



## Algonquin to Adirondack Conservation Association

*"Connect with Respect"*

### A2A Hires First Coordinator

Svenja Belaoussoff, Ph.D., has accepted the position of Coordinator with the Algonquin to Adirondacks Conservation Association (A2A). Its president, Emily Conger, says that the organization is "thrilled to have Dr. Belaoussoff. She is just the kind of person we need to move ahead with our conservation goals, because not only does Svenja have an excellent background in biology, she is also passionate about A2A's work of connecting and improving habitat for wildlife in this area, where there is such great biodiversity of species."



Dr. Belaoussoff on a recent camping trip in Algonquin Park.

Dr. Belaoussoff earned her doctorate in the Department of Environmental Biology at the University of Guelph for her research on ecological measures of disturbance. She later held a post doctoral fellowship in the School of Rural Extension Studies, at the University of Guelph. Her research took her to northern Nicaragua where she worked with coffee growers to examine in what ways environmental education affected how they farmed. Currently, Dr. Belaoussoff is a Sessional Adjunct Assistant Professor at Queen's University in the School of Environmental Studies, and she and her husband, Geoff Wilson, own Green Barn Honey (Davies Apiaries) in Seeley's Bay, Ontario.

Dr. Belaoussoff's appointment marks an important step in the development of A2A, as it builds organizational capacity.

The A2A Conservation Association, incorporated in 2002, is active in promoting the conservation of wildlife habitat and habitat connectivity in the area between and encompassing Algonquin Park and the Adirondack State Park in New York, an area the size of New Brunswick with outstanding biological diversity.

As coordinator of A2A, Dr. Belaoussoff will work with both the membership of A2A and its partnering organizations to realize conservation goals. She will be promoting the organization and its mission, organizing fundraising, coordinating research and raising public awareness of environmental issues.

- Richard Deering, A2A Director

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Check out our website at

[www.a2alink.org](http://www.a2alink.org)

#### Canadian Mailing Address:

19 Reynolds Rd. Lansdowne, ON K0E 1L0

#### U.S. Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 640 Wellesley Island, New York 13640-0640



## Plans for Gananoque Watershed Lakes Move Forward

Almost from its inception, A2A's Board of Directors and Advisors has recognized the importance of the Gananoque Watershed to connecting habitat in the A2A region. Working with landowners along the system is something the board has had as a goal for a long time. A2A is now ready to move ahead with Lake Planning, which is the name of the process of learning about the historical state of the 15 lakes in the watershed and the Gananoque River itself, then determining the present situation and making recommendations about what changes landowners and governments can make that will bring about improvement for the future. The A2A Board sees Lake Planning as essential, because without clean, healthy lakes and shorelines, wildlife cannot maintain healthy populations. We are particularly concerned about the status of some of the Species at Risk inhabiting this important watershed.

A2A has already begun contacting partners. Two major agencies have already indicated that they would like to partner on this project, as well as three cottagers' associations. A2A president Emily Conger along with Svenja Belaoussoff, our new Coordinator and Volunteer Cameron Smith met with officials of the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority and St. Lawrence Islands National Park. We have also met with the Gananoque River Waterways Association, the Upper Beverley Lakes Association and a representative of South Lake. The Leeds Stewardship Council has been involved from the start in trying to get Lake Planning going for the Gananoque River Watershed. So partnership building is moving along rapidly.

The first step in the Lake Planning process is learning what is important to landowners and other residents of the watershed, and what they want for the future. Surveys of several lakes and the river have been completed, and more are planned for the next year. What we have learned so far is that residents are almost unanimously interested in better water quality and maintaining healthy populations of wildlife. So with our partners, we will be making application to a number of funding sources in the next few weeks. We hope to be able to announce in our next newsletter that we have found enough funding to hire a biologist to begin work next season.

- Emily Conger, A2A President

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## Connecting Kids with Nature

More and more people in Canada live in urban areas. This is a trend that is expected to continue into the future. Urban dwellers don't have the same opportunities to get out and enjoy nature like people in the rural areas.

But that doesn't mean that rural people always take advantage of having nature in their own backyard. Many of us take it for granted.



