

Adirondacks

2025 Fall/Winter Update

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends of the Adirondacks,

Here at The Nature Conservancy, we firmly believe that collaboration leads to a better world. That belief was powerfully reaffirmed at the Adirondack Council's 50th anniversary celebration, where several organizations were honored for their contributions to preserving and enhancing the natural resources and communities of the Adirondacks.

We were proud to be among those recognized for our enduring commitment to the region.

Today's environmental challenges demand bold, united action—both inside and outside the Blue Line. Is it always easy? No. Uncomfortable? Sometimes. But is it possible? Absolutely.

At The Nature Conservancy, we see these challenges as opportunities to build bridges—across sectors, across geographies and across perspectives. We're forging new partnerships with organizations, businesses, governments and communities to create lasting impact. With your support, anything is possible.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Peg R. Olsen
Director



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Meet Keeley Jock, the 2025 Adirondack Conservation Associate



Keeley Jock grew up in Akwesasne, as an enrolled member of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe and Mohawk Council of Akwesasne.

She most recently served as a climate justice fellow for the Adirondack North Country Association and worked at the Six Nations Iroquois Cultural Center, digitizing the late Ray Fadden's artwork. Jock wrote her undergraduate thesis at Paul Smith's College on Indigenous knowledge informing Environmental Protection Agency standard wetland assessments using some data from Follensby and gave a TEDx

Talk at The Wild Center educating the Adirondack community about the Haudenosaunee Seventh Generation Principle. This field season, Jock led a biocultural bioblitz at Follensby and helped to inform Indigenous cultural provisioning practices at Nature Conservancy preserves.

COVER Reishi, identified and logged at the Follensby Pond Research Preserve biocultural bioblitz. © Nancie Battaglia

THIS PAGE Kevin Chlad, Adirondack Council deputy director; Kris Kovey, The Nature Conservancy in the Adirondacks trustee; and Peg Olsen, Adirondacks director for The Nature Conservancy, at the Adirondack Council's 50th anniversary gathering.

Baby loon in training. © Jill Bauer

Nature Conservancy Adirondack Conservation Associate Keeley Jock. © Photo courtesy of Jock



The Nature Conservancy is a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) international membership organization. Its mission is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends.

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2.4 # trees preserved for the future
178.5 gallons water saved

342.7 lbs. CO₂ prevented

Living Laboratories: What You Make Possible

Thanks to your support, The Nature Conservancy's preserves across the North Country of New York are more than just beautiful places to hike, birdwatch and reflect—they're dynamic living laboratories where science and nature meet to shape a better future. And they're part of something much bigger: a network of protected lands that are advancing conservation, resilience and restoration on local, regional and global scales.

Imagine walking along a quiet boardwalk through Spring Pond Bog Preserve in Tupper Lake. The air is cool and damp, filled with the earthy scent of moss and the calls of rare birds overhead. This vast peatland—one of the largest in New York—is a haven for species that are found nowhere else in the state. It's also a vital site for research that could save the endangered spruce grouse. For over a decade, scientists from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation have studied this elusive bird here, working to boost its genetic diversity and ensure its survival.

A little to the northeast, our Gadway Sandstone Pavement Barrens Preserve offers a completely different experience. Picture a rippled expanse of ancient sandstone, formed 12,000 years ago by a catastrophic flood. There are fewer than 20 sandstone pavement barren sites globally, making them rare and imperiled. SUNY Plattsburgh faculty and students have long studied this incredible habitat, exploring everything from small mammals to the resilience of jack pine trees.

LEFT TO RIGHT Gadway Preserve represents an outstanding example of a sandstone pavement barren, a globally rare natural community found in fewer than 20 sites around the world. © Carl Heilman II

Spring Pond Bog Preserve's wetlands and surrounding forest provide habitat for more than 130 species of birds, including boreal species like spruce grouse, black-backed woodpecker, gray jay and short-eared owl. © Charlie Reinertsen/Twolined Studios LLC

Your generosity also fuels collaboration. Recently, we partnered with the Ausable Freshwater Center to supply native tree seeds from our preserves to their new nursery. These seeds will grow into hardy plants that can withstand elevation and climate extremes—perfect for restoring stream habitats and strengthening ecosystems across the region.

And the work doesn't stop there. Our scientists are monitoring black ash trees in the High Peaks region for signs of the invasive emerald ash borer. At the newly established Follensby Pond Research Preserve—a nearly 15,000-acre expanse—your donations helped create a refuge for cold-water species threatened by climate change. This site will serve as both a sanctuary and a hub for cutting-edge research.

