Adirondack County**

- The county idea is not politically possible, but a lot of regional efforts underway
- Local Gov't Day was very positive, 300 people
- Adirondack Partnership has funded its economic development project
- APA filled its economic development position, 2012
- Schools changing
  - Increasing resource sharing now a focus in all schools
  - Piseco School has tuitioned it's students to neighboring Lake Pleasant
  - Ausable Forks Catholic school closed, SLK and LP study a merger
- Strengthening links between towns:
  - The 5 Finch Towns and DEC
  - Keene and Jay, after Irene
  - Clifton-Fine
  - Morehouse-Arietta-Lake Pleasant in HamCo sharing
  - Saranac Lake Village and North Elba joint planning grant, \$463,000
- Whole Park is in one Congressional District
- The tax cap is having impacts on local government and school budgets

- There have been layoffs and shrinkage in school district employment
- Regional efforts get State rewards

### **Post Big Government**

- This scenario described some towns doing well, while others fade without much intervention
  - Town-by-town differences become more pronounced
- It is easy to see the mix of improvements and setbacks around the Park. It is not all improving, it is not all failing.
  - The improving towns exhibit restored downtown blocks, new businesses and new buildings
  - The declining towns have more vacant or abandoned property and fewer businesses, especially off-season
- But the weaker towns are garnering considerable attention. They are not being left alone to die. The Governor's whitewater event in Indian Lake is an example. So, this is actually moving away from the original Post Big Government scenario.
- The challenges remain the same:
  - The only bank branch office closes
  - The last gas station closes
  - The local food store closes off-season
  - A couple of small shops close
- School populations are an issue everywhere
- Each town has assets to build upon and people working to improve things, often collaborating with neighboring towns
- Declining towns have plenty of allies
  - But their future remains in the hands of residents
- Regionalization is being rewarded by the State

### **Adk State Forest**

- The big negative trends remain and awareness is growing:
  - Climate change: adaptation and mitigation are both needed now
  - Rural / City demographics are diverging
  - Health care and pension costs increasingly burden county/town government and schools
- People point out that any number of possible city crises could drive people to the Park. Terrorism, floods, viral epidemics, heat waves, etc.
- However, the notion that the Forest Preserve needs big changes is not on anyone's mind as a solution - in fact the opposite is the case
- Most have embraced the question of how to use the Forest Preserve as a solution, not a problem

## So Where are We Now?

- The Wild Park, our foundation, is being strengthened
- The Usable Park's recreation focus is making great progress in many dimensions, except the early retired idea
- The Sustainable Life scenario has many diverse projects coming to fruition.
  - The NC Sustainability Plan lays out details and a path to NYS supporting funds
- Regionalization is clearly being favored vs. independent solutions in every town
  - Failure of some towns remains possible
- The big negatives all remain: climate, gov't health care and pension costs, and rural/city demographics
  - But these are not distracting people from their projects
  - There is an expectation to do better than average rural regions

## What Happens Next?

- We are developing an interactive software tool so we can track progress and include more people in this ongoing conversation. We hope to release it in the early fall.
- We believe the single most promising change is reflected is the number of projects arising from collaborative efforts
- Large numbers of independent projects, rooted in shared intentions, are moving us where we want to go.
  - This is very powerful. It isn't top down. It is us.
  - Government is well suited to helping because of our alignment, as evidenced by the NCREDC's wins in Albany
- We will see you next year with another update (the last of our 3 year commitment to this project)

## Keynote: Creating the Adirondack Future

Bob Bendick, Director of U.S. Government Relations, The Nature Conservancy provided the keynote and departing inspiration. Here is the text of his speech.

### Introduction

Thank you for inviting me to be part of this meeting. It's great to be back in the Adirondacks! I am surprised and impressed by how many people I remember from years ago who are still involved in charting the future of the Park.

I particularly want to recognize my colleagues at the Adirondack Chapter of TNC and their Director, Mike Carr, for the terrific work that they continue to do here.

A part of the reason that I was asked to talk with you today is that in the 1990s as Deputy Commissioner for Natural Resources at DEC, I worked here in the Adirondack Park and served as Chair of the four-state Northern Forest Lands Council which was tasked with making recommendations about the future of the north country from Maine to Tug Hill. The final report of the Council, titled “Finding Common Ground”, is, of course, the theme of your ongoing discussions.

