



A2A

Algonquin to
Adirondacks
Collaborative

NEWS

Winter
2019

U.S. federal legislation would enshrine habitat connectivity

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Forward thinking
proposals in U.S.
but serious
slippage in Ontario



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- U.S. Legislation proposed for Wildlife Corridors

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Connecting wildlife habitats is critical to conserving biodiversity—especially considering the challenges of a changing climate. Warmer weather will increasingly force wildlife and plants to shift locations. Wildlife corridors, as in the A2A region, help to minimize the risk of habitat loss and fragmentation—a major factor in species decline and extinction.

See US Legislation Page 2

We are grateful for support from



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1 Jessie St Lansdowne ON K0E 1L0

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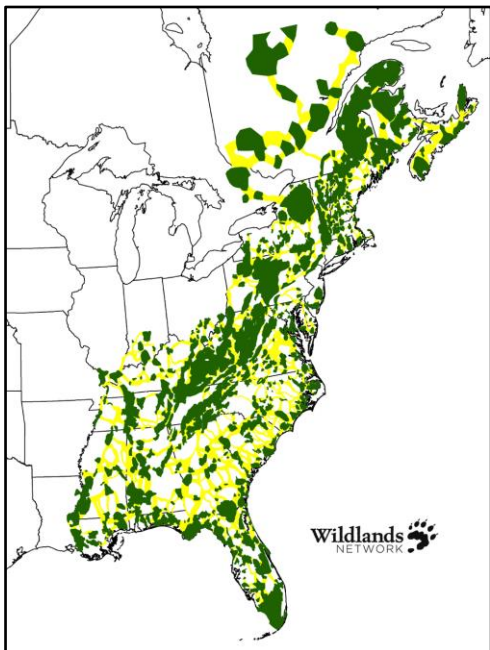
Progress:

US Legislation Cont'd from Page 1

This would be the most important legislation for protecting wildlife and habitat

Recognizing the importance of connectivity, Senator Tom Udall (D-NM) and Representative Don Beyer (D-VA) introduced the Wildlife Corridors Act of 2018 in Congress on December 6, last year. If passed, the Act will direct key federal agencies to collaborate with states, tribes, local governments, and private landowners to establish and manage "National Wildlife Corridors" to promote habitat connectivity.

"With roughly one in five animal and plant species in the U.S. at risk of extinction due to habitat loss and fragmentation, one of the simplest yet most effective things we can do is to provide them ample opportunity to move across lands and waters," said Beyer.



Map of the Eastern Wildlands Network showing wildlife corridors, including the A2A region. Learn more: <https://wildlandsnetwork.org>

Renowned biologist, E.O. Wilson urged members of Congress to support the Act, adding:

"(This Act) would provide the most important step of any single piece of legislation at the present time in enlarging the nation's protected areas and thereby saving large swaths of America's wildlife and other fauna and flora. . . ."

The Act will have three substantive outcomes:

First, it will create a Wildlife Connectivity Database that will contain standardized data to support decision-makers by collecting and disseminating information to states, tribes, and federal agencies

Second, the Act will authorize federal agencies to designate National Wildlife Corridors to support connectivity, resilience, and adaptability of native fish, wildlife, and plant species on public lands.

Finally, the Act will establish Regional Wildlife Movement Councils to develop regional plans, funded by a Wildlife Movement Grant Program, that will identify priority areas on non-federal lands to protect essential resources and maintain biological movements.

The Act is an important first-step in recognizing one of the many unique impacts climate change has on wildlife. Environmental laws in the United States are often criticized for their inability to adequately address climate change because their focus is too granular. This Act provides a more holistic approach to addressing species decline and extinction.

We ask our U.S. readers: Please reach out to your local Representative and Senator and encourage them to support this legislation. You can access contact information for your local members of Congress. [here](#)

Slippage:

ALGONQUIN TO
ADIRONDACKS
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Ontario pondering whether to weaken protections for species-at-risk



A2A Field worker Clayton Shearer beside Highway 401 with a gray rat snake, a species at risk

Essentially MECP is inviting the public to consider options that, if passed, would undermine the very cornerstones of the ESA, namely science-based listings that include Indigenous traditional knowledge, mandatory habitat protection, and legislated timelines for planning and reporting.

