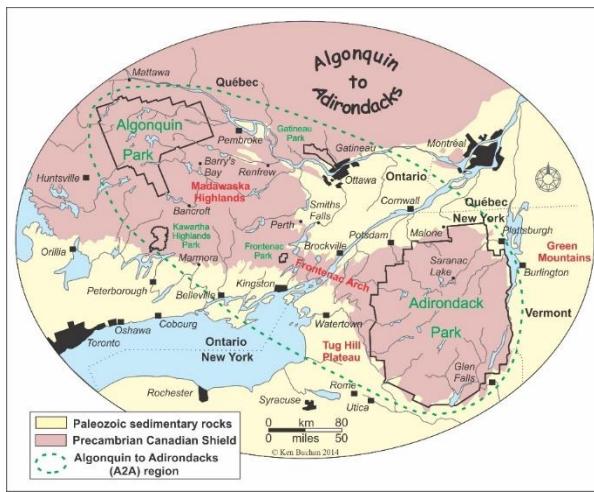




A2A

Algonquin to
Adirondacks
Collaborative

2017 Annual Report



Our dream: a resilient, ecologically connected A2A region that sustains a full range of native wildlife and enhances people's quality of life for generations to come

<http://www.a2acollaborative.org/>



The Algonquin to Adirondacks (A2A) Collaborative was founded in 2002 as a regional organization dedicated to the protection of the last intact forested biological corridor in eastern North America.

The Algonquin to Adirondacks corridor is the most extensive, least degraded north-south corridor east of Lake Superior, connecting the Appalachian forests of the southeastern US to the vast boreal forests of the Canadian Shield. It provides a critical pathway through which species can move and disperse in response to habitat needs and climate change. The heart of the A2A Region also represents one of the most biodiverse areas of Eastern North America as northern and southern forest zones mix.

While the A2A corridor has many significant natural features and functions it is under threat and requires concerted effort to ensure that those features and functions persist for generations to come. Habitat loss and fragmentation threatens wildlife and ecological integrity on any fronts. For example, ecological connectivity in the A2A narrows through the Frontenac Arch, a “bottleneck” where major transportation corridors also present connectivity challenges. Development and population growth continues to present challenges as wetlands are lost and forests degraded. Finally, climate change is leading to greater pressure on species as ranges shift and exotic species flourish. Intact ecosystems to support resilient and diverse species populations, and the ability for species to move, are key adaptation mechanisms for the natural world as the climate continues to shift.

The Algonquin to Adirondacks Collaborative is committed to facing these challenges directly by working with our partners to protect this critical and spectacular landscape for generations to come.

Our Vision: We envision a resilient, ecologically-interconnected landscape that sustains a full range of native wildlife and enhances people's quality of life for generations to come.

Our Mission: We connect lands and people across the Algonquin to Adirondacks region to conserve and enhance a critical corridor for ecological integrity and resilience in eastern North America.

A2A makes a major contribution to conservation in the Region by taking a regional view and looking for synergies and opportunities that build on the efforts of local groups and agencies. We use the individual pieces created at the local level to complete the conservation puzzle, a critical step in ensuring resilience and ecological integrity in the face of climate change and habitat loss.

This annual report summarizes our work in 2017 including our A2A Trail – A Pilgrimage for Nature, Road Ecology and Conservation Action Planning, as well as our ongoing communication efforts and fund raising for our conservation activities.

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A2A Annual General Meeting 2018

President's Message



Thank you everyone for being here today. I would especially like to thank all the those who are here representing Partner organizations working across the A2A region and sharing our mutual commitment protect this landscape. And we would all like to acknowledge that today we meet on land for which indigenous peoples take responsibility and have done so for millennia. Their deep connection to this land continues to inspire and inform our work at A2A and those living throughout the region.

There is much to report on this year. We continue to advance our shared vision of an intact ecological landscape.

Our Executive Director, David Miller, celebrates his second year with A2A at the beginning of April and we are so proud of him and the work that he has done to move our organization forward. I'd like to take a moment to recognize David and his incredible efforts.

