



Adirondack Common Ground Alliance  
**2018 Blueprint for the Blue Line**

Successes in the Adirondacks are being celebrated. A diverse network under the banner of the Adirondack Common Ground Alliance (CGA) are focused on celebrating these victories and addressing emerging priorities to positively affect the whole Adirondack Park, its communities, institutions, people and environment. Across a broad array of topics, the CGA brings people together around a shared vision and strategies to seek collaborative solutions to common ground issues. CGA sets the stage for constructive action and communicates with one voice on a shared agenda to solve simple and complex problems in the Adirondack Park. This common ground approach has proved to be a constructive path to success.

Recent successes include state passage of the Forest Preserve Health and Safety Land Account; expanded efforts preventing and controlling invasive species; the renewal of Champlain Valley farming; significant Regional Economic Development Council and private sector investment for recreation and tourism facilities; additions to the Forest Preserve; record setting numbers of travelers; significant public investment in improved access to state lands; and increases in the Environmental Protection Fund. A coordinated commitment and hard work can accomplish a lot.

In 2012 the [ADKfutures.org](http://ADKfutures.org) project proposed a vision for the Adirondack Park over the next 25 years:

*Over the next 25 years, an understanding of the interdependence of our environment and our economy spreads throughout our communities (and the State). 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 (no less protective) regulation to preserve our unique landscape while enhancing the health (and economy) of our communities.*

Building on input from the 11<sup>th</sup> annual Adirondack Common Ground forum July 11, 2017, to move further toward this ambitious ADKfutures goal, and realization of the full potential of the Adirondack Park, the following opportunities for action and budget needs are offered for consideration in 2018:

**Opportunities for Action (consistent with current legislative or budget authorizations):**

1. **Capitalizing on success, manage overuse, and use science to preserve the natural environment and leverage economic development in communities**
  - a) Manage increased High Peaks use and encourage use of alternative destinations..
  - b) Update the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan:
    - a. Increase the use of “complex planning” to allow for broader planning integrating adjacent state units and other lands and waters.

- b. Revise the SLMP to provide specific principles, guidelines and criteria for complex planning while considering a “backcountry” classification for state lands allowing for recreational non-motorized biking, and wilderness management, in some locations, and expanded Wilderness protections in other locations.
  - c) Initiate a comprehensive recreational management and resource protection planning process for the High Peaks area.
  - d) Incentivize small Adirondack-scale private lodging investment to spread tourism impact.
  - e) Develop and sustain regional, collaborative networks that connect communities and entrepreneurs (e.g. ADK Rail-Trail, 5 towns, Great South Woods and hamlet to hut).
  - f) Support the convening of a park-wide, multi-stakeholder forum to organize research and monitoring priorities and funding needs.
  - g) Work with decision makers (e.g. AATV) to integrate science into decision-making.
- 2. **Improving curb appeal, redevelopment and investment in core downtowns, fostering entrepreneurship and smart growth, and attracting, retaining and supporting young families:**
  - a) Increase I Love NY Adirondack marketing and include a great place to visit, work and live.
  - b) Make the Park “family friendly,” celebrate diversity, and encourage urban/Park exchanges to encourage everyone to visit, live and/or retire in the Park.
  - c) Assist with business succession planning and match entrepreneurs with opportunities.
  - d) Offer expanded business planning assistance to communities and businesses.
  - e) Create ‘Adirondack Scholarships’ for private colleges in the Park.
  - f) Create a clearinghouse at the APA of workbooks (REDC) and successful plans.
- 3. **Combat Terrestrial and Aquatic Invasive Species Threats:**
  - a) Sponsor an invasive species citizen science Bio-Blitz to empower local action.
  - b) Initiate a state-wide communication and marketing campaign that educates NYS residents about the threats to invasives and mechanisms for prevention and control.
  - c) Explore biological controls to defend against invasive pests and implement programs in the Adirondacks (e.g. identify hemlock hedges for the eventual release of biological control agents to defend against the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid).
  - d) Become a leader in the northeast cooperative to limit the introduction of forest pests.

### **Opportunities for Legislative and/or Budget Action:**

- 1. **Preserve the Natural Environment and Communities Leverage Economic Development:**
  - a. Appropriate capital and operational funds, and authorize diverse revenue for visitor education, improved infrastructure, alternative hike options, natural resource protection, wilderness management, recreational planning and enforcement, to sustain and share success within and beyond the High Peaks Region.
  - b. Dedicate new funding for Adirondack data collection, open source analysis, strategic planning of research, and monitoring to help decision makers with priority issues.
- 2. **Improving curb appeal, redevelopment and investment in core downtowns, fostering entrepreneurship and smart growth, and attracting, retaining and supporting young families:**
  - a. Establish a state income Adirondack investment Tax Credit.
  - b. Fund Rural Preservation Corporations (RPCs) and provide block grants to counties.
  - c. Authorize loans, grants for community center housing, child care and family services.
  - d. Forgive student debt and/or health insurance costs for job creating entrepreneurs.
  - e. Expand funding eligibility and increase opportunities for seed grants and loans.
- 3. **Combat terrestrial and Aquatic Invasive Species threats**
  - a. Increase funding dedicated to combating terrestrial invasives in the Adirondack Park.
  - b. Renew and improve legislation and policies that combat invasive species.

**Continuing Priorities (see 2017 Blue Print):** Improving APA procedures; capitalizing on (and protecting) the Forest Preserve, and growing the economy of the Park; responding to the opioid use and suicide crisis, and; supporting women in Leadership in the Park, etc.