What will this mean?

- Using “ministerial discretion” to decide if species or habitat protections should apply;
- Implementing a review process to second-guess the science-based listing decisions of the Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario (COSSARO);
- Simplifying rules for industry permits or exemptions to undertake harmful activities;
- Extending or removing legislated timelines for planning and reporting; and
- Allowing proponents of harmful activities to simply pay into a conservation fund rather than meet current requirements to provide an on-the-ground overall benefit to species that they negatively impact

Protecting Species at Risk along with their habitats has been a long-standing goal of A2A.

We began pressing the government of Ontario to enact legislation almost from our founding in the late 1990's, and advocated for a strong law when the government of the day was drafting the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 2007.

Since then, in 2013, we saw protections in that law weakened through exemptions for mining, commercial, hydroelectric and logging interests.

And now, even the remaining protections are under review. The Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP), though a “discussion paper”, is advocating for still weaker protections, under the pretext of “increasing efficiencies” and “streamlining processes”.

These changes are not law yet. A2A will submit arguments against such changes on the Environmental Bill of Rights website <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/013-4143> (comment deadline March 4th).

We encourage readers of this newsletter to do likewise. Ontario Nature, one of A2A's partners, has a campaign on their website, from which much of the information for this article was obtained, with thanks to Biologist Anne Bell. We urge you to learn more at:

<https://ontarionature.thankyou4caring.org/email/viewonwebpage.aspx?erid=3726410&trid=1d15042d-10f2-48be-a630-c216eea74247>

A2A Partner Profile:

Watersheds Canada

Small but mighty organization aims at all lakes and rivers in Canada

Barb King, Executive Director of Watersheds Canada, describes the organization as “small but mighty”, given its staff of only 4 plus interns and its huge mandate that all the lakes and rivers of Canada be healthy and sustainable and that Watersheds Canada programs be available to all organizations that need them. Originally a lake association and then the Centre for Sustainable Watersheds, it morphed into having Canada-wide ambitions and was renamed Watersheds Canada, as its founders began to realize that what they had developed to make one lake healthy and sustainable could be applied nationwide.

To achieve that, Barbara tells how they create programs that can readily be delivered through partners, such as lake associations, conservation authorities and stewardship groups.

The A2A Collaborative, starting in 2009, partnered with them to improve water quality on most of the 18 lakes of the Gananoque River system, a tributary of the St. Lawrence River from boats, to evaluate practices on each property in order to determine their effects on lake health. We wrote a shoreline report for each waterfront landowner which was personally delivered.

This approach, now refined and updated, is called Love Your Lake, and has been used to assess over 35 000 shoreline properties by Watersheds Canada and its many partners. Recently they have developed an app to help landowners restore shoreline vegetation with native plants suitable to each property's conditions.

Watersheds Canada also reaches out to municipalities to help elected officials and staff members understand and comply with the provincial regulations that affect freshwater water bodies, such as shoreline development, septic health, setbacks, etc.



Recently, it also partnered with stewardship organizations to restore the health of streams that support Brook Trout, which require cool water, by increasing overhanging vegetation and reducing shoreline trampling by farm animals.

And in the works: Blue Lake Certification, a form of Eco Certification, to help lake associations prioritize actions needed to make their lakes healthy and sustainable.

Barbara sees the work of Watersheds Canada as essential to the work A2A does. The materials it develops stress the importance of healthy, connected habitat.

And, she adds, “A2A provides a way to reach out to landowners. The mapping that A2A has done allows Watersheds Canada to be far more strategic in developing our overall plans.” In its messaging, Watersheds Canada cites the importance of the A2A region: that it's unique in Canada, highly sensitive and of highest biological diversity.

Why has Barbara dedicated so much of her life to Watersheds Canada? “I am passionate about fresh water, so it's great to be able to marry my passion with my career. I want to ensure that future generations have healthy lakes to enjoy, where they can swim, boat and fish.”