Since leaving New York, I have worked for the Nature Conservancy in Florida, then across ten southern states and, for the last five years, nationally, where I have gained new perspective on how people with a variety of views can come together to conserve large natural areas like the Adirondacks, for their long term benefits for people and the environment.

I will get back to that theme later, but first, a warning label on my talk—as you well know, it is important to view ideas and advice from outside experts with skepticism. I have not lived and worked in New York for a long time, and as I have prepared for joining you today by reading and by talking to some of you on the phone, I have been reminded how unique the Adirondack region is in its history and culture. As an outside observer no longer part of that culture, I am not certain how helpful I can actually be, but I’ll give it a try.

### **Trends in Collaborative Conservation**

The Northern Forest Lands Council was a truly diverse group of people representing local government, forest industry, conservation, and state government in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York. The council members made it a point to go out and talk with a very broad range of citizens as an integral part of their planning work. Some of those meetings were difficult and fraught with conflict as has been the case in many of the thousands of meetings in which I have participated over the years. I recall, however, an evening meeting here in the Adirondacks, maybe in Indian Lake, when the council members came away from the discussion with a profound feeling of hope for the future. Certainly not everyone at that meeting agreed with each other, but there was a spirit of give and take and a sense of shared responsibility for this place that suggested how much might be possible. I have seen such things happen before from time to time—like looking through a keyhole into a better world, a glimpse of what might actually be possible through fair processes of engagement and shared commitment to making things better. The Common Ground Alliance is now realizing this potential.

Sadly, government in Washington where my work is now is not headed in this direction. Just this last week, for the first time ever, the debate in Congress over renewal of a Farm Bill became a contentious and partisan issue. As you know, little gets done in that environment. But out away from the Capitol, in real places like the Adirondacks, something new is happening on the land—diverse groups of people are coming together to think about and shape the futures of the large landscapes, watersheds and ecosystems where they live, work and recreate.

This new national trend is not just naive wishful thinking by a few conservationists. For the last two years I have co-chaired a national organization with a boring name but an interesting mission—the Practitioners Network for Large Landscape Conservation. The network is documenting collaborative conservation efforts from the Everglades Headwaters in Florida to the Northern Sierra Partnership in

California with the objective of getting those involved in these projects to help each other by sharing the lessons they are learning. A growing but mostly invisible movement of communities is doing just what you are doing in the Common Ground Alliance--local, state and federal agencies, non-profits, landowners and businesses are coming together to figure out how they can conserve large areas with important natural values in ways that also strengthen and sustain local and regional economies.

Here are some examples:

- In the **Crown of the Continent** in western Montana, at a scale similar to the Adirondack Park, ranchers, the outdoor recreation industry, land trusts and federal agencies have created a vision for the future of the public and private land in their region. Private landowners in two areas of the Crown, the Blackfoot Valley and the Rocky Mountain Front, have banded together in alliances with government agencies to protect their rural way of life, exceptional fish and wildlife habitat, and opportunities for recreation in the outdoors. In the Crown some traditional industries have declined, but ranching and tourism remain important, and there is hope for renewal of a forest products industry. The Blackfoot Valley ranchers have even created an outreach program, called Partners for Conservation, to share conservation ideas and problem solving with other ranchers around the country. The Heart of the Rockies Project fosters cooperation among private land trusts in the region. A Crown of the Continent Tourism Council is seeking to market the entire region to outside visitors.
- In the **Gulf of Mexico**, Hurricane Katrina and the BP oil spill have for the first time led the five Gulf States to think about the Gulf ecosystem as a whole. A Governors' Gulf of Mexico Alliance has identified restoration goals for the entire Gulf and strategies to achieve those goals. Within the larger Gulf region several projects are underway at the 1-2 million acre scale:
  - **The Everglades Headwaters Project** in which cattle ranchers, the South Florida Water Management District, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Department of Defense, non-profits, and local governments are seeking ways of restoring and protecting hundreds of thousands of acres of degraded wetlands to reduce flooding and sustain water supplies downstream while providing exceptional wildlife habitat, improved access for hunting and fishing, and making it possible for cattle ranchers to stay in business.
  - **The Louisiana Wetland Restoration Project** includes a wide range of Louisiana and national organizations seeking to use BP and other funding to reverse the rapid loss of the once-vast marshes south of New Orleans. Those marshes provide essential benefits to south Louisiana and the larger Gulf like buffering New Orleans from storms and maintaining a way of life dependent on the productivity of wetlands as habitat for fish and wildlife.



