



**Working toward a Strategic Roadmap for Connectivity:  
Forming a Collaborative Network.**

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Algonquin to Adirondacks Conservation Association Workshop #2  
Proceedings

**October 20<sup>th</sup> 2012  
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## Working Toward a Strategic Roadmap for Connectivity: Forming a Collaborative Network

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## **Workshop Executive Summary**

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The workshop “Working toward a Strategic Roadmap for Connectivity: Forming a Collaborative Network”, was held on Saturday October 20<sup>th</sup> at the Queen’s University Biological Station in Chaffey’s Lock, Ontario. It was attended by 28 people.

This workshop was the second in the series organized by Algonquin to Adirondacks Conservation Association (A2A) to initiate the establishment of a Collaborative Network that will develop and implement a strategic roadmap for maintaining and improving connectivity in the A2A Region. The first workshop was tasked with establishing a scientific foundation for the conservation efforts and with investigating a framework for proceeding. The striking of an Interim Action Committee (IAC) and its proposed recommendations are a result of the first workshop.

The main goal of this second workshop was to establish a structure and an immediate action plan for a Collaborative Network. In particular the workshop reviewed the recommendations of the IAC concerning the structure and action plan of a new Collaborative network. These were accepted, rejected or modified to enable the Collaborative to begin its work promptly.

Specifically the workshop examined recommendations to:

1. Create a board structure that will enable a Collaborative network to operate on both sides of the border and be able to raise funds and issue charitable receipts in both Canada and the United States
2. Deal with the fact that there may not be a legal entity in the U.S. in the short term
3. Create a balanced board
4. Create a network structure that leads to good communication and coordinated efforts on both sides of the border
5. Create a structure that will be beneficial to its organizational partners, helping them to carry out their work cooperatively and effectively, and involving them in decision making
6. Create an organization that uses the best science to inform decisions of partners both for their on-the-ground work and for outreach/educational purposes
7. Create an organization that will further the aims of its organizational partners through having a credible presence at the local, regional and national level
8. Create an organization that is self-sustaining, with a hired coordinator and financial security
9. Set the stage for the creation of a regional Strategic Plan



The workshop participants endorsed the formation of an A2A Collaborative. There was agreement in principle on all recommendations of the IAC concerning the structure and immediate action plan of the A2A Collaborative Network. The workshop participants' suggestions were either incorporated immediately (shown in italics within each recommendation) or left for the Interim Board's consideration. The latter were largely minor wording issues. A change of the name of the new Collaborative from A2A Collaborative Network<sup>1</sup>, as agreed on in the previous workshop, to the simpler *A2A Collaborative*, was agreed upon by majority vote.

### **The Structure of the A2A Collaborative**

The following specific recommendations were accepted: (The modifications agreed to are noted in italics.)

M1. In the future there should be two legal entities to lead the Collaborative, *one in the US and one in Canada*, each with charitable status. They would have a shared board of directors, but separate chairs and treasurers.

M2. In the event that it takes some time for the U.S. entity to come into existence, the recommendation is that the entity in Ontario establish a board of directors from the US and Canada. Approximately half these directors should represent collaborating partner organizations, and the remaining half should be directors-at-large chosen for their expertise and/or financial acumen and connections.

M3. There should eventually be a single executive director and administrative staff serving both territories.

M4. *The Collaborative* will be responsible for attending to day-to-day issues. Since A2A (Algonquin to Adirondacks Conservation Association) already operates in the region, has a public profile, a corporate identity, charitable status, and a paid-up membership that includes U.S. members as well as Canadian, the committee recommends that it be transformed structurally to become *the A2A Collaborative*.

M5. Following the workshop, A2A's existing board *shall* consider itself to be an interim board that will serve until its next Annual General Meeting in March, 2013, when a permanent board will be elected *by the membership at large*. As an interim board, it *shall* fill existing vacancies to bring the number of its directors up to the full quota of 15 authorized under its bylaws.

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<sup>1</sup> The first workshop named the new organization the A2A Collaborative Network. In this workshop at the end of the morning session there was a vote to rename it the A2A Collaborative. From that point on in this document it is referred to only as the A2A Collaborative.



M6. The Interim Board should change the name of the organization to Algonquin to Adirondacks Collaborative (A2A Collaborative)

### **The Immediate Action Plan**

The following specific recommendations were accepted:

A1. The existing board will appoint the new directors (9 vacancies) following the guiding principles in M2.

A2. Once an interim board is established, it should create five committees that include representatives from collaborating partners. They should be for Governance, Science Advisory, Communications, Outreach *and Education*(one committee), Funding and Membership. *The Interim Board should also consider creating a “fun” raising committee.*

A3. The Interim Board should *draft goals* for each committee.

A4. A full-time paid coordinator should be hired as soon as possible.

A5. Mapping for habitat quality and connectivity should be undertaken on a consistent basis on both sides of the border.

A6. Work on strategic plans should begin as soon as possible, so that by the time of the March Annual General Meeting:

- a one-year interim plan will have been completed
- a sketch of a five year plan will be available

A7. The organization's constitution and bylaws be changed *only* as required to reflect its new role.

A8. There should be a meeting once a year of all collaborating partners to review the goals and agenda of the Collaborative.

A9. The board should give consideration *to advising and consulting* regional sub-groups which could facilitate co-ordination and meet local needs.

A10. The organization should report annually to collaborating partners on progress toward meeting goals.

Notable issues identified during the workshop included the legal framework of an organization operating in 2 different countries, the definition of the roles of different components of the organization, the requirement for compelling goals to engage a variety of stakeholders in practical ways and the critical need to develop a funding strategy. No conclusions were reached concerning these issues, and they were left for the consideration of the board and committees.



There was general recognition and appreciation among workshop participants of the effort that was behind the well articulated recommendations of the IAC. The progress made by workshop participants in discussing and refining the IAC's recommendations marks a critical step toward achieving a strategic road map for connectivity. Nevertheless, significant work lies ahead for the interim and permanent boards to implement these recommendations. Many volunteers will be required to ensure that the recommendations are implemented. Once the Collaborative structure is established and the immediate action plan embarked upon, obtaining funding will be a priority. Funding is necessary in order to hire first a coordinator and later an executive director to help implement the immediate action plan and realize the vision of maintaining biodiversity and connectivity in the A2A region.

The acceptance with modifications of the IAC recommendations lays the foundation for an A2A Collaborative with the agility to operate both in the US and Canada and the flexibility to change as the Collaborative evolves. The new A2A Collaborative is now well positioned to work toward an Algonquin to Adirondacks region that “sustains a rich mosaic of interconnecting habitats, enhances ecological integrity in a way that respects the people who live here and functions as the critical link in maintaining connectivity in eastern North America”<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> A2A vision statement (<http://www.a2alink.org/>)

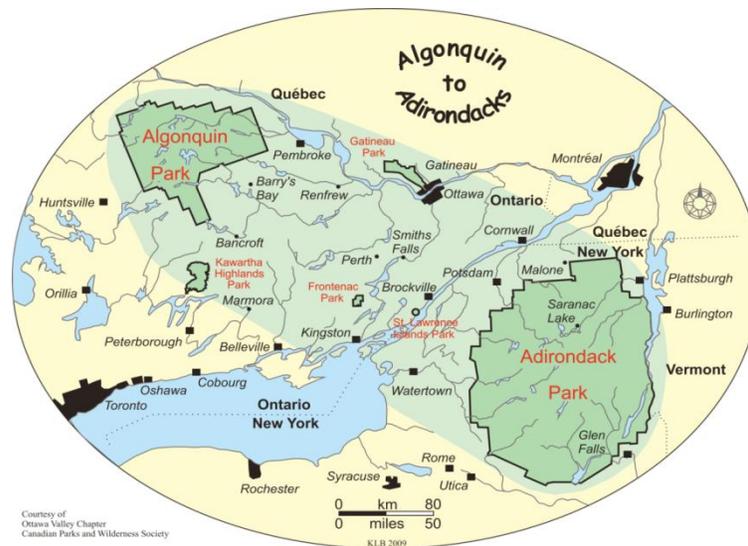


## Introduction

The workshop, “Working toward a Strategic Roadmap for Connectivity: Forming a Collaborative Network” was the second in the A2A series “Working toward a Strategic Roadmap for Connectivity”.

The workshops are concerned with the Algonquin to Adirondacks region (A2A region) which extends from the southern boundary of Adirondack Park in New York State to the northern boundary of Algonquin Provincial Park in Ontario (Figure 1). This region has a broad range of biodiversity and is important for maintaining genetic diversity and healthy ecosystems in eastern North America (Keddy, 1995, Theberge and Theberge 2004, Quinby *et al.* 1999). It is considered 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 (Keddy, 1995). As such it is a high priority for conservation and strategic land-use planning.

A2A envisions an Algonquin to Adirondacks region that sustains a rich mosaic of interconnecting habitats, enhances ecological integrity in a way that respects the people who live here and functions as the critical link in maintaining connectivity in eastern North America (<http://www.a2alink.org>). A2A was the motivator for this and the previous workshop in the series ([Working toward a Strategic Roadmap for Connectivity, A2A Workshop 1 April 2012](#)) as the organization perceived a role for a broader International Collaborative Network as facilitator and coordinator of research and actions leading to conservation of biodiversity and connectivity in the A2A region.



**Figure 1: Algonquin to Adirondacks Region**



The first workshop developed terms of reference for an Interim Action Committee (IAC, Appendix 3) for a Collaborative Network. Once established, the goal of this committee was to catalyze the establishment of a Collaborative Network. The current workshop is concerned with the recommendations of that Interim Action Committee with respect to a new Collaborative Network's structure, day to day functioning, name and priorities for the near term (Appendix 5). Participants (Appendix 2) were asked to address the IAC recommendations as a starting point in establishing methods to:

1. Create a board structure that will enable a collaborative network to operate on both sides of the border and be able to raise funds and issue charitable receipts in both Canada and the United States
2. Deal with the fact that there may not be a legal entity in the U.S. in the short term
3. Create a balanced board
4. Create a network structure that leads to good communication and coordinated efforts on both sides of the border
5. Create a structure that will be beneficial to its organizational partners, helping them to carry out their work cooperatively and effectively, and involving them in decision making
6. Create an organization that uses the best science to inform decisions of partners both for their on-the-ground work and for outreach/educational purposes
7. Create an organization that will further the aims of its organizational partners through having a credible presence at the local, regional and national level.
8. Create an organization that is self-sustaining, with a hired coordinator and financial security
9. Set the stage for the creation of a regional Strategic Plan

The format of the workshop was to split the participants into 3 smaller groups that each participated in a morning and an afternoon break-out session. The morning session addressed recommendations put forward by the IAC concerning the structure, day to day functioning and name of the new Collaborative Network. These were introduced by Gary Bell, an IAC member. In the afternoon recommendations about the proposed Action Plan for the Collaborative Network, introduced by Lee Willbanks (IAC member), were considered. The facilitators of the three break-out groups summarized the groups' input for the plenary session facilitator, Steve Hounsell. In the plenary session the key comments of the breakout groups were discussed, and the participants worked to find consensus on the IAC recommendations. Votes were taken on recommendations as necessary. What follows includes a report on the breakout sessions,



starting with the recommendations and continuing with the discussions. There was considerable agreement among different groups so, rather than reporting the duplicated results, the results from all groups have been summarized.



## President's Welcome and Introduction of A2A

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*Emily Conger, President, Algonquin to Adirondacks Conservation Association*

My name is Emily Conger. I am president of the Algonquin to Adirondacks Conservation Association. I want to welcome each of you to today's workshop, Working Toward a Strategic Roadmap for Connectivity, and thank you on behalf of all of the A2A board for taking time out of your busy lives to contribute your knowledge and experience to strategic planning for international biodiversity conservation and connectivity.

We are very grateful to Queen's University Biological Station for allowing us to use these wonderful facilities, and making it so easy for us by permitting us to use their food services. A special thanks to Frank Phelan and Mark Conboy who arranged this all for us.

You all know the significance of the A2A region in terms of maintaining healthy wildlife populations in Eastern North America. The level of biodiversity in the A2A region is one of the highest in Canada, and it represents one of the only north-south movement areas for most species, owing to the barrier effect of the Great Lakes to the West, and the widening of the St. Lawrence to the East. It's still a place where the opportunity to save and connect habitat is great, as opposed to having to restore it. But you also know there are huge challenges.

Today's workshop is a follow-up to a workshop held in April also called Working Toward a Strategic Roadmap for Connectivity, to which researchers were invited: They made several decisions, which should be considered in our work today.

They initiated terms of reference for an Interim Action Committee for a Collaborative Network, which would be made up of members from organizations across the A2A region to catalyze the process of establishing a Collaborative Network. Its role would be to make recommendations, and it is those recommendations that you will be considering today.

- Participants at the first workshop also determined that a Science Advisory Group be established
- They determined key priority functional corridors and unique landscape features for conservation.
- They emphasized the need for further flora and fauna identification and distribution mapping to prioritize conservation efforts.
- They determined that more effective management of data across the jurisdictions is needed, as well as a review of land-use, cultural mapping and climate studies
- They identified the need for a publicly available inventory of research, researchers and organizations, and finally
- They identified public opinion and the lack of political will, together with funding



difficulties, as barriers to biodiversity conservation.

So after the April workshop, in order to create an Interim Action Committee, we contacted a diversity of organizations on both sides of the border, and nine people stepped forward, four from the U.S., five from Canada. Their names are listed in your package. They met several times to come up with recommendations about how a Collaborative Network might be structured, and what its action plan might be over the next year. In a nutshell, deciding about those recommendations is the purpose of this workshop

We are so pleased that you have come to help make this happen, so that at the end of the day, a Collaborative Network will be in existence. You will learn that the Interim Action Group had to consider the legal differences between the two countries in their deliberations. Please feel free to ask the two members of the IAC who will be here today, (Gary Bell and Lee Willbanks), for clarification about this or any other issues pertaining to their recommendations. During the break-out sessions in the morning, Gary will be available in the dining area, so that he can answer questions of the three break-out groups. In the afternoon, both Gary and Lee will be available.

During the course of the day, or perhaps in the coming days or months, you may wish to make a further contribution to today's deliberations. Our webmaster, James Lolley, has set up a way to do that: [interimboard@a2alink.org](mailto:interimboard@a2alink.org). Your comments will, until my successor is chosen, come to me, and it will be my responsibility to make sure that all board members are copied on your comments.

We are extremely fortunate that we have six people who have given up their days to volunteer as facilitators and note takers. They will try to keep up with you, but may need repetition from time to time, so please be patient. They will be reporting back to Dr. Mary Jo Sibbald, who has agreed to write up the proceedings, which we hope to have to you before the end of November.

