

2019 Advocacy Report

Advocacy Department Staff:

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ADK goals for 2019 advocacy were to lead in 1) protecting public lands, 2) promoting responsible recreation, and 3) combatting climate change through letters to legislators, comments to agencies, outreach events, and boots-on-the-ground experiences.

In 2019 ADK showed the strength of its constituency of land stewardship advocates. ADK demonstrated its commitment to protecting public land through an engaged audience that sent over 10,000 letters to legislators and state and federal agencies to stop rollbacks of regulations that reduce greenhouse gas emissions (349 letters); to ensure protection from hazardous fracking waste (1724 letters); to support New York State Forest Rangers (2634 letters); to request funding for projects that combat tick-borne diseases (3811 letters); to protect habitat on the Allegheny River (269 letters); to protect young children from ATV accidents (255 letters), and to support a green amendment to the New York State Constitution that would add the right to a clean and healthful environment to the Bill of Rights (975 letters).

Sixty-two volunteers participated in lobbying in Albany or in citizen science monitoring in the Adirondack and Catskill Parks. Volunteers and staff advocated for the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), for legislation to protect open space and habitat in the Adirondack Park; for funding to combat invasive species; for funding that supports trail crews and summit stewards, and for other public land related issues. ADK stewardship advocates also participated in three Catskill and Adirondack citizen science projects that protect hemlocks and backcountry ponds from invasive plants and pests, and that monitor the delicate flowering plants of the Adirondack Alpine Zone. In the backcountry water monitors project funded by the Lake Champlain Basin Program and the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission, twenty-nine volunteers participated in two trainings and seven staff-led outings, and monitored eighteen ponds. The project total over a five-year period is 132 volunteers and 82 ponds.

In August, ADK addressed the issue of high use and associated resource degradation in the High Peaks Wilderness through a successful week of engaging stakeholders in Leave No Trace Hot Spot events. The week included a trail building service project that was the highlight of the ADK Conservation Committee volunteer retreat.

In November we celebrated the past 30 years of ADK Advocacy by reviewing the record of victories for New York State Public Lands. With the guidance of Neil Woodworth during that time, ADK advocacy ensured that foot trails could be built on the Forest Preserve; new wilderness areas, mountains, river corridors and lakes in the Adirondack and Catskill Parks were protected; and state parks were expanded and protected. Over 150 ADK supporters and allies came together to celebrate at the New York State Museum and to wish Neal Woodworth fair winds and following seas in his future adventures.