

Q1/2013

Thanks to those of you who have renewed your 2013 membership. A reminder mailing went out recently to those who have not yet renewed. If you have not paid your 2013 dues, you may do so by sending a check in the envelope provided in the mailing or pay by credit card or PayPal online [here](#). Your contribution is especially important this year as AdkAction.org takes on several major new efforts.

Save the Date for Member Movie Premiere and Annual Meeting/Reception July 12, 2013

AdkAction.org members, please save the date for our annual meeting and reception to be held at The Wild Center, Friday, July 12. The event will include drinks and hors d'oeuvres followed by a premier of *Flight of the Butterflies*, a new film at The Wild Center made possible by AdkAction.org funding (See details below.)

AdkAction.org Sponsors Local Showing of Butterfly Documentary at The Wild Center

AdkAction.org recently announced a \$20,000 donation to The Wild Center to locally sponsor [Flight of the Butterflies](#), a critically acclaimed new documentary about the Monarch butterfly by SK Films. The movie sponsorship is a key part of a new Monarch conservation project by AdkAction.org. The movie will debut during BuzzFest on Saturday, July 6, 2013, at The Wild Center and be shown through June 2014. Please read the press releases by [AdkAction.org](#) and [The Wild Center](#) for full details.



Last fall, as AdkAction.org developed a Monarch initiative for this summer, we approached The Wild Center to suggest they add the movie to their programming. This spring, The Wild Center learned the movie would be available to them, but at a price tag they could not afford. AdkAction.org raised \$20,000 to sponsor the movie, primarily in new donations.

Learn About the AdkAction.org Monarch Conservation Project and How You Can Help

It is not widely known that the Adirondack region has a key role in the lifecycle of the Monarch butterfly. The Monarchs you may have seen fluttering above an Adirondack lake in the fall are part of a very special migrating generation. Those born in the Adirondacks and elsewhere in the northern range of the species live much longer than other Monarchs, long enough to begin an epic journey of 2,000 miles or more to winter in a high-altitude fir forest in central Mexico. After spending the cold months in a torpor massed in the Mexican forest, the butterflies mate. They continue their amazing journey, flying to the Southern U.S. to lay eggs on milkweed, beginning the incredible cycle all over. The journey for some may total 5,000 miles. Without migrating Monarchs from the north, this wonder of migration will cease.

News accounts during the past month about a perilous decline in the numbers of Monarch butterflies served to underscore the importance of AdkAction.org's Monarch and milkweed conservation project, which will ramp up around July 1. Read full [details of our Monarch project in a commentary](#) from the March 19 issue of the Adirondack Daily Enterprise.

The AdkAction.org program intends to help the threatened Monarch butterfly by urging conservation of milkweed, the perennial plant essential to Monarch reproduction. Encouraging propagation of more milkweed in the Adirondacks can help offset its disappearance in other areas. Monarchs lay their eggs only on the milkweed plant and their caterpillars eat only milkweed. The caterpillars ingest a toxin from the milkweed that is passed on to the butterflies, making them unpalatable to birds. We will ask highway crews to delay mowing until migrating Monarchs have emerged.



AdkAction.org will distribute thousands of [brochures](#) this summer explaining this natural phenomenon. Each brochure will contain a sample of milkweed seeds and will urge recipients to plant the seeds and to plant butterfly gardens to provide nectar for Monarchs as they migrate through our area. AdkAction.org also plans to bring a series of speakers to the Adirondacks, including scientists and writers. We suggest for summer reading Barbara Kingsolver's new novel, "*Flight Behavior*."

The Monarch project is a major endeavor and will require the support of donors and volunteers. Please see the newly constructed [Monarch butterfly pages](#) of our web site to learn more about how you can help. Email info@adkaction.org to volunteer to distribute brochures, collect milkweed pods in the fall and plant more milkweed.

Saranac Lake/Lake Placid Schools to Study Consolidation

AdkAction.org's board of directors noted at its March 8 meeting that the Saranac Lake and Lake Placid schools districts have agreed to study consolidating, a suggestion made to them last fall by a consultant hired by AdkAction.org. This [Adirondack Daily Enterprise article](#) reported that the school boards in Saranac Lake and Lake Placid "agreed to pursue grant funding for a consolidation study of the two school districts."