I would like now to introduce Steve Hounsell, who became a board member of A2A about six months ago. He is a biologist with over thirty-seven years of experience working with Ontario Power Generation (OPG) and the former Ontario Hydro. He was responsible for the development and implementation of a biodiversity policy, the first of its kind in the electricity industry.

His current work focuses on climate change adaptation needs for biodiversity conservation. Steve is also the president and chair of Trees Ontario, a founding director of the Canadian Business and Biodiversity Council and a member of the Ontario Biodiversity Council and the Biodiversity Education and Awareness Network. Steve is the past president of Ontario Nature



and a founding member and past director of the Natural Step Canada, an organization dedicated to promoting sustainability across society. He also works with the Carolinian Coalition, a network of organizations promoting the Big Picture natural heritage system of core natural areas and habitat corridors.

We felt that with this experience Steve would be the ideal speaker to get us started today.

### **“Enhancing Connectivity within the A2A Region - The Imperative for Action”.**

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*Presenter: Steve Hounsell, President, Trees Ontario.*

My talk this morning will simply remind you of several things you already know and care about, which presumably is why you are here. My intent is to make it “top of mind” and hopefully to impart a sense of urgency for action that is guided by the best that science, including the social sciences, have to offer.

In short, I will remind you about:

- the importance of the A2A region to us, and to biodiversity, at cascading spatial and temporal scales;
- the threats that are increasing, again at cascading scales, which is to say we are not exempt from, or sheltered from, global scale environmental change, including climate change; and perhaps most importantly;
- the opportunity that clearly lays before us – the effective formation of a Collaborative of like-minded organizations and individuals who are guided by a common vision and who are willing to set aside their potential differences in favour of building upon what it is that we can agree upon, namely:
  - the opportunity to protect those ecosystem goods and services which sustain us;
  - the opportunity to sustain and where necessary enhance the quality of life that endears us to this region;
  - the opportunity to enhance the resiliency of this broad regional landscape to better cope with the ever increasing threats that we as humanity impose on our ecosystems
  - and finally;
  - the opportunity to metaphorically polish this jewel of a landscape for generations to come.

That will require an array of skills, much more than any single organization can offer, hence the need for a collaborative all working “with the end in sight”.



And why should we do this? We need to do this for ourselves, for reasons of enlightened self-interest, for the clean air, clean water and healthy food that we need for healthy lives and for the renewable resource base that we seek for a prosperous and sustainable economy. Remember this: “healthy ecosystems, with their native diversity of life sustain healthy people and a healthy economy”. Why do we want healthy, vibrant ecosystems and landscapes? We want it for ourselves!

And for people like me, and likely many of you, there is also the moral imperative: surely the rest of life matters, surely our stewardship is its only hope.

Whether your motive is one of enlightened self-interest or one of altruism, BOTH arguments will lead us in the same direction – one of ecological sustainability, which is the very foundation for social and economic sustainability.

The other point to remember is simply this: the future is all about choices, choices that we collectively make. I am here because I believe we are making the right choice – to better organize ourselves so that we may work to achieve an ecologically sustainable future for this region, a vision which quite frankly inspires me.

### **Importance of the A2A Region**

Again, I doubt that I need to remind anyone here of the unique importance of this region, but for the next few minutes I would ask that you step back and consider the ecological significance of this region in the broader context.

The A2A region is a virtual hotspot for biodiversity, a broad ecotone, or confluence of ecoregions, between northern and southern forest regions with admixtures of Atlantic coastal ecosystems. The richness of its biodiversity is truly noteworthy and one of the highest in Canada. That, in itself, is reason enough.

This region also represents one of the only north-south, or should I say south to north movement corridors, and I say corridor loosely, in this part of north-eastern North America. That distinction has just made this region become far more significant due to the ever-increasing threat of climate change.

As for natural barriers for species dispersal and movement, just look to the Great Lakes to the west, or the ever-widening St. Lawrence to the east. Landscape connectivity within this region is critical to ensure long-term survivorship and to enable species, which are fortunate enough to have sufficient powers of dispersal, to follow their favoured climates, as climate envelopes shift in non-linear patterns further north in response to climate change. There will be more on that later.



Stated a little differently, if we care about biodiversity and its related ecosystem services, then we have a huge responsibility, indeed a continental responsibility, to help protect and enhance the connectivity of the ecosystems within this broad region that we are calling A2A.

### **Threats**

The spring workshop spent considerable time identifying key threats to biodiversity in this region. You can find them in the proceedings to that workshop. In broad strokes, the key threats, or problem if you prefer, relates to habitat loss and fragmentation, invasive species and now climate change. Yes there are other threats, but they are at least at this point, of lesser concern.

**Habitat loss and fragmentation** remains the greatest threat as it does globally, nationally and regionally. Although there is still much intactness and ecosystem integrity over much of the region, there are areas where habitat loss and fragmentation have been excessive and at the cost of native species and their ability to disperse through the landscape. This is perhaps most acute in the “bottleneck” area where the Frontenac arch crosses the St. Lawrence on both sides of the border. It is a function of habitat loss from competing land uses, including agriculture, urban sprawl, cottage developments and the barrier effects of major highways, most notably Hwy 401 in Ontario.

**Invasive species** remains the second largest threat in the region, which is also true globally, nationally and provincially in Ontario, in New York State and elsewhere. Invasive species are growing in menace both in terms of their impacts on native species and the ecosystem goods and services that we value and in terms of the numbers of species causing impacts. As impactful as they may be, it doesn't hurt to remember that virtually all invasive species have piggybacked on our activities and our global trade. Frankly, their impacts pale in comparison to the global effects caused by the ultimate invasive species of them all - humanity. It never hurts to take a good hard look in the mirror!

And now we have **climate change**, again brought about largely due to damaging human activity and our societal addiction to fossil fuels, which will rapidly become a dominant threat and further exacerbate the threats of habitat loss and fragmentation and invasive species.

In terms of climate change I noted that the participants of the spring workshop all felt it was a very significant threat, but something that is largely beyond our control and hence not feasible to change. There is no question that the issue of climate change is much, much bigger than we are, and something that we alone cannot stop. Climate change is a reality. It is happening and its effects will grow immensely in the coming years and decades, and there are no meaningful



indications that society is willing to reduce emissions to the levels that are needed to help maintain civilization and nature as we have known it. Welcome to the Anthropocene.

There are however some things that we can do and in my mind, must do. We can and must adapt. We can address climate change adaptation, most certainly in terms of its impacts on people, but also in terms of its impacts on biodiversity.

The predicted impacts are many and unprecedented in human history and indeed well beyond. Just for a moment, let's look at just some of the high level threats posed by climate change, many of which we are already witnessing, including:

**Altered Disturbance Regimes** including the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events including tornados, as well as periods with too little water, meaning drought, or conversely too much water, meaning floods, well beyond the norm and possibly beyond the tolerance limits of many of our species and the ecosystem goods and services that they provide.

**The effects of Exotic Invasive Species and Eruptive Native Species** will also be magnified in a future of rapidly changing climate – As I have mentioned, the rapid spread of exotic invasive species is considered the second greatest threat to biodiversity after habitat loss. The removal of thermal barriers to range expansions is expected to accelerate the spread of many invasive species. Likewise the removal or alteration of thermal barriers can also cause massive eruptions, meaning population explosions of even native species into regions where they have been historically absent and where natural predators are absent. The devastating spread of the Mountain Pine Beetle in western Canada is but one example.

**And consider the effects of Changing Bioclimatic Envelopes** –Climate variables, including temperature, precipitation and humidity have a profound influence on our ecosystems and largely determine which species can survive and which cannot survive. As I am sure you know, the historically stable relationship between climate, bedrock geology, soil and landform has been used as the basis for identifying and classifying ecosystems within a hierarchy of spatial scales, across Canada and North America. That framework has been used for renewable resource management and for protected areas management in terms of identifying representative ecological areas. That is all about to change in a future of climate change. Radical shifts in bioclimatic envelopes will have significant potential impacts on biota.

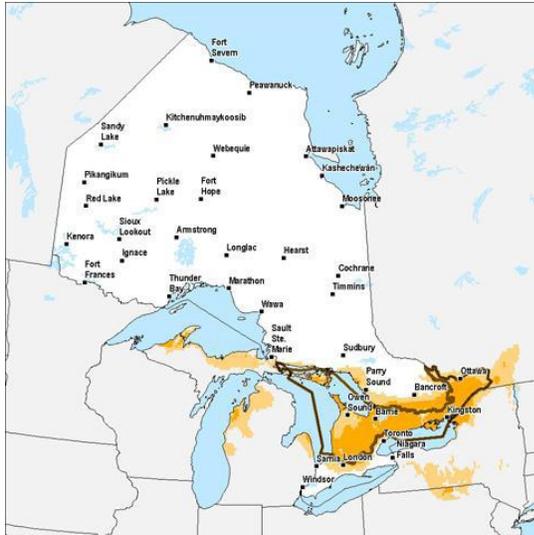
Take a look at the next few slides (Figures 2-4): this first slide illustrates the current climate envelope for ecoregion 6E in Ontario. I apologize as I do not have the equivalent for New York State, but the notion still applies. It represents the climate envelope which has probably existed within this region for the past several millennia driven by stable atmospheric levels of CO<sub>2</sub> in the order of about 280-290 ppm, at least until the last several decades, where the effects of the



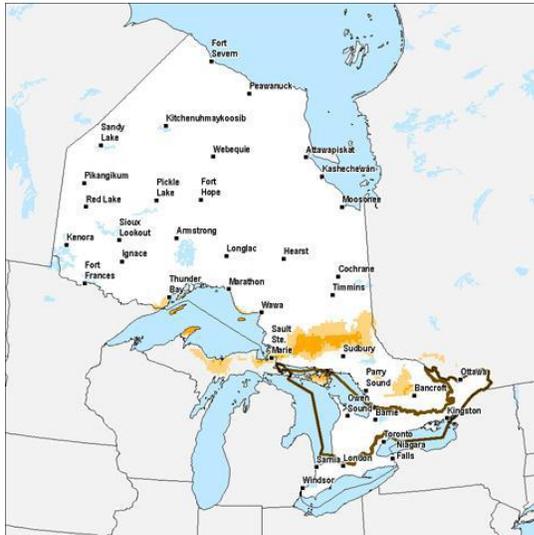
Industrial Revolution have really kicked in. The following two slides offer predictions of where our existing climate will migrate over two time periods – mid-century and late 21<sup>st</sup> century. Note that by late this century, the climate that has resided in this region, and for which species are well adapted, will migrate to the north shores of Lake Superior, or beyond, in the vicinities of Wawa to Marathon. I would suggest that these models are probably underestimating real world changes, as has happened time and time again.

The point is this: many species will not be able to migrate fast enough to keep pace with changing climates. Changes in phenology will affect plant reproduction, insect emergence times, and consequently, the nesting survival of migratory birds. Such asynchronies can have significant population level effects. There will be winners and losers under such selection pressures, forever changing the structure and composition of many of our ecosystems and the socio-economic services and functions they provide. The winners will be those species with high reproductive outputs and great dispersal abilities. You can read into that “r” selected species, the opportunists and generalists. The habitat specialists, the long-lived species with low reproductive outputs and poor dispersal abilities will be the losers; the quality “K” selected species that we typically value most. The result will likely be a simplification and homogenization of our landscapes – not a good formula for resilience. These growing threats demand our attention and strategic response. What do we need to do to limit the worst of those effects? How can we enhance the resilience of our ecosystems to better cope with these changes? Do we know what species and communities are most vulnerable and where the probability of success might be greatest?

I am referring to the need to enhance the resilience of our ecosystems to better cope with the effects of climate change. I am referring to the need to enhance habitat connectivity where it is needed most, in the bottleneck areas where habitat loss and fragmentation is most severe and where such habitat losses are causing barriers to the northwards movement of species, as they try to follow their preferred climatic envelopes which are most conducive to their survival. Enhancing habitat connectivity – the right habitats matched to the limits of site conditions and climate, is a key and vital climate change adaptation imperative to reduce adverse effects on biodiversity and the ecosystem services that they provide. Indeed the International Panel on Climate Change has stated that 20 to 30 percent of the earth's plants and animals may face extinction without the establishment of interconnected natural areas. That need is central to what we are all about.



**Figure 2: Bioclimatic Envelope ecoregion 6E (present, McKenney *et al.* 2010)**



**Figure 3: Migration of Climatic Conditions for ecoregion 6E (2041-2070, McKenney *et al.* 2010)**



**Figure 4: Migration of Climatic Conditions for ecoregion 6E (2071-2100, McKenney *et al.* 2010)**



A national study on climate change adaptation needs and priorities undertaken by the University of Waterloo under the guidance of an impressive adaptation advisory committee consisting of about 80 thought-leaders from across Canada, identified climate change impacts on biodiversity as the second highest priority for action nationally, just behind impacts on city infrastructure and followed closely by impacts on freshwater supply and quality. Given the huge natural barriers to species movement posed by the Great Lakes, A2A was identified as one of the priority landscapes at a national level for both maintaining and enhancing habitat connectivity for conserving biodiversity in a future of climate change.

My real point is simply this: the entire effort to date with A2A, its current vision and mission is exactly what is needed to reduce the most adverse effects of climate change on biodiversity. Our collective mission if you will, just became far more important because of the **added threat of climate change**. We need to act swiftly, with the best science-based guidance we can get, if we are to limit what could be staggering adverse effects. And fortunately there are frameworks and organizations that can help, including some excellent frameworks and tools developed by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources on mainstreaming climate change adaptation with biodiversity conservation. I am referring to their publication: “A Practitioners Guide to Climate Change Adaptation in Ontario’s Ecosystems”.

So my plea here is simple: do not dismiss the climate change issue as something beyond our control. Rather, recognize the threat and increase your resolve to form a collaborative and accelerate strategic stewardship actions across the landscape. As I said, our efforts just became more important because of the threat of climate change. Assisting migration through enhanced habitat connectivity is key in a future of rapidly changing climates.

### **So then what do we need to do?**

The Solution, at least in my view, quite simply is Maintaining and Enhancing Habitat Connectivity on a strategic basis across the landscape, while connecting people to the very landscapes which sustain them and their quality of life for decades to come. We need to find ways to reconnect people to nature. We need to make it clear we are a part of nature, NOT apart from nature.

Protecting and sustainably managing landscapes with a high degree of naturalness and high connectivity is priority number one. Don't lose what you've already got!!! Recognizing the significance of these landscapes and encouraging the on-going sound stewardship by the people who live and work in those landscapes is fundamental to our success. These people are already doing what is needed. They need to be recognized and profiled for their efforts and



seen as the natural leaders for others to follow. We need to build land-owner pride.

Second, we must work strategically to enhance habitat connectivity in those areas where it is most needed, areas of high habitat loss and fragmentation which represent a form of barrier for the movement of species, as they seek, wittingly or not, more favourable habitats in a future of rapidly changing climates.