"Our preserves offer incredible opportunities to deepen our understanding of nature and our place within it," says Kate Berdan, New York stewardship manager. "We welcome research that explores climate resilience, traditional ecology and how recreation affects our natural resources."

Because of you, these preserves are not only protected—they're powering discovery, restoration and hope. They're helping The Nature Conservancy lead the way in conservation science around the world.

To learn more about conducting research at one of our New York preserves, contact Seth Jones at seth.jones@tnc.org.





Follensby Field Notes

Follensby Pond has long been considered one of the crown jewels of the Adirondacks—a nearly 15,000-acre haven for biodiversity. Its clear, deep waters are surrounded by northern hardwood forests—including sugar maple, yellow birch and American beech—that form a dense canopy overhead. Smaller patches of conifer forest add texture to the landscape. Thanks to a historic agreement, The Nature Conservancy continues to own Follensby, while New York State now holds two conservation easements: one that established the Follensby Pond Research Preserve, and another that opened 6,000 acres along the Raquette River for public recreation. With your continued support, we’re now writing a new chapter for this storied place—one that honors its ecological and cultural significance while expanding access and understanding.

Welcoming the Public for the First Time

This summer, we launched the first-ever public educational tours of Follensby in partnership with The Wild Center. Small groups ventured into the preserve, trading the noise of daily life for quiet moments broken only by haunting loon calls. Visitors ranging in age from 13 to 80 explored the landscape by boat and on foot as team members from The Nature Conservancy and The Wild Center shared stories of Follensby’s geological origins; the deep history of the Penobscot, Abenaki, Oneida and Mohawk Nations who hunted, fished

and lived in this region; the legacy of Ralph Waldo Emerson’s Philosophers’ Camp; the return of bald eagles to the area; and the importance of protecting freshwater ecosystems around the globe.

Re-Storying the Land

A new initiative called Re-Storyation is helping to reshape how we understand and share the story of Follensby while also restoring Indigenous Peoples’ access to and caretaking of their ancestral homelands. The Nature Conservancy is working with Indigenous communities to include their perspectives in interpretation, education and stewardship in order to maintain and enhance the conservation values of the property.

This effort acknowledges the history of Indigenous dispossession in the region and more accurately reflects and centers Indigenous ways of knowing that have been lost and overlooked. While Emerson and other 19th-century scholars gathered at Follensby, which became known as the Philosophers’ Camp, to reflect on nature and preservation, Indigenous Peoples have always understood humans as part of nature, bound by responsibility and reciprocity. Public tours now offer a chance for people to explore these layered histories and deepen our collective understanding.

LEFT TO RIGHT Wild Center intern Cole Christman, Nature Conservancy conservation associate Keeley Jock, Nature Conservancy Follensby programs coordinator Jess Grant, and Wild Center intern Canyon Sundown. © Jeff Webber/TNC

St. John’s wort flowers collected at Follensby Pond Research Preserve. © Nancie Battaglia
Kate Berdan, stewardship manager, identifies plants during the biocultural bioblitz. © Nancie Battaglia

Explore Follensby



Supporting Indigenous Access and Cultural Practices

This is the first conservation easement held by New York State that supports a landowner in providing Indigenous Peoples with access to their traditional territory. Affirming this access helps enable cultural practices—from gathering berries and medicines to sourcing black ash trees that are essential for basketmaking.

To explore these opportunities, Keeley Jock, the 2025 Adirondack conservation associate, led an inventory of plants and animals that have cultural significance to Indigenous communities. This bioblitz involved Indigenous partners, scientists from the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, The Nature Conservancy, and other institutions. Over the course of three days, more than 30 participants spread across this enormous landscape and scoured steep forest slopes, green meadows filled with orchids and a series of beaver ponds surrounded by shimmering silver maple trees for important species. The data will be shared with Indigenous Nations, and protocols developed by Jock will ensure that certain aspects of Indigenous knowledge remain protected.

The first public educational trip into the Follensby Pond Research Preserve, led by The Nature Conservancy and The Wild Center.
© Rick Godin/The Wild Center

A Reference Site In a Changing Climate

The Follensby Pond Science Research Consortium—also created under the conservation easement—is building a shared vision for the preserve as a research site and climate refuge for cold-water species. Here, western science and Indigenous knowledge come together to guide natural resource management in a changing climate.

The consortium includes team members from The Nature Conservancy, The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment, the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Cornell University and Paul Smith's College Adirondack Watershed Institute. Together, we're creating a collaborative community of scientists to monitor climate impacts and explore solutions.

Your Support Is Shaping the Future

Thanks to your support, the next chapter of Follensby is being written by Indigenous partners, dedicated scientists, passionate educators and all who come to experience this resilient landscape. Your generosity is helping protect a place where nature, culture and community come together—and where new stories are just beginning.





