



A2A

Algonquin to
Adirondacks
Collaborative

NEWS

FALL
2017

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Dr. Gary Bell Assumes A2A Presidency

Sarah Walsh, who was elected President of A2A in 2016, moved out of the A2A region early this year and resigned from the board effective December 1st. We are extremely grateful for all the work she has done for A2A and for her offer to serve as an advisor to the Board.

Gary Bell, our Vice President, will be A2A's leader until our next Annual General Meeting, which is planned for March of 2018. Gary, who holds a Ph.D. in Biology, is a conservation biologist, planner, and land securement specialist. He is currently the Nature Conservancy of Canada's Program Director for Eastern Ontario where his work is focused on acquiring lands in the Frontenac Arch and the Ottawa Valley. He has long been a supporter of A2A, and has been on the Board for six years.



We were extremely fortunate that a "Mystery Donor" stepped forward with a \$20 000 1-1 matching challenge, but we didn't, and still don't, have enough donations to match it before year's end. So finding a way to reach out to more people and raise more funds became our goal. Putting on the Gala gave us the added benefit of raising the profile of the A2A Collaborative. We quickly found out that people liked the idea, and we were able to sell out the venue.

Peter Milliken, A2A Board member and retired Speaker of the House of Commons in Ottawa, greeted our 60 guests at the door on a very stormy night in Kingston. At their places everyone found donated bottles of wine with A2A logo on the labels. And then they sat down to great food, fine wines, delicious beer and fantastic entertainment from Sarah Harmer www.sarahharmer.com.

A2A Gala

A2A and "glittering" are not often found in the same sentence, but that's all changed now! On October 29th A2A, with some greatly appreciated help from singer Sarah Harmer, Chez Piggy Restaurant in Kingston, Hillier Creek Estate Wineries and MacKinnon Brothers' Brewery, staged our first (glittering!) A2A Fundraising Gala.

With our 3-year Capacity Grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation now ended, A2A needs to actively raise funds to carry out our mandate to "connect lands and people across the Algonquin to Adirondacks region to conserve and enhance a critical corridor for ecological integrity and resilience in eastern North America".

We are grateful for support:

MacLean Foundation

Acting president Gary Bell and past president Emily Conger highlighted A2A's recent activities, and explained how we hope all our supporters will consider A2A when making their yearly donations. This year your donation will be matched 1-1 by the Mystery Donor. Please see page 8 for how you can help.



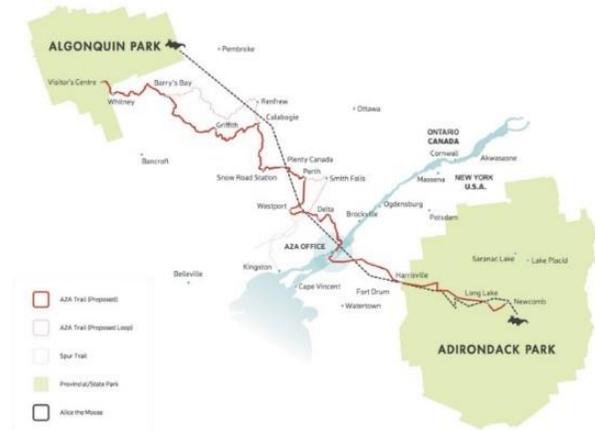
The Gosling Foundation

- facebook.com/A2ACollab
- instagram.com/A2ACollab
- twitter.com/A2ACollab

The A2A Trail from End to End: Inspired by Alice! ▶ By Emily Conger

The A2A Collaborative staged its Reconnaissance Trek of the A2A Trail during the first 2 weeks of October this year. Hikers started at the our two anchor parks and walked, biked and canoed to Wellesley Island in the St. Lawrence, just south of the U.S.–Canadian border.

We experienced, first-hand, the diversity and beauty of the A2A region as we completed this end-to-end journey along the A2A Trail. We loosely followed the over 500 km journey from Adirondack Park to Algonquin Park taken by Alice The Moose over a decade ago, whose journey inspired us to create the A2A Trail – A Pilgrimage for Nature – which physically and symbolically links these two parks and the lands and people between them.



On October 1, John Allport (third from left in photo) began the Canadian trek in Algonquin Park, the same day as John Davis set out from Newcombe, NY in Adirondack Park to trek the American segment, (brilliantly mapped by Rich Phillips). Over the following two weeks, they trekked with some A2A volunteers over 600km (400 miles) along hiking trails, old rail trails, and back country roads to scout and assess the A2A Trail.