The challenge, then, is to foster the appropriate stewardship ethic and behaviours across the region and to develop the appropriate incentives to achieve healthy resilient ecosystems that will sustain healthy, proud and prosperous rural communities living within the means of nature, while also serving the needs of the rest of nature for generations to come.

To achieve our noble vision, it seems to me that we will be well served by adopting the following strategic directions:

**First by Engaging People** so that people understand the uniqueness of the A2A Region, the importance of its conservation and enhancing its overall connectivity, and its relevance to their own health and quality of life – healthy ecosystems sustaining healthy people. I am referring to effective outreach and communications.

**Second by Reducing Threats** to the region's biodiversity and the associated ecosystem goods and services that we depend upon by encouraging practical and cost-effective efforts to help reduce those threats while pursuing more ecologically sustainable and profitable practices.

**Third by Enhancing Ecosystem Resilience to the threats that we and others pose** through strategic efforts to enhance land and water stewardship, land securement, habitat restoration and the sustainable management of working landscapes, all in an effort to achieve a broad vision of connecting lands and people across the Region.

And finally by **Increasing Knowledge**, so that we can better engage people, better reduce threats, and better enhance ecosystem resilience to human disturbances. Adaptive management and continual improvement in program implementation have to be an integral part of our efforts.

The **benefits** are many and while these efforts serve nature in terms of conserving biodiversity, perhaps more importantly, it serves the needs and interests of the people living within this broad region. It needs to have social relevance. Yet again, it is premised on the notion that “healthy ecosystems sustain healthy people and a healthy economy”.

All of which brings me to the very reason for this workshop and the need for establishing a collaborative, a bi-national collaborative.



## **The Collaborative – How it can help**

Can we agree on that broader vision? An Algonquin to Adirondacks region that sustains a rich mosaic of interconnecting habitats, enhances ecological integrity in a way that respects the people who live here and functions as the critical link in maintaining connectivity in north eastern North America. A region that embraces the notion that: “healthy ecosystems sustain healthy people and a healthy economy”. This is about sustaining nature and sustaining a unique quality of life for generations to come. This is a vision that embraces grassroots efforts across the entire landscape to protect what sustains us. It is a vision that sees us as being part of the landscape and indeed sustained by its services. It is a vision that prepares us for a future of climate change and enhances resilience for all.

We have had the very good fortune of having a group of dedicated individuals from both sides of the border prepare for us a set of recommendations for our internalization and review. These recommendations will serve to fast track us toward setting up a collaborative that will enable us to most effectively get on with the task at hand, and work toward a common vision that we can all embrace.

In my view, these recommendations are timely and needed. My plea to you for this workshop is pretty simple: listen, discuss and then let’s try to build upon what we can agree upon and not get lost in the weeds or concentrate on divisive differences. Let’s take the high road, build on the high level things we can agree upon and settle the details in the coming months. We cannot do it all in one day.

The urgency to get on with the job is high. I hope you can agree with that. We now have the opportunity to reinvent ourselves, building upon the excellent work done to date and the passion and knowledge that you all bring to better conserve, protect and steward this unique working landscape. We can build a collaborative that has the breadth of partners to provide planning and science-based guidance to focus our efforts, to set priorities for action, to implement solutions on the ground where it is needed and to provide the necessary outreach and communications to engage people around both problems and more importantly, solutions.

Let’s make it happen!



## **Interim Action Committee's (IAC) Proposed Structure of a Collaborative Network**

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*Presenter: Gary Bell, Program Manager, Nature Conservancy of Canada (Eastern Region) and member of IAC*

I am not going to make a “presentation” this morning but I am going to make just a few points. Steve Hounsell’s presentation really speaks for me – it was a beautiful encapsulation of what we need to do and how we need to get there, a great vision to carry us through the day.

### **1. Geography**

I realize that here, in this room, we are speaking to the choir -- this is the easy part. Everything that Steve said is just so obvious to me and probably all of us; but the hard part is getting everyone outside this room to embrace it. Getting people to embrace this vision depends, first, on getting people to identify with this “geography”. In this regard I would just say that this is A2A, Algonquin to Adirondack. It’s not just “A”. In other words, it’s not Algonquin, and its not Adirondack, it’s about the connection between them. If you talk to people about threats to nature, people will identify pollution or over-hunting or over-fishing. They will talk about habitat loss in isolation, some will even mention climate change. But I’m a one issue guy, and for me it comes down to one thing and that is fragmentation. It’s all about maintaining connectivity and that’s what A2A is really about. The vision we need to have people embrace is all about connectivity.

### **2. Organization of Organizations**

The second point I wanted to make is a general comment about organization because the committee kicked around a lot of different structures. We talked about what this organization is and what it could be and what various kinds of structures we could adopt and embrace. We, the committee, are really talking about an “organization of organizations”. We have a bunch of great organizations doing great work in this region, and our problem is we don’t all necessarily know what everybody else is doing. We don’t work off the same play book or keep the same score sheet or understand how we can work with each other to make our efforts the most effective in attaining our common goal, even though we share a common vision. Thus, this will be an organization of organizations, an alliance, with individual at-large members to help move it along.

The reason I bring that up is that one of the organizations we really looked at and borrowed heavily from to create the kind of board structure we are proposing is Y2Y (Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative). But Y2Y states very clearly in their mission they are not an



“organization of organizations”, they are an organization of members and their goal is to push organizations, to make things happen by being independent and pushing the organizations on the ground. However, the committee is recommending that A2A be an organization of organizations on the ground helping each other to move our missions forward. But we will also have individual members who will help push us along - a bit of a hybrid.

### **3. Partnership**

The other thing I wanted to mention before we go through the structure relates to partnership. Last night we sat around a big table and introduced ourselves, but it turned into this great session of biography. It was almost the typical round table of introductions saying why we were there, but everybody ended up talking about their life history and why they were here and it was really very instructive. We heard a lot from people about how they had developed their individual visions of conservation and how they ended up being here at this table.

During this session I spoke a bit about partnership and said that, in thinking about an A2A Collaborative Network, it really is about partnership. I have given a lot of thought about the meaning of partnership over the years having worked on partnership projects in California, New Mexico and here in Ontario. A lot of people tend to think that partnership is about organizations using their missions and combining their efforts to achieve some particular outcome. But that’s not what partnership is about. Partnership is about individual human relations. It’s between two individuals where those individuals represent different organizations, understand their organizations, and understand how to get their organizations to get things done. Through their personal relationship with that other person, they find a way of collaborating and using the strength of their organizations to get something better achieved.

It’s very easy for someone in one organization to criticize another organization and say, “why aren’t they at the table?”, “why aren’t they doing more?”, or “why aren’t they achieving what they set out to achieve?”. But the real problem is that we don’t have a personal relationship with people in that organization that is directed at positive change. Don’t blame the organization; blame the lack of a relationship! So, if we are going to build a collaborative, that collaborative needs to be built on personal relationships with people in this room and people outside this room. It needs to be positive and, well, “collaborative”. And we have to share a common vision and a common mission.



For the rest of the morning we are going to discuss the proposed structure of an Algonquin to Adirondack Collaborative. So before we separate out into our breakout groups I'd like to go through each of the major points for discussion and give a little back story to them.

### **M1. The Board Structure.**

How can you have an organization called "A2A" if it's only located in Ontario? Such an organization is not "A2A", it's "A". What is needed to make the work bi-national is for the collaborative to be a bi-national. And if we are going to have this bi-national collaborative, then we really need to have 2 legal entities. We need to have a US entity to represent the US side, and it is going to take a little bit of work to achieve that. You can't have an organization situated in Canada that is going to attract US donors, because of the whole issue of tax law and the whole issue of accountability and the whole issue of credibility for partners on both sides of the border. We need to be able to say that this organization exists as much in the US as it does in Canada in order to get buy-in from all of the various partners that need to buy into this process.

There are a number of ways we could do this. It would be possible to have two separate boards, two separate organizations that sit down and talk every now and then, but the best structure we came up with was to have a board that has members from both sides, American and Canadian. The idea is for a single slate of board membership for both organizations but structured so that the board can represent the legal needs on each side of the border. Thus, while there is a common membership, there would nevertheless be a separate chair and treasurer for each side for legal purposes. That maintains the common vision, and we don't end up with any kind of mission drift. Most of the business of this board will be bi-national, but there may be individual items pertaining only to one side or the other. The board chairs and treasurers will switch out for those items, should something have to be done pertaining only to one side. In this way, if necessary, separate minutes, separate entities, separate accountability for legal reasons can be maintained.

Does anyone have any thoughts or questions about that before we move on?

*[Questions (Q) and comments(C) were answered (A) by the committee and members of the existing board].*

Q: I was wondering how many people from each side of the border? I know it says....

A: That gets to a future point, but right now we are going to have to operate from a Canadian organization and the current board is 15 members, but that will be a nuts and bolts issue for



the board to decide itself somewhere down the line. Is a 15-member board the right size? Is it too few?, too many? That has to be a point for future discussion.

Q: Can you clarify whether various members of the organizations are relating one to another with less top down, or do you see a top down organization that all the groups feed up to, maybe that's too simplistic as a duality. But I think it's really important to talk about whether you're serving... It's kind of like National Audubon chapters.- they take bites and send us the money in Washington. That would be the Octopus model; whereas, in the jellyfish model everything keeps working, but there isn't a brain. That would be a network phenomenon- there isn't a brain in a jellyfish, but it seems they get the job done.

A: The function of this organization is to serve the collaborative, to serve all the other organizations, but at the same time all the organizations have a responsibility to serve the collaborative.

Q: You are talking about information flow, not money?

A: I am talking about both. I think initially the collaborative will only be able to offer information and co-ordination. If the membership (other organizations) help it find funds, I would like to see the day when the collaborative can bring in money individual organizations are not able to attract. Such funds could be directed to projects that achieve the ultimate shared goal. This is one reason why I love the idea of a collaborative. I know of two different foundations that are interested in cross-border conservation and I am not really able to apply for funding because anything we do is local. We (Nature Conservancy Canada) are a national organization, but our conservation work is local. If I put in an application to acquire a property on Loughborough Lake, that's not a cross-border project, that's a local conservation project. The collaborative could go to those foundations and say we are working on cross-border conservation; this year we think this and this and this are the three projects that contribute the most to this ultimate vision that all the members of the collaborative share. Ka-ching!

Q: Is the USA side the big obstacle here?- You people are light years ahead of thinking south of the border from my perspective. There is no A2A USA. So I guess I'm thinking process here, and what are the steps to get to that? Are you looking for an evolutionary process that starts with the creation of A2A USA and bringing that into the collaborative or are you going straight to the collaborative. Is it a two step process?



A: First of all there are no obstacles, only opportunities. We are creating a new collaborative and using the strength of a new collaborative to do the grunt work that is necessary to create a new entity in the US.

A: One entity already files with CRA, one will file with IRS to get 501(c)(3) status. It takes time and someone with energy to fill out the paperwork and get it done.

C: I have been really impressed with the Adirondack group with their conservation biology expertise. Maybe it rests in one big group, but they have some good thinkers. I listen to North Country Public radio and you Americans have much more focus on environmental issues. We need the personal connections with some of the people. We need them to commit.

A: Things always look better from afar!

Q: Why do we need a separate legal entity on the US side? We frequently have partner organizations that already have 501(c)(3) status applying for grants on behalf of Staying Connected. They do all the management and there is no need for a legal organization.

A: 2 Countries 1 Forest (2C1F) said they did that initially, and eventually found they wanted the status. They recommended that A2A get the status straight away. Working through others means that sometimes you have to change your goals to fit with theirs.

A2: We need to be able to give tax receipts, that IRS recognizes, to donors.

### **M2: Two legal entities**

C: This will change the profile and raise it and create discipline on both sides of border, and it ensures equality.

### **M3: Single board dual responsibilities**

Q: Each entity would have to have its own rules, its own charter, own board?

A: The two entities would share the board, each would have their own board but with the same people. It is allowable to have Canadians on US boards and vice versa.

### **M4: Lead organization**

Q: Step by step to an A2A Collaborative seems logical. (A2A should) have list of people for USA. I still can't see the process. Everybody is spread thin.

A: If you have an important job to do, give it to a busy person.



Q: Maybe it would be possible to roll over an existing organization or create a hybrid or move directly into the collaborative. The success depends on having a clear transition of how to get there, and it's not clear yet.

C: We don't know the landscape in the States. Some organizations in the US don't want to commit, because don't know if connectivity is feasible because of the 401. They want a feasibility study done before they commit.

C: If we were sitting on the Oak Ridges Moraine in Ontario back in the 1920s and 1930s, you would have seen a desolate barren desert with major gullying. Forest did not exist there. Down in the Norfolk Sand Plain near Long Point, a critical region for bird migration, all the forest was cleared; it was denuded, roots were exposed 5 feet down. If you go there now, these are the jewels of our landscape, because there were visionary foresters in the 1930s who said we have to stabilize these soils. They started putting in plantations- created beautiful lush forest ecosystems. The jewels that we have- the Ganaraska Forest, Williams Conservation Reserve, Bacchus Woods- are the results of visionaries a century ago. Right now what we appreciate was desolate a century ago. We need a vision and need to convey its value and then change will happen.

C: The request for a feasibility study represents the resistance that does exist..

Q: Perhaps existing organizations could be 'morphed' into legal chapters? It costs money and time in setting up from scratch. We need to move right away but need you (US) to help get things done, because we need you to work politically.

A: That's what the Canadian side is going to do.

C: Nothing we have in the recommendations precludes 'morphing' from happening.



## **Morning breakout session: Structure and Functioning of the Collaborative Network.**

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Participants were divided into three breakout groups for consideration of the IAC recommendations. The recommendations reviewed in the morning session concerned the structure of the Collaborative Network, the lead organization and the name of the organization.

Initially breakout groups were asked if the fundamental assumption of the IAC, that there was a desire to establish a Collaborative Network across the A2A region, was correct. The unanimous answer was yes.

There was much discussion around the recommendations. Some groups attempted to consider the recommendations separately, but the discussions arising often overlapped issues. Here, they are reported together for each of three subheadings.

### **1. Structure of the Collaborative Network (M1-M3)**

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The following IAC recommendations were considered in this section:

**M1. It is recommended that in the future there be two legal entities to lead the collaborative, one on each side of the St. Lawrence River, each with charitable status. They would have a shared board of directors, but separate chairs and treasurers.**

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All groups agreed in principle.

**M2. It may be that it will take some time for the U.S. entity to come into existence. In the meantime, the recommendation is that the entity in Ontario establish a board of directors from the US and Canada. Approximately half these directors should represent collaborating partner organizations, and the remaining half should be directors-at-large chosen for their expertise and/or financial acumen and connections.**

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All groups agreed in principle.