In 2017 we also celebrated a walk-through of the proposed A2A Trail. Our work continues in identifying connecting segments on both sides of the border and we are making tremendous progress to make creation of a connected trail between Algonquin Park and Adirondack a reality. The A2A Trail itself does not connect the landscape but it provides a powerful means of communicating the essence of that landscape and celebrating this cause.

Our Road Ecology Committee completed its Highway 401 transportation study and presented its final report to Ontario MNRF. The committee has done such a wonderful job on this work and has renewed goals for future work in this area.

David and our planning consultant Megan Ihrig completed the initial scoping of an A2A Conservation Action Plan. We would like to continue to the next stage of CAP which will require additional grant funding and we hope to move this forward in the coming months.

A2A has also continued to advocate for the species and environment of the region working with our First Nation, Canadian and American partners to comment on policies and regulations impacting the flora and fauna of the region. We provided letters and comments on a range of issues including protection of the American Eel.

A2A held its first gala fundraiser at Chez Piggy in Kingston which featured a performance by Sarah Harmer. Thank you so much to Emily Conger and David Miller for making this happen and to Sarah Harmer, Peter Milliken, Zoe Yanovsky of Chez Piggy, MacKinnon Brothers Brewing, Hiller Estates Winery and all the other donors, volunteers and supporters who made it possible. Our gala was such a success that we hope to do it again this year – the time, place and details have yet to be worked out but we will let you all know soon.

The gala fundraising helped us to complete our match requirements for our first ever challenge matching grant from an anonymous donor. That donor knows who they are and we would all like

them to know what a huge difference their gift has made to A2A's capacity as an organization. Thank you so much!

A2A finished our 2017-2018 year in good shape financially, with excellent staffing by our Executive Director, and with great success in our projects. We still have much to do and I encourage everyone to support us financially, to engage us as an active partner, and to help us continue to grow and achieve our mission connecting nature and people in the A2A corridor.

In parting, thank you to our, Board of Directors, our partners and to our many friends and supporters who have made the excellent work of A2A possible.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gayle Ladd".

Trails Committee Report

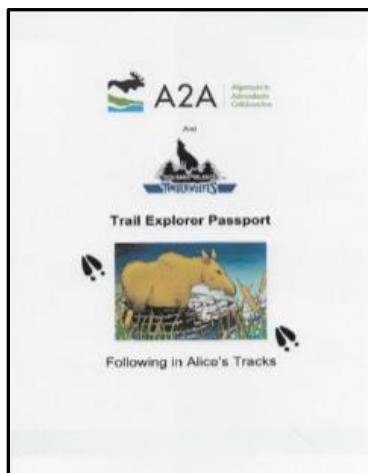
Committee members: Emily Conger (Chair), Richard Grover (chair U.S. sub-committee), Nicole Wooten, David Miller, Richard Phillips, Wayne Terryberry, Elizabeth Vandenkerkhof, John Davis, Doug Munro

Mandate:

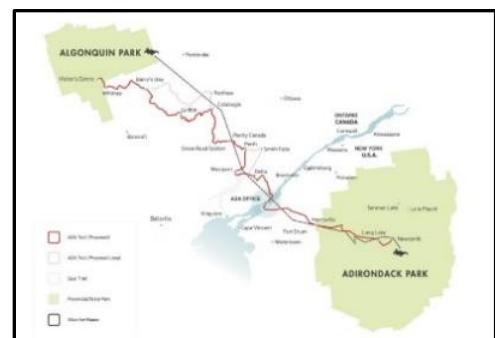
- Connect travellers to the unique natural and cultural heritage of the A2A region through direct experience
- Protect critical ecosystems in A2A by fostering an understanding and appreciation for them among visitors and residents,
- Support the regional trail destination identity of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere,
- Support local businesses and livelihoods by attracting sustainable tourism,
- Build a sense of regional community through partnerships with local trail organizations, communities, businesses, and First Nations.

