



A2A

Algonquin to
Adirondacks
Collaborative

NEWS

Spring/
Summer
2018

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What Drives Volunteer John Allport?

**"I am driven by a few key words:
Spirituality. Passion. Action. Restraint."**

John has an eclectic history: In his former lives he's been an aerospace engineer, professional tennis instructor and intellectual property attorney. Now he manages a farm to enhance wildlife and he volunteers for A2A. He is also an A2A donor. In his words here's why:

"These are catastrophic times for the wildlife and biodiversity of this planet, our home. As at about 1970, in only 10,000 years, North America had lost up to 97% of the numbers and range of its post-glaciation wildlife. WWF Canada reports that, from that time until 2014, many observed species suffered further losses of 83% on average. This latest decline to 0.5% of our inherited natural abundance has happened on my watch and by my inaction. I cannot stand by any longer.

"Spirituality: These losses of wildlife are not apart from me; they are a part of me, of my spirit. I die when they die.

"Passion: I am driven to remain alive and healthy and to take every action that I can to reverse these losses. Current thinking in biodiversity recognizes that wildlife cannot thrive, cannot even survive, in bounded protected areas such as parks and preserves. Our well-meaning actions in creating such spaces have been largely ineffectual in preserving this living heritage. It is now generally recognized that these valuable spaces must be connected by a living web of wildlife corridors. The A2A corridor is one of the most significant on the continent, and the efforts of A2A's employees, volunteers and affiliate members are extraordinarily valuable. I passionately believe that they must succeed.

"Action: There are many human-interest groups with seemingly different and often competing needs and desires: ordinary folks, rural and urban, governments at every level, farmers, hunters, conservationists, those pursuing outdoor recreation. It sometimes seems impossible to satisfy them all while preserving biodiversity. I believe that we must formulate essential questions for which each of those groups would give



As John Allport says: 'It's hard to take a selfie with a big horse.'

an identical answer. The actions needed going forward will then be more readily apparent. One such question:

"Do you wish that the abundance of wildlife should not decline, but rather increase, during your lifetime?"

There seems to be only one answer to that question, whoever you are. Let's find more such questions, and then let's act.

"Restraint: I believe that in our interactions with wildlife, we see ourselves as we feel ... like big, fuzzy teddy bears. Wild animals, whose business it is, know better. We are the most fearsome predator ever to roam the planet. We have overseen the destruction of 99.5% of many species, and 100% of too many. In our actions, even our well-meaning ones, we can too easily love our loved ones to death. We must show a restraint that is anything but natural to us, or we will lose it all.

"Find those questions for which every interested party agrees upon the answers and we'll be well on the way towards a solution to the harms already done."

John's commitment to A2A has led to his taking a gruelling exploratory hike on the Canadian side of the proposed A2A Trail and his continued guidance to make the Trail project as beneficial to wildlife as possible.

We are grateful for support from



Gosling Foundation
MacLean Foundation



A2ACOLLABORATIVE.org

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Partners' Corner Part 1: Part 2 see page 7

Thousand Islands Land Trust

Thirty-two years ago, the Thousand Islands Land Trust (TILT) was born from a small group of year round and seasonal residents on Grindstone Island who cared deeply for the River. Initially formed to protect the head of Grindstone, the organization has grown to serve the greater Thousand Islands region, stretching from Cape Vincent to Oak Point, Hammond, and to ensure protection of the River and the ecologically rich habitats that surround it.

Since its beginning, TILT has stayed focused on its mission: working to conserve the natural beauty, diverse wildlife habitats, water quality, and outdoor recreation opportunities of the Thousand Islands region, for present and future generations.

TILT has developed and expanded upon the unique features of its eight Signature Preserves with over 38.4 miles of recreational trails that are open year-round to the public.



Another TILT development is the advancement of the Zenda Farms Preserve. The vision is to return it to its former glory as a community hub by adding features like the Zenda Community Garden and the 1.35-mile walking trail.

This spring, TILT celebrated Arbor Day with their 6th annual "For the Trees" volunteer event. Each April, this event brings hundreds from the community to the Zenda Farms Preserve. With their help, over 250 trees have already been planted there.

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



Annually, over ten thousand people flock to TILT's Potter Beach Preserve, making it one of the most highly desired destinations along the River



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A Passion for Wildlife:

Restoration of the Trumpeters - By Paul McKay

On the coldest days of this winter's bone-chilling deep freeze, a dozen impossibly elegant, apparently impervious Trumpeter Swans congregated at the mouth of a Frontenac Park creek to feed, groom themselves, socialize and perhaps choose mates to produce new cygnets.