**M3. There should eventually be a single executive director and administrative staff serving both territories.**

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All groups agreed in principle.

The discussion and suggestions concerning recommendations M1-M3 fell into one of the 3 following categories.

#### **1. Wording of recommendations**

- More than one group thought that the wording of recommendation M1 was not clear. It was suggested that an organizational chart would help and that a “shared board of directors”



needed to be better defined. The wording “A single board of directors” rather than “shared” was put forward.

- It was also suggested that “one on each side of the St. Lawrence River” should be changed to “one in the US and one in Canada”. One participant suggested a third nation at Akwesasne should be mentioned.

## **2. Legal issues**

- All groups had questions concerning the challenges dealing with legal issues arising from two legal entities, each located in a different country with different laws. Participants noted that on the Canadian side many issues could be avoided or delayed by continuing to maintain the current A2A name and status. The idea of operating under a different name than the name registered was discussed.
- The possibility of getting the legal charitable status for donations in the United States through an existing organization was discussed e.g. Part of the mission of American Friends of Canadian Land Trusts is facilitating donations of land and funding from US taxpayers to Canadian conservation organizations <http://afoclt.org/>.
- It is possible to get registered in the US quickly, but obtaining charitable status is more difficult with the IRS. There is an accelerated process available if you pay. The suggestion was made that encouraging an already existing US organization to become the US A2A may be a way to facilitate the formation of the Collaborative Network.
- It was noted that the Adirondacks is a very political area around environmental issues.
- Separate chairs and treasurers for US and Canadian sides of the A2A Collaborative Network would be necessary.

## **3. Mechanisms of Operation of the board and the Collaborative Network.**

- Handling the funding, and reporting on its use, are complex and detailed. There is a need for dual reporting (to the IRS in the US and the CRA in Canada). Official records and book keeping will have to be kept separately to meet the requirements of each country. Having a single staff does not pose a problem, but they will need to be knowledgeable about both Canadian and US regulations.
- Issues relating to one country only may need to be voted on by members of that country. Other board members may have to recuse themselves.
- There are many organizations chasing the same funding; therefore, it makes sense to consolidate efforts to raise money. The Collaborative may be more successful raising private money, because public money is scarce. There was discussion about United States Federal



grants and whether they must be spent in the US. Questions were asked concerning the functioning of the board with respect to funding:

- Participants asked what constitutes a quorum with this dual structure. The answer was not clear and remains to be defined.
- Questions arose such as Who chairs meetings? Is the chair rotated? How is the meeting going to be conducted?
- More than one group cautioned that the size of the final board will influence effectiveness. It was suggested that broader representation could be obtained without having a completely unwieldy board by having both a core board and an advisory board. This enables the collaborative to benefit from a broad range of expertise.
- A need for better definition of organizational members and individual members was identified. The possibility of the organization being hijacked by a dissident group was mentioned. This might be possible, because only the membership, and not partner organizations, will be able to vote at AGMs and it is there that board members are elected. A governance committee, as recommended in the action plan, could address this by recommending rights and responsibilities for membership.
- It was suggested that partner organizations should not be brought into the collaborative until after March 2013 when the new board is in place.
- A number of participants asked whether Canadians can be on American boards and *vice versa*. The answer is yes. Save the River has board members from both countries, as does 2 Countries 1 Forest and Y2Y(Yukon to Yellowstone).
- One participant recommended at least one First Nation representative on the board as a mandatory requirement. This led to a discussion about whether board seats should be mandated or dedicated to a particular organization or field. The conclusion was that they should not.
- To encourage and facilitate attendance, it was suggested that meetings rotate locations and the board make full use of video/conference calls.
- The importance of some board members having specific knowledge or technical expertise was observed.
- Sub committees should be set up for areas of expertise and need. Board members should be ready to chair some of these committees. In addition, these sub committees can have members that increase A2A's overall membership and upon which the collaborative can draw in the future for leadership roles.



- Participants considered that as the number of not-for-profit organizations is increasing, it was good to have a consolidating organization. Reducing fragmentation of organizations will increase the effectiveness of on-the-ground action. With a collaborative, a higher level of direction can be obtained that will reduce wasted effort by more effectively utilizing funding and people hours available.

## **2. Lead organization (M4-M5)**

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**M4. There should be a lead organization for the collaborative that will be responsible for attending to day-to-day issues. Since A2A (Algonquin to Adirondacks Conservation Association) already operates in the region, has a public profile, a corporate identity, charitable status, and a paid-up membership that includes U.S. members as well as Canadian, the committee recommends that it be transformed structurally to become the lead organization.**

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There was full agreement that A2A should become the lead or coordinating organization.

**M5. Following the workshop, A2A's existing board should consider itself to be an interim board that will serve until its next Annual General Meeting in March, 2013, when a permanent board will be elected by its membership. As an interim board, it should fill existing vacancies to bring the number of its directors up to the full quota of 15 authorized under its bylaws.**

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There was full agreement that the existing board should continue to serve until the AGM and the vacancies should be filled.

- It was suggested that the wording of M4 be changed to avoid any suggestion of a hierarchy of organizations.  
e.g. ***The Collaborative will be responsible for attending to day-to-day issues. Since A2A (Algonquin to Adirondacks Conservation Association) already operates in the region, has a public profile, a corporate identity, charitable status, and a paid-up membership that includes U.S. members as well as Canadian, the committee recommends that it be transformed structurally to become the Collaborative.***
- One group noted that the name of the existing organization was A2A Conservation Association and thought it needed to be changed in M5.
- It was considered that the wording of M5 should be strengthened e.g.



Following the workshop, A2A's existing board *shall* consider itself to be an interim board that will serve until its next Annual General Meeting in March, 2013, when a permanent board will be elected by its membership. As an interim board, it *shall* fill existing vacancies to bring the number of its directors up to the full quota of 15 authorized under its bylaws.

- One group pointed out that it needed to be clarified in M5 that the permanent board should be elected by the membership at large, not by the board.
- It was commented that if A2A is to be the start-up organization, there's no other option but to have an interim board until the next AGM to remain within the current rules of A2A.
- The groups generally thought the focus should be on getting the Collaborative Network up and running. Unless there is an actual barrier in A2A's existing bylaws, the bylaws should not be changed. It would take up too much time and energy.
- Clarification was asked for concerning how long the interim board would serve.

### **3. Name of organization (M6)**

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#### **M6. The interim board should change the name of the organization to Algonquin to Adirondacks Collaborative Network**

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No groups disagreed outright with this, but there were reservations concerning the suggested name of the new organization.

- More than one group suggested omitting 'Network' from the name.
- One suggestion was that the name should not be legally changed initially, as the process would consume time better used elsewhere. There was a suggestion that Algonquin to Adirondacks Conservation Association can simply say it is operating as the A2A Collaborative Network. However others indicated the legal name change in Canada would not be that difficult.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Plenary: Discussion of findings of 1<sup>st</sup> breakout session**

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*Facilitator: Steve Hounsell*

The recommendations (M1-6) won general endorsement from all groups with the caveat that there may be better ways of expressing some of the recommendations and some other minor



concerns e.g. timing of implementation. It was agreed that specific details of the functioning be left to the board.

M1. There was agreement in principle from all groups with editing of the wording to be decided by interim board.

M2. There was agreement in principle from all groups with editing of the wording to be decided by interim board.

M3. There was agreement in principle from all groups

M4. There was agreement in principle from all groups. The workshop participants as a whole agreed to reword the recommendation as below:

***The Collaborative will be responsible for attending to day-to-day issues. Since A2A (Algonquin to Adirondacks Conservation Association) already operates in the region, has a public profile, a corporate identity, charitable status, and a paid-up membership that includes U.S. members as well as Canadian, the committee recommends that it be transformed structurally to become the Algonquin to Adirondacks Collaborative.***

M5. Agreement in principle from all groups. It was generally agreed to make the recommendation stronger by substituting shall for should

***e.g. Following the workshop, A2A's existing board shall consider itself to be an interim board that will serve until its next Annual General Meeting in March, 2013, when a permanent board will be elected by its membership. As an interim board, it shall fill existing vacancies to bring the number of its directors up to the full quota of 15 authorized under its bylaws.***

M6. Participants had reservations concerning the word "Network" in the name. A rapid show of hands vote was taken concerning the name of the potential A2A Collaborative Network. The majority were in favour of changing the name, suggested by the first workshop participants, to A2A Collaborative (without Network) as they considered this simpler. This vote was not unanimous. There was discussion concerning whether the word 'conservation' should be included in the name. Some participants considered that it was important to have an indication of the organization's goals in the name, others thought it was a word that may concern certain potential collaborating organizations e.g. transportation organizations.

It was concluded by majority vote that the organization should be named the **A2A Collaborative** without the words "network" or "conservation" in the name.

Gary Bell noted specific details of structure and functioning had to be left to the board.



## Presentation: The Staying Connected Initiative

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*Guest presenter Jens Hilke, Biologist, Staying Connected Initiative.*

I want to share lessons learned from the Staying Connected Initiative, a multi-state effort to protect existing connectivity and restore lost connectivity from New York to Maine.

Staying Connected, in conjunction with 2 Countries 1 Forest (2C1F), obtained grant money to go after implementation. Most money is from the US. We have focused in New York, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine and are struggling to reach out to partners in Quebec and New Brunswick to expand to a more bi-national organization. The 2C1F “no regrets”<sup>3</sup> linkages were the starting point of our conservation science and that’s one link I want to talk to you about.

### 1. Conservation science

I bring conservation science up first because it drives all the other tracks that we have. It’s the basis for the other work that we do. When we pass the straight face test (prove we are legitimate) in front of a local land use planning commission, it’s because we have our conservation science ducks all in a row. I would encourage you to pursue some of those (Highway 401) feasibility models immediately. Make sure there is a broad vision of what connected A2A landscape looks like. I say broad vision because I think at that large scale conservation science provides the vision at a coarser scale that other people can plug into. Habitat connectivity exists at multiple scales and so our conservation science has to exist at multiple scales. For us the first step was structural connectivity. Where are there structures in place, and in this case I mean trees and wet lands, that would allow more animal movement? We can not prove the animal movement, but we can prove the structure is in place that would allow animal movement. That was the starting point for our 2C1F data, and it was those structural connectivity models that allowed our various partners to plug into this bigger vision. We are now at the place where we need to refine those models so we’ve done work within the linkages. In the Northern Appalachians there are 7 landscape level linkages that Staying Connected have identified as ecoregionally significant: Tug Hill to the Adirondacks, the Adirondacks to the Southern Green Mountains, through NE Vermont across the Taconics to the Green Mountains, Green Mountains through NE Vermont into West Maine and the pre border region near New Brunswick, Quebec and Maine. These are the Staying Connected linkage areas. So we started with blobs like the A2A blob, as a vision for moving forward and refined the blobs with least cost paths analyses to define what a linkage is. So what does

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<sup>3</sup> “No-regrets” actions are actions by households, communities, and local/national/international institutions that can be justified from economic, and social, and environmental perspectives whether natural hazard events or climate change (or other hazards) take place or not. “No-regrets” actions increase resilience, which is the ability of a “system” to deal with different types of hazards in a timely, efficient, and equitable manner. Increasing resilience is the basis for sustainable growth in a world of multiple hazards (see Heltberg, Siegel, Jorgensen, 2009; UNDP, 2010).



Greens to Adirondacks look like, where is the land cover suitable to allow movement. We are now in the place of refining with functional connectivity models e.g. Roadside tracking, where are the most number of species crossing roads? At this functional connectivity level our Transportation agency gets concerned. The Staying Connected initiative involves all four US state agencies of transportation, all four state Fish and Wildlife Agencies, twenty NGOs with The Nature Conservancy and the Wildlife Network being two of the leads. In our conservation science we really need to get to that functional connectivity level to see the different scales at which connectivity operates on. Not all our partners can buy in to the blob.

## **2. Transportation**

I work very closely with our transportation agency. I have a very good working relationship with those folks. This relationship is critical, because when we talk about connectivity and move beyond the blob of genetic activity, we get to road sections, and you can not go to your agency of transportation and tell them that every square inch of the 401 is an important crossing, because they cannot deal with it. They need the hotspots identified, they need you to say “invest your money here!” The blob does not do it for them; they need the full force of the scientific community to say “that’s the spot.” If you say that convincingly enough in Canada you might get an overpass, in the US we are not going to get any overpasses any time soon, especially not in Vermont. I really encourage you to work with your transportation agency. We have a whole suite of NGO partners that do conservation science; we have a largely separate suite of partners that work on transportation issues. They are not the same people. This habitat connectivity thing is too big for one organization to own or even one collaborative partnership. You need different people working on different aspects of it. Transportation agencies plan 10-20 years out. This shuts out most citizen activists. I do not send citizen activists to the transportation agencies. That would lead to frustration on both sides. The citizens want to stop projects that were planned 10 years ago- the transportation agency is not going to change its plan at this stage, so you get conflict. To avoid conflict you need to have a durable partner, in this case the Fish and Wildlife Agency, to work together with transport agencies 10-20 years out. Road crossings are a great hook for connectivity. Genetic connectivity across large areas such as Algonquin to Adirondacks does not do it for too many people. The road crossing is at a scale that is comprehensible. They are not thinking about genetics, they are thinking about getting Bambi from one side of the road to the other, and that’s enough for them. The transportation side of things is a different set of priorities and a different time scale, but it is a critically important wing of Staying Connected. We flag a bunch of spots and when it comes up that the culvert needs replacing, then they



will incorporate our input, and perhaps put in a bigger culvert. We got hammered in Hurricane Irene a year ago, we lost hundreds of bridges and culverts. The good news is: suddenly climate change and flood resiliency are on everyone's radar screen, because we are still paying for Irene and will be for a long time. Suddenly it looks really good to build a culvert right the first time and not keep replacing it every 3-4 years. The agency of transportation is changing its hydrological formulas to 1.5 times bank width, because we keep having to replace these small culverts. Our Interstate system was unscathed by Irene, our town road system was hammered. We got a wake-up call that has been helpful, so when the agency of transportation talks about flood resiliency, we are on board. It leads to wider culverts and that is good for connectivity. The lesson is identifying co-benefits.

