THE ADIRONDACK RESEARCH CONSORTIUM:
A NEW VOICE IN THE ADIRONDACKS

On January 16, 1994, over thirty students, professors, and other interested individuals met at Paul Smith's College to discuss the possibility of forming an organization to promote and review research about the Adirondack Park. Following an overwhelming expression of interest by those present and some lively discussion about the proper role and rule of such an organization, an eight-member Steering Committee was elected and charged with developing a name, statement of purpose, structure, and agenda for the fledgling organization. The steering committee completed this charge in March, and the Adirondack Research Consortium (ARC) held its first official meeting and conference at Paul Smith's College June 16 and 17, 1994.

With the public agencies and many interest groups already focusing on the Adirondacks there is no shortage of information about the Park. However, the ARC seeks to provide information that is qualitatively different from much of the information available from those sources by applying academic standards to the research it supports and monitors. While there is no single authoritative source for academic standards, it is possible to be more specific about them than Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart was with his "I know it when I see it" definition of pornography. In general, academic standards require researchers to

1. Place their research within a coherent theoretical framework
2. Be explicit about sources of information
3. Be explicit about their research methods, with specific attention to research design, validity and reliability of measures, and techniques of analysis
4. Draw conclusions that are consistent with their empirical findings

Academic standards are not in themselves a guarantee of objectivity. They do, however, require researchers to provide sufficient information about
their methods so that others may detect instances of intentional or unintentional bias. Since violations of academic standards generally have negative consequences only within the academy, full membership in the ARC is limited to faculty and professional staff at accredited Colleges and Universities. Associate membership in the ARC, with all privileges except voting, is available to individuals outside the academy.

To date the ARC has initiated four activities designed to foster and report research on the Adirondack Park. First, the first annual ARC Research Conference was held June 16 and 17 at Paul Smith’s College. Over fifty researchers and interested individuals attended the Research Conference, which featured ten presentations and a keynote address on “Management of the Adirondack Alpine Preserves: 1964 to 1994” by Ed Ketchledge of SUNY-ESF. The second annual ARC Research Conference and meeting is being planned by Malcolm Fairweather and Tom Rumney of SUNY-Plattsburgh and will be held in late May of 1995. Second, the editors of the Adirondack Journal of Environmental Studies agreed to devote a section of their publication to peer-reviewed articles oversee by the ARC Editorial Review Board. Third, an electronic network devoted to Adirondack issues has been established by Jon Erickson at Cornell University (JDE3@CORNELL.EDU). Fourth, Kathy Hargis of Skidmore College is chairing an education committee designed to foster cooperative efforts between ARC and educators in public schools and other venues.

The ARC is headquartered at Paul Smith’s College. Gary Chilson of Paul Smith’s College was elected President of ARC for a two-year term, Thomas Pasquarello of SUNY-Cortland was elected Vice-President, and Chad Dawson of SUNY-ESF was elected Secretary/Treasurer. Membership inquiries, AJES submissions, and other correspondence should be mailed to: The Adirondack Research Consortium, Paul Smith’s College, Paul Smiths, NY 12970, or you may reach us by phone at (518) 327-6377.

AJES and ARC Peer-Reviewed Articles

AJES and the Adirondack Research Consortium have initiated a joint effort to promote and disseminate peer-reviewed research about the Adirondack Park and its environment. As a result, part of each forthcoming issue of AJES will be devoted to research articles that have been peer-reviewed by a panel selected by the ARC Editorial Board.

Submissions for the peer-reviewed section of AJES should be made directly to the editors of AJES and clearly marked “For Peer Review.” The editors of AJES will review each article for focus and readability across disciplines and pass those that meet their criteria on to the Editorial Board. The ARC Editorial Board will send the article to a panel of three of the author’s peers for a blind review. Peer-reviewers will be asked to comment on the article and to place it in one of the following categories: publish as is, publish with some revisions, do not publish. Whether or not the article is accepted by the ARC Editorial Board, the anonymous rankings and comments of the peer-reviewers will be made available to the article’s author.

Thomas Pasquarello