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ADIRONDACK COMMUNITIES AND CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Linking Communities and Conservation Inside the Blue Line

By Heidi Kretser

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June, 2001

Adirondack Communities and Conservation Program: Linking Communities and Conservation Inside the Blue Line

By Heidi Kretser

With Contributions from
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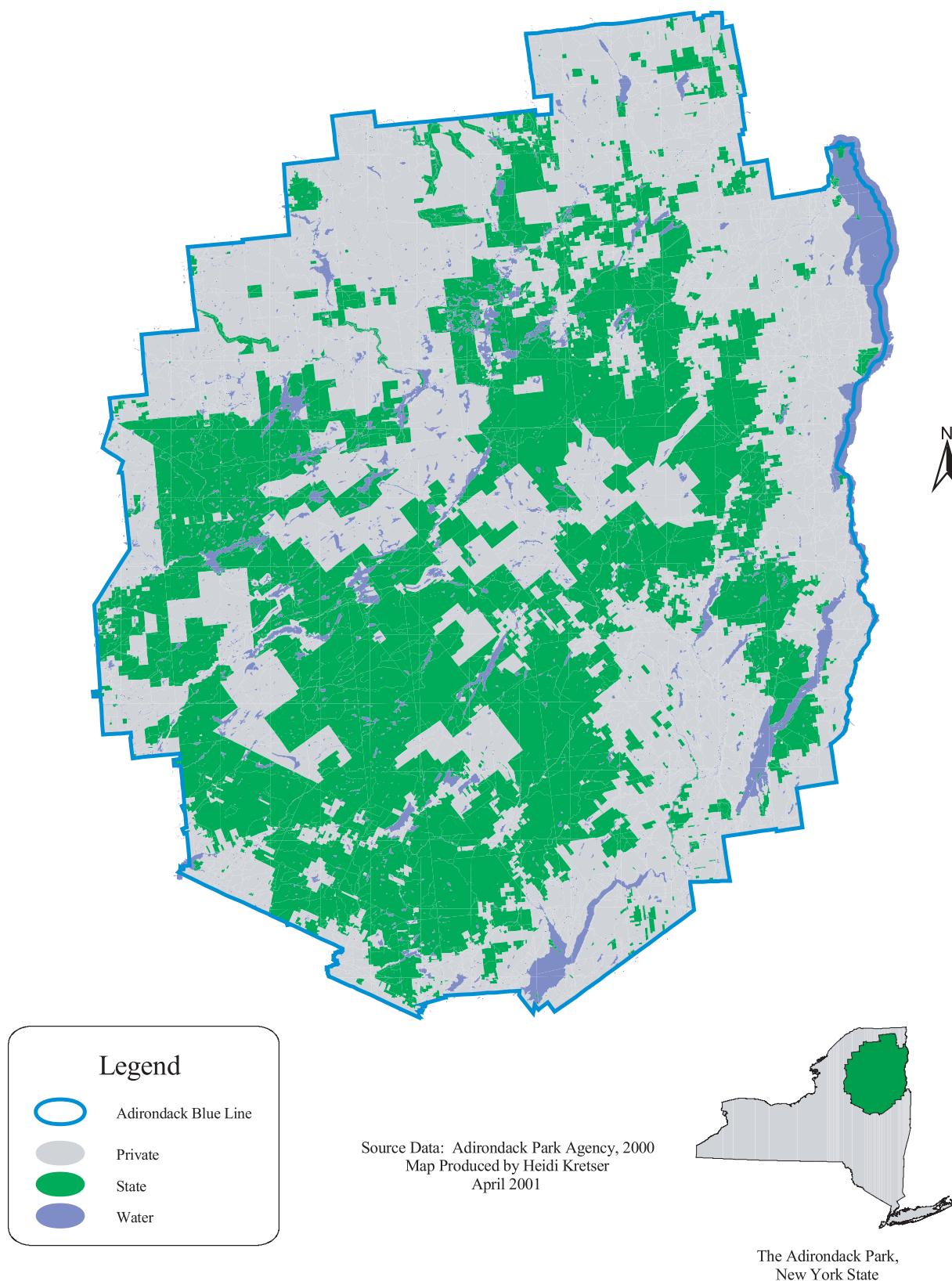
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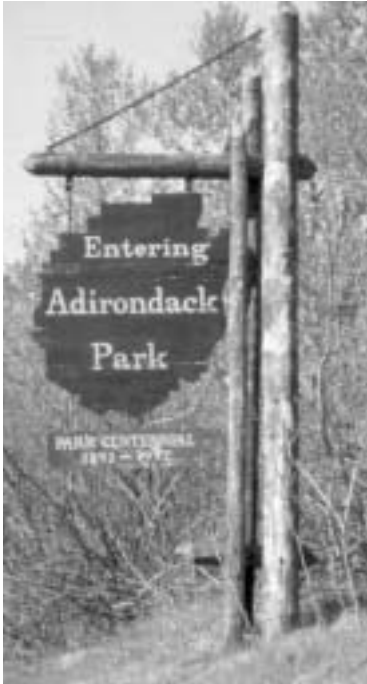
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Map 1: Public and Private Land Inside the Blue Line





More than 130,000 year-round residents, 40 summits higher than 4,000 feet, 2,700 lakes and ponds, 30,000 miles of rivers, brooks and streams, and a diversity of wildlife share the six-million acre mosaic of public and private lands.

Introduction

The Adirondack Communities & Conservation Program (ACCP) takes an information-based approach to understanding socio-economic and political factors in the regional conservation equation within the Adirondack Park. The intended result is an integrated approach to problem identification and resolution. A number of participatory studies and cooperative activities have provided constructive points of entry into selected communities located inside the Park. This report synthesizes the findings from three community case studies and a broader tourism study and identifies links among community development efforts, the surrounding natural environment, and conservation issues in the Adirondack Park.

Overview

The Adirondack Park is one of the oldest managed wilderness areas in the country. Adirondack communities are unique as they are located inside the Blue Line, the official boundary of the Adirondack Park. The State of New York owns 46 percent of the six million acres inside the Blue Line, creating a mosaic of ownership and management regimes with the remaining lands in private hands (Map 1). Currently, 130,000 year-round residents share the region with 42 summits higher than 4,000 feet; 2,759 lakes and ponds; more than 30,000 miles of rivers, brooks, and streams; and wildlife ranging from the endangered spruce grouse and the elusive bobcat to the moose, loon, and otter.

Community Boundaries

Geographic location, above all else, determines the community to which one belongs in the Adirondack Park. Lakes, mountains, and vast tracts of wild forest lands isolate hamlets from one another. Often, one must travel 20 to 25 miles of open road to reach the next hamlet. A hamlet is defined as a concentration of businesses, public services, and residences commonly formed at the crossroads or intersections of main travel corridors or secondary roads. Some of the larger hamlets are incorporated as villages. Villages traditionally provide a broader range of everyday services: grocery stores, post offices, banks, insurance companies, pharmacies, hardware/clothing stores, schools, and basic health services. These village economies must constantly adapt to the more dynamic trends of the global economy.

Villages and hamlets are situated within another political entity: the town. Towns are the political land units which compose counties. For example, the village of Tupper Lake is located in the town of Altmont; the hamlets of Piercefield and Childwold are in the Town of Piercefield. Both of these towns are located in Franklin County. The mix of hamlets, villages, towns, and counties creates many administrative challenges and complicates the definition of community.

Land Ownership and Stewardship

The public ownership and stewardship of the Adirondack Park means that people other than the immediate residents of the Park's towns, villages, and hamlets control and have an interest in the Park. The Park attracts state, national, and international interest as a model of people coexisting with nature in the modern world, all within a day's drive of more than 70 million people. The decisions made at the town, village, or hamlet level impact the surrounding public land and therefore impact the people supporting those lands: State taxpayers, summer residents, tourists, non-profit organizations, and those who live closest to the public land – Park residents. These diverse constituencies make it challenging to manage the Park and its resources satisfactorily and further complicate the definition of community.

Economic and Environmental Challenges

The Adirondacks, like most rural communities, have a history of natural resource extraction in forestry, mining, hunting, trapping, or agriculture. Today, however, industrialization, technological advances, and the global economy have reduced employment in these fields and limited job availability in rural areas such as the Adirondacks. These issues are compounded by the unique nature of the Park. Distance between hamlets, rugged terrain, isolation, low population, and the regulatory environment all pose serious challenges to economic growth.

The environmental changes occurring in the Adirondacks over the past few decades differ significantly from the pressures of the logging and mining industries 100 years ago. Changes in the US economy and lifestyle are largely responsible for the transition. The post-World War II era created a society with ample leisure time and extra spending money. Since the 1950s and 60s, tourism in the Adirondacks has been on the rise. Over time, many of these visitors have purchased land in the Adirondacks and built second homes. At the same time younger people leave for jobs or educational opportunities elsewhere, older Americans and second home owners are discovering the Adirondacks, which offers a small town life-style and coveted environmental amenities. The Adirondacks and other rural areas face the challenges of rapid development: development incompatible with the existing infrastructure or which destroys the favorable small town atmosphere, versus the need for economic revitalization that complements the natural environment and maintains the quality of life. However, rural areas like the Adirondacks often lack the population, skills, and technical resources to encourage appropriately scaled economic growth that is compatible with the surrounding natural areas. Changing demographic and economic characteristics in the Adirondacks complicate development and conservation strategies in the region and challenge traditional ideas and meanings of community.



Distance between hamlets, rugged terrain, isolation, low population, and the regulatory environment pose serious challenges to economic growth.

The disconnect between the management of the human environment of the Park and the natural environment shapes the way people see and understand the Forest Preserve and the local communities.