At the CRCA's environmental education programs, *surfing the net* takes on a whole new meaning.

When I was growing up, during the summers we would go outside in the morning and spend the day riding our bikes, exploring the forest, climbing rocks, playing sports or collecting bugs. Most kids today don't have that same opportunity for unstructured play and exploration, even if they do live in a rural area.

Environmental education programs provide an opportunity to connect kids with nature. For many kids, it may be one of the few opportunities they have to explore a wetland, field or forest. These programs provide hands-on learning that complements the lessons being taught in the classroom. When you can actually experience a forest, for example, and all of the animals and plants that live in it, you have a better understanding of forest habitat and the creatures that depend on it.

In the Algonquin to Adirondacks area, there are a number of groups that provide outdoor education programs. Thanks to a recent initiative, we are connected under the Environmental Education Network – a coalition of local school boards and environmental education providers. This provides us with an opportunity to share ideas, collaborate and meet our fellow educators.

The Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority has been providing environmental education programs at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area in Kingston since 1981. Beginning in fall 2007, we will be providing education programs at Mac Johnson Wildlife Area in Brockville, taking over the program from Environmental Connections. There are programs for students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 on a variety of topics. All programs are all linked to the provincial curriculum. They all provide a great way to connect kids with the natural world. For some, they may provide one of the few opportunities they will have to get close to a frog, smell the wildflowers or listen to the birds sing.

To find out more about the CRCA's education programs, please visit our website at [www.cataraqueiregion.on.ca](http://www.cataraqueiregion.on.ca). To learn more about the Environmental Education Network go to [www.environmentaleducationnetwork.ca](http://www.environmentaleducationnetwork.ca).

- Karla Maki-Esdon, Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority

### Hard Work Pays Off—A2A a Charitable Organization

We are very proud to announce that after almost 2 years of refining our submission to the Charities Directorate of Canada, the Algonquin to Adirondacks Conservation Association has been granted Charitable Status. This means not only that our organization can issue tax receipts to donors, which can be used to reduce the amount of tax they pay, but that we are eligible to apply for grants for which we were ineligible previously.

The Charitable Status A2A has is still for the Canadian side only. As the American A2A movement gains strength, we will consider applying for equivalent status in the U.S. Stay tuned for news on fund raising drives and secured grants.

- Emily Congor, A2A President

### St. Lawrence Islands National Park Management Plan Review

St. Lawrence Islands National Park invites you to be involved in the park management plan review process.

Since its establishment in 1904, the community has been a key component in shaping what St. Lawrence Islands National Park is today. Many groups, organizations and individuals have helped St. Lawrence Islands National Park to balance protection of the Thousand Islands area with provision of meaningful opportunities for people to continue to enjoy this unique and special place.

The years have witnessed much change locally, regionally and nationally.

The pace of change in the environment and in Canadian society is increasing with rapid urbanization, increasing stress on natural ecosystems and rising awareness of the fragile connection between a healthy ecology and a sustained quality of life. A Management Plan is about the role the national park will play into the future to provide benefit and relevant services to Canadians and the commitment to work with communities, organizations and individuals for a sustainable future and to sustain or improve the ecological integrity of the park.

For more information and/ or to provide public comment please contact the park.

Tel: 613-923-5261

Fax: 613-923-1021

E-mail: [mpsli@pc.gc.ca](mailto:mpsli@pc.gc.ca)

Web: [www.pc.gc.ca/sli](http://www.pc.gc.ca/sli)



A summer visitor learns about the Park.

The Story <sup>1</sup>

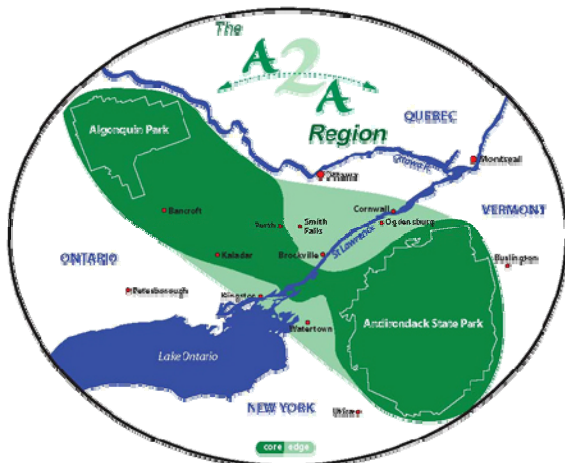
The A2A region is a vast cross-border patchwork of ecological communities. Some are connected, but most are fragmented. It is vitally important that the divided parts be connected and habitat improved, because populations of key species are falling.