It may have been the first time in more than a century. Late in the 18th Century, the last known wild Trumpeter in Ontario was shot by a Pelee Island hunter.

That followed a half century during which North America's largest waterfowl, with the widest wingspan, was shot to supply skins and feathers for the commercial "Swan Trade". An estimated 107,000 Trumpeter skins were sold to hat and accessory shops in London, Boston and New York.

However, in the early 1980's a visionary Ministry of Natural Resources "midwife" named Harry Lumsden initiated a plan to begin restoring wild Trumpeters in Ontario. Using wild stock from western Canada, nests were established in a protected wetland. Eventually, youngsters hatched and later they began breeding.

Those progeny were tagged by MNR biologists, who quickly discovered that because their parents had no long-distance 'migration map' to teach their cygnets, the fragile wild population had a short winter range



of only a few hundred kilometers – to the nearest shallow, open water feeding destination such as the shore of Lake Ontario.

So Lumsden and his MNR colleagues hit upon the idea of replicating their 'foster parent' experiment with the help of 50 conservation authorities and other allies across Ontario. The concept was to create new nest sites in protected wetlands, and foster new Trumpeter families with some 500 swans or eggs supplied by the MNR.

In the southern Frontenac Arch area, the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority took the lead by creating wetland nest sites to host breeding Trumpeter pairs at the Mac Johnson wildlife refuge, and release their young in the Rideau Lakes area. They now flourish during the winter in protected bays along the Saint Lawrence River, and at the outlet of tumbling rivers and creeks. In the spring and summer, they seek quiet wetlands and shallow bays to rear their young.

It is a miraculous parable. Ontario's wild Trumpeter Swan population has increased from zero to an estimated 2,000 in just a few decades. Clusters now stretch from Owen Sound to Brockville to the northern headwaters of the Ottawa River. Their protected status, and the interconnected spaces within the Frontenac Arch, offer safety and prime habitat for that success to be magnified many times over.

Clarkson Students Map New York to Ontario Wildlife Pathways

New York A2A Region Roadkill Density

Clarkson University ADK Semester Fall 2017

Cartographer: Justin T. Davis

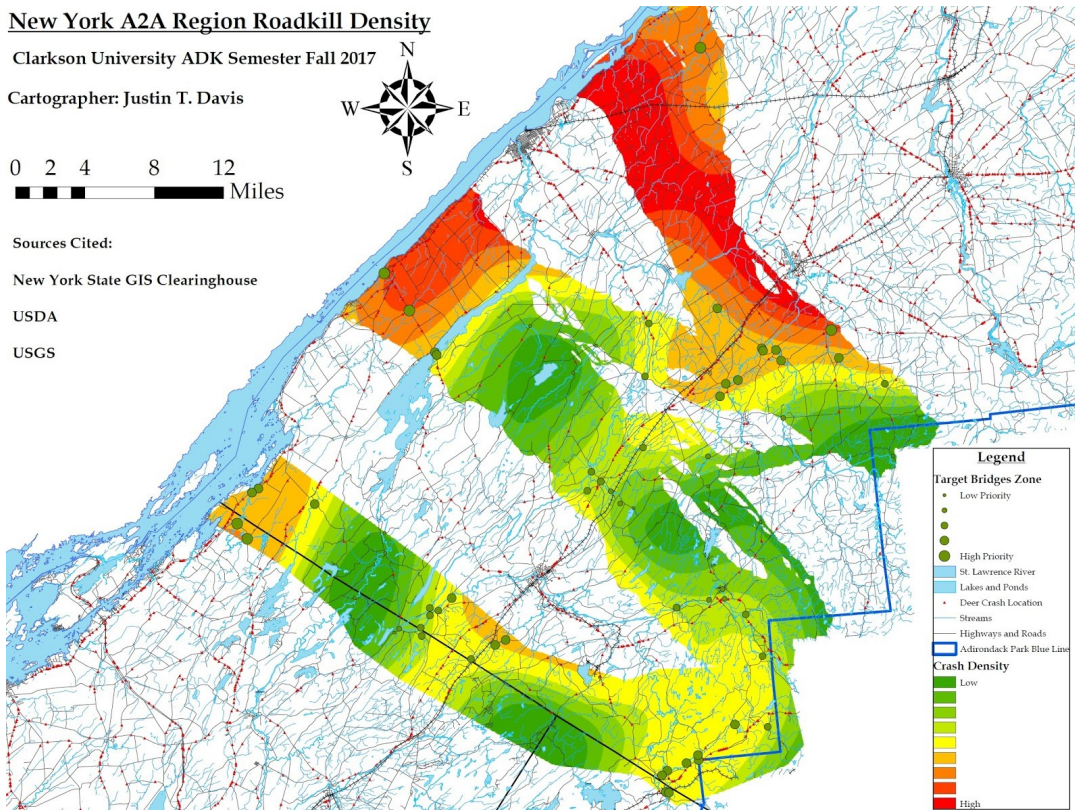
0 2 4 8 12
Miles

Sources Cited:

