

Q2/2013

We invite those who are receiving this newsletter and are not yet AdkAction.org members to visit our website to join our growing membership and add to our support. Membership payment by credit card or PayPal is [quick and simple online](#).

Monarch Project Gets Great Response



Since its launch in early June, the [AdkAction.org Monarch Butterfly Project](#) has been a success, attracting great public interest and press coverage. Nearly 10,000 education brochures containing milkweed seed samples have been distributed at almost 100 locations throughout the Adirondacks. Another 10,000 [brochures](#) are being printed due to huge demand.

The Adirondack Almanack invited Marsha Stanley, AdkAction.org communications chair, to write [an article for its web site](#) about the project and to become a contributing writer. The Schenectady newspaper got wind of the project and did [a lengthy article](#). An increasing number of inquiries with questions or requests for help have been emailed to AdkAction.org about the project, giving us excellent publicity for all we do. Visit our [home page](#) to read many other press reports on our project.

If you have not yet seen [Flight of the Butterflies](#), the large-screen movie now showing at The Wild Center, be sure to add it to your not-to-be-missed list. AdkAction.org raised \$20,000 to sponsor the movie for a year-long run at the museum. It has been attracting big crowds. AdkAction.org is credited prominently as the film starts to roll and our brochure is given to all museum visitors.

The importance of our project is underscored by the further drastic Monarch decline being noted by scientists and citizens who track them this summer. This July 23, [short interview with a Canadian entomologist](#) provides a succinct and frightening summary of the current plight of the Monarch and the reasons behind it. Watch it when you have time.

AdkAction.org Sponsoring Famous Scientist Lecture at The Wild Center

Internationally recognized butterfly and bee scientist Dr. Orley “Chip” Taylor will lecture at The Wild Center at 7:30 p.m., Friday, Aug. 23. His two-day visit to The Wild Center is sponsored by AdkAction.org. On Saturday morning Dr. Taylor will demonstrate butterfly tagging. Check The Wild Center calendar online for specific times.

Dr. Taylor, a professor at Kansas University, is founder of [Monarch Watch](#), a butterfly advocacy organization which makes intensive use of “citizen” scientists who report sightings and other information for Monarch Watch tracking.

“Wired for Learning” Conference Schedule Set

Last fall, the AdkAction.org board approved the concept of sponsoring an all-day seminar for educators on how to take full advantage of the new high-speed broadband which has finally become available in the Adirondacks. That creative idea has gradually become a firm plan, thanks to our partnering with The Wild Center, BOCES and Adirondack Community Trust as co-sponsors.

AdkAction.org contracted with noted education consultant [Alan November](#) as the keynote speaker. Alan became so taken with the idea that he has offered to provide two additional workshops for teachers after his keynote—“Building a Culture for Year-Long Success” in the morning and “Who Owns the Learning” in the afternoon. The program will conclude with a presentation of Adirondack success stories about using the web for instruction.

“Wired for Learning” will take place at The Wild Center. Because the Flamer Theatre is not expected to be able to accommodate all the teachers expected to sign up for this for-credit, in-service training day, The Wild Center will show off its own new skills with high-speed broadband to broadcast the event in other rooms within their building and to teachers who will participate at distant locations.

There will be limited space for AdkAction.org members who might like to attend. Take a look at the draft [schedule for the day](#) and email info@adkaction.org if you have a strong interest in attending.

Annual Membership Meeting and Reception

About 100 members attended the annual membership meeting and reception at The Wild Center on July 12. Dave Wolff chaired the business meeting at which he reviewed the status of the organization’s finances and membership. Both are good and are increasing in strength. He gave a summary of the many projects underway involving schools, water quality, broadband and Monarch butterflies. The members voted to approve the revised and updated bylaws as well as new three-year terms on the board for Jim Crane, Airlie Lennon, Fred Schwarz, Marsha Stanley and Phyllis Thompson.



The audience then enjoyed *Flight of the Butterflies*, the AdkAction.org-sponsored movie, a beautiful portrayal of the life cycle of the Monarch butterfly and its annual roundtrip journey between Canada and Mexico. Both before and after the movie and business meeting there was an enjoyable, lively reception at The Wild Center.

Monthly AdkAction.org Broadband Calls Have Big Impact

A recent anecdote from the AdkAction.org Broadband Conference Call, which Dave Wolff started three years ago, exemplifies what a big pay-off that time on the phone can have. AdkAction.org learned in late July on the call from regular participant Rob O’Hara, USDA field representative for northern New York, about grant money available from the Rural Utility Services for distance learning equipment. We knew that The Wild Center needed such equipment badly for the museum’s major new distance learning

initiative. We alerted The Wild Center to this grant program, which is obscure and had escaped their grant writer's eagle eye. The Wild Center is crafting a grant proposal for up to the full \$500,000 amount per individual application. They will make the submission by the Aug. 12 deadline. We will keep you posted on how it turns out.

The AdkAction.org Broadband Call has attracted many prominent [participants](#).

New Executive Director



AdkAction.org is pleased to announce the hiring of Alice Vera as the Executive Director to the Board. Alice's family has had ties to Saranac Lake since her great grandmother came to the area to recover from tuberculosis. Alice moved here 21 years ago and started her business, Alice Vera Photography, in 1994. Jennifer, her daughter, was born in Saranac Lake a year later, and will be graduating from Saranac Lake High School next year. Alice recently graduated from North Country Community College with an Associate's Degree in Computer Graphics and Design. Her family enjoys camping, fishing, kayaking, boating, horseback riding, and reading. Alice is also a sculptor and one of the founding members of North Wind Fine Arts. She is proud to be a resident of Saranac Lake with her daughter and husband, Jeff.