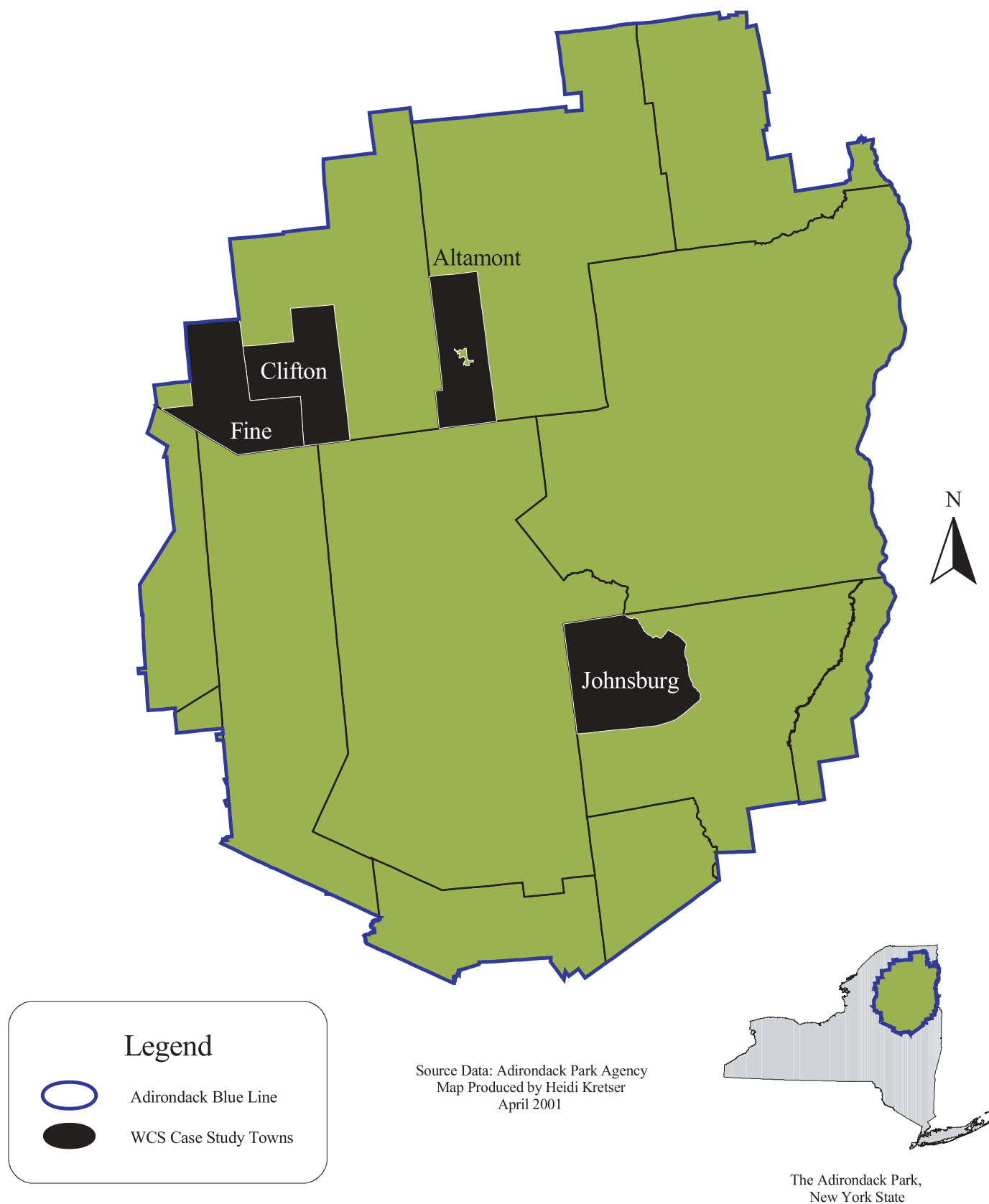


Land Management

The Forest Preserve, which refers to state-owned lands maintained in a “forever wild” condition, adds to the complexity. State-owned lands, which account for varying percentages of each town, are maintained in a natural condition, free from development and timber harvests (Adirondack Park Agency, 1996). New York State, via the Adirondack Park Agency (APA), exercises a measure of private land zoning control defined by the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan (1996). This Plan delineates Adirondack lands into 14 classifications, each with its own regulations and usage possibilities. Six categories zone privately-owned land and eight categories cover state-owned public land (Appendices A & B).

The public lands are managed and overseen by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). The Adirondacks encompass two DEC administrative units: Region 5 and 6. Unit Management Plans divide state-owned lands into smaller, more manageable parcels. Although efforts have been made to include local advisory committees and community input, management of the state lands remains largely an entity separate from the day-to-day community activities and separate from the day-to-day thoughts of local residents. This disconnect between the management of the human environment of the Park and the natural environment shapes the way people see and understand the Forest Preserve and local communities. For too long, local communities and the state forest have been managed independently of one another. As a result, many people fail to see the importance of the environment on the economy or vice versa.

Map 2: WCS Case Study Towns



USA at night. The Adirondack Park is one of the only places east of the Mississippi that offers a break in the sea of light.



Study Overview

The three areas chosen for this study represent distinctly different communities in the Adirondack Park (Map 2 and Table 1&2). Clifton-Fine is a small isolated community in the northwestern Adirondacks that has been experiencing overall economic decline over the past decade. Johnsburg, in the southern Adirondacks, is undergoing rapid changes relative to the overall Adirondack Park and is growing in popularity as a community and as a tourist destination. Altamont in the northern Adirondacks is relatively populous, yet it is geographically and economically isolated from its prosperous sister communities in the Tri-Lakes region – Saranac Lake and Lake Placid. As each community undergoes changes in the new millennium, identifying links among development, economic growth, and conservation will be critical to maintaining the characteristics of the Adirondacks that both residents and visitors enjoy.

The three case studies presented below briefly explain how each town perceives community, how the Adirondack Communities and Conservation Program approaches working with the community, and how the major themes within each community relate to conservation. In each community, people consistently reported concerns linked to either conservation or how the Adirondack Park affected their lives.

The fourth study presented here explores the role of tourism in communities and how tourism relates to protection and management of the Adirondack Park's natural assets. The study provides an in-depth look at Adirondack tourism opportunities from the perspective of 258 business

¹ Blue Mountain Lake, Cranberry Lake, Eagle Bay, Indian Lake, Inlet, Long Lake, Newcomb, North Creek, Old Forge, Piseco, Raquette Lake, Speculator, Star Lake, Thendara, Tupper Lake, Wanakena

Table 1: Community Profiles of Clifton-Fine, Johnsbury and Altamont compared to New York State

Community	Clifton-Fine	Johnsbury	Altamont	New York State
Population	2,713	2,519	6,466	17,990,455
Average Household Income	\$25,595	\$23,875	\$23,504	\$32,965
Average Per Capita Income	\$10,259	\$11,435	\$10,815	\$16,501
Percentage with Bachelors Degrees	9%	14%	11%	22%
Percentage on Public Assistance	9%	5%	7%	7%
Percentage Who Are Unemployed	10%	10%	7%	7%

Source Data: US Census, 1990

Table 2: Percentage of Land Use Classifications in target communities compared to the Adirondacks as a whole

Land-Use Classification	Clifton-Fine	Johnsbury	Altamont	Adirondack Park
Wilderness	23.0%	38.7%	0%	17.8%
Primitive	.02%	.01%	0%	.87%
Wild Forest	16.2%	16.4%	7.9%	22.1%
Intensive Use	.2%	2.4%	.004%	.33%
State Administrative	.01%	.1%	.12%	.025%
Canoe Area	0%	0%	0%	.302%
Pending Classification	1.5%	.1%	.1%	.66%
Hamlet	.6%	1.4%	1.9%	.92%
Moderate Intensity	.5%	.5%	3.8%	1.8%
Low Intensity	.6%	6.6%	5.6%	4.6%
Rural Use	9.3%	27.3%	4.7%	17.5%
Resource Management	40.3%	4.3%	66.3%	27.2%
Industrial	1.6%	.9%	.1%	.21%
Water	5.9%	1.3%	9.5%	5.7%

Source Data: Adirondack Park Agency, 1999

Quality of life, local character, sense of place, and community are difficult to define or quantify yet they appear in most discussions of community development and economic growth.



owners in 16 communities¹ in the central and western Adirondack Park. These individuals were surveyed and invited to focus groups to discuss tourism issues in less-visited areas of the park.

While a synopsis of the tourism study clearly indicates the need to understand the role of the environment and recreation on local communities and businesses, the community case studies reveal that surprisingly few links between the economy and the environment are obvious or tangible for most residents. Certainly, the positive connections to the environment found in all of the research were and still are, with few exceptions, not included in discussions of community development and economic growth. This paper will present these links and recommend ways community development efforts can foster plans that benefit from, rather than disregard, their natural assets.

Defining Community in the Park

In the Adirondacks, a clear understanding of what community means to local residents and what community means to seasonal visitors is critical to an effective dialogue on development and the environment. A resident who wishes to begin a project and defines community as those people born and raised in a particular area, or those who live within a certain distance from a geographic location will undoubtedly exclude many important stakeholders. Likewise, a downstate politician representing an Adirondack issue who narrowly defines the Adirondack community as seasonal residents or people who vacation in the Adirondacks can easily misrepresent those most affected by the outcome of a particular policy. However, a broader definition of community will most likely be more inclusive of the appropriate stakeholders. As a result, outcomes of conservation or economic development projects are more easily accepted by

the various stakeholders.

Many of the interviewees and survey respondents discussed the Adirondack community and the positive aspects of living in the Adirondacks using terms such as quality of life, local character, sense of place, and community. These terms have ambiguous meanings and are difficult to quantify, yet they appear in most discussions of community development and economic growth.

Quality of life: Describes the non-monetary amenities a community or region offers, such as clean air and water, physical safety, open space, scenic views, employment opportunities, financial security, cultural events, recreational opportunities, non-congested roads, good schools, small-town life.

Local Character: Refers to the history, natural surroundings, and traditional architecture that give an area a unique feeling.

Sense of Place: Individuals' perceptions of their own identity and the area in which they developed their perceptions; connection to an area through generations of family; the area with which one most closely identifies.

Community: The word has numerous definitions. Even in the case studies, each researcher found numerous definitions acceptable to the people of the Adirondacks:

- 1) A place where individuals interact with each other and satisfy the greater part of their physiological, psychological, and social needs (Lewis, 1979)
- 2) The people who share a common geographical location
- 3) The people who share a common cultural heritage
- 4) The people who have the right to vote and can therefore influence the decision-making process in a particular area (Hunter, 1961)
- 5) An area where all who are interested in it are part of the community.

These terms appear throughout the case studies. Quality of life, local character, sense of place, and the notion of community are intricately linked to the surrounding environment in the Adirondack context. So much of the quality of life depends upon unspoiled scenery, clean air and water, and recreational opportunities. Local character derives from the Adirondack history of natural resource extraction, hunting excursions, wilderness adventures, tourism, and generations of relatively few families living and working in the same area. Defining community in the Adirondacks is important because every conservation and development issue has a set of stakeholders and a clear understanding of the community will more clearly identify these stakeholders. Because those who are associated with the Adirondacks use the quality of life, sense of place, and local character to create their community, community in the Adirondacks represents an entity around which residents (seasonal and year-round), visitors, and organizations can convene and work towards



People expressed much love and respect for the environment and claimed it made their life the way they wanted it, yet few saw the direct management link between the economy and the environment.

long-term visions for development and conservation.

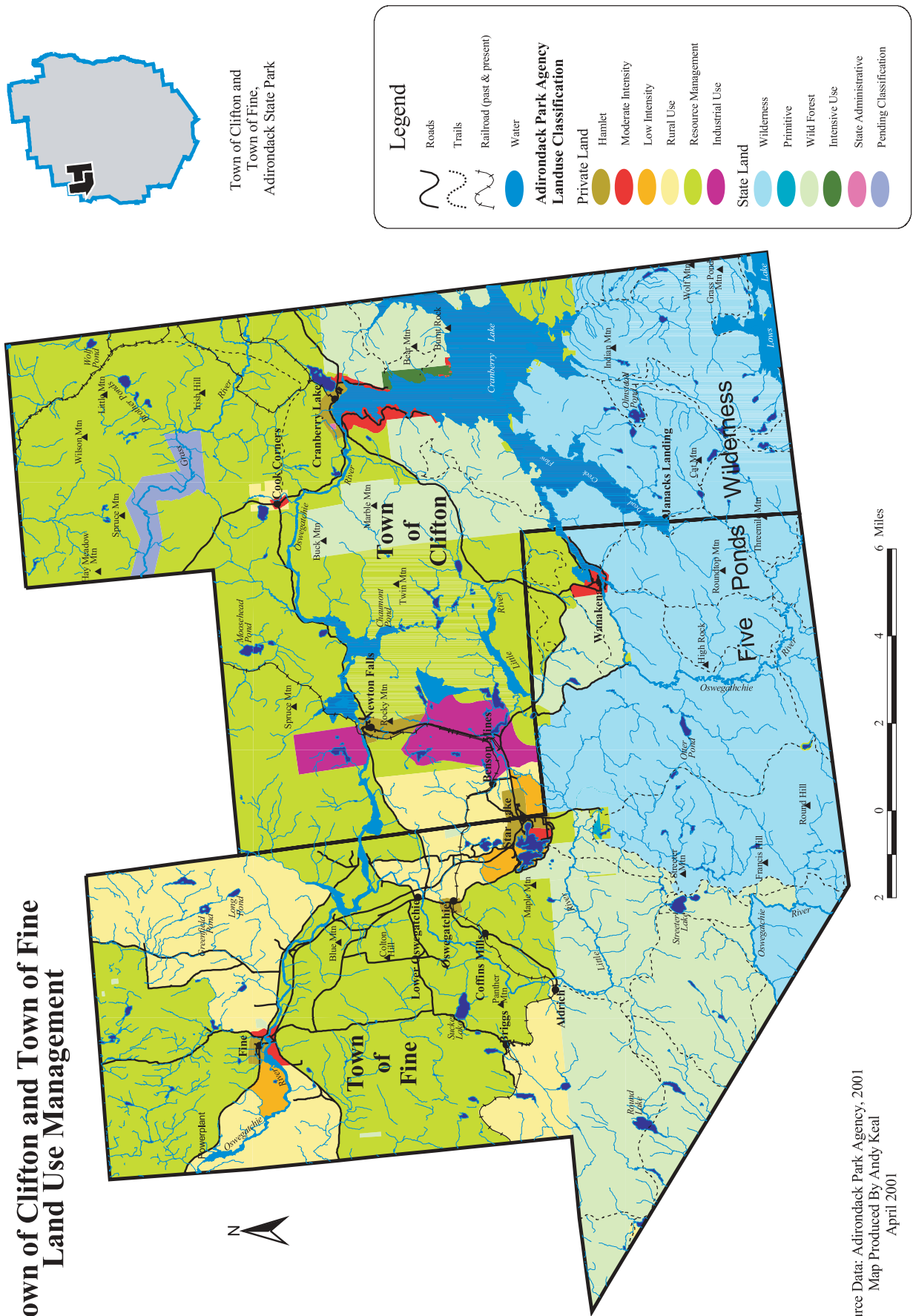
Although people love the natural environment, recreate in the natural environment, depend on the natural environment for their jobs, return to the Adirondacks after leaving because of the natural environment, and base their ideas of community on the natural environment – a tendency to neglect the environment pervades when discussing the future of the community and the structure of regulation in the Adirondacks. Perhaps the regulatory overhaul of the 1960s and 1970s still leaves a bad taste in many mouths and perhaps some people have not realized that without regulation, the Adirondacks could look like suburbia and Anywhere America strip malls. Most importantly, our community research found that people expressed much love and respect for the environment and claimed it made their life the way they wanted it to be, yet few saw the direct management link between economy and environment.