Other similar projects are just underway in the Mobile Delta and its tributary rivers in Alabama and in large areas of the Florida panhandle where the Department of Defense is an unusual but effective partner.

- And, you may have heard about what's happening in the Penobscot River Watershed in Maine at the other end of the Northern Forest Region. A diverse group of participants including the Penobscot Indian Tribe, have come together to protect and restore the river by modifying some dams and removing others to both maintain hydroelectric generation and reopen the upper river to spawning populations of Atlantic salmon, shad, striped bass and sturgeon. The expectation is that these restored fish runs will have profound benefits to both the ecology and the economy of the watershed. The Veazie Dam on the Penobscot will be breached this month.

### Common Themes

These projects and many, many more like them are characterized by several common themes:

1. *The participants see the future of their regions as a combination of public and private lands woven together to create the fabric of a larger landscape that protects natural values, provides sustainable sources of food, fiber and energy, and serves other human needs within the region and in adjacent areas.* Private landowners are taking a more active role in using government programs to their advantage and in shaping how public/private partnerships can and should work.
2. *There is a growing understanding of the Importance of outdoor recreation, including hunting, fishing and wildlife observation to the economies of rural areas and to the national economy.* Several recent reports document these values. A 2013 study of the Outdoor Recreation Economy by the Outdoor Industry Association says that outdoor recreation employs more than 6 million Americans. This is more than either the Finance and Insurance or the Construction industries. Overall outdoor recreation is worth \$646 billion annually to the American economy. These numbers are important to New York. In fact the 2011 National Survey of Fish, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation shows that more is spent on wildlife related recreation in New York than in any other state.
3. *As government budgets have tightened, there is more interest in regional collaboration across agency lines and among levels of government.* This can save money, provide better services to the public, and improve management of whole natural systems.
4. *Non-profit organizations of all kinds have come to play an increasingly important role not just in advocating a point of view, but in implementing plans on the ground.*
5. *The people of America's rural areas recognize that they are increasingly affected by forces and factors beyond their borders such as global climate change, invasive species, and the loss of America's papermaking industry to other countries.* To survive, rural communities must play a greater role in shaping their own futures.
6. *If consistently enforced and fairly applied the nation's environmental and conservation laws are being seen not just as a barrier to growth, but as a protector of rural life that can actually be a useful framework within which to discuss options for the future.*

7. *While building a healthy future for whole regions will take a long time, and the institutions, organizations and collaborations that govern the future of rural regions will only be successful if they transcend immediate political crises and changes, there are pivotal times of change during which leadership and personal commitment can make a profound difference in the outcome. This seems to be one of those times in the Adirondacks.*

And two final points that are particularly important:

8. *Americans (and people around the world) are finally recognizing something understood by the founders of the Adirondack Park so long ago—that healthy natural features like headwaters forests, floodplains and marshes are critical to the protection and management of the water resources that are so essential to our lives. They see that investing in nature for all its benefits is often more cost-effective than investing in traditional engineered infrastructure.*
9. *And, finally, as I have already suggested in this talk, the future success of conservation depends upon the real engagement at the local and regional level of diverse stakeholders in the decision-making that affects their lives and economic well-being as well as the fate of the natural systems upon which we all depend.*

In summary, I believe that collaborative landscape-scale conservation is the most important trend in conservation in America in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Only if we learn how to do this well, will we be able to protect nature for all its values.

### **Creating the Future**

I would like to finish my talk close to where I began—by discussing further the participation of people in creating a desirable and sustainable future.

The Nature Conservancy does a lot of public opinion polling. Last year at this time we released a far ranging poll that confirmed what I have seen in so many meetings like this one—that across the political spectrum there continues to be strong support for conservation of America's natural resources and exceptional places. Sure, people of different political persuasions may view how we get there somewhat differently, but there is a lot of consensus about the goals. Here are just a few of the numbers:

- More than 80% of Americans say that conserving our country's natural resources—our land, air and water—is patriotic. (And by the way the number for Tea Party Republicans is 79%)
- And 87% of voters agree that our state and national parks, forests, monuments and wildlife areas are an essential part of their state's quality of life.
- 79% of voters reject the notion that protecting our environment is at odds with a strong economy.