Kingston now being looped into the A2A Trail: a Pilgrimage for Nature

Kingston, roughly at mid-point in the A2A Trail, is a perfect place for long-distance trekkers to take a break and replenish their supplies.

Early on we realized that one of the biggest challenges for Trail users would be crossing the St. Lawrence River, since the Thousand Islands Bridge has only a narrow foot-path right next to traffic. (But a spectacular view!) Not for everybody, and not in the winter when the footpath closes.

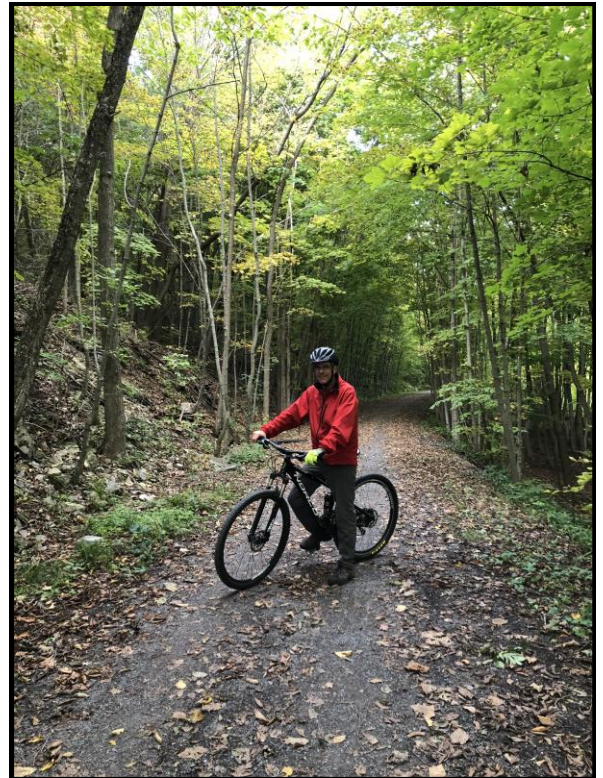
However as we looked west we spotted a ferry running from Cape Vincent to Wolfe Island and another from there to Kingston. And even better, we saw that there were trails leading from Kingston to the north. So, with funding from the Community Foundation for Kingston and Area, we are creating a loop of the Trail into Kingston.

Utilizing existing trail systems through the heart of the A2A region, this project will connect Kingston to the A2A Trail at Delta via the Rideau and Cataraqui Trail systems.

Take this loop and you will see the core of the A2A region through the Frontenac Arch, learn about how we can protect this significant natural feature and experience a host of interesting destinations, including Frontenac Park and Chaffeys Locks.

Watch our website

<http://www.a2acollaborative.org> to learn about a community trek event in the spring of 2019 to launch the Kingston link. The route is ideal for both walking and biking with trail type bikes.



David Miller, A2A Executive Director, biking the Kingston link

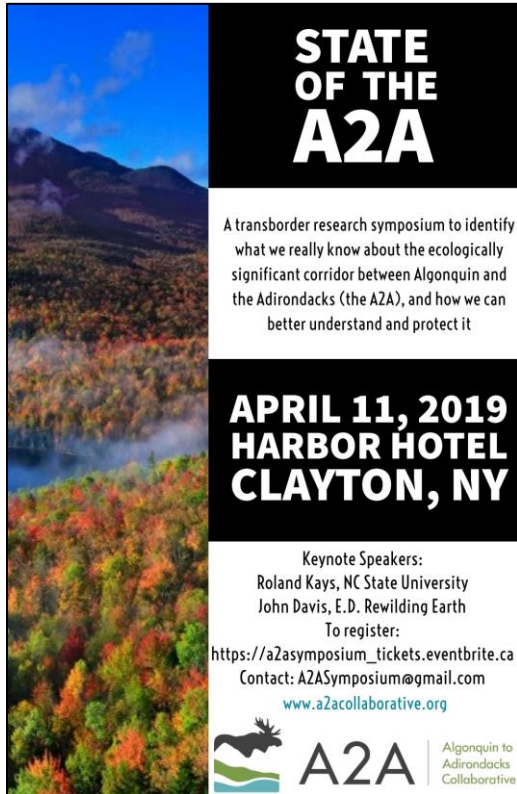
We invite you to look at the working route for the A2A Trail, A Pilgrimage for Nature, on the A2A website:

<http://www.a2acollaborative.org/a2a-trail.html>

An on-line guide will be available in 2019 and more hike events are planned for Fall 2019 to introduce and promote the Trail.