They were both very impressed by the beauty and diversity of this landscape, as well as by the rich cultural heritage they discovered. Perhaps best of all, they loved the enthusiasm they heard from people and from businesses they encountered about creating this Pilgrimage for Nature. As John Davis reported from the trail:

“Were I a moose, I’d be breaking all the rules. I’m climbing mountains merely for views of this glorious watery wooded landscape; complaining about thick bushwhacks through spruce/fir forest that a moose might forage in winter...”

At the end of it all came our celebration in Wellesley Island State Park. Both Johns were joined by A2A friends – including fellow trekkers Richard Grover and Rich Phillips from the US side and from Canadian side Emily Conger, and David Miller – in celebrating the wild habitat link that Alice Moose confirmed for us a decade and a half ago. We shared stories and photos from our concurrent treks, and we agreed to redouble our efforts to protect and strengthen connections between the great parks of Ontario and New York by ensuring that the A2A Trail – A Pilgrimage for Nature - becomes a reality!



A2A would like to thank Mountain Equipment Coop for their contribution to this phase of trail development

A2A Volunteer Profile: John Davis – Conservation Athlete

John Davis has a long and varied life in conservation. He co-founded the Wildlands Network 25 years ago and served as editor of Wild Earth for several years.

He grew up in a family devoted to the natural world. As a child he spent his time exploring eastern forests and became an avid naturalist. Even now John does not follow clocks very closely, with his work and play often merging into wildlands exploration and promotion.

He bikes, hikes, and paddles thousands of miles each year in an effort to better understand wildlife movement and the impediments wild animals face in human-dominated landscapes.

With sponsorship and guidance from Wildlands Network <https://wildlandsnetwork.org/>, Rewilding Institute, and other conservation partners, John completed TrekEast in 2011 (subject of his book *Big, Wild, and Connected*, published by Island Press) and TrekWest in 2013. John's 5000-mile exploration of the Spine of the Continent, the Rocky Mountain Wildway, was recently highlighted in the film "Born to Rewild", available through Kelly Burke at Wildlands Network kelly@wildlandsnetwork.org).

For the first two weeks of October 2017, John hiked, paddled, and cycled the A2A trail from Newcomb NY, where Alice the Moose began her trek in Adirondack Park, to Wellesley Island, as part of the A2A Trail reconnaissance hike.

This experience confirmed John's belief in the importance of the A2A region and the concept of the A2A trail. Read more at John's blog <https://wildlandsnetwork.org/blog/following-alice-moose-along-a2a-wildway/>

John hopes to trek the rest of A2A next year. Though he has explored wildlands through the continent, he considers Adirondack and Algonquin Parks two of the premier protected areas in North America--eminently worthy of being kept connected.

John urges fellow explorers and conservationists to follow rewilding.org and to send him ideas for articles and art for that forum (email wildwayscout@icloud.com).



John promotes the importance of the A2A corridor within the Wildlands Network and within American conservation circles. In John's words:

"A2A has long been recognized as a regional habitat connection priority, though it has not yet been fully appreciated as a habitat link of continental importance. However, a careful look at geologic, geographic and human footprint maps of eastern North America shows this to be among the most promising links between wildlands in the United States and Canada."

We are so glad to welcome John as an A2A volunteer!



Restoring a Continental Pathway for Wildlife

► By Cameron Smith, Chair of Roads
Ecology Committee



Field researchers Rory Tanner (left) and Clay Shearer at a Highway 401 culvert which passes under both east and westbound lanes for about 75 meters

At last, after four years, field research is finished on A2A's Road Ecology project to find ways to get wildlife across highways that are barriers to their continental pathway across the Frontenac Arch between Gananoque and Brockville.

Research was done on three parallel highways: Highway 401, (shown in the photograph) which is the most deadly to animals, Highway 2, which is the major county road in the area, and the Thousand Islands Parkway, for which an additional three years' of data, collected for a Masters thesis at Queen's University, were made available.

In all, more than 3,500 dead animals were recorded, which included deer, coyotes, otters, fishers, raccoons, porcupines, skunks, mink, weasels, snakes, turtles, foxes, squirrels, groundhogs, muskrats, beavers, and even a black bear. Not included in the 3,500 were thousands upon thousands of frogs, plus all the dead animals picked up by road crews.

The A2A wildlife pathway leads from Adirondack Park in New York State to Algonquin Park in Ontario across the Thousand Islands in the St. Lawrence River, and is the major north-south, cross-border pathway between the head of Lake Superior and the Atlantic Ocean.