Processes like Finding Common Ground and Adirondack Futures have great promise. I saw this kind of thing work in the Northern Forest Lands Council, in the creation of New York's first open space plan with the extensive participation of regional open space councils, and in lots of places since then where

conservation is being driven from the bottom up. Problems and differences are often much better resolved at the state and local basis and close to the ground than on a conceptual level in Washington where symbolism and politics seem to take the place of common sense. Perhaps a mainframe, top down conservation is being replaced by a networked approach as is the case in other endeavors today.

I recall a night many years ago when I was staying at the DEC cabin on Lower Saranac Lake during an Adirondack Park Agency meeting. It was in the autumn, and a cold front had just come through. Clouds were streaming across the face of a full moon. Shafts of moonlight illuminated the windblown lake in silver here, and then, there. It was beautiful but unsettling. The changing patterns of light on the wind-driven waves seemed then and seem in my memory now, to represent the uncertainty of this world. What will happen next? What will be light and what dark? What will our economy, our climate, our volatile national politics do next?

While we value places like the Adirondack Park because we see them as stable, insulated from change, that no longer seems entirely true. No place, not even the Adirondack Park, is immune from such things as a changing climate, changing global markets for timber and minerals, and the electronic addictions of our children that separate them from nature. People around the country, even those dedicated to the idea of wilderness, are concluding that in a dynamic world, we cannot achieve a desirable future for people, plants and animals only by preserving the past. We must actually create the future we want. Of course, the creative conservation process should be based on the strength and value of nature, but it also demands the active participation of those who will be affected by the results of our decisions. That's why you are here today and why the ongoing discussion over the future of the Adirondack Park holds important lessons for the rest of America.

These debates can be difficult and sometimes really painful, but as I look back over many years of trying to find common ground, I see two powerful benefits of collaborative decision-making—good results on the ground derived from the collective wisdom of diverse interests, and, a lasting sense of self-respect and self-worth for those with the courage and determination to engage fully in what should not be a chore but a privilege--the sacred process of creating the world in which our children and grandchildren will live.

## Overall Notes and Feedback on the Cards

We invited all participants to document their lunchtime discussions using a card that we collected. The card could also be used to provide other feedback or suggest other topics or projects for CGA to work on. Here are the contents of the main body of the cards.

-----Card Data Follows-----

"The energy and sense of collaboration at today's meeting was palpable. Well done! The vision for the Park has face validity. My concern is that the Park, as a microcosm of the country, has a history of huge income disparity. The Adirondack Park has the opportunity to be a model of real economic opportunity

for everyone. The challenge is to create the expectation that living wages with access to health care and other benefits for all Park residents be the vision. Incorporating that economic base would make any plan much more viable.

Share ideas about trails, impediments to long-distance hiking trail and rail/bike trail. Possible changes in wilderness classification. Possibility for residential and community solar.

DEC campgrounds - have Operations/Management staff work with the communities in which the campgrounds are located to identify services (e.g., campfire wood) that can be offered to campers. This could increase economic opportunities in the towns and strengthen public/private relations

Relating to the Adirondack Futures project is this further evidence of Adirondack climate change...obviously relates to the discussion of climate adaptation/mitigation: See the following paper:

Beier, C.M., J.A. Stella, M. Dovciak and S.A. McNulty. 2012. Local climatic drivers of changes in phenology at a boreal-temperate ecotone in eastern North America. *Climatic Change* 115:399-417. DOI: 10.1007/s10584-012-0455-z.

Abstract: To evaluate recent climatic changes and their impacts in a boreal-temperate ecotone in eastern North America, we analyzed ice phenology records (1975–2007) for five lakes in the Adirondack Mountains of northern New York State. We observed rapidly decreasing trends of up to 21 days less ice cover, mostly due to later freeze-up and partially due to earlier break-up. To evaluate the local drivers of these lake ice changes, we modeled ice phenology based on local climate data, derived climatic predictors from the models, and evaluated trends in those predictors to determine which were responsible for observed changes in lake ice. November and December temperature and snow depth consistently predicted ice-in, and recent trends of warming and decreasing snow during these months were consistent with later ice formation. March and April temperature and snow depth consistently predicted ice-out, but the absence of trends in snow depth during these months, despite concurrent warming, resulted in much weaker trends for ice-out. Recent rates of warming in the Adirondacks are among the highest regionally, although with a different seasonality of changes (early winter > late winter) that is consistent with other lake ice records in the surrounding area. Projected future declines in snow cover could create positive feedbacks and accelerate current rates of ice loss due to warming. Climate sensitivity was greatest for the larger lakes in our study, including Wolf Lake, considered one of the most ecologically intact ‘wilderness lakes’ in eastern North America. Our study provides further evidence of climate sensitivity of the boreal-temperate ecotone of eastern North America and points to emergent conservation challenges posed by climate change in legally protected yet vulnerable landscapes like the Adirondack Park.