The positive connections to the environment found in all of the research were and still are, with few exceptions, not included in discussions of community development and economic growth.



Map 3:

Town of Clifton and Town of Fine Land Use Management



Case Study I: Towns of Clifton and Fine in St. Lawrence County²

Overview of the Community



While many residents complain about the state purchasing land, the “forever wild” slogan defines the community in a positive and attractive manner.

Clifton and Fine are two adjacent towns in the northwestern part of the Adirondack Park. They are two of only four St. Lawrence County towns completely inside the Adirondack Park boundary. Clifton and Fine contain a number of hamlets. In the town of Clifton are the hamlets of Cranberry Lake, Newton Falls, and a section of Star Lake. The town of Fine contains the hamlets of Fine, Oswegatchie, Wanakena and the majority of Star Lake.

Together, Clifton and Fine are home to an estimated population of 2,700, with a net gain of about sixty people over the past decade (New York State Development Corporation, 1998). Resource Management, Wild Forest, and Wilderness lands bound the Towns of Clifton and Fine, which limits physical development within the area (Map 3 and Table 2). Expansion beyond present hamlet borders is also confined by the zoning categories; only one principal dwelling per 42 acres is allowed under the Adirondack Park Agency Resource Management classification, and most of that land is owned by timber companies. There are 97,000 acres, mainly in the southern part of the Clifton-Fine area, which are state-owned and classified as Wild Forest. There are 92,000 acres of privately-owned Rural Use lands, located primarily near the Park’s border, which allow for relatively more development, with limits.

Both towns have traditions of natural resource use. This makes the area unique among the neighboring agricultural-based towns. Cranberry Lake in Clifton and Wanakena in Fine were both lumber company towns established in the early 20th century. Established in the 1840s, Star Lake was the first settlement in the western Adirondack area. Star Lake also shares a history of logging, although its major identity lies with the mining industry. At various times, Star Lake has been a lumbering center, a tourist attraction, and a mining town (Reynolds and Decosse, 1976).

For most of the past century, the towns of Clifton and Fine have had stable economies due to the presence of an iron ore mine located just outside Star Lake and a paper mill in Newton Falls. Cranberry Lake has historically been a tourist center due to a Department of Environmental Conservation campground founded in 1935 and public access to the lake itself (Reynolds and Decosse, 1976). The area has been home to a wide array of businesses and services. A small hospital in Star Lake serves both towns as it is 60 miles from the nearest medical center. Wanakena is home to the New York State Ranger School, now known as the State

² From Thomas, T. 1999. *Community and Sustainability within the Adirondack Park: A qualitative inquiry into the Towns of Clifton and Fine*, unpublished report. Wildlife Conservation Society and School of Environmental Science and Forestry at Syracuse.



SUNY ESF at Wanakena is a cornerstone for the troubled Clifton-Fine economy.

University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry at Wanakena. Through prestigious forest technology and surveying programs, the Ranger School is well known, but the community in which it is located is not.

Several decades ago, the economy and social structure of the towns of Clifton and Fine suffered a major setback. In 1978 the Jones & Laughlin iron ore mine was sold and ceased operation, causing many residents to leave the area (United States Census Bureau, 1999). This exodus altered not only the population, but its demographics as well. The management, professional staff, and skilled tradespeople were able to relocate for other jobs. The result was a community where many older or unskilled laborers could not get comparable work locally or compete in other areas.

Another economic stumbling block has been the paper mill in Newton Falls. The mill has undergone ownership changes over the last two decades and has reduced its workforce by over one-third. The owners, currently Appleton Papers of Wisconsin and previously Stora Papyrus, have also imported management, as no candidates remain in the hamlets. Most of the imported professionals have chosen to reside outside of Clifton-Fine in more populated areas. In fall 1999, Appleton announced layoffs of nearly half of the full-time employees. In August 2000, the mill completely shut down. Although state economic development agencies continue to search for a new buyer, the future remains unstable as two potential deals have fallen through and time is running out. Inability to keep the paper mill open will cause repercussions throughout the economy. As residents move away to find new employment, the tax-base will dwindle placing the school and hospital in jeopardy.

The local supply of available goods and services in Clifton-Fine has

Adirondack “Nice ‘n Easy,” a project local residents worked on for many years. Located on a main corner in downtown Star Lake, it attracts passing visitors and helps revitalize the town.



also diminished over the past few decades. Prior to the mine closing, the town supported an appliance store, jewelry store, car dealership, multiple service stations and numerous restaurants and hotels (Reynolds and DeCosse, 1976). Today, each hamlet maintains at least one general store and convenience store and a small grocery store in Star Lake serves the area. Distance from other hamlets also plays a role, not only in the availability of goods, but in defining the area as unique. Tupper Lake, 30 miles east of Cranberry Lake, is the nearest village with full-sized grocery stores, a pharmacy, and department stores. Watertown, 65 miles from Star Lake, has the nearest mall where a majority of local residents shop for clothing. Watertown is also the closest location for many national chain restaurants, and offers the greatest variety for food shopping.

The small tourist industry in Cranberry Lake, a defunct paper mill in Newton Falls, and the skeleton of the mining buildings are all that remain of a rich industrial history in the Clifton-Fine area. The only local employment is through the state or town governments, such as road crews, the school district, or the hospital. While the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry is thriving, its size is limited. Several people who live in the towns work outside of the area. Many people living in Clifton-Fine do not work, because they are either retired or on public assistance. In recent years, the area has become attractive for second homeowners and retirees looking for relatively affordable Adirondack lifestyles.

Methods

In the summer of 1998, the Adirondack Communities and Conservation Program (ACCP) identified key community contacts through the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry at Wanakena. ACCP

Table 3: Major themes in the towns of Clifton-Fine and the links to conservation

THEME	RELATION TO CONSERVATION
Natural Environment	Provides the largest common element of the community. Most interviewees agreed that the main reason to live in the Adirondacks was scenic beauty, pristine waters, and ability to enjoy outdoor recreation. Long-term and short-term residents had a different emphasis for reasons to love the environment.
"Adirondacker" Identity	Indicates a desire to be part of the Adirondacks and preserve the activities enjoyed in the Park such as boating, hunting, hiking, skiing, and others. Each person defined the identity differently in order to include themselves.
Sense of Isolation	Strengthens the idea that people living in isolated areas surrounded by abundant natural resources often forego cultural, economic, and social benefits for their lifestyle. In some cases, isolation tends to foster stereotypes of "outsiders" or "other groups" and compromises the ability of a community to work toward a common goal. Individuals who like isolation want the Adirondacks to stay the same, those who dislike isolation want change. Both desires influence conservation issues inside the Blue Line.
Economy	Represents the changes affecting the communities and the environment. Historically, the economy was based on natural resource extraction, now many residents perceive that regulations keep out such economic growth. Gradually, the economy shifts towards capitalizing on outdoor recreation opportunities and promoting value-added, high-end wood products. Some residents question these venues due to the seasonality of the tourism industry and specialization of high-end wood markets. Given the recent cutbacks by the paper mill and the state of the global economy, a quick transition to a more diversified economy is critical.
Area of Attachment	Impacts how residents perceive their community. The natural environment and isolation as well as length of residence, social status, and age have contributed to the commitment of each resident to the community. Positive attachments to the community foster a willingness to participate in discussions of economic growth and conservation.
Youth and Education	Signifies the future potential of the community. Few incentives exist to educate the youth and have them stay or return to the area. Getting youth to appreciate and have knowledge of ecological significance is important to long-term conservation. If they appreciate the area, they will be more likely see the opportunities, build the skills to return, and become a contributing member of the community.



Most interviewees agreed that the main reason to live in the Adirondacks was scenic beauty, pristine waters, and ability to enjoy outdoor recreation.

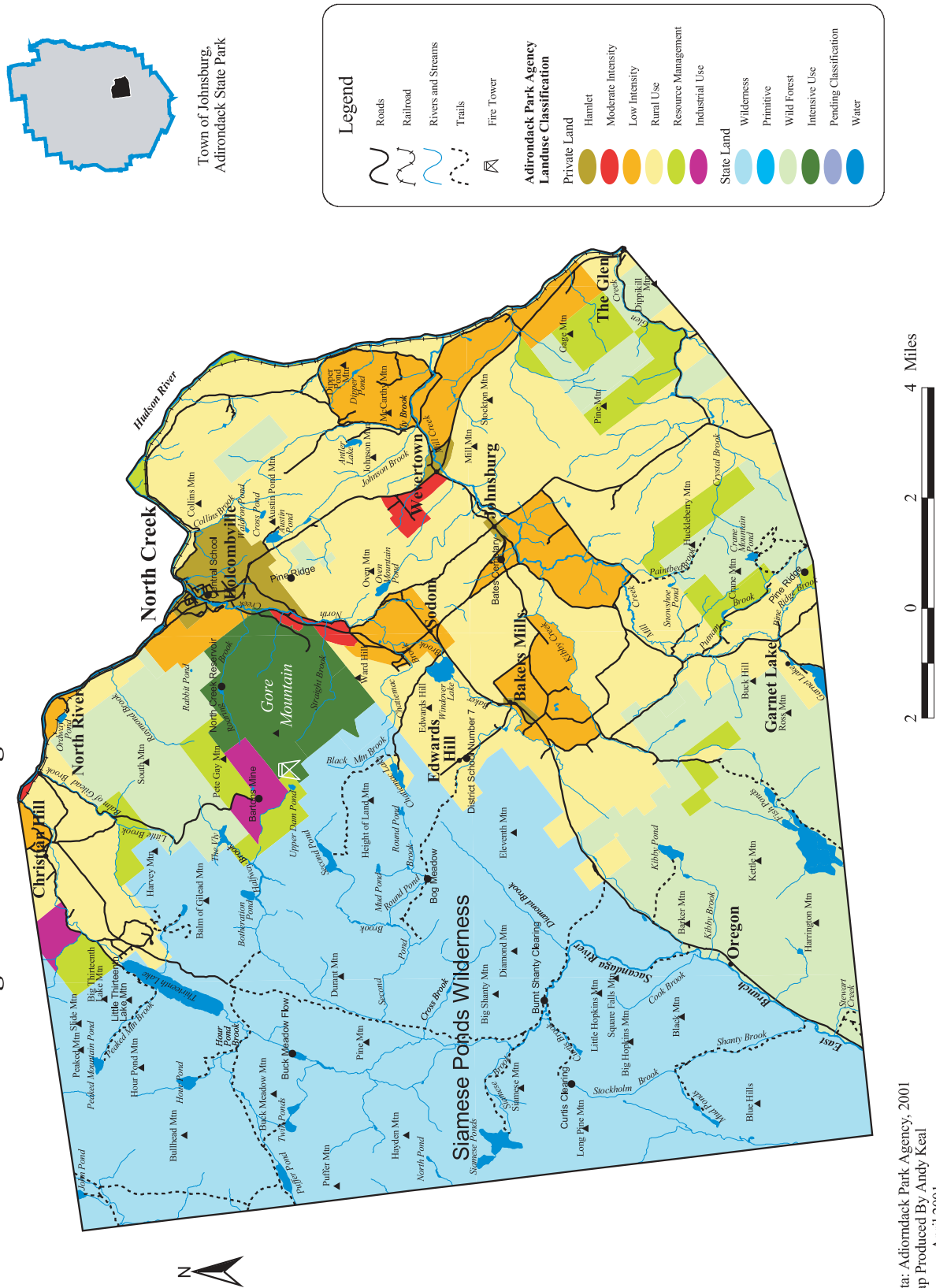
asked each key community contact to provide names of other residents for the study. ACCP conducted interviews with 50 residents and used social mapping to understand the major issues facing Clifton-Fine residents and to examine the underlying ideas of community. Currently, ACCP continues to work with these towns as they transition from company-town economies to a more diverse economic base.