In a letter to the editor by Dave Wolff, our chair, AdkAction.org board members commended the school boards for acting on an idea explored with them during a Nov. 2012 presentation ([read the full presentation here](#)) from a consultant from the Center for Governmental Research (CGR), based in Rochester. AdkAction.org proposed the visit by the consultant and underwrote the cost. The CGR presentation centered on advice about shared services, which the two boards were then beginning to study. CGR said in its report that as well intended as shared service efforts may be, the savings are usually marginal -- at best 2% to 6%. The CGR representative told the school boards that state funding to study consolidation is readily available and a study might be valuable to consider. She predicted that the time might come very soon when the two districts would be backed to the edge of a financial cliff when the available options will be limited. We believe our schools are fast approaching that precipice. The members of the school boards have shown sound leadership by taking the CGR message to heart and being willing to take a fresh look at how consolidation might benefit the two communities.

Program Schedule Finalized for AdkAction.org's Ed/Tech Conference for Teachers

AdkAction.org has continued to work with our co-sponsors -- The Wild Center, the Board of Cooperative Educational Services and Adirondack Community Trust -- over the winter on an in-service teacher training day about using broadband technology in our schools.

As announced earlier, nationally-known educator and lecturer Alan November will be the keynote speaker for the forum for teachers and educators next Oct. 25. November also will conduct two workshops. A third workshop will explore tech success stories in three Adirondack school districts.

The forum is a continuation of AdkAction.org's efforts to promote expanded broadband coverage and adoption in the Park. Our board has made this a priority issue for several years with the conviction that widespread use of broadband could be a key to economic survival in the Park and an important tool for Adirondack schools facing declining student enrollment and shrinking budgets. Completion of a high-speed broadband line across the northern part of the Park last summer will make it possible for many Adirondack schools to tap into the power of the internet as an educational tool for the first time.

The tech forum will provide the key component of the program for the Franklin-Essex-Hamilton Board of Cooperative Services (BOCES) in-service training day for teachers. Educators from throughout the park also will be invited to participate remotely using high-speed connections.

AdkAction.org is reserving seating at the forum for any members who have an interest in observing that day. To reserve space, please email Dave Wolff at wolffert@gmail.com.

Broadband in the Adirondack Park Makes Major Advances

Over the past two years, the North Country has received over \$7M in Regional Economic Development Council Grants to fund six Broadband projects. Last fall, Governor Cuomo announced the Connect NY Broadband Grant Program to help fund the expansion of high-speed internet access in unserved and underserved areas of New York. This past March, he announced the recipients of the 18 Connect NY grants. Building on its successful track record justifying expansion of Broadband to unserved and underserved areas, the North Country received over 20% of the Connect NY monies awarded (a total of \$5.48M to fund six new projects). The North Country Broadband projects that received funding will benefit the Towns of Thurman, Bellmont, Schroon, North Hudson, Jay, and Wilmington; the Community of Lyon Mountain; and Hamilton County.

To see a vivid illustration of what these projects will mean in the Adirondacks, see [this map](#).

Dave Wolff, AdkAction.org Chair, continues to host monthly conference calls during which all the Broadband interested parties discuss grant applications and strategies for extending service to additional rural areas.

Update on AdkAction.org Salt Reduction Efforts

As a reminder, AdkAction.org either purchased or helped the Adirondack Watershed Institute purchase via grants upstream and downstream monitors that were installed in conjunction with our successful efforts to get New York to test reduced salt techniques on three test roads. The State's efforts continue on the three test roads (Routes 3, 30, and 8), with reduced truck speeds, special signage, added back-of-blade scrapers, electronic driver monitoring, and the use of alternative ice-melting chemicals in environmentally sensitive areas. It is too early to assess these efforts, and while we will have some results from the State by summer another full winter will be required for the stream monitors to be correlated with the State data and conclusions drawn as to which of these efforts to expand, if any. Please watch this space for further updates over time. We will plan for a third Winter Road Maintenance Conference at Paul Smith's College once we have enough data to involve all of the stake holders (towns, villages, counties, APA, DEC, DOT, academia, environmentalists).