



**30<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on the Adirondacks**  
**April 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026**  
**High Peaks Resort, Lake Placid, NY**



**“Key Issues Shaping the Adirondack Future”**

This year’s program tackles some of the region’s most significant issues—from the expansion of mass timber and new energy technologies to wildlife impacts, water quality challenges, and partnerships with Indigenous communities.

**DRAFT PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

**Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

- 8:00 a.m. Registration, Coffee, Poster, and Exhibit Set-Up (Avalanche Pass)
- 8:45 a.m. **Welcome and Messages:** Dr. Ellen Percy Kraly, ARC President
- 9:00 a.m. **First Adirondackers: 12,000 Years of Indigenous Peoples in the Adirondack Uplands**
- Dr. Curt Stager, Draper-Lussi Endowed Chair in Lake Ecology and Paleoecology, Paul Smith’s College
  - David Kanietakeron Fadden, Wolf Clan of the Kanienkehaka
- 10:00 a.m. **Panel: Timbuctoo: Creating Awareness, Access, and Opportunity,** Paul Hai, SUNY
- 10:45 a.m. Break
- 11:15 a.m. **Panel: Nature on the Move - Wildlife in a Changing World,** Mark Watson, Moderator,
- Joelee Tooley, Cornell University, Snapshot NY
  - John Davis, Adirondack Council, Overview of Wildlife Movement and Habitat Connectivity
- Noon Lunch – (Great Range)
- 1:00 p.m. **Panel: Invasives Update:**
- Brian Greene, Moderator, What is an invasive species?, PRISM in NYS, APIPP
  - Lake George Hemlock coalition
  - Blue Mountain Lake Association
  - Michele Curry, DEC ISGP grant implementation for AIS management in the Eckford Chain
- 2:00 p.m. **Panel: The Expanding Role of Mass Timber in the Built Environment**
- 2:45 p.m. Break

3:00 p.m.

**Concurrent Sessions**

<b>Panel 1</b>	<b>The Uses of AI in Resource Protection</b>
<b>Panel 2</b>	<b>Drinking Water Source Protection Program</b> , Chaz Rorick, NYS Department of Health <b>Opportunities for Water Infrastructure Funding</b> , Nicholas Demitraszek, Environmental Facilities Corporation
<b>Panel 3</b>	<b>Watershed Connections: Why and How the Black River Watershed Coalition Formed and Its Initiatives</b> Moderator: Sunita Halasz, Adirondack Council Panelists: Nichelle Swisher, Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation District Katie Whitkovits, Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District Jillian Lee, NYS Tug Hill Commission

3:45 p.m.

**Concurrent Sessions**

<b>Panel 1</b>	<b>Shoreline Biodiversity on Upper Saranac Lake</b> , Michale Glennon, Paul Smith’s College Adirondack Watershed Institute, Alec Cimini, Paul Smith’s College Adirondack Watershed Institute <b>An Assessment of the use of ProcellaCOR in Lake George, NY</b> , Kayla Grant, SUNY Plattsburgh
<b>Panel 2</b>	<b>Equity, Belonging &amp; the Land We Share</b> , Tamara Jolly, Adirondack Diversity Initiative

4:30 p.m.

**Reception**

**Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

8:00 a.m.

Opens, Coffee

9:00 a.m.

**Keynote: Connections Between Social and Ecological Sciences**, Jamie Shinn, Associate Professor, SUNY ESF

9:45 a.m.

**Panel: Where People and Ecosystems Meet—Perspectives on Carrying Capacity, Saranac Chain of Lakes**

- Claudia Braymer, Moderator, Executive Director, Protect the Adirondacks
- Chris Amato, Conservation Director and Counsel, Protect the Adirondacks
- Dave Gibson, Managing Partner, Adirondack Wild

10:15 a.m.

Break

10:30 a.m.

**Panel: The Evolution of Energy Technologies:** State of the Grid, CHIPE, and The Importance of Energy Storage, Camille Warner, NYSERDA

11:15 a.m.

**Panel: Adirondack Rural Community Opportunities and Challenges: Essex County Perspectives**, Sunita Halasz, Moderator

- Joe Pete Wilson, Supervisor, Town of Keene, NY

12:15 p.m.

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

- Unveiling of the ACORN Rural Resilience Roadmap Website, Cedar Young
- Presentation of the Richard H. Morse Student Award:
- Presentation of the 2025 Elizabeth Thorndike Adirondack Achievement Award:

1:30 p.m.     **Workshop: Connecting Higher Education Research with Community Priorities,**  
Sunita Halasz, Adirondack Council, and Diane White Husic, St. Lawrence University,  
Moderators:   *This workshop is a follow-up to the North Country Climate Ready  
Workshop and St. Lawrence University’s Community-High Ed Collaboration for  
Community Resilience fall program.*

- Panel Presentation, Audience Discussion, and “Speed Dating” Exercise”

3:00 p.m.     Adjourn