2017 Accomplishments

A2A completed a project with funding from Leeds and the Thousand Islands Township with a classroom of grade 4-5 students and their teacher at Thousands Islands Elementary School. The object was to teach the children about the extraordinary biodiversity of the region in which they live, and the ways they can protect it. The culminating event was a hike along a section of the trail that has been degraded by ATVs. The students in this photo are helping to remove refuse that had been dumped there



The project also included production of series of Trail signs, which will serve as a prototype for signage along the larger A2A Trail, and an A2A Trail Kids' Passport shown at left.





The most significant Trail event in 2017 was the end to end Reconnaissance Trek in October 2017. Between October 1st and 15th, John Davis trekked by foot, canoe and bicycle from the Adirondacks to the St. Lawrence while John Allport and others traveled the Canadian portion from Algonquin Park. The trek confirmed the extraordinary ecological and

cultural diversity along the Trail route and revealed new outdoor recreational opportunities. It also gave us the foundation for refining the Trail and planning the next stages of development.



Then John Allport and John Davis met up, with their supporters, on Wellesley Islands to celebrate.



In 2017 the A2A Trail Committee also hammered out a philosophy of trail development contacted local decision makers across multiple jurisdictions to begin the development of Trail governance.

Other Trail Committee accomplishments included:

- GIS mapping of the trail on the Canadian side with the US side started.
- Application for a Community Foundation grant to define a Kingston trail link.
- Presentations on the Trail included a presentation to the Adirondack Mountain Club – Laurentian Chapter's annual meeting in Canton, NY, and a presentation at Trail Head Canada in Gatineau QC.

Goals for 2018

1. Complete Next Generation of Trail Guide with GIS layers based on Recon hike
2. Host an A2A Trails event for public.
3. Develop stakeholder governance models for each section.
4. Fund and Hire new coordinator
5. Inaugural Hike (funding and completion)
6. Continue to build partners and sponsors with ongoing outreach
7. Develop a passport divided up by sections.

Science

Committee Members: Tom Langen (co-chair), Ryan Danby (co-chair), Gary Bell, Ken Buchan, Glenn Johnson, Kate Cleary

Mandate

To advance the conservation and connectivity of the A2A region's working landscape by providing research-based information to planning authorities, conservation groups, and A2A residents, while identifying the areas of focus for the A2A Collaborative.

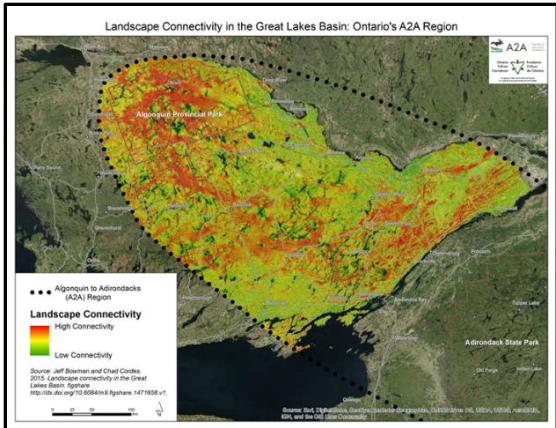
Introduction

The primary focus of the science committee in 2018 was completion of the initial A2A framework for Conservation Action Planning. This framework provided a "lens" that can be applied to local CAP efforts to incorporate landscape scale thinking, as well as tools and mapping that can help apply the lens.

Conservation Action Planning Achievements

- Produced a CAP work book for science input into the A2A CAP lens
- Held outreach and training sessions with stakeholders through a CAP webinar
- Held a series of 6 workshops on CAP
 - 2 expert sessions on the science framework at the A2A scale
 - 2 sessions with stakeholders on local needs and perspectives
 - 1 session on "ways of knowing" with a focus on first nations relationships in CAP
 - 1 session on local CAP threats/targets and approaches
- Completed an A2A lens and framework for use in the local CAP process.





Worked with the Canadian Wildlife Service to expand the A2A mapping tools throughout the A2A area on the Canadian side.

Completed the initial CAP project (Ontario Trillium Foundation SEED project funding) and prepared CAP project report.

School research

University student projects were completed at both Clarkson University (US) and Queen's University (ON). Topics ranged from road ecology and conservation easements (Clarkson) to State of the A2A work at Queens University.