Idea: presentation on energy budget in Adirondack Park summarizing cost of electricity, home heating and transportation. How can we produce more local energy and what impacts would this have? I know there is the Sustainability Plan, but a focused summary of this topic would be instructive.

Suggestion: add check box to the online registration if you are interested in carpooling.

Talked about the growing realization that there is a key linkage between the Adirondack assets and the communities and businesses. Capital is important to upgrade amenities. The HCR Microgrant Program is very successful. It is NOT available this year though (grrrrr). There is a need for a traveling road show of building entrepreneurial training capacity (marketing, recordkeeping, labor law/HR, insurance, internet, etc.). AEDC has a 16 hour class, but much more is needed.

I like hearing success stories, but am wondering if the Forum shouldn't be used to get "results" in moving the agenda forward, i.e. next steps for the region.

Wonderful presentation by Toole about trail towns. Be sure to include natural history and cross-country skiing trails that are different from snowmobile trails (long miles will bring people in winter for as long as the snow lasts). Include powder skiers effort to organize and use forest preserve in a low impact but increasingly popular way with yuppies. How can we get our town to think this way? Bring Jeremy Evans to speak at our town board meeting.

Consider that in 2024 there will be more old people than young people here. Need accommodation for that.

Love idea of a system of trails and of trail towns. Maintain with environmental studies college interns. Love also the "grading" i.e., monitoring, of the ADK Futures Scenarios.

I counted only 3 non-white faces.

Invasive species should be treated as an epidemiological problem. Take lessons from prevention and control in medical epidemiology.

Great ideas on tourism from Inlet. Inspired by the report on value and potential of mountain biking. Meeting generated a great feeling and awareness of how groups are cooperating – the enthusiasm was apparent. Need for a smaller regional concept to focus on the specific attractions of the region:

- Tupper Lake, Saranac Lake, Long Lake and Old Forge
- Raquette River, Low's Lake, Little Tupper, etc.
- Designated as Canoe Areas

Use of State and Federal funding for toxic site remediation and monitoring.

As a newcomer I am wondering how to participate in creating and envisioning this further. My town has an APA-approved plan from some years ago with apparently little interest to update. Issue I'm interested in:

- More diverse and better holistic healthcare (incl. alternative medicine)
- Openness to non-profit advocacy organizations as "business" workplace
- LGBT friendly, specifically
- Aging in place, support for people to have assistance in home, not nursing homes
- More community cultural participation like folk music singing
- Deeper discussion of environmental issues and choices

- Attention to gender perspectives

Arts and culture missing. Once again the value and potential of the arts and culture as a vehicle for creating community, promoting the region and attracting visitors and creating income opportunities was shamefully absent.

This made me realize that we're gaining ground because so many people were suggesting adding new, smaller-scale issues to the agenda for next year. Met a lot of interesting people from a variety of places and occupations.

Trail towns. Connecting different interest areas in events – history, birding, biking, etc. Celebrate collaborative efforts and positive strides. Acknowledge areas that need to be addressed and begin working on them. Beginning to move away from debate of existence of climate change to how to mitigate and manage given climate change. Communities most consider their identity and how they fit in with surrounding communities. Important to be able to visualize – such as in software demoed – to engage stakeholders. Our lands and lakes the entire ecosystem is relevant to economic potential.

It would be great to connect townships, other recreational organizations, DEC and other interested parties to develop a database with web access of all recreational accesses with special identifications of activities and accessibilities. In addition, it would be great to have a database of projects and partnerships within the Park. To look at similar projects or to assist partnerships to expand and grow.

