

AJES

Adirondack Journal of
Environmental Studies

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MISSION STATEMENT

The *Adirondack Journal of Environmental Studies* (AJES) exists to foster a dialogue about the broad range of issues that concern the Adirondacks and Northern Forest.

AJES serves to bridge the gaps among academic disciplines and among researchers and practitioners devoted to understanding and promoting the development of sustainable communities, both human and wild.

The journal purposefully avoids serving as a vehicle for any single or special point of view. To the contrary, in searching for common ground AJES welcomes variety and a broad spectrum of perspectives from its contributors.

CONTRIBUTING TO AJES

We encourage the submission of manuscripts, reviews, photographs, artwork and letters to the editor. For additional information please visit the AJES website at www.ajes.org/ or contact Jon Erickson at jon.erickson@uvm.edu or 802-656-3328.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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PREROGATIVE

Better Information for Better Decisions

By DAN FITTS

My introduction to the Adirondack Research Consortium was memorable. Five inches of snow fell on May 13, 1996, as I traveled from my home in Lake Placid to the 3rd Annual Conference on the Adirondacks, which was held that year at Great Camp Sagamore in Racquette Lake. As the recently appointed executive director of the Adirondack Park Agency, in the early years of a new administration, I had been invited to speak about changes in perspectives at the agency. The unpredictable weather combined with the pointed and divergent concerns expressed by groups and individuals about the policy directions at the Adirondack Park Agency (at one point someone that day told me "the gloves are off") left in my mind the impression that it had been a typical Adirondack day. It was also immediately clear that being there, face to face, benefiting from the exchange of information on issues, was something of great value, and something I would want to stay involved with.

In 2006, the Adirondack Research Consortium incorporated as a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization and elected its first board of directors. I was honored to be hired as the first executive director in 2007. Since that time I am pleased to report that the Adirondack Research Consortium has steadily grown and has doubled the annual operating budget. In addition to organizational growth, the Adirondack Research Consortium now has an established network of nearly 40 partners that believe in our mission and support our work financially. Included in this growing list are members of the business, not-for-profit, government, and education communities. A list of these important partners to date can be found on the back cover of this issue in recognition of their support.

In May of 2009, the Adirondack Research Consortium held its 16th Annual Conference on the Adirondacks in Lake Placid. The over 200 people that attended shared the latest information on a wide range of topics that included energy, community, education, and the humanities. The conference was a success by all measures as attendees enjoyed talks and presentations by national, state, and regional experts, and a particularly strong agenda of paper and poster presentations by both students and professionals. We introduced a new conference model in which several concurrent sessions operated simultaneously allowing more people opportunity to participate on a wider range of topics.

The diversity of the conference audience is representative of the organization's broad base of interest. The distribution of the audience by groups represented is shown in Figure 1. While the not-for-profit and academic communities continue to be strong segments of our audience, we have been pleased to see a steady three-year trend in the growth of the audience from the business community. The Consortium hopes to build on this trend and also increase participation by local governments as both businesses and municipalities are frequently in the position of making decisions that impact the Adirondack Park.

In the coming months, much is in store for the Adirondack Research Consortium. We are moving our headquarters to the Countess Alicia Spaulding-Paolozzi Environmental Research and Education Center on the Paul Smith's College campus, a perfect location for an Adirondack-based research organization. More publishing opportunities and a more robust dialogue between author and reader are envisioned with the

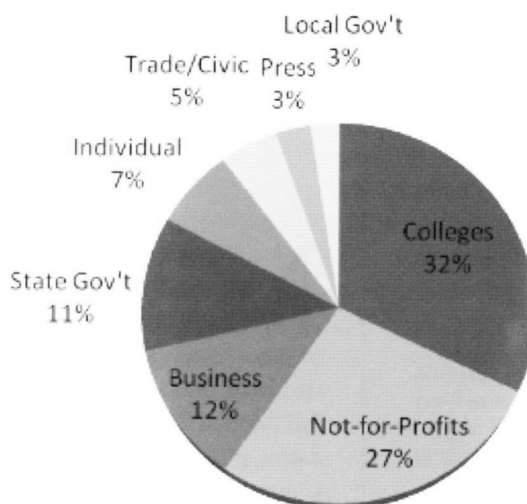
improvements to our *Adirondack Journal of Environmental Studies* as we move toward on-line publication. With a grant from First Pioneer Farm Credit we are planning a one-day biofuels market development conference to be held in the winter of 2010. Finally, we are busy working on the 17th Annual Conference on the Adirondacks to be held May 19 and 20, 2010, in Lake Placid, and intend to continue "growing" the conference in both programmatic content and attendance.

As I think back to my first encounter with the Adirondack Research Consortium in 1996, I note that the Consortium has not strayed far from its original mission. The Adirondack Research Consortium's roots go back to the initial recognition that there was an acute need for accurate and unbiased scientific and factual information in order to make the best policy decisions in the Adirondack Park. Although the policy divisions of prior days have lessened in some instances, new questions arise daily. Building a regional economy and strengthening communities, developing alternative energy sources, finding the resources and opportunities to expand broadband

access, and combating invasive pests and plants in our forests and waterways are just a few of the complex issues facing the Adirondacks. I would argue that the need for information and collaboration has never been more clearly demonstrated. There will always remain an overwhelming need for science-based research and accurate information to base ongoing discussions and policies about

the future of the Park and its residents. The Adirondack Research Consortium can uniquely provide an unbiased forum to host that dialogue.

To learn more about what is going on at the Adirondack Research Consortium take a look at our webpage at adkresearch.org, send an e-mail to info@adkresearch.org, or give me a call at 518-523-1814.



16th Annual Conference on the Adirondacks- Audience

Figure 1. *Distribution of 16th Annual Conference on the Adirondacks audience by groups represented*



ARC Board of Directors last summer at the Adirondack Ecological Center in Newcomb, NY. Pictured left to right, standing: Bill Porter, Jeff Anthony, Joe Visalli, Bob Stegemann, Dan Fitts, Tom Burkly; seated: Dan Spada, Eileen Allen, Stacy McNulty, Jon Erickson. Missing: Dan Castle, Brian Chabot, Graham Cox, Sunita Halasz, Jerry Pepper, Liz Thorndike.