

## ALICE GONE WALKABOUT

Moose migration inspiration for an  
Algonquin-to-Adirondack trail

BY RYAN STUART

**S**he wasn't chasing a White Rabbit and the Queen of Hearts never threatened to chop off her head. But Alice the Moose's 640-kilometre adventure from northern New York State to Ontario's Algonquin Provincial Park was almost as extraordinary as the classic book, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Now, the moose's adventure is inspiring an Ontario organization's efforts to build a hiking trail following in her hoof-steps.

"It could be a symbolic connection between the lands and people of the region," says Emily Conger, the head of the Trails Committee of Algonquin to Adirondacks Collaborative, the group working to get the trail built.

The moose was radio-collared in Rochester, New York, in 1998. After being released outside the city she headed north, crossed the Canadian border, island-hopped the St. Lawrence River at the Thousand Islands, Froggered across four lanes of the Highway 401, wandered through farmland and eventually made it to the wilderness of Algonquin. She died of unknown causes in 2001, but her

incredible journey lives on.

"Alice's journey symbolizes the need for animals to move to find food, shelter and mates to which they aren't related," says Conger. "Without connected habitat, it is difficult if not impossible for animals to fulfill their needs."

The route Alice followed is unique in Eastern Canada, says Conger, because it's high in biodiversity and it's one of the only places in Eastern Canada for land animals to migrate north to south across the St. Lawrence River-Great Lakes watershed.

Conger's group thinks a trail roughly along Alice's route will raise awareness about the importance of wildlife corridors and protecting threatened habitat, with the added bonus of boosting the local economy with an influx of hikers.

"We think of it as a pilgrimage to nature," says Conger. "Let's make a better economy that is sustainable, in no way interferes with ecological function and also inspires people to become advocates of nature."

Still early in the planning stages, Conger says, the trail will likely link existing paths, rail-to-trails and back roads. With 50 partner organizations on board she's optimistic it could be ready to hike by 2019. [A2ACollaborative.org](http://A2ACollaborative.org) ✕

### THE LOW DOWN