Major Findings

The data collected and analyzed show that a sense of community exists in the towns of Clifton and Fine. Factors such as the number of years living in a particular place, participation in community activities, and strength of commitment to the place of residence help define the communities. These shared social experiences create a sense of community. However, social differences within the population lead to diverse interpretations of these factors. Length of residence plays a primary role in determining how an individual is connected to the larger concept of community. The number and strength of social ties, such as belonging to community organizations, are of key importance in perceiving a sense of community as well as fostering commitment to the community.

It is important to note that more than one view of local community emerged; the distinct views were built around specific social conditions of the interviewees. For example, residents of Cranberry Lake, the most distant hamlet and the most economically prosperous, were more likely to identify with the community of Cranberry Lake. Residents of the other hamlets were more likely to identify themselves as part of the larger Star Lake or Clifton and Fine communities. In all cases, however, residents identified most closely with the place where the majority of their social interactions occurred. Interactions within the place and with others living there were more important to the sense of community than the place itself.

Map 4: Town of Johnsburg Land Use Management



Source Data: Adirondack Park Agency, 2001
Map Produced By Andy Keal
April 2001



Case Study II: Johnsbury in Warren County³

Overview of the Community

Revitalization of the North Creek Depot and Upper Hudson River Railroad highlights the Town of Johnsbury's history.

The town of Johnsbury in Warren County is located in the southeastern Adirondacks. In 1990, Johnsbury had 2,352 people residing year-round and seasonally, just under 12 persons per square mile. Johnsbury has five official hamlets: North Creek, Johnsbury, Wevertown, North River, Baker's Mills; and three unofficial hamlets: Sodom, Riparius, and The Glen. These hamlet areas have distinct historical backgrounds and natural features that have influenced their development. Of the three communities studied, the town of Johnsbury has the largest percentage of Wilderness: almost 39% (Map 4 and Table 2). Johnsbury has 27% of its land in the Rural Use designation, again the highest compared to the other case studies (Rural Use zoning allows one single family dwelling per 8.5 acres). This has interesting implications: although Johnsbury has the greatest amount of protected area, it also has a much greater potential for development relative to the other towns in this report.

The town of Johnsbury has a diverse industrial history, including mining, logging, farming, and tourism. The first settlement was established in 1790. Timber-related activities dominated the area during its

³ From Brooks, C. and The Town of Johnsbury. 1999. "Town of Johnsbury's Inventory and Analysis" unpublished report, Wildlife Conservation Society and the Town of Johnsbury.

early years. A tannery was built in Wevertown around 1832. By 1871, a railroad line was fully operational to North Creek and the economy, although still largely industrial, turned more towards tourism.

From the beginning, Johnsbury was an industrious area. The hamlet of Johnsbury, with the first settlement at Elm Hill, began in 1790. Within a decade there was a sawmill, store, gristmill, distillery, and woolen mill (soon changed to cotton mill and one of the first calico printing mills in America). Baker's Mills and Sodom, areas of high elevation, saw some farming in the late 1700s and were among the last sections in the town to be developed. A gristmill on Baker Brook built in 1835 attracted some settlers. To the west of Baker's Mills is the area called the Oregon Territory, or Fox Lair. The largest tannery in the town was built in the Oregon Territory in 1878 but was destroyed by fire in 1892. In the hamlet of North River, Barton Mines opened in 1878 and Hooper's Mine opened in 1898. Together they made garnet mining the stabilizing economic activity in the early 1900s. Concurrently, tourism in the town was increasing and a hotel was built on Thirteenth Lake. After World War II summer camps began to dot the North River area.

The hamlet of North Creek is the major commercial and service center of the town of Johnsbury. Logging camps on North Creek near the Hudson River set the location of the hamlet of Johnsbury, but the tannery, built in 1852, initiated its settlement. Dr. T.C. Durant, the builder of the Union Pacific Railroad, was influential in the hamlet's industrial development by building a sawmill and a woodworking mill, and overseeing the completion of the Adirondack Railway to this point by 1871. In 1933, a group of residents began the first ride-up-slide-down ski trail system in the East, with activities eventually centered at the North Creek Ski Bowl. Combined with the existing railway system, the area became a popular winter resort area.

After World War II the technology and market were available to utilize the hardwood forests of the region and the Hamlet Area again became a logging center. In 1963, the State-operated Gore Mountain Ski Center opened. Efforts begun by the town in the 1990s to link the Ski Bowl with the Gore Ski Center are progressing toward upgrading and reopening the facility. Wevertown, home to the first tannery in the town built in 1934, is now dominated by various enterprises associated with the T.C. Murphy Lumber Company. Today, the bulk of Johnsbury's economy is composed of sawmills, the garnet mine, Gore Mountain, tourism, local government, schools, and a variety of thriving small businesses. Many Johnsbury residents rely on the close proximity to the Glens Falls region for employment and shopping opportunities.



Motivated groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, the North Creek Railway Depot Preservation Association and the local government work together to make revitalization a reality in the Town of Johnsbury.

Storefronts in downtown North Creek maintain high occupancy relative to other Adirondack communities.



Methods

ACCP approached the town of Johnsbury through several key community members and by attending local government meetings. ACCP agreed to help the town re-write a 1986 Inventory and Analysis by conducting interviews with local community members to assess their long-term community priorities and by using a community development technique called asset mapping. Asset mapping identifies the social/cultural, economic and natural assets of the area. The town of Johnsbury Inventory & Analysis (I&A) is used as a tool by decision makers and residents interested in the town and concerned about rapid growth and development. It provides a baseline document for the town's Master Plan. ACCP participated in a town-wide visioning process and continues to assist the town of Johnsbury as it moves toward realizing its long-term goals.

Major Findings

Compared to many of the other 112 communities in the Adirondack Park, the town of Johnsbury in Warren County has seen tremendous change within the past fifteen years. But what makes this change distinctive is that growth and development have been inspired primarily from the residents of the town. Town residents have taken steps to initiate and steer the desired change. The community vision of the town of Johnsbury is to become "The Adirondacks' most improved community in which to live and work." Achieving this vision requires a solid plan, dedicated support from residents and businesses, and strong support from town, county, and state governments. At the same time, it is also imperative to preserve the essential character of the community.

No single social reality exists in the Town of Johnsbury, but interviews identified some shared values and principles that bring together Johnsbury's diverse people and create a sense of connectedness. The res-

Table 4: Major themes in the Town of Johnsburg and the links to conservation

THEME	RELATION TO CONSERVATION
Economy and Job Availability	Realizes the gradual shift from dependence upon natural resource extraction economy to dependence on tourism and retired persons. Explores the future of the forestry industry and working forests. Encourages innovative economic opportunities such as telecommunications. Promotes businesses compatible to maintaining a healthy environment. A diversity of enterprises maintains the importance of the traditional economy with a focus on new recreation and tourism opportunities.
Opportunities and Activities for Young People.	Provides interesting opportunities for people of all ages to maintain a diversified demography. Focuses on youth as the retired community continues to grow. Fosters an appreciation for recreation and the surrounding environment. Facilitates dedication and future life-long interest in the community.
Relationship Between New and Long-term Residents.	Identifies common areas of interest. Encourages working together on development programs which promote economics and conservation - acknowledging all voices. Balances interest for maintaining the specialness of Adirondack towns and wilderness, not only for second home owners or retired persons, but for the whole community.
Connection to the Hudson River.	Promotes conservation through preserving open space and a corridor for wildlife. Emphasizes the connection to the river and the importance of keeping it healthy.
Increasing Tourism	Addresses the impact on areas of high use and promotes minimum impact use of resources. Drives coordination and planning to accommodate conflicting recreational resources such as snowmobiling and cross-country skiing.
Disconnect with the rest of the Adirondacks	Increases awareness that each individual community is part of a larger entity facing similar challenges within the Adirondacks. Shows a need to connect communities with the surrounding natural areas. Develops a regional identity and improve the significance of the Park.
Rate of Change	Emphasizes the need for planning. Fast unplanned change can result in negative unintended impacts on the surrounding environment. A small amount of planning will reduce impacts such as degradation of area trails and inadequate septic systems to unsightly facades downtown and increases in taxes for additional road maintenance.

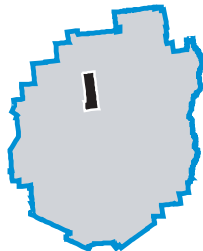
Efforts begun by the town in the 1990s to link the Ski Bowl with the Gore Ski Center are progressing toward upgrading and reopening the facility.



