

# The Future for the Adirondack Research Consortium

By WAYNE GLASS  
President, ARC

## Abstract

*The Adirondack Research Consortium is a membership organization dedicated to the support and dissemination of research on the Adirondacks. In this article, the history and future opportunities of the Adirondack Research Consortium are discussed. The author discusses upcoming events and new initiatives.*

**T**his past year has been a busy one for the Adirondack Research Consortium (ARC). We are finishing up twelve years of strictly volunteer efforts as a loose-knit organization that has become the preeminent venue for research on the Adirondack Park. As we enter our thirteenth year, we are embarking on a new phase of the organization that promises to be even more exciting.

For those that do not know ARC, we are a non-advocacy membership organization dedicated to research on the Adirondacks. Sounds good, but what does that mean? ARC is the only regionally-focused organization whose sole interest is in supporting and reporting on research in, and about, the Adirondack Park. Started as a coalition of primarily natural science researchers, the ARC has expanded its scope to include the humanities, economics, community development, business, and many other fields of study.

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ARC produces an annual conference that is the showcase for current research on the Adirondack Park and its environs. Traditionally, the Annual Conference on the Adirondacks has been the place for researchers, students, and practitioners to discuss the latest research of importance to scientists and those who are concerned about the Park. This year (2006) we will hold our thirteenth conference. Each year, attendance at the conference has grown to the point where, in 2005, we were forced to relocate the conference from our traditional home at the Hotel Saranac to a larger venue.

## ARC will help the Adirondacks achieve even greater successes as it moves into its next phase of life.

As the Board of ARC considered the organization's stellar history this past year, it was apparent that there was much more that ARC could do to not just further research efforts in the region, but also to make sure that the research results are disseminated to a broad audience. In 2005, we took over direct responsibility for the publication of the Adirondack Journal of Environmental Studies (AJES). This excellent publication has long complemented the ARC itself. Now work is underway to evaluate the Journal, and to develop a peer review process.

In keeping with our volunteer beginnings, a committee was formed to

consider a process to develop a research agenda for the Adirondacks. This type of initiative has been lacking for the region, as researchers have competed for ever decreasing funding, while the need for on-going research on the Park has increased. The research agenda will provide a consensus from a wide range of viewpoints on what the critical research needs are for the region. Researchers will be able to refer to the agenda as support for their grant requests and to help design new research initiatives.

ARC has been supportive of the All-Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI), a unique (and also much-needed) look at the Adirondack Park. Patterned after similar initiatives instituted in other areas, the Adirondack ATBI is a scientifically-based inventory of the biological diversity within the Park, and requires citizen participation to be effectively completed. The inventory itself will support scientific research by promoting coordination among research initiatives, and will ultimately lead to a better understanding of the Adirondack Park.

The inclusion of citizen participation is one area in which the ARC can participate in initiatives such as the ATBI and the development of a research agenda. Through its annual conference and AJES, we have a means to publicize such on-going projects, to report on their progress and to solicit input from a wide constituency.

Promotional efforts for the ARC have been broadened in an attempt to reach new audiences for the conference



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

and the Journal that have not necessarily been aware of the research efforts in the Park. We have contacted universities outside the region that have Adirondack-focused programs. In 2006, we will make a more concerted attempt to include researchers in those areas that, while outside the Park, are impacted by our environment or that share common interests, such as the Hudson Valley, Champlain Valley, Southern Quebec and Eastern Ontario, the Thousand Islands, the Finger Lakes region and the Catskills. Also, we are being more diligent to include elected officials and representatives of state and federal offices whose missions include programs vital to the Park.

We have had many partners in our efforts over the years. Paul Smith's College supported AJES for a number of years, while the Adirondack Park Agency and the Department of Environmental Management supplied some of the talented volunteers that have guided the organization. Other colleges have also been supportive in many ways, including Cornell and SUNY ESF. Our website and listserv is coordinated by Cedar Eden Environmental, LLC. My own employer, Adirondack Economic Development Corporation, supports my time leading ARC efforts. Without this support (and the support of many individuals and organizations), ARC would not be where it is today.

This brings me to the most important change for ARC. For years, we have functioned as a loosely organized, unincorporated volunteer organization. We benefited from the largess of other organizations that let us use their tax-exempt number or their bulk mail permit. As such, the organization had no real legal standing to represent itself or

any particular initiative. When ARC meets for its 13th Annual Meeting in May 2006, we will be an officially incorporated not-for-profit organization! This may seem like a small milestone, but is a major one for ARC — the culmination of years of hard work by many individuals. It will be recognition, too, of the importance of research to the future of the Adirondacks, and an opportunity for the organization to maintain its leadership position in representing all the research efforts that benefit the New York State and the communities, residents and visitors to the Park.

Following this milestone, we will be applying for the coveted 501(c)3 (non-profit) status, which will allow ARC to realize the benefits of being a "real" not-for-profit organization. Conceivably,

ARC can apply for grants on behalf of researchers or in partnership with other organizations.

The future for ARC is outstanding! The Board is working toward a part-time executive director position that could coordinate the conference, handle the business functions of the organization and represent the organization and its initiatives to institutions, researchers and decision makers. We have a modest amount of money in the bank. Planning continues for our new initiatives. What we need more than anything is the continued support of people like you! With the support of the many researchers and a public so dedicated to the beauty and quality of the Park, ARC will help the Adirondacks achieve even greater successes as it moves into its next phase of life.



DAVID KAVNER