



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ANCA Board of Directors Hires Elizabeth Cooper as New Executive Director

Brings corporate and military experience to lead growing economic development organization

SARANAC LAKE, N.Y. — The Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA) Board of Directors announced today that Elizabeth Cooper will succeed Executive Director Kate Fish, who has led the rural economic development organization for 12 years.

Cooper has significant experience in private sector supply chain analysis and management and as a captain in the New York Air National Guard. She is a recognized leader in community development and as an entrepreneur in the region. Cooper lives in Lake Placid, N.Y., having grown up in Star Lake, N.Y.



“Elizabeth’s experience as a small business owner, her work in community development and her global experience made her stand out from a pool of 54 applicants from as far away as London, England; South Africa; Texas and Nevada. It will enable her to lead ANCA in strengthening local food and clean energy systems as well as the entrepreneurial economy,” said ANCA Board Chair Jim Sonneborn.

“When Kate announced she was planning to retire, we knew we had to find a remarkable leader — someone who was passionate about the Adirondack North Country and knowledgeable about our rural economies. We are thrilled to welcome Elizabeth Cooper as our next executive director.

“ANCA has real momentum in developing innovative, collaborative projects and attracting significant public and private funding for implementation. Cooper represents a rare find — someone who has led 300 people in Antarctica and opened a coffee shop in one of the most rural parts of the state. That experience allows her to see the challenges of the region and the opportunities we find in our hamlets and villages, farmlands and forests.”

Sonneborn noted, “Kate has been an exceptional leader for the past 12 years, increasing the organization’s impact in northern New York communities.” That leadership and the team that Cooper inherits was recently recognized by the U.S. Department of Commerce and Mastercard with grants

totalling \$1.28 million. The funds will be used for direct services to businesses to increase e-commerce, expand wholesale and retail markets and reduce energy costs.

Based upon the recommendation of the search committee, Cooper's impressive resume and the enthusiastic endorsement of the staff at ANCA, the board unanimously selected Cooper as the right person to take Fish's accomplishments to the next level.

"I can't overstate how excited I am about the opportunity to lead an innovative and dynamic group of individuals that is making a real difference to the future of the North Country," said Cooper. "Systems-level problem solving is at the core of my management expertise and what ANCA does every day."

"I've seen firsthand the results ANCA delivers to our communities. The recent [Ward Lumber transition to a worker-owned cooperative](#), preserving more than 50 jobs, demonstrates clearly that collaborating with committed partners is the way to achieve real progress in this region. My passion for this work matches that of ANCA's staff and board — I can't wait to get started."

Cooper graduated from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in 1999 before serving in the New York Air National Guard in both active and reserve capacities for nine years. In this role, Cooper was Commander of the Maintenance Operations Flight, supervising Aircraft Maintenance Personnel in both Scotia, N.Y. and McMurdo Bay, Antarctica. She worked in logistics for Target Corporation before receiving an MBA from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, N.Y. in 2006. Cooper subsequently took a position with Accenture, a Fortune 500 multinational company that provides consulting and processing services, where she led an international team from their New York City headquarters in developing 24-hour supply chain services for clients. In 2009, Cooper returned to the Adirondacks, where she worked as Community Development Coordinator for the Towns of Clifton and Fine from 2009-2013. During this time, she coordinated efforts to rehabilitate the J&L site, increase broadband access and administer Local Waterfront Revitalization grants.

Cooper will begin at ANCA on July 12, 2021.

[ANCA](#) is an independent, nonprofit corporation with a transformational approach to building prosperity across northern New York. ANCA's community-informed, results-driven strategies for local food producers, small business owners, aspiring entrepreneurs and municipal innovators offer targeted interventions that are designed to keep wealth and value in local communities.

Attached: one (1) PDF document and one (1) photo.

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