In addition, more than a hundred species at risk call the region home. Ongoing fragmentation is adding to their stress, further intensifying the need to connect habitat.

Meanwhile, all species - plants, mammals, fish, birds, reptiles, insects, and amphibians - are facing growing stress as global warming advances. They will need resilience to survive and adapt. But it is the interlinking support found in biodiversity that provides resilience, and fragmentation has been eating away at biodiversity.

A2A, the Algonquin to Adirondacks Conservation Association, is responding with broad programs to connect and improve habitat within the region that extends from Algonquin Park in Ontario to Adirondacks State Park in New York State, an area roughly the size of New Brunswick in Canada, or in the United States, an area almost as big as Maine. The region connects Canada's Boreal Forest with the Appalachian Mountains down to the State of Georgia. It is the most important area for connectivity east of the Rocky Mountains.

At the core of the region are the two parks linked by the Frontenac Arch, the southerly extension of the Precambrian Shield. To its west, and for a short distance to the east, there is limestone and, further to the east, the St. Lawrence lowlands. These areas support distinctive ecosystems which merge in the Thousand Islands area to form one of the most diverse ecosystems in North America.



The entire region, and especially the Frontenac Arch, provide north-south pathways that allow wildlife to maintain genetic diversity. Animals travel these pathways, birds follow them, and with global warming pushing climate zones northward, even plants are expanding along them.

Canadians and Americans are fortunate that enough woodlands and wetlands have survived that some pathways still exist, fragile though they may be.

Nevertheless, in both Canada and the United States, rapidly growing development pressures in key areas, the bottleneck at the St. Lawrence River caused by the hourglass shape of the Frontenac Arch, and existing gaps in habitat present powerful challenges to A2A. Meanwhile, global warming is shifting habitat climate conditions northerly at a rate of about 40 kilometres a decade, much faster than trees can expand their range. Time for action is short.

Since much of the land in the region is privately owned, A2A works in partnership with landowners, government agencies and public organizations to link habitat in ways that respect owners, benefit the land, and contribute to economic and social well-being.

The A2A Conservation Association envisions a future where people can learn to live in harmony with nature, where biodiversity can remain vibrant, species can be protected, sustainability can be assured, and cross-border resilience to global warming can be strengthened.

Yet, for any one of these objectives to be achieved, all must succeed. If one fails, all fail.

For the sake of everything that lives — fish that must survive in warming waters, plants that are slow to migrate, animals and birds that depend on reliable habitat, insects and microbes that are the tireless maintenance workers for the environment, and people on both sides of the border, who need access to nature for the peace and inspiration it provides — for all this, A2A is working to ensure that the natural heritage of the region continues to enrich the present and is secured to grace the future.

- Cameron Smith, A2A Volunteer

1. This version of "The Story" is considered draft as it has yet to receive official board approval.



Please send your membership form to: Algonquin to Adirondacks Conservation Association 19 Reynolds Rd. Lansdowne, ON K0E 1L0

**Join A2A**

“Our mission, through partnerships and cooperation is to restore, enhance and maintain the ecological connectivity, ecosystem function, and native biodiversity while sustaining responsible human land uses and practices in the distinctive region of Ontario that lies between and connects the Algonquin and Adirondack Parks.”

Membership Form

I’m joining as a member

I want to renew my membership

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City of Town: \_\_\_\_\_

Province or State: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to volunteer to help A2A

My skills are: \_\_\_\_\_

I am enclosing \$25 for one year’s membership payable to A2A Conservation Association

I am also enclosing a gift to help with the following:

Creation of wildlife highway crossings

Development of a website to help educate the public

Purchase of material to help landowners create habitat on their land

Establishment of workshops for landowners

The information collected on this form is gathered to help serve our membership and will be held in confidence.