New York State GIS Clearinghouse

USDA

USGS



This map shows the students' analyses of the most suited area for animal travel between the Blue Line and the St. Lawrence River. This region is overlaid with deer crash data along with target bridges that could be modified for safe animal passage.

Last year, Clarkson University's Adirondack Semester had 11 students living in the Adirondacks and researching/exploring the A2A. The students took five classes together while living at Paul Smith's College. The classes were An Adirondack Sense of Place, Ecology of the Adirondacks, Geographic Information Systems, Environmental Policy, and finally an A2A focused research project challenge that tied all of the classes together: "Assuming that the A2A Conservation Corridor is scientifically justified, how can it be implemented in New York State?"

This class included lectures, field visits, and interviews. Activities included meeting with A2A officials, guest lectures on animal road passages from a civil engineer and ecological restoration from a watershed management professor. The students also visited protected sites in NY located outside of the Blue Line (the boundary of Adirondack Park), Mew Lake campground in Algonquin Park, the Split Rock Wildway corridor in the eastern Adirondacks, and met with professionals from nonprofit organizations such as the Thousand Island Land Trust and The Nature Conservancy

This was an interdisciplinary project. Students' majors ranged from biology to civil engineering. The students split into three research teams - data collection and analysis, public outreach, and economics & social organizations. After researching and collaborating among sections, each group came up with 4 recommendations to further expand the A2A mission in the US. Their work addressed broader issues such as institutional organization in the US as well as more detailed recommendations including mapping information regarding where to target landowners for conservation easements or specific bridges to target to create safe animal crossings. An overview of the final recommendations was presented at the 2018 A2A Annual General Meeting in March. To read the class' white paper and/or access slides from their final presentation please contact either of the co-instructors from the project: Alex French at afrench@clarkson.edu or Tom Langen at tlangen@clarkson.edu.

A Passion for Wildlife:

Ministry of Transportation Protecting Wildlife

- By Cameron Smith



Gillian Dagg-Foster, head of the MTO's environmental section for the Ontario's eastern region, leans on fencing built to keep snakes and turtles off Highway 401.

Ontario's super-highway, the 401, runs beside the St. Lawrence River and the Thousand Islands, and that's where hundreds of animals are killed every year as they try to cross. A2A has been studying the highway, along with other nearby roads, to determine the best places and methods to reduce wildlife mortality.

Now, action is being taken by Ontario's Ministry of Transportation. It is erecting a fence to keep snakes and turtles off the road, especially those that are species at risk.

"We're doing this," says Gillian Dagg-Foster, head of the ministry's environmental section for the province's eastern region, "because we have an obligation under the Endangered Species Act to protect them. But we're also doing it because it's the right thing to do. We don't want to be part of the reason for them disappearing."

The fence stretches for one kilometer on the south side of the highway just east of the Thousand Islands International Bridge to the United States. It was originally erected last fall, but the fencing mesh was ripped from the posts by snow thrown from plows clearing the highway.

The new fence is tight up against the guard rail, because the land slopes sharply downward to a wetland, and the top of the slope is the only place it can go. It is made of heavy gauge metal mesh with openings of three-eighths of an inch.

This fall a fence on the north side of the highway will be erected using a different type of mesh, because on that side the fence can be set farther back from the guardrail.

To determine the effectiveness of the fencing, the ministry is funding a two-year project to monitor the results, which will be conducted by Queen's University in collaboration with A2A.

"What about the thousands of other animals that are killed in this 45-kilometre stretch of highway between Gananoque and Brockville?" I asked Ms Dagg-Foster. A2A will be coming up with recommendations at the end of the year for protecting all wildlife in this stretch, because it is the key link in a continental pathway for animals moving north and south across the river.

"Our primary focus is on endangered species and on the safety for humans driving the highway. But again, we'd like to do the right thing (for other animals) if we can do it in a cost-effective way." - Gillian Dagg_Foster

This, she said, would mean establishing a need for mitigating structures, determining where they should be located to achieve the maximum benefit, and a price tag that could be accommodated.