### **3. Land Use planning**

I work with 251 Vermont municipalities. We plan Vermont with volunteers late at night with lots of coffee. These folks are very well intentioned. We throw huge numbers of issues at them: brown fields, economic development, resource protection, transportation planning and disaster planning. We throw it all at this eight person volunteer board late at night. It's my job to go around to all the communities to help them understand the science brought down to their town scale. Why is land use planning part of habitat connectivity? When I think about Phoenix, Las Vegas, any part of Nevada...as these areas get more arid, people are moving to where there is water. Water is the new division between the haves and have-nots. We have it in Vermont and you have it here. Suddenly the environmental refugees are coming here. There are profound implications for wildlife when we talk about large numbers of people moving to rural Vermont. We are going to end up with sprawl. So land use planning is critical. Vermont has embraced sprawl; we live with a 1970s zoning code that promotes sprawl that is shutting down habitat connectivity. The land use planning wing of Staying Connected is incredibly important, and again we have a separate suite of partners here. We offer a range of tools, we explain the science and the tools to communities and say "you choose what to do and what tools to use." That's empowering local communities. We cede control for the vision of habitat connectivity to countless planning commissions across the state of Vermont. We are not in charge of the full vision of what habitat connectivity looks like, we are empowering locals, they have a piece of that vision and they know we are not pretending we want them involved, we are saying- you choose- what does habitat connectivity look like in your town? In some towns they don't want any part of regulation; they are strongly in favour of property rights. In towns such as this, habitat connectivity is in an outreach and education phase; we empower land owners to manage their land- that's fine, we have given the power to them, we



are the keeper of the big picture and we empower locals to bubble up with the local vision of connectivity.

#### **4. Land protection**

In the State of Vermont 7% is State land, 8% is Federal land and 81% is in private hands. Most of the land is in private hands and we are never going to be able to buy enough land to conserve a network for functional connectivity. So land protection is one of the tools, but not the only tool. It can alienate people. It is a tool, but not the most important one, for habitat connectivity. Buying small expensive parcels of land whose only function is connectivity is a hard sell, especially in a competitive funding landscape. Outreach and education are important here, and everywhere, in Staying Connected.

We put linkage coordinators in all the linkages in Vermont. Their role is (1) as a catalyst: they make things happen and don't get used up in the process, (2) as a convenor: they help the germination of projects, and they work with the town and introduce partners to help, and finally (3) as a conduit: they tell Staying Connected what's happening on the ground, and they tell locals what's going on with Staying Connected.

I just wanted to give you a sense of the multiple parts of the Staying Connected initiative. We've met a tremendous amount of success on the US side, we are still working and anxious to partner with you (whatever that means!), and I hope some of these examples of having multiple tracks at once is helpful to you, because it is a much bigger tent than just conservation scientists. We need to work out how to engage others and get them to take ownership.

#### **CPAWS maps of the A2A region**

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Ken Buchan, a member of CPAWS-Ottawa Valley Chapter, brought to the meeting the most recent large maps of the A2A region that were commissioned by CPAWS. These were displayed as discussion points in the lunch room. They are available at the CPAWS-Ottawa Valley web site (<http://cpaws-ov-vo.org/campaigns/algouquin-to-adirondacks>).



## **Interim Action Committee's Proposed Action Plan**

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*Presenter: Lee Willbanks, Executive Director, Upper St. Lawrence River Keeper, Save the River, and a member of the IAC.*

If you have partner organizations they should have representation on the board. In Save the River's board, as in most boards, you frequently go out of way to get expertise in certain areas e.g. fund raising.

I was pleased everyone felt the U.S. should be represented on both boards. It is a difficult proposition on both sides of border, sharing the effort when everyone is stretched thin. The Nature Conservancy has more depth and may be a better candidate.

The IAC felt there were five committees that were really critical; some committees flow from the fact that you have to function. The Governance committee is obviously important for setting bylaws and writing a constitution and nominating board members. We need to get others engaged.

I can't begin to make a better case for a Science Advisory committee than Steve did. It's the grounding for everything that goes forward, its how to structure the case from the big to the small.

Communication and Outreach- We need people to take what you want to do and speak clearly and intelligently about it to others. We need people to fashion that message.

At Save the River, Funding and Membership are together and now we are decoupling them. Membership is important as I need to be able to say so many members are behind me. It's also my action network. When I need to send out a message saying "click on this and send your message to the government" or "click on this and donate five dollars so we can do the next big thing," I send it to them. It's really key. Funding needs to be separate - targeting people who are members at a certain dollar amount and funders with multiple thousands of dollars. You need a committee that's focused on where are the grants, where are the foundations, where are possibilities to get this money to do what we want to do.

And here's the fun stuff I can just run through and list them off. It's the interim board that we are embarking on that needs to set objectives and timeline for each of the committees. A full time paid coordinator is needed to whip those committees into shape. Strategic planning is critically important and difficult. No one enjoys it, particularly the coordinator. A one year plan that charts out a reasonable realistic course for the group to follow is good. Its reasonable to do a sketch of a five year plan subject to change, and a totally fantastic ten year plan that we keep so that ten years out we can look at it and say "wow, boy we changed, we evolved, we moved



on.” Those levels of planning are good because they focus the mind; they make you think about what you can realistically do.

The paid staff or coordinator is going to be looking at the plan and working with the committees and trying to get the one year plan to mesh with everything that’s going on.

It goes without saying that a constitution and bylaws are necessary to get the whole legal organization in place. We need to schedule a meeting after 1 year and see where we are. We should establish region subgroups, which we did note was potentially difficult to achieve in six months to a year. Reporting needs to be built into everything you do, to your board, to your membership, to your collaborators.

The only fun thing on the whole list that I get to speak about at all is the mapping. We need to get the mapping done to locate quality habitats and connections. Without the mapping you don’t have anything to present that people can point to and say, ” I live there and this is important to me.” We discover this on the river every day. They can drive by in a large yacht and then come and look at the chart and suddenly they are connected. We talk to them about what’s going on in that bay and suddenly they are interested.

The mapping is important for the science. but also important for funding, publicity and out reach. And that’s about it.

Questions? [Questions were asked by the audience and answered by the speaker or members of the IAC and A2A board]

Q: Is Save the River run by membership?

A: No, our membership is our action group. The membership elects our board according to our constitution. Our 1400 members vote, we sent out ballots, got 700 back, and the slate was elected. We reach out in multiple ways to our membership: we use them for advocacy. We are involved in the water level fight for lakes and the (St. Lawrence) river. We are governed by our board of directors. We say we are staff driven, but my inbox is always full of suggestions from the board.

Q: For years we’ve been saying how we’d like to have more representation from the US, now suddenly we seem to have some. What are we doing differently?

A: I did not know any better, as I had just started in a new position! As I understand it, Save the River has been involved with A2A for a while and on several projects.

A: (Emily) We (A2A) have done a lot of back and forth; we’ve done presentations at sessions with the Army Corp of Engineers, we done presentations at your AGMs and you guys have come over and worked with us.



A: We've (Save the River) been building a good connection, but this is a different level for us. It's been whatever science we understood, how we could connect. It is a huge commitment to participate at this level. We need to think about how to fit into the next level when it becomes even more real as a cross-border thing. We've had discussions that give me serious pause. The whole ecosystem is very important to us. We are trying to be very careful with the whole industrial wind placement on our side of the river; we have to focus on the river and the further we go up the bank, the harder it is for us to find time. The Nature Conservancy, Audubon and some other state-wide groups have way broader staffs and way more funding secured and could probably bring greater understanding of the terrestrial part. That being said, we will continue to be an interested party, but probably not to be an involved party- my staff would throw me in the river!

Q: Do you have Canadian committee members at Save the River?

A: Yes we do. I have one Canadian board member; I have multiple Canadian members and emeritus board members. We are looking down the river to Massena, across the river to do more, because we've got this river between two countries. Right now we are underrepresented with Canadians on our board of directors.

Q: You work with TIARA and TIA?

A: Yes we do, sometimes just on practical stuff like shore line. We do a range of programs, some practical. Water levels are an issue. We do River Keeper training- how to judge the health of the river.

### **Afternoon Break-out Session: Action Plan for a Collaborative**

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Groups were asked to consider the IAC's proposed actions for a Collaborative. To avoid repetition, the discussion and suggestions from all three groups are summarized below for each recommendation.

**A(1) The participants of this workshop should compile a list of possible candidates for appointment to the board. There will be nine vacancies to fill. The existing board will appoint the new directors following the guiding principles in M(2).**

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All groups added more organizations to the lists provided (see Table 1) and accepted the recommendation. The following arose in discussion:

- The plan is to appoint the board members (9) now, and then vote in a permanent board at the AGM in March.
- Eric Holmlund offered to facilitate introduction to people from the Adirondack Institutes.
- Canadian government employees cannot vote when on a board, but they can sit as



advisory members.

- With a limited number of board members, board positions should be focused on candidates who bring a membership base or other assets e.g. expertise.
- An advisory board could be made up of government representatives
- There was discussion about term limits and whether A2A currently has them for board members. It does not. Should limits be added to its constitution? No conclusion was reached.

| <b>Table 1: List of possible candidate organizations for appointments to the board or committees</b> <i>(This list was compiled using the suggestions from both workshops.)</i> | <b>Country</b> |
|---|----------------|
| 2 Countries 1 Forest  | C and US       |
| Adirondack Action   | US             |
| Adirondack Landowners Association   | US             |
| Adirondack Mountain Club  | US             |
| Adirondack Nature Conservancy Association (ANCA)  | US             |
| Adirondack North Country Association  | US             |
| Adirondack Park Agency  | US             |
| Adirondack Watershed Institute  | US             |
| Aggregate and mineral groups  | C and US       |
| Algonquin Provincial Park   | C              |
| Colleges and Universities e.g. Paul Smith College, SUNY Potsdam, St Lawrence University, Clarkson, Queen's, Ottawa Univ., Carleton , St. Lawrence College                       | C and US       |
| Canadian Museum of Nature   | C              |
| Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society-Ottawa Valley Chapter   | C              |
| Canadian Sustainable Forestry   | C              |
| Centre for Adirondack Biodiversity – (Potsdam)  | US             |
| Children and Nature Network   | C              |
| Certified Forest owners   | C and US       |
| Citizens' Campaign for the Environment  | US             |
| Citizen Science   | C and US       |
| Conservation Authorities e.g. Ganaraska Region, Cataraqui Region, Mississippi Valley, Quinte Conservation, South Nation, Rideau Valley  | C              |
| Conservation groups   | C and US       |
| Conservation Ontario  | C              |
| Conservation Trusts   | C and US       |
| Cornell Cooperative Extension   | US             |
| County Travel Planning e.g. Lewis County  | US             |
| Cultural/heritage groups  | C and US       |
| Ducks Unlimited   | C and US       |
| Eastern Ontario Model Forest  | C              |
| Environment Canada  | C              |
| Environment Commission of Ontario   | C              |
| Farm groups, St. Lawrence County Farm groups, Maple Sugar Producers, OFA  | C and US       |
| Federation of Anglers and Hunters   | C              |
| Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Association Inc.   | C              |
| Federations re: Soil and Crops-Agriculture organizations  | C              |



| <b>Table 1, continued</b>   |          |
|---|----------|
| Field naturalists   | C        |
| First Nations e.g. Akwesasne (Mohawk), Algonquins of Ontario  | C and US |
| Fort Drum Military Biologists   | US       |
| Friends of the Tay Watershed  | C        |
| Frontenac Arch Biosphere (FAB)  | C        |
| Greenbelt Coalition   | C        |
| Homeland Security/Border Control- Federal   | US       |
| International Joint Commission  | C and US |
| International Union for Conservation and Nature   | C and US |
| Jim Murphy – Ontario Parks with Algonquin. Park Zone Planner.   | C        |
| Private Land owners   | C and US |
| Land trusts e.g. Ontario Land Trust Alliance, NY Land Trust Alliance  | C and US |
| Land Use Planners, St. Lawrence County Planning, Municipal planners, Strategic planners –municipal, regional and county | C and US |
| Leeds-Grenville Stewardship Council   | C        |
| Local group representatives   | C and US |
| Local residents   | C and US |
| Military-U.S. and Canada  | C and US |
| Ministry of Natural Resources- current and retired personnel  | C        |
| Municipalities especially planners  | C        |
| National Audubon Society of New York State  | US       |
| National Capital Commission   | C        |
| Nature Conservancy of Canada  | C        |
| TNC The Nature conservancy.   | US       |
| The Nature Conservancy, Western New York Chapter  | US       |
| New York Forest Owners' Association   | US       |
| NOKS—National Outdoor Leadership Society  | C        |
| NYS DEC Region 6  | US       |
| Office of Parks and Recreation  |          |
| Ont. Fur Managers   | C        |
| Field Naturalist Clubs  | C        |
| Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters   | C        |
| Ontario Hydro   | C        |
| Ontario Ministry of Environment   | C        |
| Ontario Ministry of Transportation  | C        |
| Ontario Nature  | C        |
| Ontario Provincial Parks  | C        |
| Ontario Rivers Alliance   | C        |
| Ontario Road Ecology Group  | C        |
| Ontario Tourism   | C        |
| Ontario Woodlot Association   | C        |
| Ottawa River keeper   | C        |
| Outdoor Recreation Groups   | C and US |
| Parks Canada  | C        |
| Planners' conferences   | C        |
| Politicians e.g. Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus  | C        |
| Private sector-Businesses (large and small) especially tourism  | C and US |
| Protect the Adirondacks! Inc.   | US       |
| Public Health in US and Canada  | C and US |
| Rideau Canal  | C        |
| Save The River  | US       |
| Science groups  | C and US |



| <b>Table 1, continued</b>  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| Source water protection committees                               | C                            |
| St. Lawrence County Planning                                     | US                           |
| St. Lawrence Islands National Parks                              | C                            |
| St. Lawrence Parks   | C                            |
| St. Lawrence Parks Commission                                    | C                            |
| St. Lawrence Seaway  | US                           |
| Stewardship Councils-current and retired                         | C                            |
| Thousand Islands Area Residents' Association (TIARA)             | C                            |
| Thousand Islands Association (TIA)                               | C                            |
| Thousand Islands Land Trust                                      | C                            |
| Transportation Planners and other transportation representatives | C and US                     |
| Tug Hill Commission  | US                           |
| Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust,                                    | US                           |
| U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service                                   | US                           |
| U.S. Forest Service  | US                           |
| Wildlands Network  | US                           |
| Wildlife Conservation Society                                    | US                           |
| Wildlife Society   | US (with a Canadian section) |
| Woodlot owners   | C and US                     |

**A(2) Once an Interim Board is established, it should create five committees that include representatives from collaborating partners. They should be for Governance, Science Advisory, Communications and Outreach, Funding and Membership.**

The following descriptions for each committee were proposed by the IAC:

1. Governance — responsible for recommending the appointment of individuals to committees, monitoring their contribution, and recommending the appointment or election of individuals to the board of directors, as well as for other issues of how the organization is run.
2. Science Advisory — responsible for undertaking scientific investigations requested by the board, and recommending scientific undertakings and research to the board.
3. Communications, Outreach — responsible for promoting the goals of the Collaborative, and for bringing to A2A the views of the collaborating partners.
4. Funding—responsible for raising money to accomplish the objectives of the organization.
5. Membership — responsible for recommending what should be the rights and responsibilities of members, for attending to the interests of members, and for expanding membership.