Message from the Executive Director, Alice Vera

I would like to thank the board of AdkAction.org for hiring me as their Executive Director. I am thoroughly enjoying my position, as it allows me to work on many projects that positively impact the Adirondack Park. The butterfly program has been one of my favorite activities. Everyone has been so enthusiastic about the brochure with the milkweed seeds enclosed. I am confident that we will be increasing the habitats for the Monarch Butterfly in the Adirondacks. The Milfoil problem is another concern for me. I have updated the brochure for this year to make it more appealing with a bit more color added. I also attended my first broadband meeting by phone. The varied and constantly changing duties appeal to me, and everyone I have worked with so far has been wonderful. I am looking forward to getting many jobs accomplished with this fine group of people. I wanted to share the poem by my husband, reprinted at the close of this newsletter.

What's That Stuff in the Lake?

To find out, read the following interesting submission by Dr. Michael DeAngelo, who teaches and performs water quality analyses for Paul Smith's College Adirondack Water Institute, where he has collaborated closely with AdkAction.org's water quality initiatives.

It's that time of year for many changes to occur in our Adirondack Lakes. This spring and summer we had the perfect weather for aquatic plants, algae, bacteria and animals to grow and thrive in our Parks' waters. We had a very wet May, June and early July which brought lots of nutrients and other materials into our lakes through runoff of rainwater through each lake's surrounding watershed. The last two weeks with the very hot and sunny conditions meant that plants, algae, and bacteria can grow and thrive rapidly with this abundance of nutrients and the energy of our summer sun. As this weather pattern continues we should see lots of stuff in Lake Colby and other Adirondack Lakes.

Bryozoans. These are jelly-like blobs that are often confused with egg masses but appear larger and more brain-like. Bryozoans, sometimes seen attached to submerged sticks or docks, are animals. What looks like an individual is a colony of animals, each with a whorl of swirling tentacles. Most species found in Adirondack Lakes are large and round, gelatinous, firm, and slimy to the touch. While they may be unsightly on piers and docks, bryozoans are not a water pollution problem and in fact help to filter water.

Fresh water sponges. Greenish spongy-looking clumps attached to submerged sticks and plant stems might be freshwater sponges. Freshwater sponges are another member of the animal kingdom but are often mistaken for aquatic plants or algae. Most sponges are green, because they have algae living in their tissues. Freshwater sponges vary in size from a less than an inch to three feet. They are most commonly seen in summer or fall. They are usually finger-shaped, and can look soft or hard. Sponges are strong enough to be picked up without falling apart, unlike many kinds of algae.

Green algae. Green algae cells are microscopic plants and are found in all lakes. Most green algae are harmless and are a very important part of a lake's food chain, helping fix dissolved oxygen into the lake water. Most algae float freely in the water column (called planktonic or suspended algae). They may be single cells, groups of cells bound together (colonies), or chains of attached cells (filaments). The filaments and some of the colonies can become of sufficient size to be seen with the unaided eye. Some algae have the ability to swim, others just move at the mercy of wind and currents. The planktonic algae are the organisms that give water a green or blue-green color when the density of cells is quite high.

This summer many of our Adirondack Lakes are seeing greenish-yellow clouds that look like cotton candy in shallow water near the shoreline. This type of algae is known as metaphyton. Metaphyton, made up of several different kinds of algae, may be a foot or more in length. Unlike the planktonic algae that result in whole-lake blooms and give lake water its color, metaphyton do not affect lake transparency and are usually localized phenomena. These kinds of algae do not necessarily indicate that there are excess nutrient levels in the water. Grabbing a handful of metaphyton yields only a few stringy, slimy threads of filamentous algae.

Cyanobacteria also known as Blue-green algae. Blue-green algae are actually a group of photosynthetic bacteria that many people refer to as "pond scum." Blue-green algae are most often blue-green in color, but can also be blue, green, reddish-purple, or brown. Blue-green algae generally grow in lakes, ponds, and slow-moving streams when the water is warm and enriched with nutrients like phosphorus or nitrogen.

When environmental conditions are just right, blue-green algae can grow very quickly in number. Most species are buoyant and will float to the surface, where they form scum layers or floating mats. When this happens, we call this a "blue-green algae bloom." Blue-green algae blooms generally occur between warm sunny summer months.

Many different species of blue-green algae occur in Adirondack waters with high nutrient levels. The most commonly detected include *Anabaena* sp., *Aphanizomenon* sp., *Microcystis* sp., and *Oscillatoria* sp. Many of the blue-green algae can produce toxins. These chemicals are not produced all of the time and there is no easy way to tell when blue-green algae are producing them and when they are not. When the cells are broken open, the toxins may be released. These toxins can be harmful or cause death if consumed in large amounts by humans or animals like dogs.

Monarch Poem by Alice Vera's husband, Adirondack poet R. B. North

We are closing this newsletter with something a bit different, a Monarch poem by Adirondack poet R. B. North. Enjoy.

chrysalis musings

from crawling
to flying,
an evolution...

milkweed meadows,
on sticky summer days-
a haven,
affixing to
necessary nourishment...

emerging,
speckled-
from black, yellow, white-
crawling...
to
white, black, orange-
flying...
breath-taking,
astounding,
miraculous...

the great migration,
pollination,
during the southerly flight...
beautiful endangered species,
when will mother earth
find a listening ear?.....

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