A2A's research has been funded under the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forests' Species-at-Risk Stewardship Program to document the needs of species-at-risk snakes and turtles. In the process, our research has also catalogued other animal fatalities, in order to determine where on the highways they had been trying to cross.

By the end of February we will submit our final report to the ministry. Then we will take our results to map wildlife pathways extending from about 25 kilometers north of the St. Lawrence to the American side of the river. From these results we will then develop recommendations for creating safe passageways.

For these, all options will be on the table including wildlife overpasses, underpasses, widening of bridge spans to create dry land pathways under bridges, and modification of culverts, also to provide dry pathways.

Our recommendations should be available by early summer, and we will be seeking public support. So please stay tuned.

Momentum Builds for CAP

Conservation Action Planning (CAP) is a well established, locally driven process to strengthen and coordinate the greening efforts of existing agencies, organizations and local groups through a collaborative process.

With a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, A2A has been exploring how to make sure that such local efforts also consider the Big Picture A2A challenges and actions on a landscape scale.

So in the A2A CAP project, we have been asking local stakeholders about what targets and threats need to be addressed beyond *local* environmental actions, how to bring to the table a wide range of perspectives including those of indigenous and local knowledge, and what types of tools we need to help them assess the "big picture" A2A issues.

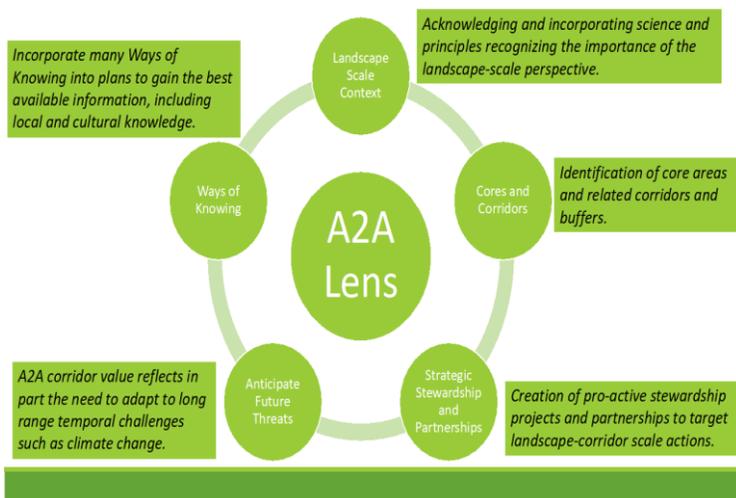


Photo Credit: David Miller

Recent Actions: On Sept 21, A2A met with 30 stakeholders at the Opinicon, a small Ontario resort, to explore conservation engagement and different "ways of knowing" and relationship building. Our focus was on First Nations knowledge systems. Larry McDermott, of Plenty Canada and Chris Craig, of the Eastern Ontario First Nations Working Group, led the discussion.

On Sept. 28, 20 other stakeholders met in Mallorytown to explore targets and threats with the help of Jarmo Jalava from Carolinian Canada Coalition. Both workshops built on earlier spring sessions designed to create an A2A "lens" to help local action plans to incorporate actions, targets, and threats that are important at the scale of the A2A corridor.

The resulting lens, support tools and mapping will be used to support and promote local Conservation Action Plans. A2A is already discussing the potential for such CAP projects with stakeholders from a couple of geographic areas.



How the A2A CAP planning "lens" is being created

Partner Corner: Land Conservancy for Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington

For people whose bliss is to walk in the woods, look out over a lake, or travel with binoculars to catch glimpses of birds, natural heritage planning work may seem to be an unwelcome distraction. For a land trust whose goal is to conserve land for nature, it is a necessary task.



This year, the Land Conservancy KFLA finished assembling Land Information Ontario data and other materials to develop maps focusing on local natural features – water courses, wetlands, lakes, forests – and overlaid these maps with information about land that is already being protected here –provincial parks, conservation authority properties, lands owned by land trusts, etc. The resulting compilation maps provide a way to highlight areas that might have the highest conservation values and could best increase connectivity between protected areas.

“As a land trust, we have to focus our efforts to be effective,” explains Dr. Kate Laird, chair of the group’s mapping committee. “The compilation maps have helped to frame our Natural Heritage Plan which will assist us in our work preserving natural sites and landscapes in the two counties.”