There was agreement with the proposed five committees and support for another committee, the “fun” raising committee.



Various additions and changes were recommended:

- Addition to description of Governance committee:—responsible for recommending the appointment of individuals to committees, monitoring their contribution, and recommending the appointment or election of individuals to the board of directors, as well as for other issues of how the organization is run (*now and in the future*).
- Addition to Science Advisory recommendation: See [Working toward a Strategic Roadmap for Connectivity](#), A2A Workshop #1 April 2012 for guidance.
- Change to Communications recommendation: Communications, Outreach *and Education*—responsible for promoting the goals of the Collaborative, and for bringing to A2A the views of the collaborating partners *and individuals*.
- Addition to Membership description: *The committee will set conditions of membership for groups.*
- Another committee termed “Fun” Raising was suggested. The Collaborative needs to promote activities that are fun for its members and the community. This would be good for morale and public relations and increase gross national happiness!

The following points were raised in discussion:

- There is a need for public education around the role of A2A – is this part of communications and outreach? If the Collaborative is trying to turn a big ship, then our communications need to be significant and on the level of the local land owner.
- The Collaborative needs to help people to see the bigger picture as they go through their day to day work.
- The Collaborative should strive to be a resource for municipalities and planners.
- The committees for Governance and Funding should be established first.
- The Funding committee and the Science Advisory Committee need to be closely related.
- Science is being carried out currently e.g. active restoration of trees in Ontario.
- A major concern among participants was that the board was being asked to undertake a significant amount of work, and that the time allowed was probably insufficient.
- It was noted that committees don't have to be drawn from the board, but it would be useful to have a chair from the board.

### **A(3) The interim board should set objectives and timelines for each committee.**

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All groups agreed in principle. The following considerations were raised.

- One group suggested adding or just substituting ‘*and draft goals for each committee*’



- More than one group cautioned that this was a lot to achieve by the March AGM.

#### **A(4) A full-time paid coordinator should be hired as soon as possible.**

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There was general agreement concerning hiring a full-time paid staff member.

- One group mistakenly understood that the coordinator position and the executive director were one and the same and recommended they were to be hired ASAP after the AGM.
- Another group suggested the modification: *This should happen “instantly”*.
- Several participants raised concerns about the funding for this position. It was suggested that American private foundations might be a good place to tap, as it is difficult to reach out to foundations in Canada.
- How does the Collaborative get the assistance of wealthy people on the Canadian side who are not involved? The idea of approaching wealthy residents along the river was put forward.

#### **A(5) Mapping for habitat quality and connectivity should be undertaken on a consistent basis on both sides of the border.**

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There was general agreement among participants concerning this recommendation. The following were raised in discussion:

- The mapping is needed as soon as possible to help focus on priorities.
- Even when trying to coordinate only Quebec, Ontario and Vermont, mapping is difficult. Timing, scale etc. are different in every state/province. The possibility of Gary Neilson (MNR) arranging for mapping Ontario and New York leaves out Vermont, Quebec, and Akwesasne.
- The Collaborative should encourage local universities to set up a program to attract graduate students to work in this area. It was noted that collaboration with Fleming College's GIS program would be useful ([Sir Sanford Fleming 2012](#)). Queen's University also has a certificate program in GIS ([Queen's University Dept. Geography 2011](#)).
- It was noted that mapping the political landscape is also important, i.e. mapping all those political jurisdictions, individual property levels, and municipalities. Precise land use mapping that integrates use and ownership is needed.
- Several participants emphasized the need to interface with the land owner and to deal with the municipalities. This is not all about biology.
- Fort Drum region, First Nation reserves and highway networks, e.g. investigation of Highway 401 porosity, were all mentioned as areas for further studies.



- Some participants observed that a previous study on the Thousand Islands Parkway didn't use green fencing or have signage that could educate the public. It was concluded that the Collaborative needs to take advantage of every opportunity to reach out to the public and promote its causes.
- Due to time constraints, more than one group considered that in the next few months, the Collaborative should work to just define the issues, as there is inadequate time to get the mapping done. In direct contrast, other participants observed connectivity analysis (particularly with respect to the 401) needs to be done immediately in order to engage US partners as soon as possible. Another perspective presented was that consensus on interoperability mapping standards would be difficult to achieve but should be a future goal. In the meantime mapping should continue.
- An inventory and a multi species assessment were proposed.
- It was observed that an open timeline was needed for mapping, not just the next 6 months, as mapping will be an ongoing project.
- Habitat quality maps are required, and perhaps some sort of land value (economic) could be mapped.
- Critical barriers for different species need to be determined.
- A seamless vegetation type map is probably not a priority.
- It was observed that various people have some of the maps and data required already e.g. Dan Spada from Adirondack Park Agency has lots of land cover maps and data. Sheldon Lambert indicated that St. Lawrence Islands National Park has maps and data. Gary Bell noted that Nature Conservancy of Canada has also done some connectivity analysis.

**A(6) Work on strategic plans should begin as soon as possible, so that by the time of the March Annual General Meeting:**

- **a one-year interim plan will have been completed**
- **a sketch of a five year plan will be available**
- **a sketch of a ten year plan will be available.**

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There was agreement with this recommendation, but there was recognition among the groups of the amount of work and the limited time before the March AGM. One suggestion was to omit the ten year sketch, as it would have to be vague.

**A(7) The organization's constitution and bylaws be changed as required to reflect its new role.**

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There was agreement in principle with this recommendation



- The workshop participants wanted the name changed to A2A Collaborative and thought that the board could determine the kind of change that is required to do this.
- Some participants suggested that it was not necessary to focus time on changing the constitution. It is important not to divert attention from what really needs to be done.
- The change in wording to **The organization's constitution and bylaws be changed *only* as required to reflect its new role** was thought to be an improvement.

**A(8) There should be a meeting once a year of all collaborating partners to review the goals and agenda of the Collaborative.**

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There was general agreement with this recommendation. The discussion included the following:

- Does the meeting need to be part of a bigger communication and networking process?
- Meeting once a year is not enough to engage the partners. The Collaborative also needs to utilize email and the website to come together around issues.
- There is a need to identify and define the collaborators and their role in the organization. Some thought that nothing formal needed to be set up. Others felt they would like to have a well-defined role for collaborating organizations.
- Collaborating partners need to be identified to put power behind the Collaborative for funding applications. This is further indication of the need for more definition e.g. Ontario Nature has 81 small organizations as partners. Each is listed on the website and the partnerships are formalized.
- Will there be resources to keep up the list of partners and to provide services to them?
- Some participants suggested that in order to engage people, the Collaborative needs to define charismatic goals and actions that people can support (versus just the academic process of setting up an organization).

**A(9) The board should give consideration to establishing regional sub-groups which could facilitate co-ordination and meet local needs. (It may be advisable to wait until the permanent board is in place, and to take up this suggestion at the first annual meeting of collaborating partners).**

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There was no disagreement with the recommendation, but there was significant discussion surrounding the definition of a sub-group.

- These sub-groups would be determined by the priority of areas requiring attention and



issues to be addressed.

- Substitute “establishing” with **advising and consulting**.
- There is a need to define the term regional subgroup. Is it just one of the regional organizations in the Collaborative? Is it geographical? Is it issue-based? Should there be chapters? Would this just be an unnecessary layer of bureaucracy? Would issue-based ad hoc committees be better?

#### **A(10) The organization should report biannually to collaborating partners on progress toward meeting goals.**

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There was general agreement with this recommendation.

- Substitute “bi” with **semi**.
- Send out an annual report, but communicate continuously.

#### **Consideration of the Case for Support Document (Appendix 4)**

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Although not an agenda item, in addition to considering the proposed action plan, participants were also asked to consider the ‘Case for Support’ document provided by the IAC and to comment. In two of the groups there was inadequate time to do this, and the facilitators suggested participants send in their comments by email. The following discussion points reflect the input of only one breakout group:

- It was not clear exactly who the target audience for the document was, and the comment was made that the document would need to be more specifically written for different goals e.g. grant-awarding agencies versus potential collaboration with a local volunteer group.
- The length of the document was questioned, and it was observed that it will be even longer if the strategic plan is added. It was suggested that a shorter document was required including some ‘passion’ and also the strategic plan.
- The need for references for information cited was observed.
- It was suggested that a timeline should be included, and this could be done by including the strategic plan.
- The number of collaborating organizations and members should be included. This lends weight to any request that follows. If this is not known, then the intention of having a number of collaborators should be specifically stated.



- Some participants proposed adding the passionate aspect of “loving the earth” and considered that the document needs a simple but strong philosophical foundation and not just the science.
- The following specific wording changes were suggested :
  - p.22- paragraph 1-last sentence-remove “Bear” and “try”;
  - 4<sup>th</sup> bullet-remove “phenology” and replace with “changes in the seasons”;
  - p.23- 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet-change “northwards movement” to “movement”.

## **2nd Plenary: Discussion of findings of 2nd break-out session**

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*Facilitator: Steve Hounsell*

The workshop participants worked to find consensus on an action plan for year one. They were asked to commit to the future of the Collaborative and provide a contact person for it.

There was generally agreement with all the recommendations, with some useful suggestions.

A1. Numerous possible organizations from the US and Canada were put forward (Table 1). The board will be prudent choosing people for the board, so as to advance the course of the Collaborative.

A2. There was agreement in principle from all breakout groups with the qualification that time is short (until the AGM in March) and it may be difficult to get all committees established. The suggestion of an extra committee, the “fun” committee was noted.

A3. There was agreement but with a word change:

**The interim board should *draft objectives and timelines for each committee.***

It was noted that this represents a great deal of work to have done by March. It was agreed that the board should delegate finalizing the details to the members of the committees.

A4. Everyone considered that a full time paid coordinator needed to be hired as soon as possible.

A5. There was general agreement that high level mapping for connectivity should be initiated immediately and a work plan developed, but that decisions concerning data structure should be left until later, as it represented a very difficult problem that could limit progress.

A6. The workshop participants agreed that the one year plan needed to be drafted by March 2013 as did the five year sketch, but rejected the need for the ten year plan, arguing it would have to be so vague as to not be very useful at this stage.



A7. The recommendation was agreed upon with the addition of **only** e.g. “.....**bylaws be changed only as required.....**”. This emphasized that changes may not be necessary and should not necessarily be undertaken.

A8. There was full agreement.

A9. This was agreed upon by the participants with the following word change:

**The board should give consideration to *advising and consulting* with regional sub-groups which could facilitate co-ordination and meet local needs.**

A10. It was agreed that the board would report annually, (not biannually as in the recommendation) and perhaps more frequently initially as required.

There was general commitment to the future of the Collaborative, but provision of a contact person for the Collaborative was left to be established by email.

## **Conclusions**

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Overall the workshop generated lively discussion and, while different perspectives were brought forward, there was substantive agreement on major issues and the IAC’s recommendations by the participants.

### **The structure of an A2A Collaborative.**

The workshop participants endorsed the proposal of an A2A Collaborative.

There was agreement in principle on all recommendations of the IAC concerning the structure of an A2A Collaborative. The workshop participants had suggestions concerning wording of the recommendations that the IAC had made, which the board can consider and amend as needed. A change of the name of the new Collaborative from A2A Collaborative Network, as agreed on in the previous workshop, to the simpler A2A Collaborative, was agreed upon by majority vote. The notion that addition of the word Network implied a looser association was not considered critical.

There was agreement that the current A2A would be the co-ordinating organization for the new A2A Collaborative and would continue to act as a catalyst for the formation of the US part of the new A2A Collaborative. This, together with the endorsement in principle of the IAC’s recommendations concerning the Collaborative structure, enables the interim board of A2A to immediately begin work toward a transition of the current organization into the new A2A Collaborative. As soon as possible the current board of the Ontario based A2A should be made up to its full quota of members by appointments drawn from collaborating organizations on both



sides of the border and of individuals who bring needed skill sets to the board. During the next few months leading up to the AGM in March 2013, the A2A board will make every effort to fulfill the recommendations of the Interim Action Committee by proposing a new board for the new A2A Collaborative (M2) to be voted upon by the members at large at the next AGM. Consistent with the IAC recommendations, the board structure will be such that the new A2A Collaborative will ultimately be able to operate on both sides of the border and be able to raise funds and issue charitable receipts in both Canada and the United States. Specifically how this structure is to be established was not clarified and will have to be determined by the new board. In the short term, in the absence of a specific legal US A2A entity, the Canadian wing of the A2A Collaborative will act as the sole coordinator while seeking to facilitate the establishment of a US entity. One fast route to achieve this that was discussed would be to encourage an existing US organization to evolve into the US A2A part of the Collaborative. The legal entity in Canada (A2A Collaborative) will have a balance of representatives from both the US and Canada on the board, and the board is anticipated to be a single shared board that will serve both the US and Canadian entities of the A2A Collaborative.

The major concern of the participants about the structure of the Collaborative network centred around the legalities of the A2A Collaborative operating in two countries and how to create the cross jurisdictional mechanisms necessary to operate effectively. Clearly legal advice will have to be sought.

There was agreement that fine details of the operation of the board should be left to the board and committee members to determine.

The acceptance with minor modifications of the IAC recommendations relating to the structure and functioning of the board lays the foundation for an A2A Collaborative that can function both in the US and Canada and with the flexibility to change as the Collaborative evolves.

#### **Action plan for a Collaborative.**

The recommendations of the IAC concerning the proposed action plan of an A2A Collaborative (A1-10) were generally endorsed with minor modifications to the wording. The IAC agreed to consider and incorporate amendments.

The first action for the interim board is to start establishing a network structure that leads to good communication and coordinated efforts on both sides of the border. With this in mind the



list of potential partner organizations was extended, and board members will be appointed drawing from this and using the directions of M2. The list remains open for further suggestions. It was considered that the board should focus on new board members who bring a membership base or other assets.

The agreement that the board should work toward creating the five IAC recommended committees (before the AGM if possible), and consider the extra 'fun' committee suggested, is a step in creating a structure that will lead to good communication and co-ordinated efforts on both sides of the border. The hard work setting up these committees and getting them functioning is yet to come. Reservations were expressed concerning how much could be achieved by the March AGM. Participants indicated that the committees represented an opportunity to draw on the expertise available within the partner organizations in the Collaborative (both in the US and Canada) but felt that every committee should have a board member. It was considered necessary that the interim board *draft* goals for the committees but should allow the committees, with their expertise, to work out the details. This also allows for more members of participating organizations to be involved in decision making.

The governance committee must be formed as soon as possible, since without the appropriate people on the board and the committees, even the best structures and processes will not guarantee the correct decisions. There are a number of governance issues that need to be addressed immediately as with any new organization e.g. careful definition of roles and responsibilities for Chair(s), Executive Director and Coordinator.