Advocacy

A2A continued to be active with advocacy activities and science comments in collaboration with partners including:

- Support for Ontario Nature comments on Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forests “opportunities to enhance carbon storage” paper, snapping turtle hunting ban,
- Input into the Leeds and the Thousand Islands Township Official Plan
- Support for Mississippi Field Naturalists comments on protecting ANSIs in Lanark County
- Comments on proposed wind farm proposal in adjacent to Adirondack Forest
- Input into revised Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society revised Ottawa Valley Conservation Strategy
- Support for efforts to increase protection for and recovery of the American Eel

Goals for 2018

- 1) Enable Partner Organizations to access and use on line mapping resource.
- 2) Initiate local Conservation Action Plans with the A2A Lens
- 3) Establish ongoing information management and decision support system to capture resources and information as projects are completed.
- 4) Build US side science support
- 5) Ensure that indigenous traditional knowledge and citizen science is embedded into A2A science.

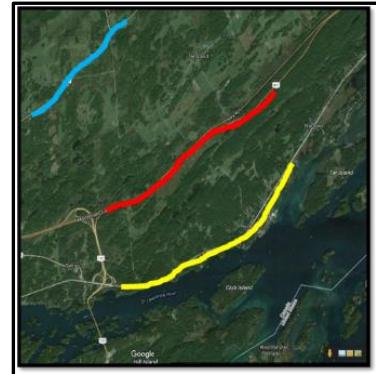
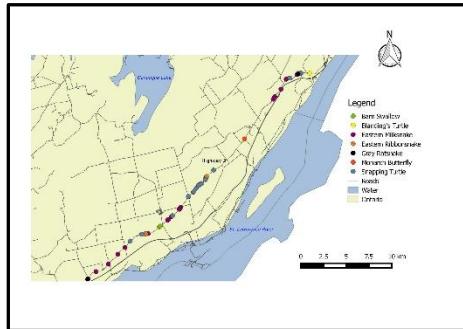
Road Ecology Committee Report

Members:

Cameron Smith (Chair) John Urquhart, Mandy Karch, Ryan Danby, Fred Scheuler, Josh Van Wieren

Mandate:

To advance the conservation and connectivity of the A2A region's working landscape by researching, recommending, and communicating how to reduce the adverse fragmenting effects of roads and highways.



2017 saw a very active and successful year working towards reducing the fragmenting effects of roads and highways in the A2A. the A2A and our partners at Queen's University is now in the final stages of the research and assessment stage of the Road Ecology work and looking towards outreach and implementation in 2018.

2017 results

- Completed the second year of field research along Highway 2 between Gananoque and Brockville
- Completed a third survey of Highway 401 between Gananoque and Brockville over a two-week period, employing an expanded number of field researchers
- Engaged a videographer who filmed field research on all three highways
- Held multiple discussions with the videographer and an associated marketing consultant regarding future plans for videos and development of a communications plan
- With the Chair of the Communications Committee, discussed and commissioned a proposed communications plan
- Presented a final report to the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) on all the research completed on Highways 401 and 2, together with data from a Queen's thesis report on the Thousand Islands Parkway

- Under the supervision of Ryan Danby, began the process of using data from the MNRF report to map wildlife pathways from the Charleston Lake area, across the three highways, to the American side of the St. Lawrence River
- In discussions with the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO), obtained its commitment to erect one kilometre of turtle and snake fencing along a major mortality hotspot on Highway 401
- Presented preliminary findings to:
 - Quebec Road Ecology Conference o University of Ontario Institute of Technology
 - Quinte Field Naturalists
 - Queen's University students and staff
 - the author of an article to be published in the Ontario Nature Magazine (readership 16,000)



Priorities for 2018

- Present findings in the MNRF report to agencies responsible for each of the three highways, and to local municipalities
- Complete mapping of wildlife pathways from the Charleston Lake area to the U.S. side of the St. Lawrence River
- Develop recommendations for providing safe ecopassages across the three highways
- In conjunction with the Communications Committee, develop a communications plan to promote the creation of safe ecopassageways for wildlife
- In accordance with the communications plan film additional videos featuring the recommendations
- Build support for recommendations by:
 - making presentations to highway agencies, municipal governments, interested associations, schools, landowner groups, collaborative partners
 - promoting through social media and through other means recommended in the communications plan
- Undertake two years of research on the effectiveness of the snake and turtle fencing erected by MTO on Highway 401
- Develop a road ecology plan for critical township roads
- Determine what initiatives should be undertaken on the U.S. side of the St. Lawrence to ensure that recommendations will be effective



COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Members: Emily Conger (Chair), David Miller, John Allport, Nicole Bird, Richard Deering, Lisa Erdle, Elizabeth Vandenkerkhof

Mandate: To create and distribute content in a strategic manner to a variety of audiences; to increase the number of A2A's partners and individual members and provide service to them

2017 was an very active and successful year as A2A continued to expand its communication tools and reach.

2017 accomplishments

Completed Spring and Fall newsletters



Printed and distributed the new A2A
Brochure



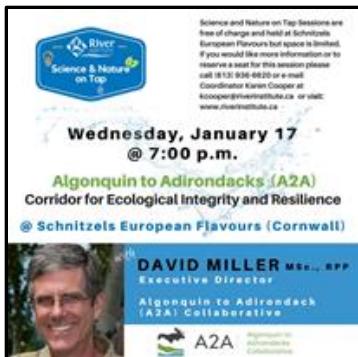
Expanded the A2A Exhibit Kit and installed the display as part of the Stewards of the St. Lawrence exhibit at the Arthur Childs Museum in Gananoque (May-Sept) and the Save the River Conference.



Continued to build on the progress with press and political exposure including:

Articles in Explore Magazine, Peace and Environment News, the Adirondack Explorer, and the North Country News

Radio Coverage of the A2A end to end trek from Moose FM (Can) and National Public Radio (US)



Presentations/exhibits on A2A at the Trailhead Canada Conference, St. Lawrence River Institute Nature on Tap series, Friends of Frontenac AGM, Save the River Conference, Adirondack Research Council.

Meeting with local MPP Sophie Kiwali to present A2A and the Conservation Action Planning Initiative.



Worked with Road Ecology Committee to engage a communication consultant and contract for a communication strategy linked to video work.

As we have over the past few years, A2A has been involved in a course taught at Queen's University called 430 ESCN. A2A and the Frontenac Arch Biosphere suggest topics that are of importance to our work. These then become research projects undertaken by groups of usually 4 students. At the beginning of the term we were part of a field trip around the Frontenac Arch Biosphere all of which falls within the A2A region north of the St. Lawrence. Then David Miller spoke to the class about what A2A does and why. The students then presented their findings to us. These findings will be further refined by questions they are asked, and the students' final reports will be available to A2A within a few months.



Goals for 2018

1. Produce initial video products (road ecology, trail, A2A overview)
2. Complete strategic communication strategy
3. Explore the opportunity and requirements for membership campaign and branding (ongoing)
4. Provide one-page communication guides for key projects (ongoing)
5. Increase Social Media profile
6. Continue ongoing presentations as needed and available
7. Develop and initiate A2A recognition strategy (donors and stewards)
8. Expand partner communication and recruitment

Funding and Finance Committee Report

Members: Gary Bell (chair), Emily Conger, Mike Kehoe, David Miller, Peter Milliken

Mandate: To advance the conservation and connectivity of the A2A region's working landscape by overseeing and assisting with fundraising to support A2A's activities, and managing, tracking and reporting on A2A's financial status.

The focus of the Committee in 2017 was to build more sustainable core funding base to support operating expenses as the Ontario Trillium Foundation Capacity Grant expired.

2017 Accomplishments

Brought in a total of almost \$19,000 in individual contributions (donations, memberships, event tickets) which met our challenge target and is being matched with a \$20,000 contribution from an anonymous donor through the matching donation challenge during 2017.



Held the first A2A Gala at Chez Piggy in Kingston with wine from Hillier Estates, Beer from Mackinnon Brothers, and music from special guest Sarah Harmer. 60 A2A supporters had a wonderful evening celebrating A2A and generating \$4,400 for A2A.



