



Building Blocks for Adirondack Community Success

Updated Blueprint for the Blue Line
Adirondack Common Ground Alliance (2017)

Once again this past year New York is making progress in protecting the environment of the Adirondacks while growing its economy. Expanded efforts for preventing and controlling invasive species, additions to the Forest Preserve, record setting numbers of travelers, increases in the Environmental Protection Fund, investments through the Regional Economic Development Council's, first passage of a constitutional amendment aimed at enhancing broadband, and assisting in municipal safety and health are only a portion of the activities that have moved the state toward recognizing the potential of the Adirondack Park. This is evidence of what a coordinated commitment and hard work can accomplish.

For ten years, scores of stakeholders—including those from the local government, nonprofit, environmental and business sectors have come together as the Adirondack Common Ground Alliance to find a common agenda and coordinate their efforts toward collective action to solve simple and complex problems. In the past we developed a shared vision and strategies for the whole Adirondack Park in order to communicate with one voice. Using a scenario-based planning tool to stimulate new, creative, thinking about the challenges and opportunities ahead, a new conversation started and the Common Ground Alliance proposed the following vision for the Adirondack Park over the next 25 years. The entire report can be found at ADKfutures.org

“Over the next 25 years, an understanding of the interdependence of our environment and our economy spreads throughout our communities. Our mixture of public and private lands is the defining feature of the Park; our diverse sustainable economy increases our self reliance. We use balanced, slightly more flexible regulation to preserve our unique landscape while enhancing the health of our communities.”

In moving toward this ambitious goal the Common Ground Alliance submits the following 2017 agenda.
2017 Common Ground Alliance Forum - Tuesday, July 11, 8:30-3:30 View in Old Forge

Policy, Practice and Budget Recommendations

Improving the APA procedures (Slightly more flexible regulation, and streamlining, are understood to require reforms that both enhance protection and restoration of environmental resources and improve predictability and sensitivity to business needs.)

1. Update Agency guidelines and procedures by supporting legislation to address Agency response time for initial applications to expedite a more complete evaluation of applications and reduce the number of subsequent revisions; and refine requirements for determining lot size and counting as proposed by the APA in 2013.
2. Fund and hire APA circuit riders to make the agency more proactive and its services more accessible to applicants in distant locations in the Park.

3. Amend the APA Act in order to permit the Agency to deny permits without requiring an adjudicatory hearing. The amendment should allow the applicant the right to have an adjudicatory hearing on an appeal of the denial of a permit.
4. Develop policies or regulations that encourage and facilitate energy conservation and renewable sources of energy.
5. Look closer at Adirondack Park Agency (APA) policies for private land use development and stewardship and amend them to include current, science-based reforms including, for example, transfer of development rights (TDRs), clustering and smart-growth incentives.

Capitalizing on the Forest Preserve

1. Fund an increase in full-time and seasonal DEC staff dedicated to education about and stewardship of and enforcement on the Forest Preserve to address increasing user impacts.
2. Expand partnership with the NYS DEC and others to support the creation and continuation of volunteer "Friends Groups" for assistance in promoting and maintaining aspects of the Forest Preserve, similar to what the Office of Park, Recreation and Historic Preservation and Parks and Trails NY do to support its "Friends" programs.
3. Embrace comprehensive landscape scale complex planning, such as the Great (Adirondack) South Woods study, and explore revisions in the State Master Plan that improve recreational management and resource protection, and develop programs encourage redistribution of visitor use patterns in the Park and apply this approach to the High Peaks region. Embrace comprehensive landscape scale planning and start it for the High Peaks.

Growing the economy of the Park

1. Improve "curb-side appeal" in hamlets through expansion of Main Street and Downtown Revitalization programs and initiatives to improve other non-downtown businesses and business districts.
2. Strengthen local businesses and community efforts by sharing success stories among park communities to model new and innovative ideas.
3. Adopt special state incentives for investments in the size and kind of business activities that are appropriately scaled to businesses in the Adirondack Park, for example develop programs based on the DEC Smart Growth grant for DOS and ESD. Evaluate the 80/20 funding requirement for state grants within the blue line.
4. Support partners to establish a diversity plan that outlines strategies for ensuring all demographics feel welcome in the Adirondacks.
5. Pass for a second time the constitutional amendment that addresses environmental and community concerns regarding road and utility infrastructure in the Adirondacks and pass the associated enabling legislation so that the constitutional amendment can go to the citizenry for a vote.

Responding to the opioid use and suicide crisis

The legislature and executive branch have made serious strides in dealing with the growing problem of heroin and opiate abuse since the bipartisan Senate report of 2014. Unfortunately the problem still grows. We encourage consideration of bipartisan recommendations including attention to opiate use for young children.

1. Support implementation of Chapter 69, 70 and 71 of 2016 Laws which address Prevention, Treatment, Expanded Insurance Coverage for Addiction Treatment, and Funding to Combat Heroin and Opioid Abuse.
2. Working with Legislative representatives, support equitable funding for mental health services throughout ALL towns in the Adirondack Park. Such funding could support mental hygiene clinics and add per diems staff into local clinics and schools to improve access to mental hygiene services by all Adirondack residents.
3. Assist in de-stigmatizing mental hygiene issues by consistently naming the suicide and opioid addiction crisis until measureable progress has been made parkwide.

Women in Leadership in the Park

1. Explore campaign finance reform that reduces the cost of running for elected positions.
2. Develop an intern program for women to monitor and learn from local government operations