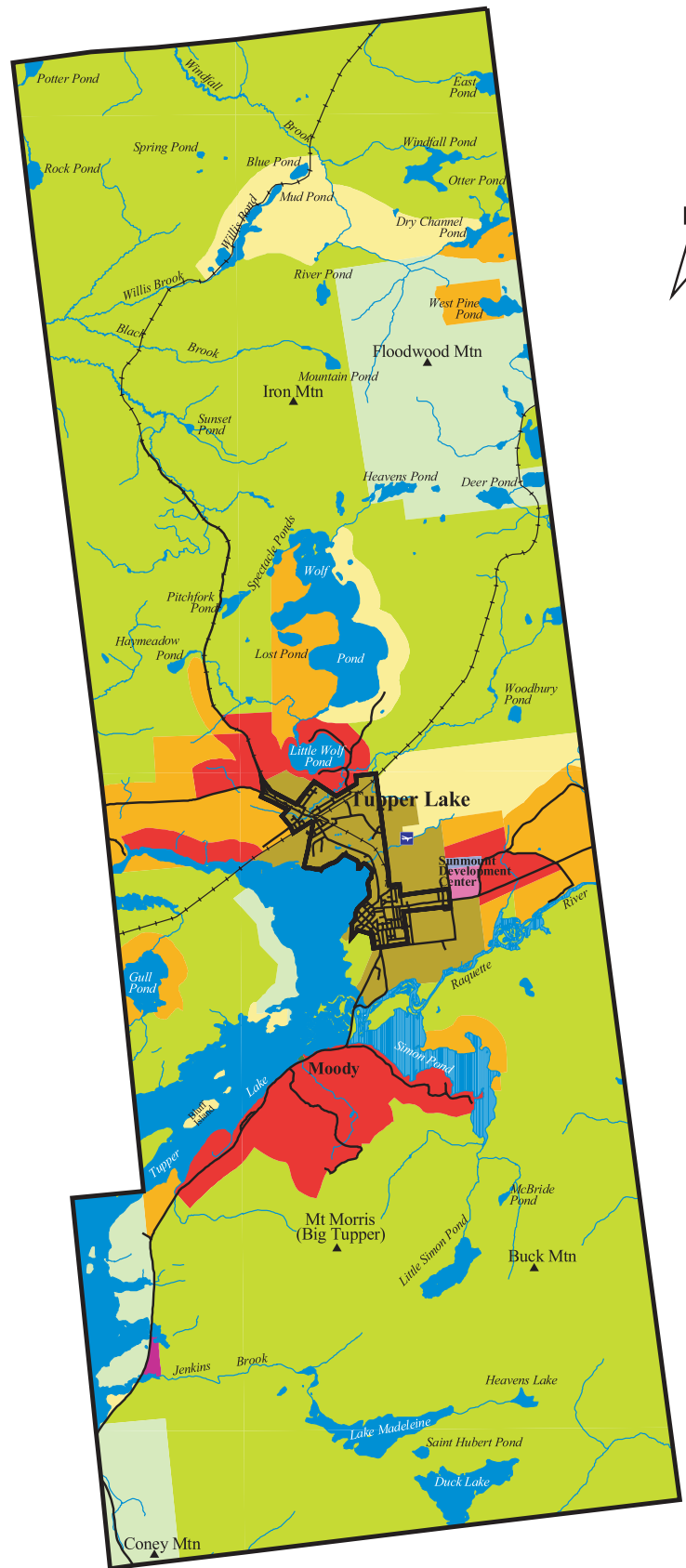
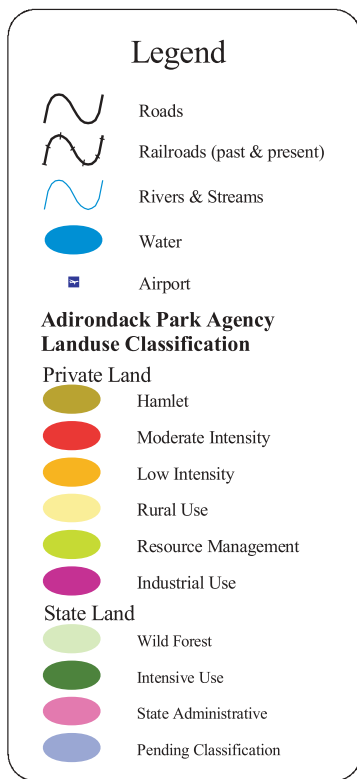
idents' love for their community transcends ideology and class. People know each other well; extended families connect over generations; and a network of relationships sustains neighbors and hamlets. Conflicts and controversies exist, but usually involve only a few players; the majority of residents resist the impulse to "take sides."

Many residents fear "taking sides" has the potential to cause serious problems for community development and sense of community. While the community has experienced dramatic change over the past 5-10 years, much of this change has been ushered in by newer and/or retired residents. The lack of involvement by long-term working residents has led to some feelings of resentment toward the pace at which the community is changing. If this is not addressed it will increase the level of "us and them" sentiment. The opportunity to include socially, generationally, and economically diverse groups must be a goal for community development. Most importantly however, future work in the community must be enhanced by a positive sense of community because that sense will provide a strong foundation for any community-based change.

Map 5: Town of Altamont Land Use Management



Town of Altamont,
Adirondack State Park



Source Data: Adirondack Park Agency, 2000
Map Produced By Andy Keal
April 2001

0 6 Miles

Oval Wood Dish is a successful private employer in Franklin County. It provides more than 100 jobs for local residents.



Case Study III: Altamont in Franklin County

Overview of the Community

Geographically, people refer to the community of Tupper Lake as the area situated inside the political boundaries of the town of Altamont. The village of Tupper Lake is a separate political entity within the town, but both are often discussed as one. The town was incorporated in 1890, the same year the first railroad car arrived. Within a few years the town was a crossroads for two major railroad lines, several large hotels, and many sawmills. At its peak in 1950, the population reached 6,880 (Centennial Committee, 1990). The 1990 census of the town and village totaled 6,199 residents (Town Clerk, personal communication, 1998). The Adirondack Park Agency designated land-uses in the town of Altamont are unlike those of most other towns in the Park. Altamont contains no Wilderness or Primitive land-use categories and only about 8% of the land is Wild Forest (Map 5 and Table 2). However, 66% is zoned as Resource Management. While this boosts the wood products and working landscape economy, it limits the amount of recreation available to the public in the immediate area.

Similar to many communities across the Northern Forest region of New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, Tupper Lake based its early economy on resource extraction. Throughout Tupper Lake's history a myriad of industries and corporations have opened, prospered, and closed their doors in the community. Hotels, logging companies, wood product industries, health services, a dress factory, restaurants, and retail

⁴ From Kretser, H. 1999 "Bridging Healthy Communities to Healthy Environments: A Case Study of the Tupper Lake Community," Wildlife Conservation Society and The Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

shops are just a few of the businesses which established Tupper Lake's economy. Today, Tupper Lake maintains a diverse employment base through the public and private sector.

As in the rest of the Adirondacks, education, local and county government, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and the New York State Correctional facilities provide an array of public employment for Tupper Lake residents. The largest public employer in Tupper Lake is the New York State Sunmount Development and Disabilities Center. State government, the tourism sector, privately-owned small business, and the wood products industry have a significant impact on employment in Tupper Lake. The major private employer is OWD Inc., a producer of plastic knives, forks, spoons, and straws. Big Tupper Ski Area opened in 1960. It has experienced some exceptional ski seasons yet has struggled through numerous changes in ownership. The ski area has been closed throughout the 2000-2001 ski seasons. Currently, work is underway to find a new owner and bring back the economic activity associated with the Big Tupper ski facility. The community relies on the regional economy as well as the local. A significant percentage of Tupper Lake's residents work outside of the community, commuting 40-100 miles every day to work. More recently, telecommunicating has increased employment possibilities for a few residents.

Tupper Lake, like other Adirondack communities, has had its fair share of set-backs and controversies. The proposed correctional facility for Tupper Lake in 1997 raised many questions about appropriate economic development for the community. Although the prison was eventually located just outside the Blue Line in Malone instead of Tupper Lake, the surrounding debate brought about several new initiatives which seem to be gaining momentum for success. In the fall of 1998, community members proposed building a new Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks. To date, the project has received much support and is well underway. Such a facility will promote development that increases jobs and economic activity while facilitating environmental education and appreciation. Local residents have mobilized to raise money to build a new Railroad Depot and connect Tupper Lake to the recently revitalized Saranac Lake-Lake Placid Adirondack Scenic Railroad. Finally, the Ten Rivers Program is another new initiative which aims to market the western Adirondacks region as the headwaters to 10 major recreational rivers. The program will increase environmental awareness of the surrounding community and help balance tourism-related economic activity in that region with well-known areas in the eastern Adirondacks.

Today, Tupper Lake is the eastern gateway to the Northwestern Adirondacks, a region that includes some of the least explored areas of wilderness and canoe waters as well as the communities of Clifton and Fine. It serves as the western gateway to the High Peaks Wilderness area. It possesses the human capital to improve its community development



Once a favorite ski destination for locals and tourists, Big Tupper remains closed until new owners with strong financial backing emerge.

Overlooking the High Peaks, the future Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks will stimulate economic activity and foster environmental education.



capacity and work towards stimulating the economy.

Methods

ACCP began working with the Tupper Lake community after several groups had made unsuccessful attempts to start controversial economic development projects in the Town. ACCP contacted key community members and organized a written survey on development, business, recreational, and social issues. This was followed by numerous interviews with residents and members of various organizations. Currently, ACCP works with Tupper Lake on various efforts including the Ten Rivers Project, the Scenic By-Way Corridor Management Plan, and a partnership with the Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks to form the Adirondack Cooperative Loon Program.

Major Findings

The history of the Adirondack Park, current thinking, and research on Tupper Lake all support the idea that community includes all those affected by decisions made at a local level. At the time of this research, the local community of Tupper Lake had no clearly defined vision or course of action for issues affecting the area. This is partially a result of the changing values and beliefs of the traditional community and partially attributed to isolation, failure to communicate, lack of coordination, and a black and white perception of major issues.

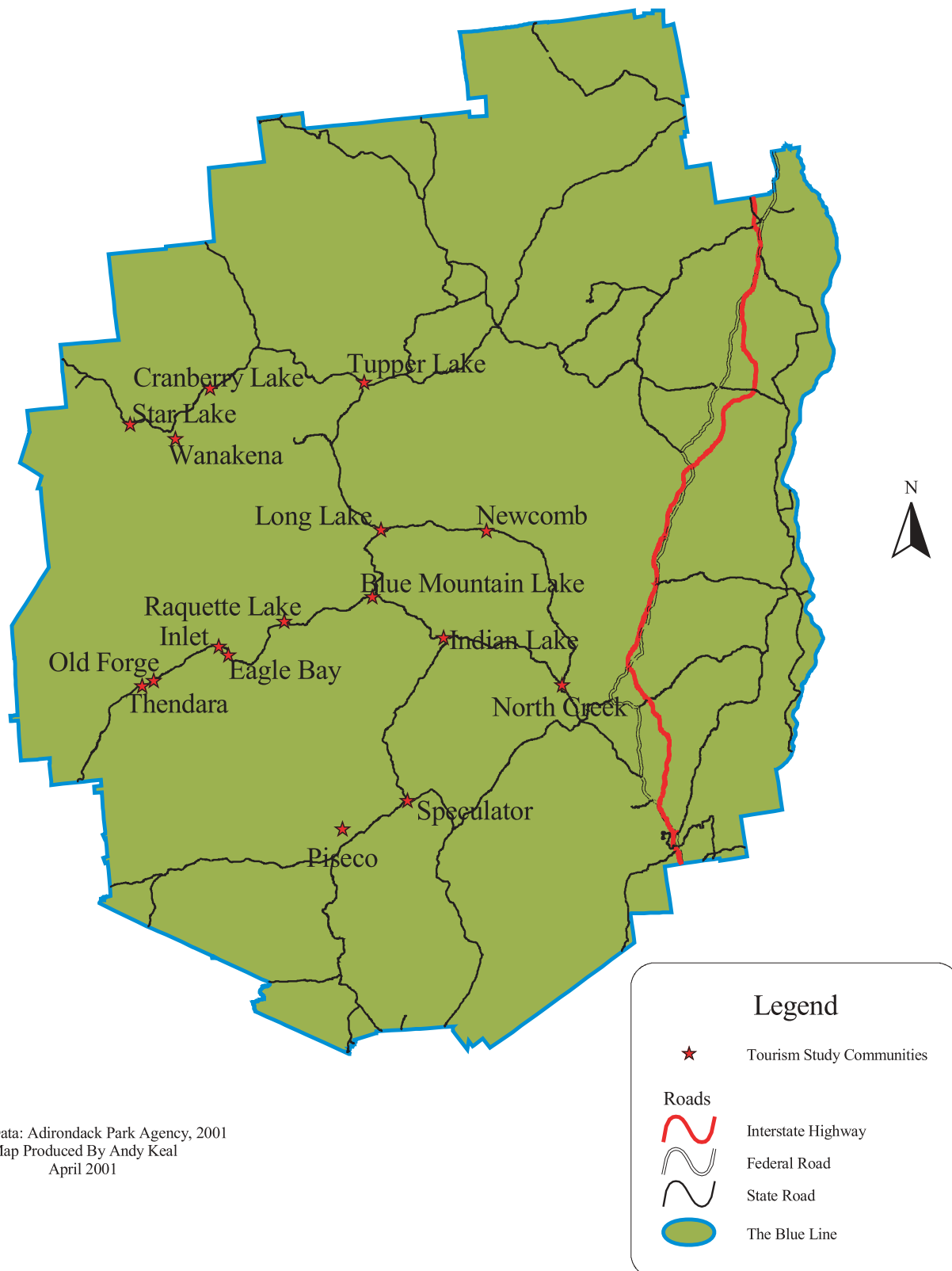
New ideas and new methods of conducting business are beginning to permeate the community. These are accepted by some, while others hold on to a more conventional way of thinking. Throughout the community, conflicts exist among people and entire families who have “been around” for years. But new ideas, changing demographics, the changing economy,

Table 5: Major themes in the Town of Altamont and the links to conservation

Theme	Relation to the Conservation
Waterfront and Recreation Development	Highlights the environmental assets of the community: the lake, the nearby mountains, walkways, and hiking trails
Beautification and Scenic Beauty	Improves built and natural environment, highlights the scenic beauty of the area. Scenic beauty cited as the main reason for people to live in the community
Volunteers and Community Organizations	Provides potential social energy to focus on projects which relate to conservation/environmental issues such as Chamber of Commerce initiatives, Natural History Museum, and the Ten Rivers promotion.
Chamber of Commerce Initiatives	Markets environmental features and promotes recreation oriented events in the immediate area.
Attitude Change	Signifies an opportunity to open dialogue among economic and environmental interests and create a venue in which to discuss collaboration. Without such a change, efforts will be hindered.
Leadership Role Models	Supports leaders who are interested in compatibility among environmental and development ideas and provides positive role models for youth in the community.
Relationship Between Seasonal and Year-round Residents	Fosters a relationship between these traditionally divergent groups to partner on various projects such as the new Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks.
Water Quality Issues	Review planning issues for sewage, community water sources, wetland regulations, and run-off to increase protection of valued resources such as the lake.

and the influx of various organizations with an interest in Tupper Lake seem to divide the “locals” and negatively affect the ability of the town and village to move ahead on many projects. Opportunities in the community of Tupper Lake over the past year have nevertheless brought residents together to achieve several common goals. While some sections of the town have difficulty working together, most are moving forward to connect the links among the human community, the surrounding environment, and future development.

