



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 Through Leadership in Climate Resilience, Community Engagement and Partnerships, and Preparing future Leaders.**
- 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:
 - To Be Announced
- 10:45 a.m. Break
- 11:00 a.m. Panel: **The NYSERDA Climate Assessment Report**
- **An overview of the NYSERDA Climate Assessment**
 - **An overview of the Assessment’s Society and Economy Sector, especially regarding North Country issues.** Invited Speaker: Robin Leichenko, Dept. of Geography, Rutgers University, and Sector Co-chair.
 - **Climate resilience case studies from the North Country - communities that have been impacted, how they recovered, what programs/funds they utilized, and how they are preparing for the future.**
 - **An overview of the ACORN project,** Sunita Halasz, Climate Strategy Advisor, Adirondack Research Consortium

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

- Speaker:
- Richard H. Morse Student Award:
- 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:

<p>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,</p>
<p>Session 2: Predicting Northeast Hiker Preparedness: Information, Risk, and Experience, Jill Weiss, SUNY ESF Findings on Recreational Use in the Adirondacks, The Adirondack Council</p>
<p>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,</p>

2:15 p.m. Concurrent Sessions:

<p>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</p>
<p>Session 2: (Algonquin) The Adirondack Journal of Environmental Studies, Opportunities for Publishing, Ellen Percy Kraly, Colgate University.</p>
<p>Session 3: (Iroquois) To Be Announced</p>

3:00: p.m. Concurrent Sessions:

<p>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</p>
<p>Session 2: (Algonquin)</p>
<p>Session 3: (Iroquois) 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.</p>

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. Panel: Survey of Climate Change in Adirondack Lake Ecosystems (SCALE), (**David Miller**), Water Quality Research in Adirondacks: History, Program Parameters, Initial Findings and Program's Goals, Plans moving forward.

- **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
- How climate change magnifies the impact of pollution sources in Adirondack Park.

9:45 a.m. Panel: Water Quality, Case Statements from Successful Programs, Threats to Adirondack Waters: Lessons from Lake George

- Moderator & Introduction: **David Miller**, Adirondack Council Clean Water Program Coordinator: Major Threats to Adirondack Waters from WWTPs, Septic Systems, Non-Point Runoff, and Road Salt.
- **Chris Navitsky**, Lake George Waterkeeper: Lessons Learned from Lake George: A comprehensive approach to water quality protection and a model for Lakes throughout the Park.

10:30 a.m. Break

10:45 a.m. Panel: Panel: Adirondack Built Environment, Opportunities and Challenges for Building Construction in the Adirondacks:

- **Melissa O'Mara**, The Leaders Co-Lab, Moderator
- **Leslie Karasin** - Northern Forest Center
- **Jesse Schwartzberg** - Black Mountain Architecture
- **Robert Politi** or **Rob Gillis** - Merrill Thomas Realty (Invited)

Noon Lunch (Great Range) - Speaker: **Lessons Learned in Conservation and Opportunities For the Future**, Patrick Lynch, Program Manager, Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center, Institute for Sustainability Engagement.

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**, Climate Strategy Advisor, Adirondack Research Consortium

3:00 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)