Obtained core funding from the Maclean foundation (\$15,000) and the Echo Foundation (\$20,000 in 2017 and \$20,000 in 2018)

A2A Sponsors/Grantees in 2017



Ontario
Trillium
Foundation



An agency of the Government of Ontario
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

The Gosling Foundation



McLean Foundation

Other 2017 work included:

- Arranging for formal financial review of 2014-2017 finances
- Supporting project grant applications to the Kingston Community Foundation (pending), and Ontario Trillium Foundation for the A2A Trail (unsuccessful), Gosling foundation for Road Ecology (\$5,000 received), and the Ontario Trillium Foundation for the second stage of the Conservation Action Planning Project (pending).
- Tracked budgets, funds and financial transactions
- Reported financial matters to the board
- Advised the Board on fundraising matters
- Continued to identify and maintain a list of existing and potential sponsors and funders

Goals for 2018

1. Refresh Fund Raising Plan
2. Apply to 10 foundations for core funding: 5 in Canada, 5 in US
3. Get 501c3 status
4. Evaluate Membership giving strategy/options
5. Realize \$12,000 in private donations / memberships
6. Plan fund raising event
7. Ongoing support for project funding applications
8. 100% of board engaged in the culture of philanthropy
9. Apply for reconciliation funding

Nomination Report and Election of Directors

2018 Annual General Meeting

Under the bylaws of the Algonquin to Adirondacks Collaborative the Board can have a maximum of 15 and a minimum of 5 directors.

Directors who were elected to the A2A Board for a 2 year term at the A2A Annual General Meeting of March 26, 2017:

- **Gary Bell:** Ph.D., Biologist, Conservation Planner, land securement specialist, Program Manager – Eastern Ontario, Nature Conservancy of Canada
- **Mike Kehoe:** CPA, CMA, Coppo and Company, Toronto, ON, Consultant – Practice Management
- **Alex French:** MSc. Environmental Policy, Sustainability Coordinator, Clarkson University

Directors whose term expires with this Annual General Meeting and who are nominated by the Board for another 2 year term:

- **Emily Conger:** B.Sc., Upper Canada District Board of Education, consultant and teacher (Ret.) Past President Gananoque River Waterways Association, Communications Consultant
- **Lee Willbanks:** J.D, M.P.A., Upper St. Lawrence Riverkeeper, Executive Director of Save the River
- **Peter Milliken:** Fellow of Queen's University School of Policy Studies
- **Ken Buchan:** Ph.D. Geophysics, Board member of Ontario Rivers Alliance and Quetico Foundation, and Past President of Ottawa Valley Chapter of Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society

New Board Members nominated for a 2-year term:

- **Kate Cleary**

Kate Cleary is a recent (2016) arrival to the North Country and is currently a lecturer in the Biology Department at SUNY Potsdam. In fall 2018 she will join the faculty of the Environmental Studies department at Saint Lawrence University as a Visiting Assistant Professor. Kate is originally from CT and earned her Masters in Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Biology in 2010 from Colorado State University and her PhD in Fish and Wildlife Sciences in 2016 from the University of Idaho. Both her Masters and PhD research focused on evaluating the impacts of agriculture on biodiversity in tropical biological corridor systems. Kate was excited to find a strong biological corridor initiative in her new home in the North Country, and is looking forward to joining the A2A team and using her expertise to support the A2A's mission however possible.

- **John Davis**

John Davis is executive director of The Rewilding Institute and editor of Rewilding Earth. He also serves as volunteer land steward in Split Rock Wildway for Eddy Foundation, securing Wildlands linking Lake Champlain with Adirondack High Peaks. He is the author or editor of many publications on wildlands conservation, including BIG, WILD AND CONNECTED: Scouting and Eastern Wildway from Florida to Quebec. He lives with his family in eastern Adirondack Park.

- **Paul Tuck**

Paul is currently a litigation attorney at Hancock Estabrook LLP working in environmental and commercial law. He has a JD from Vermont Law School and a BA in Ethics and Religious Studies from Arizona State University. Paul has grown up in and around nature and has previously been involved in supporting efforts to conserve public land.

Resignations: **Larry McDermott, Sarah Walsh**

Financials

2017 Year end