



29th Annual Conference on the Adirondacks
May 15th and 16th, 2025
High Peaks Resort, Lake Placid, NY

"Resilience in Action: Addressing Climate Challenges in the North Country"
Impacts, Socio-ecological Issues, Human Responses



The 29th Annual Conference on the Adirondacks will explore the theme “Resilience to Climate Change in the North Country.” Featuring keynote addresses, expert panels, and interactive sessions, the event will address climate impacts, socio-ecological issues, and human responses across the Adirondack region. Highlights include discussions on invasive species, wildlife, water quality, sustainable building, and unveiling findings from the ACORN Project. With participation from academic leaders, environmental organizations, and policymakers, the conference offers a platform for collaboration and innovation in building regional resilience.

DRAFT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Thursday, May 15th, 2025

- 8:00 a.m. Registration, Coffee, Poster, and Exhibit Set-Up (Avalanche Pass)
- 9:00 a.m. **Welcome and Messages:** Ellen Percy Kraly, ARC President
- 9:15 a.m. **The Adirondack Foundation’s Social Safety Net Study and 3-year Effort to Rebuild the Region’s Social Infrastructure**, CJ Dates, Director of Philanthropic Services, Adirondack Foundation.
- 10:00 a.m. Panel: **Higher Education as a Driving Force for Meaningful, Systemic Change in Resilience and Sustainability:**
- Moderator: Dr. Ellen Percy Kraly, William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of Geography and Environmental Studies Emerita at Colgate.
 - Panelists: Dr. Diane Husic, Executive Director of the Center for the Environment, St. Lawrence University.
 - Dr. Susan Powers, Director, Institute for a Sustainable Environment, Clarkson University.
- 10:45 a.m. Break
- 11:00 a.m. Panel: **New York State Climate Impacts Assessment: Understanding and Preparing for Our Changing Climate**
- **An overview of the NYS Climate Assessment**, Amanda Stevens, Senior Project Manager, NYSERDA
 - **An overview of the Assessment’s Society and Economy Sector, especially regarding North Country issues.** Robin Leichenko, Sector Co-chair and Dean, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Rutgers University
 - **Climate resilience case studies from the North Country - Adirondack Hiking and Biking Trails: Climate Impacts and Adaptation Strategies.** Julia Goren, Executive Director, Adirondack Rail Trail Association.
 - **An overview of the ACORN project**, Sunita Halasz, ACORN, Climate Strategy Advisor, Adirondack Research Consortium

Noon

Lunch – (Great Range) **Annual Awards Luncheon**

- Honoring **David J. Miller** for His Distinguished Service on the Adirondack Research Consortium Board
- Presentation of the Richard H. Morse Student Award: **Hayden Beyer**, St. Lawrence University
- Presentation of the 2025 Elizabeth Thorndike Adirondack Achievement Award:
Nathalie Costa Thill, Executive Director of the Adirondack Center for Writing

1:30 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions:

Session 1: (Algonquin) **Adirondack Park's Old-Growth Forests: Characteristics of an Extensive Remnant Ecosystem**, Abigail Higgins, SUNY ESF,
Carbon Accumulation and Structural Complexity of Wildlands in the Adirondack Forest Preserve, Edward K. Faison, Highstead Foundation,

Session 2: (Iroquois) **Predicting Northeast Hiker Preparedness: Information, Risk, and Experience**, Jill Weiss, SUNY ESF
Findings on Recreational Use in the Adirondacks, The Adirondack Council

Session 3: (Wright) **Long-term Organic Carbon Trends in NE US Cloud Water and Precipitation Samples**, Sara Lance, ASRC, University at Albany
Interactions between Climate Change and Other Anthropogenic Impacts in Northeastern Forests, Charles Canham, Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies,

2:15 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions:

Session 1: (Wright) **Structure of Adirondack Old-growth Forests: The Structure, Composition, and dynamics of old-growth forests in the Adirondack Park**, Dave Orwig, Harvard Forest, Harvard University
Exploring Tree Heights and Tree and Site Characteristics in Old-Growth Forests Across the Adirondack Mountains State Park, Erik Danielson, Harvard Forest, Harvard University

Session 2: (Algonquin) **The Adirondack Journal of Environmental Studies, Opportunities for Publishing**, Ellen Percy Kraly, Colgate University.

3:00: p.m.