Map 6: Tourism Study Communities



Source Data: Adirondack Park Agency, 2001
Map Produced By Andy Keal
April 2001



Unplanned tourism and lack of adequate facilities cause more problems than benefits to the Adirondack region, especially for the fragile ecosystem.

Study 4: Tourism – Stewardship and the Environment⁵

Overview of Study

The people and businesses associated with tourism and recreation are in a sense their own community. Tourism and recreation provide a common thread unifying development and conservation issues in the Adirondacks. During peak tourist season, when people visit the Adirondacks to enjoy its natural assets, business in most hamlets increases dramatically. Tourism, in some planners' eyes, is an environmentally-sensitive panacea for development. In 1994, the services industry accounted for 25% of the economy; second behind government jobs at 34%, and just more than trade at 21% (Rockefeller Institute and NYSDOL, 1994.) Even in the government and trade sectors, much of the economic activity is an indirect effect of tourism.

At the same time, unplanned tourism and lack of adequate facilities arguably cause more problems than benefits to the Adirondack region, especially for the fragile ecosystem. Tourism is one of the leading economic activities in the Adirondack Park, yet little research, planning, or public policy has addressed its development. The tourism study described here provides local business and community-based information that, in addition to recommending how businesses might be better prepared to address the needs of increasing tourism in the Adirondack Park, can also help inform, refocus, and improve initiatives for tourism planning, community development, business assistance, environmental protection, and recreation opportunities throughout the Adirondacks.

Methods

The report provides an in-depth look at Adirondack tourism opportunities from the perspective of 258 business owners in 16 communities⁶ in the central and western Adirondack Park. This survey of tourism businesses and follow-up focus group sessions were conducted in areas considered to be less popular destination communities. The list of tourism businesses was obtained through the local Chambers of Commerce and the focus group sessions were open to the public. ACCP continues to support on-going discussions relating to tourism and recreation and its role in Adirondack communities.

Major Findings

Tourism supply and demand are unevenly balanced throughout the Adirondacks. The study highlights the views of local business operators in different communities of the Park and examines the geographic struc-

⁵ From Holmes, T and Higgins, B 1999, "Tourism Business, Community and Environment in the Adirondack Park: The perspective of business owners and managers in the central and western Adirondack Park," Wildlife Conservation Society.

⁶ Blue Mountain Lake, Cranberry Lake, Eagle Bay, Indian Lake, Inlet, Long Lake, Newcomb, North Creek, Old Forge, Piseco, Raquette Lake, Speculator, Star Lake, Thendara, Tupper Lake, Wanakena

ture of tourism within the Adirondacks. Communities in the Adirondacks have distinct strengths, interests, and priorities with regards to tourism. Consequently, tourism planning, marketing, and development should explicitly consider the demonstrated diversity of community, geography, and business interests. Unfortunately, many communities want to be everything to every interest.

Tourism stakeholders within communities have different perceptions of how their tourism opportunities should be promoted and marketed. Most people in the tourism business identify with Adirondack mountains and lakes. Wilderness, beauty, and peace and quiet are among the most common terms mentioned. Many communities also identify with Adirondack history and culture as a part of their identity, but have difficulty integrating them into a whole experience. While the wide diversity of tourism opportunities is an asset for the region, the lack of a cohesive vision that accommodates that diversity — both regionally and sub-regionally — is a barrier to future tourism development, especially for the communities of the central and western Adirondacks.

Business operators in the central and western Adirondack Park have a wealth of ideas and a strong interest in local tourism planning and research. They offer a pro-active approach to enhancing tourism development and anticipating positive and negative attributes of tourism in order to effectively improve local economies. However, they lack the resources to assure broad participation in the development of community tourism plans. Currently, little research or information is available regarding the number, characteristics, or preferences of tourists in the Adirondacks. Furthermore, the State of New York presently has neither a statewide tourism plan nor a tourism plan for the entire Adirondack region.

Improving the quality of offerings (including shops, lodges, attractions, and transportation) was identified as the most effective action for improving the tourism economy of the area. High-quality service will greatly improve many visitors' experiences. However, labor market issues are the biggest problem for Adirondack business operators. Finding and keeping qualified workers presents a formidable challenge to many businesses in the Adirondacks. The cost of labor, a lack of adequate housing for service workers, college students returning to school before Labor Day, health insurance, and transportation issues all contribute to making labor a top priority for Adirondack tourism. Close to one-half of business owners are interested in changing or improving their enterprises. They perceive a shift in outdoor recreation demand and see significant economic potential in winter outdoor recreation activities, specifically snowmobiling and cross-country skiing. In order to keep up with demand, these "motivated" entrepreneurs are especially interested in business assistance on labor issues, the Internet, improved marketing and customer service. Motivated local entrepreneurs represent an important core of interest and commitment for providing and improving a quality experi-



Many tourism-based businesses come and go in the central Adirondacks. Cost of labor, lack of adequate housing for workers, college students returning to school before Labor Day, health insurance, and transportation services make labor a top priority for Adirondack businesses.



While organizations continue to work to balance motorized and non-motorized access, the majority of business owners are concerned about noise, water, and garbage pollution.

ence for the annual 10 million people who visit the Adirondack Park (Adirondack Regional Tourism Council, 2000).

From the perspective of the business operators surveyed, the natural environment is the Adirondacks' greatest tourism asset. Promoting tourism, while at the same time minimizing the potential negative environmental impacts of tourism, is a challenge. Business owners express willingness to participate in public-private partnerships and collaborative activities that promote and protect a high quality outdoor recreation experience in the Adirondacks such as a well-groomed snowmobile trail or a canoe access on a motorless lake. Adirondack entrepreneurs also want to more effectively promote the area's natural resources and provide better maps for easy access to local areas.

While being located in the Adirondack Park offers a superior outdoor experience, some businesses view the associated regulations as a hindrance to the economy. Specifically, restrictions placed on land designated as Wilderness limit access for various kinds of recreation, such as the use of mountain bikes, float planes, motor boats, snowmobiles, and other motorized vehicles. While organizations continue to work to balance motorized and non-motorized access, the majority of business owners are concerned about noise, water, and garbage pollution affecting the region.

Communities noted a lack of environmental interpretation for visitors to their areas; they noted the difference between the Adirondack Park and National Parks, where education is an important aspect of the visit. Study participants perceived education as an effective way to address issues such as leaving garbage and food accessible to animals, recycling, defacing trees and rocks, disposing gas and oil, and general stewardship.

The public and private sectors play important, but very different, roles in Adirondack tourism. While the public sector is concerned with land-use regulations and public access, the private sector is concerned with marketing and providing quality service. To date, there have been few attempts to bring the public and private sectors together to address tourism planning at the community or regional level. Efforts to begin collaboration coupled with a cohesive plan for the tourism industry will greatly improve economic benefits and natural resource management in and around the Adirondack Park communities.

Table 6: Major themes in the tourism study and the links to conservation

THEME	RELATION TO CONSERVATION
Environment as the Main Attraction	Highlights the importance of maintaining a healthy natural environment. The majority of entrepreneurs perceive a chance to see wildlife and access to lakes and rivers as the greatest importance to visitors, suggesting an opportunity to incorporate these recreation concepts in the community planning process.
Education	Increases the amount of information for visitors, residents, and entrepreneurs. An improved effort must be designed in order to save special places in the Adirondacks and promote better stewardship
Permit Process	Creates some difficulty when setting up new tourism-related businesses. Individuals must understand, complete, and wait for the permit process with DEC and APA prior to opening or when making changes to the business. However, this process is important to protect certain attractive environmental qualities.
Wilderness Designation	Limits use and protects the lands but is a potential deterrent to economic activity in some tourism sectors: snowmobiling, jet skis, mountain bikes, float planes, sightseeing plane rides. Wilderness designation protects the "outdoor experience" that many visitors seek. Other land use categories provide a balance to accommodate different recreation activities.
Marketing	Promotes the region as a whole using the natural assets as a leveraging point. Needs to include some of the smaller hamlets in a more rigorous regional marketing plan.
Labor	Causes financial difficulties for many tourism businesses because the lack of quality or dependable workers results in an inability to meet the demands of visitors and an inability to address the environmental concerns related to business. Recognize that labor issues are a significant deterrent to economic development in the Adirondacks. Promote a collaborative approach among communities, regional organizations and state agencies to develop innovative solutions for training, health insurance, wages, job-sharing and public transportation.
Tourism Planning and Development	Considers the impacts of overuse, seasonality, and encouraging use of less popular areas. Provides a regional approach to tourism. Encourage community planning for tourism and transportation to lessen the negative impacts of over-use. Pay particular attention to trailheads, signage and connections between hamlets and State Lands. Pro-active approach to planning will prepare communities for participation in the design of the DEC Unit Management Plans for State Lands.
Communication Gap Between Public and Private Enterprises	Inhibits both sides from having and using the necessary resources to promote and conserve Adirondack natural assets. Bring together different stakeholders through an advisory panel and/or workshops on tourism.

Discussion of Case Studies

Differences



With abundant Resource Management lands, Altamont and Clifton-Fine are in a better position to promote the wood products industry.

The case studies discussed above provide one venue to compare Adirondack communities. While many lessons can be learned from each community, it is important to note their inherent differences before making general recommendations for future action. First, the population of Tupper Lake is more than double that of the other two communities. Second, the mix of APA land-use classifications within each town differs tremendously. These classifications have implications for community development and appropriate actions. For example, with abundant Resource Management lands, Altamont and Clifton-Fine are in a better position to promote the wood products industry. Johnsburg, on the other hand, is in a better position to focus on recreation or smaller scale natural resource-based industries, such as small landowner associations. While the land use categories do not explicitly discourage certain types of growth, the communities need to consider resource availability within each land use category prior to pursuing certain types of economic growth.

A third difference between the towns, which is evident in their histories and current industries, is their economic structure. The Clifton-Fine employment base lies in competitive and constantly changing private enterprises influenced by the global economy. Tupper Lake retains a mix of government and private jobs, while Johnsburg has a similar mix but also is within driving distance of larger communities, such as Glens Falls, just outside the Blue Line. Finally and most importantly, the communities employ a variety of approaches to community development. Johnsburg is using community visioning by creating long-term goals and working towards meeting them via inventory, analysis, and public participation. Clifton-Fine has a self-selected economic development group which meets regularly. Tupper Lake has made multiple attempts at different development strategies and has had only limited success until recently with the waterfront development and Natural History Museum project. Only recently have Clifton-Fine and Tupper Lake engaged in a visioning process to set forth goals for their communities.