A2A Spring Symposium

It's time to re-examine where Science should be taking us



From the very beginning, we in the A2A Collaborative have known that whatever conservation actions A2A and its partners took should be based on the best science available.

This year we've decided to take stock of where science should be leading us, and assess what we need to do to be truly effective in facing the challenges of protecting and conserving the A2A corridor. So.....

We will be presenting our first Symposium on the State of the A2A on Thursday, April 11th, on the shores of the St. Lawrence River at the beautiful Harbor Hotel (at right) in Clayton, NY.

Researchers and conservation advocates from both sides of the border will meet to present research and discuss a range of perspectives relevant to the A2A region as an international ecological corridor. In addition, we hope to identify future research needs, and build collaborative trans-border partnerships.

The Symposium will include:

- Exploring a full range of perspectives in the A2A region including ecological, geological, social/anthropological, and First Nations knowledge.
- Presentations on recent ecological connectivity and climate change science and how it relates to the A2A region.
- Presentations on past, current and proposed A2A research and conservation projects.
- A final session to identify the top 10 future research/project needs.

We are proud to have keynote speakers Roland Kays, a zoologist with years of experience researching coyotes in Northern New York, and an expert in new technologies to study free-ranging animals, John Davis, A2A Board Member, long-distance wilderness trekker, and author of Split Rock Wildway: Scouting the Adirondack Park's Most Diverse Wildlife Corridor, and Cathy Keddy, author of The Conservation Potential of the Frontenac Axis: Linking Algonquin Park to the Adirondacks, the A2A Collaborative's foundational document.

To register, please go to [a2asympoosium_tickets@eventbrite.com](https://a2asympoosium_tickets.eventbrite.ca)

For other symposium information, contact us at: a2asympoosium@gmail.com

Stage 2 of Conservation Action Planning

Making sure that local conservation efforts are coordinated and effective



CAP Stage 1 workshop at the Opinicon Resort

2019 will be the year that A2A completes Stage 2 of Conservation Action Planning (CAP) What does that mean in concrete terms for conservation in this region?

Stage 2 is funded by a second SEED grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. It builds on a 2016-2017 SEED grant project in which we created a landscape-scale "lens" approach to applying the already developed CAP Framework to the Algonquin to Adirondack (A2A) corridor.

The CAP Framework is a robust, repeatable and well-tested open concept planning process that builds on existing local conservation efforts, and focuses on opportunity and action through local input.

Learn more about Stage 1 at:

<http://www.a2acollaborative.org/conservation-action-planning.html>

Applying the A2A landscape scale "lens" means looking at threats, targets, and actions within a regional context; making sure that as local conservation action plans are developed, they consider the bigger conservation picture.

Our next goal is to test-drive this "lens" approach with local partners to develop a Conservation Action Plan, namely the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve area of A2A north of the Thousand Islands Bridge, the "pinch point" of the A2A region.

It is one of the areas of highest biodiversity, but also one of the most highly threatened areas of the A2A region, with such issues as inappropriate development, invasive species and climate change impacts.

In developing the CAP, the board of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve will play an important partnering role, as will other local organizations and municipalities.

Our plan is to use CAP workshops and Miradi software to provide us with a database, analytical capabilities and automatic report formats. Through this work, we'll learn how to then go on to apply this Landscape Scale Lens to multiple Conservation Action Plans across the A2A region.



2019 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 2019 so that A2A can:

- ▶ provide safe passageways for animals to cross highways
- ▶ complete 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

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

In the United States to P.O. Box 1 Wellesley Island New York 13640 or complete an online membership at A2ACollaborative.org

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? _____

I have the following talents/interests that I think would be helpful to the A2A effort: _____