Concurrent Sessions:

Session 1: (Wright) **Dynamics of Adirondack Old-growth Forests Over the last Four Centuries: Forest Dynamics Across the Adirondacks 50 years After the Arrival of Beech Bark Disease**, Jillian Dyer, Harvard Forest, Harvard University
Preliminary Evidence of Pulse-Quiescence Dynamics in Old-Growth Adirondack Forests, Neil Pederson, Harvard Forest, Harvard University

Session 2: (Algonquin) **One Rock at a Time: Saving Lake George**, Ellen Brown, Author.
The Life of Wilderness Safeguard Paul Schaefer Brought into Focus, David Gibson, Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve.

4:00 p.m. Reception and Meet the Poster Authors (The Den)

Rachel Ameen , Syracuse University, Creative Cartographies of Animal-Recreation Interactions in the Adirondacks: Mapping Borders, Margins, and Transitions
Olivia Devito , SUNY Plattsburgh, Using LiDAR to quantify peatland vegetation gradients and microtopographic variability
Zoe Fox , SUNY Plattsburgh, Climate change effects on <i>Pinus banksiana</i> growth south of its natural range
Timothy McCay , Colgate University, Earthworms of the Adirondacks: An update
Amélie Przedwiecki , SUNY Plattsburgh, 7,000 Years of Fire and Vegetation History in a Jack Pine Barrens
Sophie Turner , SUNY Plattsburgh, Cone Serotiny in the Altona Flat Rock Jack Pine Population
Jill Weiss , SUNY ESF, Adirondack Mountain Reserve Parking Reservation System Pilot: A Mismatch in Perceptions

Friday, May 16th, 2025

8:00 a.m. Opens, Coffee

9:00 a.m. **Survey of Climate Change in Adirondack Lake Ecosystems (SCALE)**, Moderator: David Miller, Adirondack Council Clean Water Program Coordinator

- **The SCALE Project, its Initial Findings & How Climate Change magnifies the impact of pollution sources in the Adirondack Park**, Kevin C. Rose, Ph.D., Associate Professor & Frederic R. Kolleck '52 Career, Development Chair in Freshwater Ecology, Acting Director, The Darrin Freshwater Institute Director, The Jefferson Project

9:45 a.m. **Threats to Adirondack Waters, Case Statements from Successful Programs, & Lessons from Lake George.**

Threats to Adirondack Waters: An Overview, David Miller, Adirondack Council Clean Water Program Coordinator

Lessons Learned from Lake George: A Comprehensive Approach to water quality protection and a model for protecting our Lakes throughout the Park, Chris Navitsky, Lake George Waterkeeper

10:30 a.m. Break

10:45 a.m. Panel: **Adirondack Built Environment – Resilience, Redevelopment, and Regional Opportunity** - This session explores the urgent need to rethink how we build—and rebuild—in the Adirondacks with housing, climate resilience, and economic vitality deeply intertwined:

- Melissa O'Mara, The Leaders Co-Lab, Moderator
- Kevin Stack – Building in Nature's Image, LLC
- Jesse Schwartzberg, Black Mountain Architecture
- Rob Gillis - Merrill L. Thomas, Inc.
- Adam Bailey – Northern Forest Center

Noon Lunch (Great Range) - Speaker: **From the Hudson to Patagonia and Back: Watershed Conservation in an Interconnected World**, Patrick Lynch, Executive Director, Central New York Land Trust.

1:30 p.m. **ACORN "Connection and Action" Workshop:** The Adirondack Climate Outreach and Resilience Network (ACORN) spent the last year conducting community listening sessions, and now it's time to translate that collective learning into action. This highly interactive workshop is open to everyone - people who have participated in ACORN events in the past, as well as newcomers. Participants will draw connections that show regional interconnectedness. We will use these connections to devise climate resilience actions for the North Country. Participants will leave the workshop with a chosen action item to implement.

- Sunita Halasz, ACORN, Climate Strategy Advisor, Adirondack Research Consortium
- Jen Kretser, Director of Climate Initiatives, The Wild Center

This workshop is held in memory of our friend Bruce Selleck, esteemed Colgate Professor and former ARC President.

3:30 p.m. Adjourn

Table Exhibits:

Emily Fell, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's Great Lakes Program New York's Great Lakes Action Agenda

Deanna Sullivan, Climate Policy Analyst, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Office of Climate Change / Adaptation, Adaptation and Resilience Programs, and the Climate Smart Communities grants and related opportunities.

David Gibson, Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve, Introducing his new book: *A Force for Nature*, Paul Schaefer's Adirondack Coalitions, (Syracuse University Press, 2025)



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In Memory
Bruce Selleck (1946-2017)
Bill Porter (1951-2020)



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