The formation of the Science Advisory Committee in particular is necessary in creating a collaborative that uses the best science to inform decisions of partners both for their on-the-ground work and for communication, outreach and educational purposes. This workshop and the previous one have enabled people to come forward with suggestions for representatives for this committee which is the first step toward a Science Advisory Committee. When formed, this committee will have a critical role to play in initiating the work necessary for a feasibility study on the barrier that the 401 presents to connectivity. This was noted to be a prerequisite for certain US agencies participation in the Collaborative.

The Communications, Outreach *and Education* committee will be pivotal in furthering the aims of the Collaborative and its partners by helping to increase its profile at the local, regional and national level, but must base all its work on the best science so as to maintain credibility. The point was made that some 'passion' was required in order to engage and connect with as



many stakeholders as possible. The participants also indicated that 'Education' should be included in the committee's name to emphasize the critical role it will play. An important role to be developed for the Collaborative was as a resource for municipal planners, both with respect to effective wording for environmental based bylaws and also as a source of scientific data to support decisions.

The Membership Committee (together with Governance) will need to address a recurring issue that arose during the workshop: the definition of various participants in the Collaborative e.g. partner organizations, collaborators, individual members, and sub regional groups. Relationships are the lynch pin in creating an effective A2A Collaborative. The different roles need to be better defined, and there needs to be clarity around expectations of every role. Although there were some dissenters who were in favour of a much looser organization, it became clear during the workshop that in order to get productive engagement, all participants in the Collaborative must clearly understand their roles, and that achieving this shared clarity was necessary.

Although concern about funding was expressed, there was agreement to hire a coordinator as soon as possible. The coordinator would work with direction from the interim board, and the permanent board for a time period to be determined (possibly a year, but that was not clarified). The coordinator would be working with the board to (1) get the Collaborative operational, and (2) help develop the strategic plans for one and five years. The funding source for this position remains unclear as does the funding for the Collaborative as a whole. The funding committee will have to review funding sources early and proactively, and develop a funding strategy as soon as possible.

There was agreement to undertake connectivity mapping, but there were reservations about trying to undertake mapping of habitat quality at this early stage. The need for the classifications to be reconciled between the US and Canada was noted to be problematic. More than one group observed that lack of consensus on classifications should not stop further mapping work, but consensus should be a goal for the future. Furthermore the observation was made that mapping was going to be an ongoing project for the Collaborative, not just part of the immediate action plan. The need for mapping the political landscape was also asserted to be important.

There was consensus on preparing a one-year interim strategic plan in time for the annual general meeting in March, and a sketch of a five-year plan. However the recommendation to



prepare a sketch of a ten-year plan was rejected because it was thought the vision was sufficient and further details would be difficult to gather at this stage.

The workshop participants indicated that bylaws and the constitution of the Collaborative should be changed only as necessary and not necessarily.

There was agreement that there should be a meeting every year to review the goals and the agenda of the Collaborative, and also that there should be more continuous communication using the website and email. A report from the board on progress should be submitted annually.

The establishment of regional subgroups before the establishment of a permanent board was decided to be overly ambitious, and the need for clarification of the term sub group was noted. In the short term it was decided that the board would merely advise and consult with such groups.

The requirement for compelling goals and actions for the A2A Collaborative was articulated a number of times during the workshop. This will encourage multiple stakeholders to engage with the A2A Collaborative vision in very practical ways. The academic process of setting up an organization, although necessary, was thought insufficient to do this! The next stage in the development of the A2A Collaborative, as it develops as a dynamic organization, will fill this need to move urgently to action if it offers a way to harness the strengths of all who contribute. The A2A Collaborative needs to identify practical opportunities to benefit and connect members in new and innovative ways to help them work toward their shared vision of biodiversity conservation and habitat connectivity.

There was general recognition and appreciation among workshop participants of the effort that was behind the well-articulated recommendations of the IAC. Furthermore the work ahead for the interim and permanent boards in putting these recommendations into practice is significant, but it is a critical step in working toward a strategic road map for connectivity. Without the help of volunteers, implementation of the recommendations will not take place. Once the Collaborative structure is in place, obtaining funding becomes a priority in order to hire first a coordinator and later an executive director to help move toward the goals of maintaining diversity and connectivity in the A2A region.



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## Appendix 1: Workshop Agenda

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Friday, October 19</b>   |  |
| 4:00-6:00 pm                | <b>Registration of weekend participants in Main Lodge dining hall (upper level)</b><br><i>Ken Buchan and Ian Whyte</i>   |
| 6:00-7:00 pm                | <b>Dinner in Main Lodge dining hall</b>  |
| 7:00-8:30 pm                | <b>Participant projects and informal networking</b><br><i>Facilitator: BryarlyMcEachern</i><br><i>Participants will have three minutes to introduce themselves and explain a project that their organization is working on/has worked on where an Algonquin to Adirondacks regional Collaborative would be/would have been useful</i>  |
| 8:30 pm                     | <b>Chat, relax, settle in</b>  |
| <b>Saturday, October 20</b> |  |
| 7:30-8:30 am                | <b>Breakfast in Main Lodge dining hall</b>   |
| 8:00-8:30 am                | <b>Registration of day participants in Main Lodge dining hall</b><br><i>Ken Buchan and Ian Whyte. Molly Sorensen for latecomers.</i>   |
| 8:30-8:45 am                | <b>Assemble in Main Lodge conference room (lower level)</b>  |
| 8:45-9:00 am                | <b>Welcome Introduction</b><br><i>Presenter: Emily Conger, President, A2A Conservation Association</i>   |
| 9:00-9:20 am                | <b>Enhancing Connectivity within the A2A Region - The Imperative for Action</b><br><i>Presenter: Steve Hounsell, President, Trees Ontario</i>  |
| 9:20-10:15 am               | <b>Interim Action Committee's (IAC) Proposed Structure of a Collaborative Network</b><br><i>Presenter: Gary Bell, Program Manager, Nature Conservancy of Canada (Eastern Region)</i><br><br><i>Gary Bell, a member of the Interim Action Committee, will describe the IAC's proposed structure for a Collaborative Network. Presentation will be followed by a question and answer period.</i> |
| 10:15-11:00 am              | <b>1<sup>st</sup> Break-out Session: How to Structure a Collaborative Network</b><br><i>Groups discuss how to best structure a Collaborative Network, reacting to, agreeing with or amending the IAC's recommendations. They will also recommend interim board members for a Collaborative Network.</i>  |
| 11:00-11:20 am              | <b>Coffee Break</b><br><i>Break-out group facilitators meet to review results of 1<sup>st</sup> break-out session, find points of agreement/disagreement</i>   |
| 11:20-12:15 pm              | <b>1<sup>st</sup> Plenary</b><br><i>Facilitator: Steve Hounsell</i><br><i>Discuss findings of 1<sup>st</sup> break-out session; work to find consensus on structure of new Collaborative, the lead organization and name.</i>  |
| 12:15-1:15 pm               | <b>Lunch in Main Lodge dining hall</b>   |
| 12:45-1:10 pm               | <b>Guest presenter Jens Hilke, Staying Connected Initiative</b><br><i>Jens, a biologist with the Staying Connected Initiative will share lessons learned from this successful multi-state effort to protect existing connectivity and restore lost connectivity from New York to Maine.</i>  |
| 1:15-2:10 pm                | <b>Interim Action Committee's Proposed Action Plan</b><br><i>Presenter: TBD</i><br><i>A member of the IAC will describe the IAC's proposed Action Plan to get a new Collaborative up and running.</i>  |
| 2:10-2:55 pm                | <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Break-out Session: Action Plan for a Collaborative Network</b><br><i>Groups discuss actions that a Collaborative should aim to accomplish in its first year.</i>   |
| 2:55-3:15 pm                | <b>Refreshment Break</b><br><i>Break-out group facilitators meet to review results of 2<sup>nd</sup> break-out session, find points of agreement/disagreement</i>  |
| 3:15-4:30 pm                | <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Plenary</b><br><i>Facilitator: Steve Hounsell</i><br><i>Discuss findings of 2<sup>nd</sup> break-out session; work to find consensus on an action plan for year 1. Commit to future of Collaborative Network and provide contact person for Collaborative Network.</i>   |
| 4:30-5:30 pm                | <b>Free Time</b><br><i>Opportunity to relax, explore, socialize, and/or view project displays of participant organizations.</i>  |
| 5:30-6:30 pm                | <b>Dinner in Main Lodge dining hall</b>  |
| 6:30 pm                     | <b>Free Time</b>   |
| <b>Sunday, October 21</b>   |  |
| 9:00 am-noon                | <b>Brunch in Main Lodge dining hall</b>  |



## Appendix 2: Workshop Participants, Facilitators, and Note-takers

| <b>Workshop Participants</b> |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Debbie Badzinski             | Bird Studies Canada  |
| Gary Bell                    | Nature Conservancy of Canada, Eastern Region   |
| Ken Buchan                   | CPAWS, A2A Conservation Association  |
| Maureen Elliot               | Trent University, Sustainability Studies   |
| Barrie Gilbert               | Frontenac Stewardship Council  |
| Richard Grover               | YES eleven   |
| Jens Hilke                   | Staying Connected Initiative   |
| Eric Holmlund                | Paul Smith's College   |
| Alison Lake                  | Ontario Parks  |
| Sheldon Lambert              | Parks Canada   |
| Jeff Leggo                   | Parks Canada   |
| Chris Lemieux                | Trent University/University of Waterloo  |
| Dann M. Michols              | Thousand Islands Watershed Land Trust; Board Chair, Frontenac Arch Biosphere Network |
| Margot Miller                | A2A Conservation Association   |
| Laura Roch                   | Concordia University, Geography, Planning and Environment                            |
| Don Ross                     | Frontenac Arch Biosphere Network   |
| Pieter Leenhouts             | Ontario Woodlot Association  |
| Samantha Tavenor             | Queen's University, Environmental Studies  |
| Ian Whyte                    | CPAWS, A2A Conservation Association  |
| Lee Willbanks                | Save the River   |
| Gillian Woolmer              | Wildlife Conservation Society Canada   |
| <b>Workshop Facilitators</b> |  |
| Emily Conger                 | A2A Conservation Association   |
| Steve Hounsell               | Trees Ontario  |
| Ed Lowans                    | Gananoque River Waterways Association  |
| BryarlyMcEachern             | A2A Conservation Association   |
| <b>Workshop Note-takers</b>  |  |
| Sandy Gray                   | A2A Conservation Association   |
| Molly Sorensen               | A2A Conservation Association   |
| Cameron Smith                | A2A Conservation Association   |

## Appendix 3: Members of the Interim Action Committee

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Gary Bell        | Program Manager, Nature Conservancy of Canada                              |
| Brian Barkley    | Former Executive Director, Eastern Ontario Model Forest                    |
| Cathy Keddy      | Ecologist  |
| Gary Nielsen     | ON Ministry of Natural Resources   |
| David Smith      | Regional Forester, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation |
| Dan Spada        | Supervisor, Natural Resource Analysis, Adirondack Park Agency              |
| Brad Steinberg   | Chief Park Naturalist, Ontario Parks                                       |
| Matthew Thompson | Environmental Resource Coordinator, St. Regis Mohawk Tribe at Akwesasne    |
| Lee Willbanks    | Executive Director, Upper St. Lawrence Riverkeeper, Save the River         |

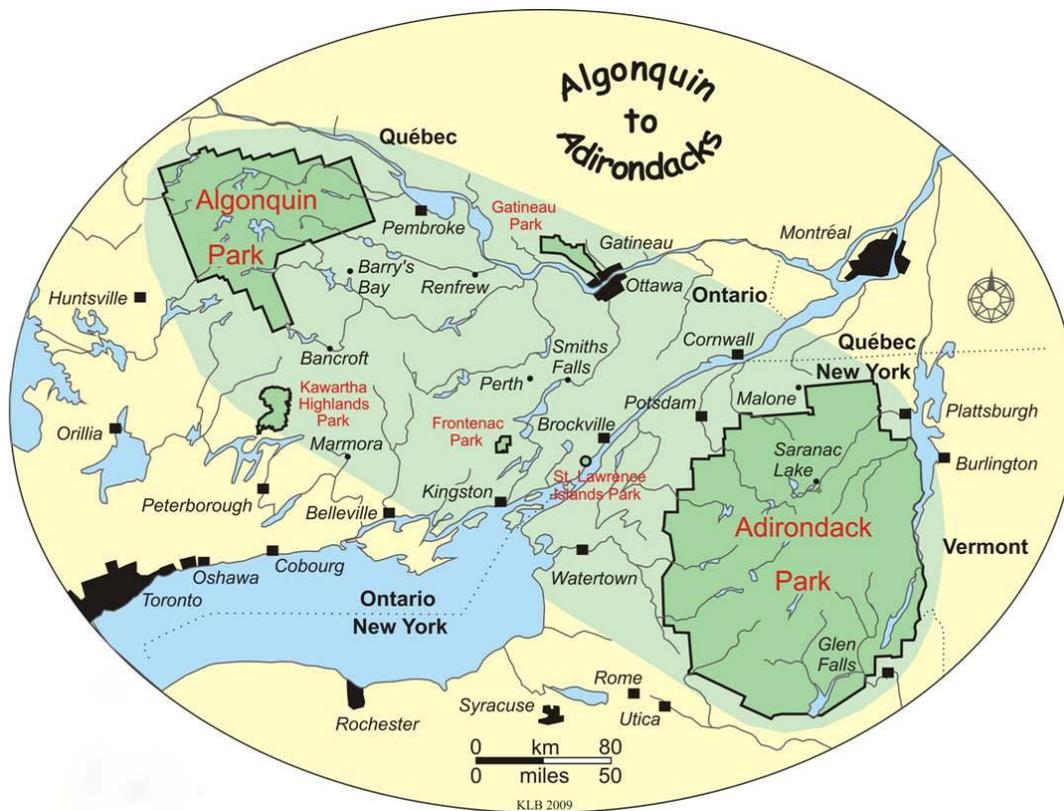


#### Appendix 4: Case for Support (Appendix A from the Arrival package) (Draft : October 15, 2012)

*Purpose:* This document is a draft Case for Support that offers a rationale for the formation of a Collaborative in the Algonquin to Adirondacks region.

#### Importance of the A2A Region

Algonquin to Adirondacks (A2A) Conservation Association's mission is to conserve biodiversity and enhance habitat connectivity between and including Adirondack Park in New York and Algonquin Park in Ontario. This region is critical for maintaining genetic diversity and healthy ecosystems in eastern North America. It is the most extensive, least degraded north-south corridor east of Lake Superior, connecting the Appalachian forests of the south eastern US to the vast boreal forests of the Canadian Shield (Keddy, 1995). The Frontenac Arch, which is at the crux of this region, has served for millennia as a funnel for the dispersal of wide-ranging mammals, and it has enabled the free movement of organisms in response to environmental stresses, thus supporting population resilience through time. Moreover, the A2A Region in its southern extremities provides a pathway through which species farther south can advance to maintain resilience as climate changes.