Thanks to a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Land Conservancy was also able to publish a 28-page, full-colour booklet, “We Need Nature”, including a few of the natural heritage maps and information about some local animal and plant species.

Dr. Laird sees A2A’s Conservation Action Planning work as an excellent complement to the Land Conservancy’s natural heritage planning efforts.

“Our mandate is limited to Frontenac County and Lennox and Addington County, but animals and plants don’t recognize these artificial lines. Thanks to A2A we can position our work in a larger context, and see how our efforts link to those of conservation partners beyond the county borders.”

With the natural heritage planning process complete at the large-scale mapping level, the Land Conservancy KFLA’s next steps are to do a detailed map analysis of priority areas and situate potential donations and purchases in the mapping framework. Before any acquisition can move forward, at least one site visit is necessary. Members of the all-volunteer group will be happy to head back to the woods.

The Land Conservancy KFLA currently owns six properties and holds two conservation easements, protecting 220 hectares (540 acres) and providing habitats for 19 species at risk.

Members of the Land Conservancy would be pleased to bring maps and speak to your community group or lake association. The Natural Heritage Plan and some maps are available on the Land Conservancy’s web site, LandConservancyKFLA.org. For a copy of We Need Nature, send an email request to info@LandConservancyKFLA.org.

Queen's Students Researching A2A



Queen's ENSC 430 students at Landon Bay Lookout with reps from A2A and FAB

Queen's University has been offering a course for several years in conjunction with A2A and the Frontenac Arch Biosphere (FAB), called Environmental Sciences 430. It's "an interdisciplinary study of the scientific, socio-political, and economic aspects of selected local, national, or global issues related to environmental sustainability".

The course gives students the specific skills they need for environmental and sustainability research. But it gives them something else: real-life projects, which are important for A2A and FAB. We suggest research topics that we would like to see investigated, and the students do the work!

For example, this year for A2A students in groups of 4 are investigating stewardship of privately owned land; the status, trends and pressures on water quality; where and how forestry is carried out in the A2A region; finding the best indicators to assess biodiversity; and nature-based recreation that can aid conservation: all topics that help provide important scientific understandings on which we can base our future work.

This September David Miller, A2A's Executive Director, made an in-class presentation to acquaint the students with the region. A couple of days later Emily Conger, A2A's past president, accompanied the students on a field trip arranged by Professors Ryan Danby and Graham Whitelaw. The trip had several stops. One of the most important was Landon Bay, shown above, a new part of the Thousand Islands National Park. It is a particularly important place for the students to see the biology, geology and geography of the A2A region. In fact, at Landon Bay there are so many different tree species that the Smithsonian Institute maintained a 100m X100m plot to study them.

Now the students are attending classes, meeting in their groups and working at their research. Their findings will be reported at a symposium at the end of the school year.

A2A will send representatives to see these presentations, and we will be given access to the printed versions. Findings will also be published on-line.

We like to feature stories from partners
In this newsletter. Contact the editor at
emconger.lostbay@gmail.com to learn more.



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2018 Membership Form

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

Make it happen: Join to Donate to A2A!

Memberships can now be treated as donations, which means that we can issue you a charitable receipt. You can choose whatever level of membership you wish each year. Please be as generous as you can in 2016 so that A2A can:

- ▶ provide safe passageways for animals to cross highways
- ▶ build the A2A Trail - A Pilgrimage for Nature - connecting Algonquin and Adirondack Parks
- ▶ provide the research and facilitation needed by A2A's 50+ partners to restore habitat and connectivity in this unique, fragile A2A landscape

Those donating \$500 or more will receive a hardcover book about the A2A. All donors of \$100 or more will be recognized on the A2A website, unless anonymity is requested.

You can complete your membership and donate by PayPal at A2ACollaborative.org

Or send your donation to 1 Jesse Street, P.O. Box 88, Lansdowne ON K0E 1L0 in Canada

In the United States please send your donations to P.O. Box 1 Wellesley Island New York 13640

Thank you to all our members!

Membership Level:	Shagbark Hickory	Blue Beech	Black Ash	Yellow Birch	White Pine	Red Oak
Cost:	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$500	<input type="checkbox"/> \$250	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25

Name: _____

New: Renewal: Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____ Affiliation: _____

I am enclosing a cheque for _____, made out to the Algonquin to Adirondacks Collaborative.

I would you like to receive information from A2A including notices of upcoming events by:

regular mail: by e-mail:

Would you like to volunteer for A2A? _____ In what capacity? _____