Similarities

Although conducted independently, the community case studies, and to some extent the tourism study, reveal similarities among Adirondack residents from different areas. Three over-arching themes are:

- 1) The desire for economic stability and job availability
- 2) The need to increase opportunities for youth
- 3) The important role of the environment, especially local natural areas and the quality of their resources

Along with these major themes, most residents have a strong appreciation for scenic beauty and natural assets and they enjoy living in the Adirondacks for the quality of small-town life. The communities are united by the Blue Line, the Adirondack Park Agency's regulatory structure, and the division of the parochial "insiders" and "outsiders" that plagues almost every development program. Each community offers a wealth of assets, both natural and human. Clifton-Fine hosts the Five Ponds Wilderness and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Campground; Tupper Lake has extensive water resources and Big Tupper Ski Area; and Johnsburg offers the Hudson River and Gore Mountain Ski Area. Identifying ways to capitalize on these assets will benefit future community projects in all of the towns.

Lessons Learned

How can the ACCP's research inform key issues in the Adirondacks?
What are the lessons learned?

Rural Development

- Highlight how rural development in Adirondack communities is linked to the environment on almost every theme or issue.
- Present development ideas in a tangible format. Abstract ideas of "tourism" or "industry" invite people who doubt change and tourism planning to imagine worst-case scenarios. Residents perceive a big difference between "honky-tonk" tourism and the reality of a quaint farmhouse Bed and Breakfast catering to bird-watchers.

Local Attitudes

- Recognize that local people demonstrate an affinity and appreciation of the natural environment.
- Use local appreciation of resource values to find common ground and move forward on conservation issues.

Development and Conservation

- Address misconceptions about "insiders/outsiders" and the effects of a regulatory structure. These ideas fuel conventional debates polarizing "environment OR development" and cast negative shadows on the benefits of living inside a protected area.
- Realize the majority of residents do not associate economic development with environmental conservation. Many organizations and businesses understand that environmental conservation spurs economic development. Residents enjoy living in the Adirondacks and the lifestyle it enables, yet the link between economic prosperity and environmental conservation are not as obvious to most residents.



Use the local appreciation of the resources to find common ground and move forward on conservation issues.



Take the local enjoyment of the Adirondack landscape and wildlife and translate that energy into positive community development.

Information Gathering

- Set aside an adequate amount of time and resources to gather information at the community level.
- Make the information more accessible and more easily understood for local residents, community development, conservation planning, and the tourism industry.

Connectedness to the Land

- Demonstrate links by seeing beyond political affiliations and administrative boundaries.
- Visualize the land and communities as interconnected.
- Take local enjoyment of the Adirondack landscape and wildlife and translate that energy into positive community development.
- Provide the information and resources to bridge the gap between local enjoyment of Adirondack resources and community development.

Recommendations

The underlying “sense of community” throughout the three case studies bodes well for sustainable planning in the area. Several ideas mentioned by residents are built around a sustainable ideal, although that term is never explicitly used. Community leaders recognize that they are planning not only to alleviate current issues, but also to provide for the future. However, most planning is focused on sustaining the community with less attention paid to integral links between economic and environmental issues. The diverse social layers within the community also need to be recognized and incorporated into the planning process.

Until Adirondack residents can resolve internal conflicts among neighbors, families, year-round residents, and local politicians, certain vocal and politically powerful members of the community will continue to express and work towards achieving their own well-defined agendas. If Adirondack residents agree upon common goals and objectives through asset mapping (see Identifying and Using Existing Assets, below) and visioning, then they can work with a variety of organizations to develop a more balanced approach towards sustaining human and natural communities.

Based upon the results of the three case studies, the tourism study, and trends in community development today (Sierra Business Council, 1998; Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993; and Howe et al, 1997) Adirondack communities should take the following steps towards improving their futures:

- Mobilize the community from within to increase local participation

- Focus on common interests
- Use existing assets
- Identify the community's niche
- Maintain consistency among different initiatives
- Work at the local level with a regional perspective
- Facilitate inter-community and stakeholder collaboration

Community Mobilization

A key component of community mobilization is local participation. A recommended approach to working in a community is identifying locals who are respected by all or almost all segments of the population. Local involvement can be generated by building on existing formal and informal social networks. Build social networks informally, for example, through community clean-up efforts that involve both new and long-term residents. At the same time, encourage better communication with the local industries, whether it's a paper mill, mine, health facility, or ski mountain. Greater involvement from all interests will increase trust among the public and private sector as well as neighbors and organizations. It will also serve to identify the community's most important issues.

Throughout the process of community development, residents should be encouraged to take an active role. Regular communication with residents and community organizations should keep people aware of ongoing research or work in their communities. Moreover, increasing local participation in all aspects of the community development process, from brainstorming to decision-making, will facilitate long-term support. Local residents often have innovative ideas for the sustainable growth of their community, just worded differently. Acting as a knowledge or funding source to improve upon existing ideas allows for the accomplishment of larger goals without compromising local identity.

Numerous efforts have succeeded in mobilizing Adirondack community members to use available resources to improve their towns and villages. Almost everyday newspapers showcase local and regional attempts to improve Adirondack communities. The Champlain Valley Heritage Network has boosted the economies of Essex, Westport, and Port Henry through cooperative marketing and activities based in the Lake Champlain region. The residents of Indian Lake have constructed a stage to accommodate live performances for the community theater at the local movie theater. The Communities 2000 program in Old Forge, Inlet, Thendara, and Eagle Bay is developing a pedestrian/bike path connecting the four communities to the area train station. Over several years, Saranac Lake has organized a downtown revitalization program through the efforts of the town and village residents and the Office of Community Development. The Saranac Lake plan uses the town's unique assets to



Increasing local participation in all aspects of the community development process, from brainstorming to decision-making, will facilitate long-term support for most initiatives.

develop community projects. A river walkway, the renovation of the Railroad Depot, and the rebuilding of the local Ski Lodge provided pivotal community projects through which community members mobilized and participated in improving the area's character. Local Chambers of Commerce in communities throughout the Park successfully sponsor festivals and outdoor sporting events year-round with the help of motivated community members. Each strategy provides a different starting point for towns and villages inside the Blue Line. By taking these varied but similar approaches to community mobilization, towns and villages highlight their assets and create a community vision.



Common interests, such as an historical landmark, can unite people of diverse backgrounds to move forward on community development projects.

Focus on Common Interests

Focusing improvement efforts around common interests will facilitate community development. Each case study suggests that common ground exists within each community, yet is difficult to attain because of the tendency to focus on controversial issues. Local social divisions are also problematic. Often, a person's or project's association with one organization, group, or family in a town will reduce credibility with other groups due to stereotypes or previous negative encounters with that organization, group, or family. As long as mobilized citizens focus on common interests such as beautification, improving schools, revitalizing downtown areas, supporting libraries, and upgrading access to medical care, these local divisions can be set aside to move towards a shared vision.

One of the most important common interests is the natural environment. The case studies and the tourism report reveal that the Adirondacks' natural resources and pristine environment are important considerations in many peoples' minds. However, the reasons why the environment is considered so important differ among the communities and their residents. The environment is a common interest around which opposing groups can open dialogue and mobilize to action. Whether an all-encompassing development plan or community vision exists or not, room for integrating a common interest — the natural surroundings — exists within various projects. An understanding of shared interest in the environment will facilitate action on these projects.

Identifying and Using Existing Assets

The traditional approach to community development has been to focus on a community's needs, deficiencies, and problems. By comparison, a strategy called assets mapping focuses on a community's capacities and assets. Assets mapping emphasizes the development of policies and activities based on the capacities, skills, and resources of people and their community. Evidence indicates that community development occurs only when local community members are committed to investing them-

selves and their resources in the effort. Assets mapping initiates this process by organizing community members to identify their collective skills and resources.

Assets mapping is based on the recognition that each community has a unique combination of resources and strengths. Assets mapping helps a community understand its starting point before charting a course to move forward. It identifies the resources present in the community, the capacities of its residents and workers, and the associational and institutional base of the area. This strategy concentrates first of all upon the program building and problem-solving capacities of local residents, local associations and local institutions. It then evolves to constantly build and rebuild the relationships among local residents, local associations, and local institutions. Assets mapping should provide not only a method for constructing networks to address community needs, but also a mechanism for understanding community well-being.

As part of the process, an inventory of citizens' associations is compiled. These associations, less formal and far less dependent upon paid staff than are formal institutions, are the vehicles through which citizens have historically assembled to solve community problems or to share common interests and activities. An inventory of the more formal community institutions is also compiled. Private businesses; public institutions such as schools, libraries, parks, police and fire stations; and nonprofit institutions such as hospitals and social service agencies are the most visible and formal part of a community's fabric.

ACCP has taken the asset mapping approach a step further to include a town's natural and physical characteristics. As Adirondack communities employ this method and continue to grow, a balanced partnership of resident capacity and natural resource capacity will help towns attain their long-term goals.

Niche Identification

Ninety-two towns and 13 villages exist within the Adirondack Park. All share certain attributes, such as relative size, abundant forests, and small private enterprises. Yet while each town has a distinct Adirondack character, there are also pronounced distinctions. For example, Lake Placid and Lake George are recreation centers which embrace world-class tourism. Long Lake and Speculator promote the rustic getaway, while Inlet and Old Forge boast of pristine and continuous waterways. Newcomb and Keene Valley provide access to different areas of the High Peaks, whereas Star Lake and Tupper Lake remain off the beaten track as gateways to the unexplored northwestern wilderness. Taken together, the diversity of the towns' characters and economies create the Adirondack region. Inter-community interaction and asset mapping can help clarify each town's niche. Conferences can provide an ideal setting for inter-community cooperation



The Adirondack identity can be further dissected into specific niches in which each individual community can excel.

in devising a regional plan for Adirondack communities and their niches in the 21st century.

The tourism study indicates the potential for increasing year-round tourism. Leaf peepers, hunters, anglers, skiers, birders, snowmobilers, canoeists, and campers utilize the park throughout the year. Traditionally, tourists rented small cabins for a week or a month at a time. Unlike years past, the Adirondacks is increasingly a weekend getaway. Tourists seeking longer vacations fly places other than the Northeast. The opportunity for the Adirondack communities then becomes how to attract the weekend tourist into their own community. Communities interested in attracting tourists need to ask themselves: What is unique about our community? Why would people want to come here? And what can be done to make the visitors' stay more enjoyable? These questions and others will help identify a community's niche.



Coordinating small efforts such as flower plantings and bench design create a unique community “look” that is appealing to residents and visitors.

Consistency and Coordination Among Projects

Throughout this paper, numerous references have been made to completed, on-going, or future projects in the different communities, including the Waterfront Development Project, the Natural History Museum, the potential return of the railroad, walkway and bicycle path improvements, the connection between Gore Mountain Ski Area and North Creek Ski Bowl, and walkways connecting the Hudson River to the hamlet of North Creek. These projects are independent, but need to be considered as part of a broader community vision. Consistent styles for lighting, signs, walkways, tree plantings, flowers, and parking within each community are seemingly insignificant; however complementary designs, colors, and placement of these objects throughout a village or town create a unique community “look.” The “look” may come from a concept or theme chosen and agreed upon by residents. Coordination across a town or village’s infrastructure and the participation of volunteers or local organizations will provide an opportunity for residents to coordinate planning and develop a consistent style to create cohesive Adirondack communities.

Regional Perspective at the Local Level

Communities within the Adirondacks have an array of assets which attract residents, business proprietors, and tourists. Some areas offer good schools, easy access to health care, major roads that connect to hubs such as Glens Falls and Plattsburgh, mountainous terrain, and lowland lakes. Other areas remain somewhat isolated, lack adequate schools or health care, and offer less dramatic terrain. Overall, each Adirondack community offers a unique package of resources. A strategic community development plan will need to address the individual characteristics of the town as well as the town’s niche in the Adirondack region.