**Figure 1: Map of A2A Region**

*(Courtesy of Ottawa Valley Chapter, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society)*

The heart of the A2A Region also represents one of the most biodiverse areas of eastern North America. The Frontenac Arch at the St. Lawrence River is an area of bio-geographic overlap between northern boreal, southern deciduous (Carolinian), Atlantic coastal, and Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Lowlands forest regions. This 'interchange zone' contains southern species at the northern extreme of their range mingling with northern species at their southern-most extent, and other species in midrange. The result is globally significant biodiversity (see Biodiversity inset) that has earned the Frontenac Arch designation as a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve.

### **Biodiversity within the Frontenac Arch**

#### **Mammals:**

- Approximately 54 species, including Wolf, Marten, Lynx, Moose, Black Bear, Ermine, and Fisher
- The Grey Fox is at the northern edge of its range here and considered threatened
- 4 species (Wolf, Marten, Lynx, Moose) have become extirpated from the southern third of the Frontenac Arch

#### **Birds:**

- The diversity of breeding birds in the Frontenac Arch is high: more than 165 confirmed species; 60% of the area surveyed on the Canadian side falls into the highest possible class for number of species (>104 species/100km<sup>2</sup>)
- The Frontenac Arch provides significant interior forest habitat required by many neotropical migrants
- 8 species listed as vulnerable, 2 as endangered

#### **Reptiles**

- 17 species, 5 of which are uncommon

#### **Plants:**

- 81 species that are rare, including sedges, orchids, cacti, legumes, asters, gentians and ferns
- ½ of Canada's remaining population of wild ginseng

#### **Ecological Conditions**

- More than 50% forest cover, within 250 km of cities
- ½ of the pre-settlement wetlands are still intact
- High ecosystem and landscape diversity

### **Defining the Problem**

So, what is the problem? Over the past 200 years, the A2A Region has been damaged and partially fragmented by:

- Farming development along the Frontenac Arch, north and south of the St. Lawrence River
- Sub-urban sprawl
- Cottage developments along the St. Lawrence River
- And road developments, such as Highway 401 in Ontario

Habitat fragmentation and destruction is the leading cause of biodiversity loss, as organisms lose healthy habitats in which to feed, shelter, and breed, and populations become isolated and 'trapped in their habitat', like tadpoles in a pond that is drying up. Habitat fragmentation also disrupts the ecological services that are vital for human society, such as the filtering capacity of wetlands, erosion control from forests, and healthy fisheries.

The consequences of habitat fragmentation have become even more dire with the additional pressures posed by climate change. Based on current climate models, it is expected that southern species at the northern edge of their range will continue to push northward through the Frontenac Arch.

Northern species at the southern edge of their range (e.g. black spruce, Moose, Bear, Pine Marten) will also try to move northward. Furthermore, it is expected that:

- outbreaks of plant and animal diseases may become more common
- there will be greater fluctuations in animal and plant populations under stress
- the pressure of exotic species will increase on natural ecosystems
- and changes in phenology will affect plant reproduction, insect hatch times, and consequently, the nesting survival of migratory birds.

In order to protect biodiversity and enhance the resilience of ecological and human communities to climate change in eastern North America, it is imperative that we maintain healthy, well-connected habitats across the landscape.

### **The Solution – Maintaining and Enhancing Habitat Connectivity**

The solution can be broadly framed around the 4Rs for conserving the region's biodiversity:

- Retain as in protect and sustainably manage those landscapes which are currently healthy, functioning ecosystems;



- Restore those landscapes which have been degraded through poor land-use practices;
- Replace habitats in “bottleneck” areas where habitats have been lost and severely fragmented; and
- Recover species that are at risk by reducing threats and enhancing habitats.

Protecting and sustainably managing landscapes with a high degree of naturalness and high connectivity is priority number one. Recognizing the significance of these landscapes and encouraging the on-going sound stewardship by the people who live and work in those landscapes is fundamental to our success. These people are already doing what is needed. They need to be recognized and profiled for their efforts and seen as the natural leaders for others to follow. Second, we must work strategically to enhance habitat connectivity in those areas where it is most needed, areas of high habitat loss and fragmentation which represent a form of barrier for the north-south movement of species.

The challenge, then, is to foster the appropriate stewardship ethic and behaviours across the region to achieve healthy resilient ecosystems that will:

- sustain healthy, proud and prosperous rural communities living within the means of nature;
- conserve biodiversity by protecting and sustainably managing landscapes which already possess the desired characteristics of high ecosystem integrity and connectivity;
- enhance habitat connectivity in areas where it is most needed – areas of high habitat loss and fragmentation in a strategic effort to link more southerly ecosystems in the Adirondacks, and beyond, to more northerly ecosystems;
- facilitate the northwards movement of species as a natural response to a warming climate, thereby enhancing the resilience of the region’s biodiversity to climate change; and
- sustain populations of wide ranging, area-sensitive species, by facilitating their movement both northwards and southwards to suitable habitats.

To achieve our vision for the A2A Region, the A2A Conservation Association and its broader Collaborative of partners will pursue the following strategic directions:

**Engage People** – the Collaborative will work to enhance awareness of the values of the region and will promote and encourage a growing stewardship ethic amongst its rural and urban population so that people understand the uniqueness of the A2A Region, the importance of its conservation and enhancing its overall connectivity, and its relevance to their own health and quality of life.

**Reduce Threats** – the Collaborative will identify key threats to the Region’s biodiversity (e.g. habitat loss and invasive species) and will encourage efforts to help reduce threats while pursuing more ecologically sustainable and profitable practices.

**Enhance Resilience** – the Collaborative will engage in a strategic effort to enhance land and water stewardship, land securement, habitat restoration and sustainable management of working landscapes, all in an effort to achieve A2A’s vision of connecting lands and people across the Algonquin to Adirondack Region. That effort will be guided by a “big-picture” vision of a system of habitat cores and habitat connections that captures the habitat diversity of the region, while enhancing resilience to the increasing effects of climate change and other threats caused by human activity. Priority actions will focus on reducing barriers to plant and animal dispersal and enhancing habitat connectivity in areas of habitat loss and fragmentation.

**Increase Knowledge** – the Collaborative, including academia and government, will identify critical gaps in knowledge and support research to address such gaps; monitor the effectiveness of its programs; report on results through various means and host workshops or conferences so that we can better engage people, better reduce threats, and better enhance ecosystem resilience to human disturbances. Adaptive management and continual improvement in program implementation is an integral part of our efforts.

The **benefits** of implementing such an approach are many and while these efforts serve nature in terms of conserving biodiversity, perhaps more importantly, it serves the needs and interests of the people living within this broad region. This is premised on the notion that “healthy ecosystems sustain healthy people and a healthy economy”. These actions are collectively needed for our own health and quality of life, every bit as much as they are needed to help conserve species. On the Ontario side of the border, these efforts will advance the fundamental tenet of the Ontario Biodiversity Strategy: “protecting what sustains us”.

#### **The Collaborative – How it can help**

The Collaborative represents a bi-national Collaborative of organizations all united around a common



vision of connecting people to the lands of this region and promoting its conservation and connectivity for both people and nature for generations to come. The Collaborative has the breadth of partners to provide planning guidance, to implement solutions on the ground and to provide the necessary outreach and communications to engage people around problems and solutions. The Collaborative will need to establish a lead organization to take the lead on solutions, starting with the development of a Strategic Plan to guide priority actions in the Region over the coming years.



## **Appendix 5: Interim Action Committee's Recommendations (Appendix B from the Arrival package)**

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*Purpose: This document was the original set of recommendations made by and approved by the Interim Action Committee in preparation for the workshop. A condensed/simplified version of this document was made for discussion at the workshop (see "Recommendations for Consideration" section earlier).*

### **Interim Action Committee RECOMMENDATIONS TO WORKSHOP ON COLLABORATION**

5 October 2012

At the suggestion of a workshop held in the Spring entitled *Working Toward a Strategic Roadmap for Connectivity, Part 1*, an Interim Action Committee was formed. It was charged with preparing recommendations concerning: (a) structure and procedures for a possible Collaborative network which would help co-ordinate efforts that would improve connectivity in the A2A Region, and (b) priorities for the near term. The committee began with nine members, four from New York State and five from Ontario:

#### From New York State:

Dan Spada from the Adirondack Agency  
David Smith from the N.Y Dept. of Environmental Conservation  
Matthew Thompson from the St. Regis Tribe at Akwesasne  
Lee Willbanks from Save the River

#### From Ontario:

Brian Barkley, recently retired as Executive Director of Eastern Ontario Model Forest  
Gary Bell from the Nature Conservancy of Canada  
Cathy Keddy, a researcher whose work underpins the A2A vision  
Gary Nielsen from the Ministry of Natural Resources  
Brad Steinberg from Algonquin Provincial Park

David Smith advised the committee early on that he could not continue as an active member, as did Dan Spada mid way through deliberations, both because their agencies felt that due to budget and time constraints they could not be spared from their official duties. However both said they would like to be kept advised of progress and would be available if needed for advice and assistance. Gary Nielsen stressed that in his participation he would not be speaking on behalf of the MNR.

Following the first of the three meetings of the committee, Dan Spada said that representatives of environmental organizations with whom he spoke on the U.S. side of the border felt that they should not commit to a Collaborative until a feasibility study demonstrated that connectivity would be effective:

- across Highway 401 in Ontario
- across the St. Lawrence River
- through areas bordering and approaching the St. Lawrence on the U.S. side of the river

In response, Gary Nielsen advised the committee that if habitat images were available, there is a possibility MNR could provide the expertise for mapping on both side of the border. He suggested that if this were done it could provide the basis for a feasibility report.

### STRUCTURE AND PROCEDURES

The committee suggests that ideally there should be two legal entities to lead the Collaborative, one on each side of the river, each with charitable status, and each with a board of directors. With the exception of the chair and the treasurer of each board, the directors should be the same on each board, and there should be a single executive director and administrative staff serving both boards. (The boards would establish supervisory procedures.) Roughly half of the directors should represent collaborating



partners, and the remaining half should be directors at large chosen for their expertise and/or financial acumen and connections. The boards should meet at the same time and place, with the chair and treasurer of one board sitting out while the other board meets, and vice versa.

Even though it appears that there is no momentum at this time to create a legal entity in New York State, the committee still recommends that a collaborative be established (in the hope and expectation that at some stage a formal entity will be created on the U.S. side of the river). Therefore it suggests:

1. There should be a lead organization for the Collaborative that will be responsible for attending to day-to-day issues. Since A2A (Algonquin to Adirondacks Conservation Association) already operates in the region, has a public profile, a corporate identity, charitable status, and a paid-up membership that includes U.S. members as well as Canadian, the committee recommends that it be transformed structurally in order to fulfill this function. In particular, it recommends that:

a) following the workshop, A2A's existing board should consider itself to be an interim board that will serve until the annual general meeting in March, 2013, when a permanent board will be elected. As an interim board, it should fill existing vacancies to bring the number of its directors up to the full quota of 15 authorized under its bylaws

b) the interim board should change the name of the corporation to Algonquin to Adirondacks Collaborative Network (referred to as A2A in the remainder of this document)

c) directors should represent collaborating partners as well as individuals chosen for their expertise and/or financial acumen and business connections

d) in an effort to assist the interim board, the Collaborative should compile a list of possible candidates for appointment to the board. There will be ten vacancies to fill (including the seats of existing board members who have expressed a willingness to resign)

e) following is an initial list of organizations from which the A2A interim board should seek to recruit directors. Workshop participants are invited to add to the list. The list can also serve as an indication where individuals might be found who would be willing to serve on committees.

#### Canada

Parks Canada  
Algonquin Provincial Park  
Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters  
Ontario Woodlot Association  
Nature Conservancy of Canada  
Algonquins of Ontario  
Friends of the Tay Watershed  
Leeds Federation of Agriculture (OFA)  
Ontario Land Trust Alliance  
Eastern Ontario Model Forest  
Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve  
Ontario Nature  
Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Association Inc.  
Ducks Unlimited  
Conservation Ontario  
Leeds-Grenville Stewardship Council

#### United States

Thousand Islands Land Trust  
2 Countries 1 Forest  
Wildlife Conservation Society  
Adirondack Mountain Club



Adirondack Watershed Institute  
The Nature Conservancy, Western New York Chapter  
Save The River  
St. Regis Tribe at Akwesasne  
Adirondack Landowners Association  
National Audubon Society of New York State  
New York Forest Owners' Association  
Protect the Adirondacks!  
Wildlands Network Inc.  
Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust

In addition, a number of participants at the Spring workshop expressed an interest in working with the Collaborative Network. They should also be canvassed. Among those expressing interest were:

Andy Bramburger, PhD research scientist, St. Lawrence Institute of Environmental Sciences  
Graham Whitelaw, Professor, Queen's University, School of Environmental Studies  
Ryan Danby, Professor, Queen's University, School of Environmental Studies  
Jochen Jaeger, Assistant Professor, Concordia University, Department of Geography, Planning and Environment  
Zoe Smith, Wildlife Conservation Society (New York)  
Clay McMullen, graduate student, Queen's University, School of Environmental Studies

f) as far as possible, there should be significant U.S. representation on both the interim and permanent board, as well as geographical representation, and representation of diverse approaches to land use.

g) A2A's constitution and bylaws be changed to reflect this new role for the corporation

h) there should be a meeting once a year of all collaborating partners to review the goals and agenda of the Collaborative

i) the board should give consideration to establishing regional sub-groups which could attend to details concerning local interests and local co-ordination. (It may be advisable to wait until the permanent board is in place, and to take up this suggestion at the first annual meeting of collaborating partners)

j) A2A should report biannually to collaborating partners on progress toward meeting goals

k) A2A should have a paid, full-time coordinator

#### PRIORITIES FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

The committee recommends that:

a) five committees be established initially. They should be for:

Governance — responsible for recommending the appointment of individuals to committees, monitoring their contribution, and recommending the appointment or election of individuals to the board of directors

Science Advisory — responsible for undertaking scientific investigations requested by the board, and recommending scientific undertakings and research to the board

Communications and Outreach — responsible for promoting the goals of the Collaborative, and for bringing to A2A the views of the collaborating partners



Funding — responsible for raising money

Membership — responsible for recommending what should be the rights and responsibilities of members, for attending to the interests of members, and for expanding membership

b) the interim board should set objectives and timelines for each committee

c) mapping for habitat quality and connectivity should be undertaken on a consistent basis on both sides of the border.

d) a coordinator should be hired as soon as possible

e) work on strategic plans should begin as soon as possible, so that by the time of the March annual meeting:

- a one-year interim plan will have been completed
- a sketch of a five year plan will available
- a sketch of a 10-year plan will be available