From the perspective of A2A, a desire by the Ministry to do the right thing is immensely encouraging.

A2A AGM: A Big Step Forward, Decisions to Make



Alex French showing Clarkson students' research on ecopassageways in upstate NY.

A2A held its Annual General Meeting on March 24th with 35 members and partner representatives in attendance. The programs included presentations on the A2A Trail "A Pilgrimage for Nature" end-to-end trek, Road Ecology and student research on both the US and Canadian sides.

A big milestone for A2A this year is achieving US-Canadian balance on our Board of Directors. To build on the renewed interest and engagement in the US, participants at the AGM were asked to discuss how to increase capacity on the US side and which strategic directions should be taken. Some key suggestions:

- Pursuing formal charitable and non-profit corporate status in the US to facilitate funding efforts with foundations and individual donors.
- Creating more sub-groups – modelled after the US Trails Sub-committee – focussed on US projects and implementation of broader A2A initiatives.
- Organizing regular interactive workshops or research symposiums to bring researchers together from both sides of the border.
- Developing an integrated communication strategy that focuses on motivating stakeholders on both sides of the border – including landowner outreach

General strategic priorities were also suggested:

- Continue to build the science base and messaging – focus more on scientific patterns and biodiversity than animal movement per se.
- Continue to develop A2A Trail is a critical building block for outreach and funding, including considering a water trail as part of a multi-modal travel experience which more reflects what it is like.
- Approaching funding through age demographics and motivations for donating.
- Involve younger students to complement university research and work with those developing curriculum.
- Through the Trail, encourage A2A business opportunities such as trek equipment rentals, eco tours etc.
- Help acquire conservation easements in return for Carbon Credits.

The A2A Collaborative will be an engaging partners and stakeholders throughout 2018 to assess and prioritize these ideas. You can find the A2A 2017 Annual Report at:

http://www.a2acollaborative.org/uploads/7/6/8/5/7685208/a2a_2017_annual_report_final_2.pdf

Finally, 3 new A2A Board members were elected – all from the US:

- **Kate Cleary:** Ph.D. Ecology. Lecturer in the Biology Department at SUNY Potsdam
- **John Davis:** is Executive Director of the Rewilding Institute and editor of Rewilding Earth.
- **Paul Tuck:** BA, JD. litigation attorney at Hancock Estabrook LLP working in environmental and commercial law

The Partners' Corner part 2:

The Indian River Lakes Conservancy

The Indian River Lakes Conservancy was formed in 1998 during a meeting of five couples around a dining room table on the shores of Butterfield Lake. Henry Carse, a pioneering environmentalist and civic leader, inspired the creation of IRLC with his gift of the 28-acre Osprey Point Marsh on Butterfield Lake. Now, twenty years later, the IRLC owns and protects 2,277 acres of land, with over 13 miles of well-used trails.

Baker Woods Preserve is one example of the Conservancy's work. The preserve was made possible in 2015 by the generous gift of 354 acres from Doris B.N. Baker (*The Norman H. Baker and Doris B. Nagel Baker Living Trust*). It includes more than 3 miles of trails suitable for hiking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, which are open daily dawn to dusk.



The Conservancy continues to promote education and stewardship in the A2A corridor through programs and at facilities on their preserves. In 2016, IRLC finished construction of a solar-powered trailside classroom on Redwood Hill Preserve. More trails are in progress.



IRLC is thrilled to report that a North American Wildlife Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant has been obtained to expand Baker Woods by adding an additional 250 acres on the south side of the Indian River. This acquisition is critical because it ensures the large block of state preserved land throughout the area remains intact, maximizing habitat protection in the Indian River headwaters region.

<http://indianriverlakes.org/>

The A2A Collaborative is looking forward to increased engagement with land trusts on the US side and helping to connect them with their Canadian counterparts, critical in protecting the broader A2A landscape and ecological corridors. We hope readers will consider learning more about them and helping them in their conservation efforts.



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

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.

You can help 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 2018 so that A2A can:

- ▶ Continue our work to provide safe passageways for animals across highways such as the 401
- ▶ Continue building the A2A Trail, A Pilgrimage for Nature, connecting Algonquin and Adirondack Parks
- ▶ Provide research and facilitation needed by A2A's 50+ partners to restore habitat and connectivity in this unique, fragile A2A landscape

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

P.O. Box 1 Wellesley Island New York 13640 in the U.S.

or complete an online membership at

A2ACollaborative.org

All donors of \$100 or more will be recognized on the A2A website, unless anonymity is requested.

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? _____