To reinforce community planning activities, development in the Adirondack Park during the 21st century needs to occur on a regional basis, with all projects considered part of a larger framework. This regional perspective will allow planners to recognize an area's strengths and to formulate an economic plan appropriate for the community's assets and desired change. A regional approach will also encourage organizational partnerships to eliminate duplicating efforts and increase the effectiveness of fewer targeted projects. This broader perspective will encourage communication between communities to facilitate a region which offers a multitude of services.

Media coverage is a key component to building a regional perspective. Improved media and conferences in the Adirondacks can provide a forum to address environmental issues and local government issues at a regional level. In smaller communities, stores can dispense regional information by carrying regional papers. Local organizations, school officials, and smaller communities should ensure that they are covered in these papers. This will strengthen the connection with the surrounding area. North Country Public Radio, which continues to expand its coverage, and publications such as Adirondack Life and Adirondack Explorer, as well as a host of daily and weekly newspapers, are key for dispensing regional information throughout the Adirondacks. The Adirondack Research Consortium holds a conference each year and the Adirondack Economic Development Corporation facilitates a series of Adirondack Economic Roundtables.

A regional approach to development will benefit year-round residents by distributing wealth more evenly, rather than focusing most economic activity in several Adirondack "hot spots" such as Lake Placid and Lake George; smaller towns will have the opportunity to use their unique resources for economic change that suits the community. Finally, a regional perspective will better incorporate the links between Adirondack communities and the surrounding land. Rather than viewing each community as an isolated hamlet, strategic planning should incorporate resources and natural amenity values from the surrounding management zones. Many Adirondack residents fear that the environment is considered more important than the local community's well-being. Many residents think that the environment within the towns is already well protected or over-protected. Calls for more regulation or more conservation are often interpreted as attempts to remove people from the land. However, a concerted effort to work at a regional level will alleviate some of the myths as community members open dialogue with perceived "outsiders" who are often equally interested in maintaining the local character of the communities. To this end, communities will be better prepared to participate in the state decision making process when opportunities



Media coverage is a key component to building a regional perspective. ACCP supports reporter Brian Mann at North Country Public Radio's Adirondack News Bureau.

such as the writing or rewriting of the Department of Environmental Conservation's Unit Management Plans or economic development planning arise.



Opening dialogue among numerous stakeholders is a key approach to providing information.

Next Steps

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a critical role influencing policies affecting the Adirondack Park. The public education, research, and projects that NGOs facilitate and provide are invaluable and will continue to be a necessary tool in the Adirondack Park's future. State agencies, such as the DEC and APA, welcome the information generated by Adirondack NGOs as these agencies lack the resources and staff to conduct research and organize projects as effectively.

For the Park to maintain qualities important to Adirondack residents, future community development efforts must involve year-round residents, seasonal residents, state agencies, and citizens' interest organizations. Such participation and dialogue will create an optimal setting for inter-community cooperation to devise a regional plan for Adirondack communities in the 21st century.

The Adirondack Communities and Conservation Program, a relatively new player in the Adirondack Park, saw an opportunity to open and link communication lines to provide old and new information through different yet meaningful approaches. As information providers, ACCP opened dialogue among numerous stakeholders at its annual Oswegatchie Round Table (ORT) discussion. The ORT is the backbone of ACCP's projects as discussions have forged new relationships among forest managers, environmentalists, snowmobilers, local government officials, and biologists. Resulting projects include a study of sugar maple regeneration failure in the western Adirondacks, a partnership with Eastern Mountain Sports, DEC, and ACCP to promote food canisters to eliminate black bear/human conflict in the backcountry, and a computer mapping class for Tupper Lake high school students using Geographic Information Systems. These efforts, our targeted community studies, and the projects outlined below, position ACCP to continue to work successfully with Adirondack communities in the new millennium.

Atlas of the Adirondacks

ACCP is compiling a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) database that includes a comprehensive overview of socio-economic, topographic, environmental, historical, and physical features of the Adirondacks. This database is being used to produce of an Atlas of the Adirondacks. The combination of information at multiple scales is intended to serve as a mirror for the region and its communities. If represented correctly, the



The Adirondack Community Information Center in Inlet. Left: before remodeling. Right: after

reflection will be accurate and provocative: a stimulus for discussion and debate of the region's future. The Atlas will include maps, photos, and accompanying text and interpretation. The Atlas presents a spatial look at the region's development potential and conservation needs. Presenting data in new and different ways illuminates the complex nuances of the region, while at the same time encourages park residents to see themselves as part of the same region. Through a series of Atlas working sessions, ACCP has gained invaluable input from local residents throughout the Park. An Adirondack Advisory Team composed of local and seasonal residents, as well as organizations, will guide the Atlas process through completion.

Paul Smith's College Capstone Program

Paul Smith's, the College of the Adirondacks, has initiated a Capstone Program for seniors. This program encourages students to complete an independent or group project in their major field of study. The students must identify a project and mentor, design a proposal, and complete the relevant field work in order to graduate. Students are encouraged to undertake projects which are relevant to Adirondack research needs. ACCP sees the Capstone Program as an integral link between the Adirondack community and one of its greatest assets, Paul Smith's College. Using connections throughout the region, ACCP has increased participation from local organizations by soliciting and identifying practical projects that have a greater significance to the local community. ACCP encourages and assists students to follow through with their projects by presenting their findings to their host organizations and interested community members.

Adirondack Community Information Centers

The Adirondack Community Information Centers project is a cooperative effort among numerous Adirondack communities, organizations, and State agencies to revitalize rural town centers and surrounding communities through an information-based approach to environmentally sensitive

*The Adirondack
Community
Information
Centers project will
revitalize local
communities as
well as create a
visible network of
information
providers around
the Adirondacks.*



Community Exchanges give motivated residents the opportunity to see community development around the Park first-hand.

development. It will do so by converting abandoned store fronts to attractive centers that provide essential information, ranging from local natural attractions to development options. These centers are also intended to stimulate downtown revitalization and public participation. The Adirondack Community Information Centers project is a region-wide effort focused on selected communities, including Inlet, Johnsburg, and Clifton-Fine. The program will link existing facilities/interpretation efforts and new facilities with an overall goal to increase the flow of information among institutions, organizations, and communities, thereby fostering greater appreciation for stewardship of the Adirondack Park's natural resources and communities.

ACCP has been coordinating efforts to create centers that will:

- Locate in previously vacant storefronts in hamlets throughout the Park.
- Display an overview of the Adirondacks complete with Park-wide information on natural and cultural history.
- Focus on particular natural history and cultural themes chosen by the community. Potential topics include waterways, loons, moose, mountains, railroads, great camps, mining, and forestry.
- Highlight the community's local history and recreational opportunities.
- Provide access to information regarding public and private lands, zoning and regulation, economic and small business development.
- Build computer links to the new Adirondack Information Resource Center at Paul Smith's, The College of the Adirondacks.
- Serve as a community resource for residents and tourists through exhibits, lectures, and programs.
- Create a springboard for other experiences in the community and around the Park.

Linking Communities, Forest Preserve, Tourism, and Economy

Since the initial tourism study, ACCP has hosted a follow-up conference bringing together "motivated entrepreneurs" to discuss the role of corridors through both public and private lands, the use of web sites to increase economic returns, and the Department of Environmental Conservation's unit management planning process. ACCP continues to work with various entrepreneurs, state agencies, residents, and organizations in the tourism industry to provide information and promote viable opportunities. For example, ACCP has used its GIS capabilities to help communities such as Altamont and Clifton-Fine develop maps for the Ten Rivers Recreation area.

Community Exchanges

In an effort to connect isolated communities within the Park, ACCP hosts a series of community exchanges. Various community leaders and active Park residents meet 4-5 times a year in different host communities to share ideas and experiences regarding community projects which embrace the recommendations listed in the previous section. The host community provides visiting Park residents with a presentation and tour of the project sites and explains specific details such as how the project was initiated, where the community found funding, how the leaders generated community acceptance, what resources were needed, how the community worked within existing regulations, what pitfalls were encountered, and other issues. The group has a chance to ask questions, share ideas, and experience the projects first hand. ACCP uses the exchange program as another method to maintain a strong relationship with the Park communities and promote successful projects that embrace the idea that conservation and development can coexist in the Adirondacks.

Maintaining the Community Connection

ACCP has maintained direct links to the three case study areas, which has proven critical for program development. The community research papers on Altamont and Clifton-Fine and the inventory and analysis of Johnsbury have been invaluable tools for recent community economic work in the respective towns. ACCP has regular contact with the community development groups and local governments who continue to work in those communities. ACCP is working with Clifton-Fine and Altamont on the new “Ten Rivers, Heartland of the Adirondacks” marketing plan and is participating in the on-going town visioning process in all three communities. Communities in the tourism study and the three targeted case studies are likely candidates for Adirondack Community Information Centers and for a more detailed analysis in the Atlas of the Adirondacks.

Evaluation is key for the on-going process of community work. With the initial research projects completed, ACCP will continue to serve as a consultant to the communities and a facilitator for targeted projects. ACCP is prepared to assist partner communities in the development process. As long as projects remain at an appropriate scale for the existing community infrastructure, desires of local residents, the decision-making process, and the available resources, ACCP can work with communities to make substantial progress. Partnerships, regional collaboration, and — most importantly — direct participation from the community, will enable ACCP to positively link conservation and development inside the Blue Line.



ACCP's Andy Keal, Zoë Smith, and Heidi Kretser continue to work in Adirondack Park communities forging unique partnerships and regional collaboration to build projects that successfully link communities and conservation.

Appendix A:

APA Land Use Classification Private Land Use and Development Plan

Classification	Appropriate Uses	Intensity Guidelines
Hamlet	Growth and service centers of the Park. The Plan permits all uses within hamlet areas	No limit
Moderate Intensity	Most uses are permitted, but relatively concentrated residential development is most appropriate.	500 principal buildings per square mile. 1.3 acre average lot size
Low Intensity	Most uses are permitted, but residential development at a lower intensity than above is most appropriate	200 principal buildings per square mile. 3.2 acre average lot size
Rural Use	Most uses are permitted, but rural uses are most appropriate. Low intensity residential development is also suitable.	75 principal buildings per square mile. 8.5 acre average lot size
Resource Management	Suitable uses include agriculture and forestry, game preserves and recreation. Residential development at a very low density is permitted	15 principal buildings per square mile. 42.7 acre average lot size.
Industrial Use	Existing industrial uses and future industrial sites.	No limit

(Adirondack Park Agency, 1982)

Appendix B:

APA Land Use Classification State Land Use Master Plan

Classification	Definition/Appropriate Uses	Management Guidelines
Wilderness	Areas where earth and its community of life are untrammelled by humans. Hiking, XC skiing, snowshoeing, back country camping, etc.	No additions or expansions of non-conforming uses, i.e. roads, buildings. Use of motorized vehicles and off-road bicycles strictly prohibited
Canoe Area	Like Wilderness only dominated by water. Canoeing, hiking, XC skiing, back-country camping, etc	same as Wilderness designation
Primitive	Essentially wilderness, but contains structures and other improvements. All forms of recreation permitted.	Limited motorized access and bicycles allowed. Additional structures and expansions prohibited.
Wild Forest	Similar to wilderness or primitive area only frequently lacks the sense of remoteness. All forms of recreation permitted.	Limited motorized access and bicycles allowed. Additional structures and expansions prohibited unless a formally adopted unit management plan exists.
Intensive Use	Areas where the State provides facilities: campgrounds and day use areas	Limited motorized access and bicycles allowed. Areas include boat lunches, visitor centers, campgrounds. Unit Management Plans required for all improvements.
State Administrative	Areas where the State provides facilities. Administrative, Scientific, and Visitor information related.	Provide administrative facilities on a scale which is in harmony with surrounding setting. Adhere to wetland regulations.
Historic	Buildings or structures with historical significance owned by the State.	Preserve the character of the site. Adhere to wetland regulations.

(Adirondack Park Agency, 1989)

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