Where Ice Shapes the Land: A New Way to Experience the Hudson River's Wild Heart

In the Adirondacks, where the Hudson River rushes through one of the world's largest temperate-deciduous forests, a rare and rugged landscape emerges each spring. Here, thick sheets of winter ice scrape the shoreline clean, making way for narrow meadows of wildflowers and grasses—some found nowhere else in New York. These are the Hudson River Ice Meadows, a globally rare ecosystem shaped by the river's seasonal freezes and thaws.

Thanks to your support, The Nature Conservancy has protected this extraordinary place—and now we're working to share its significance in new ways.

Through a collaboration with Revolution Rail Co.—a company that transforms historic railways into scenic rail biking experiences across New York, New Jersey, Maine and Colorado—visitors can explore the Ice Meadows via the South River Run, which winds through

lush forests alongside the preserve, and learn about its ecological benefits and cultural history along the way. This stretch of the Upper Hudson is one of the most ecologically significant parts of the region and it's protected because of supporters like you.

The Ice Meadows are more than beautiful, they're vital. These natural grasslands support rare species like the auricled twayblade orchid and the New England violet, which thrive in the cool microclimate created by lingering river ice. But as global temperatures rise, river ice forms later in the year and melts earlier.

Less ice means less scouring—and more competition for wildflowers from trees and invasive plants. Without protection, these Arctic-like gardens could disappear.

This spring, interpretive signs will be added along the rail bike route highlighting the importance of wetlands, the wildlife that thrive here, and the climate benefits of



The Hudson ice meadows, a habitat found almost exclusively near the headwaters of rivers that originate in mountainous terrain. © Charlie Reinertsen

Riders enjoying scenic views at Revolution Rail's rail trail. © Revolution Rail Co.

New England violet, a rare flower that thrives in the cool microclimate created by thick river ice that lingers into spring. © wanderingeden

Discover how your support protects New York:
[nature.org/newyork](https://www.nature.org/newyork)

natural landscapes. Riders learn how wetlands filter water, fight floods and store carbon—making these habitats unsung heroes in the fight against climate change.

The initiative with Revolution Rail is part of our broader mission to connect people with nature—and inspire action. Revolution Rail also works with The Nature Conservancy in New Jersey, where their Cape May route runs alongside the Garrett Family Preserve.

“We’re thrilled to collaborate with Revolution Rail to bring more people into direct contact with the landscapes we work so hard to protect,” says Peg Olsen, Adirondacks director of The Nature Conservancy in New York. “The Ice Meadows are a living example of nature’s diversity and resilience—and this project helps tell that story.”

Ed LaScala, executive vice president of Revolution Rail, adds, “We’re proud to expand our work with The Nature Conservancy in New York. Collaborating on the South River Run allows us to share the story of the Ice Meadows with thousands of riders each season—and deepen our commitment to conservation and community.”

Together, we’re helping more people discover the beauty of the Hudson River—and be part of protecting it. The South River Run, departing from Revolution Rail’s North Creek Station, is scheduled to resume operations in early May for the 2026 season.

Discover how your support protects New York:
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Reforestation the Future

Natural climate solutions, like reforestation, are practical, science-based strategies that use the power of nature to combat climate change. Planting the right trees in the right places can transform degraded lands into thriving forests that support biodiversity, clean our air, cool temperatures and strengthen local economies.

A Nature Conservancy study shows that across the country there are 148 million acres available to be reforested. As 88% of these acres are privately owned, we are working hand-in-hand with landowners. Together, these efforts could remove 492 million tons of CO₂—equivalent to taking over 100 million cars off the road for a year.

Locally, and in partnership with soil and water conservation districts, nurseries and contractors, The Nature Conservancy recently planted over 15,000 trees on approximately 35 acres in New York across Jefferson and Franklin counties. By combining immediate action with real-time learning in this demonstration project, we’re developing strategies to shape the future of large-scale forest restoration in New York and beyond.



**Planting Trees Isn't
Just Symbolic—It's
a Climate Solution.
Learn More Today.**

A large-scale tree planting in Jefferson County. Tree tubes, also known as tree shelters or guards, protect young trees and promote healthy growth.
© Nancie Battaglia





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Support nature
in New York

Create Your Conservation Legacy.

What better legacy is there than a thriving planet for future generations? Whether you're taking the first steps toward planning your estate or updating your existing plan, The Nature Conservancy is here to help ensure your values live on. Don't let another day pass by.

Contact Anne Salmon in New York today.

Leave a legacy
for nature.
Learn how.



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