The Adirondack Park is a world class Park with international designations not well advantaging the Park and its residents today. Lack of coordination, even communication, and appreciation for how this Park compares with protected areas around the globe means that delegations come and go here without the State, local or non-profit sectors taking full advantage of the scientific, cultural, economic research and data, and interpretation. An international exchange portal for delegations and those supporting their visits and research while here might help, as would Governor's office level attention to the world wide interest in the Park. This could be a topic for next year.

"Stewarding the Wild Adirondacks" was a 2012 workshop at Paul Smiths and was the first time 50 stewards of the woods, mountains, ponds and streams came together to discuss a) lack of resources, b) desire and growth of collaboration in common training of our young and youthful Park stewards. A lot of good ideas came out of the meeting. Adirondack Wild would be glad to help organize a discussion on Wild Stewards at next Forum.

Great progress in recognizing that the Forest Preserve is the resource that distinguishes the Adirondacks from other rural areas. My hope is that protection and preservation of the resource remains the most important part of our plans and practices.

CGA could be strengthened by including, integrating far more wilderness advocates, wilderness guides and both in-Park environmental leaders and out-of-park leaders, guides and educators who know the value of wild lands, wilderness – the very core ecological, recreational and economic asset of the regional which benefit all. CGA has typically only had an economic, infrastructure and tourism



marketing focus. That's been good! But CGA has its head in the sand on the growing impacts of lack of land use planning, development fragmentation of habitats and ecological illiteracy. CGA needs to help face facts on environmental degradation.

I am concerned about the land swap concept details. This could get caught up in short-term goals and result in more fragmentation of public and private lands. It may result in the destruction of a future larger conservation area.

Plattsburgh air service expansion, fast rail service, industry for the Adirondacks.

Rebrand? Adirondack "Park" is a misnomer. "Forever Wild" is good. The Adirondacks: A vast experiment in public/private land stewardship.

GIS phone app with many layers of GIS data about cultural, historical, natural history, architectural, trails, arts, and other recreation and tourism, focused points of interest concerning the entire Park, which users could download and use on their phones. Question: how to incorporate implementation planning up front in local and regional planning processes?

Presentations should focus on CGA-inspired projects. Most panels were efforts that were organized before or w/o CGA activity. No pitch for how people/organizations can get involved in ongoing CGA projects. Impression for anyone new is that you are too late to the party. Largely self-congratulatory.

Connect our North Country Native Botanical Gardens project (part and parcel with our homesteading "college") with the Toole Design trails and with the Web Portal (McKenna) through he had left so shared it with Neil from ADK. Idea: energy efficiency loan/grant program to help ADK motels create covered entrances to rooms, closing in the open balconies.

Constructive criticism: 1. Mics – yikes. 2. Long tables at lunch created splinter groups, hard to break in on 3. Acronyms, acronyms. Use them but please ask speakers to explain with first use

## Word Clouds

We also asked our participants to write a word or two that described their reaction to the Forum and what they were hearing. We put all the words into a little app that created a word cloud for us. Here it is followed by the raw data from the cards.







## Suggested Topics for Next Year

### Healthcare

How agency rules support or are barriers to specific visions.

Changes to wilderness regulations; allow lumbering on State Land.

Update on Sustainability Plan implementation.

Make the agenda more interactive with more opportunities for audience engagement.

### Pre-schools

Are some towns going to disappear?

### Gender?

Motivating people not involved in recreation – current residents, especially low income, have low interest and involvement.

Sustainable models of managing recreational areas (facilities, trails, systems, etc.)

Community communication – how we interact with the public.

Developing the international visitor and researcher opportunity.

Supporting and extending the Wild Stewards programs.

Regulations and land swap issues.

Ways to promulgate networking to connect people and projects that promote the “sustainable communities” endstate with sustainable tourism and protection of the forest preserve.

For a forum devoted to exploring successful collaborations around the region, the topics were limited to tourism, water quality and energy but no attention given to many other areas of regional life that merit our deep attention. These include arts and culture, health care, schools, housing and social services. These are critical to overall success of the region’s economy, communities and attractiveness to visitors and to have omitted any of the wonderful collaborations in these areas seems like a huge oversight. Perhaps these could be the focus of the next forum. They weren’t even included in the lunch topics.

Invite Adirondack Teleworks to discuss how that enterprise is going

Proposed topic for 2014: agriculture/tourism linkages and opportunities