



**Q4 2010**

### **At a Glance**

If you do not have time to read this entire mailing, here is a quick wrap-up of our accomplishments last year. We believe you will agree they are impressive.

- Raised private funds to commission an unbiased consultant study of best uses of the rail corridor between Lake Placid and Tupper Lake. Results will tentatively be presented to the public January 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Reorganized AdkAction as a 501(c)(3) to provide tax deductibility for dues and donations, enhancing our potential for growth.
- Sparked participation by the Tri-Lakes in the Google Fiber for Communities broadband contest, then began working closely with the local communities to better understand broadband needs by user surveys of local students and businesses.
- Funded a study of the harmful effects of the overuse of road salt and are now working to change state and local policies to curb such use.
- Conceived of and led a joint lobby campaign with other Adirondack groups for federal funding for milfoil control; however, the appropriation was cut along with all earmarks just before budget adoption, at the end of last year.

### **Rail/Trail Study**

The study being produced under AdkAction.org's auspices and conducted by Camoin Associates is nearing completion. The study will document the benefits of increased tourism and the costs on local economies from either restoring rail service from Lake Placid to Tupper Lake or converting the rail bed to a recreational trail. Camoin will present their findings in two public community meetings in January – tentatively at the Wild Center on Jan. 25<sup>th</sup>, and at the Lake Placid Center for the Arts on Jan. 26<sup>th</sup>, from 7 to 9 p.m. at both locations. The study was funded by private contributions that are independent of the work being done. A project steering committee made up of volunteers has been assuring that the study is unbiased and complete. While we expect considerable controversy, whatever the outcome, we think that having a solid database to work from will let our political leaders, advocacy groups, and affected communities come together behind a single plan that will end the multi-decade non-use of the valuable right of way.

### **AdkAction.org Reorganizing as a 501(c)(3)**

The AdkAction.org steering committee is pleased to report that it has approved the reorganization of our legal status to a non-profit organization. Because we will now be able to take tax-deductible contributions, we believe this change will enhance our ability to grow and to raise funds to support our expanding work on important advocacy projects in the Adirondacks.

AdkAction.org has hired Tupper Lake attorney, Kirk Gagnier, to guide us through the legal process of converting to a 501(c)(3) organization, and of incorporation, which will provide important legal protections. We can take contributions immediately, but cannot issue the tax-deductible letters until the State approves our tax status, which it should do retroactively before the end of the year. We are told that there is virtually no chance that this application will be denied, but members will have to wait for the official status  
(more news on back)

change to take tax deductions for contributions made in 2011. Donors will receive receipts showing their tax deduction as soon as the application is approved by the State. If you have any comments or questions, please feel free to email the steering committee at [info@adkaction.org](mailto:info@adkaction.org).

Under the new organizational structure, AdkAction.org will be able to continue its rapid and vigorous action on advocacy issues. We will no longer be able to donate money to candidates for political office, which has happened only rarely since the formation of our group.

### **AdkAction Works with Community to Assess Broadband Needs and Coverage**

During 1Q 2010, Google announced an experiment to provide a community (or communities) with ultra high-speed broadband, 100 times faster than what most people have available today. AdkAction.org was instrumental in developing the Tri-Lakes application called Google the Adirondacks. Google is planning to announce the selection of the winner(s) in early 2011.

Whether we win or lose the Google challenge, we believe that the Tri-Lakes benefited greatly from a process that brought together the towns of North Elba, Harrietstown, Tupper Lake and the villages of Lake Placid, Saranac Lake and Tupper Lake in support of a common goal.

The Tri-Lakes Google team has continued to meet to work on furthering broadband access in the Tri-Lakes. The challenge we face is the lack of information as to where there is service in the region, and where there is not. We are partnering with the three school districts in hopes that through the student population, we can determine who has access to the internet. Broadband census forms were sent to all students in the Saranac Lake Central School District and will be sent to all students in the Lake Placid and Tupper Lake School Districts in January. Partnering with the local Chamber of Commerce, we will also be surveying the businesses in the area. Once we can map the internet access gaps, we can begin to develop solutions to fill the gaps. If you would like to become involved, please let us know.

### **Winter Road Salt Use**

The change of administrations in Albany has slowed our efforts to press for changes in the state and local municipalities' excessive use of salt. Our widely-admired publication, produced by Paul Smith's Adirondack Watershed Institute, but underwritten by AdkAction.org, ***Review of Effects and Costs of Road De-icing with Recommendations for Winter Road Management in the Adirondack Park***, is still the basis for our desired changes. We plan another general conference on winter road maintenance, similar to the one held last May. We will invite local municipal leaders, state agencies such as DOT, DOH, DEC, APA and representatives from the Governor's office as well as our friends in the environmental community. The intent will be to produce an action plan and a recommended panel of experts who can make specific recommendations on changes in practices, chemicals used, equipment, policies, and training. The agenda and date of the conference will appear on our website as we get closer. The current plan is for a May/June date to be chosen based on the availability of the key players.

### **AdkAction Came Close to Securing Federal Grant for Milfoil Control in Park**

In December, 2009, AdkAction.org organized a joint delegation to visit Washington to seek federal money to help control milfoil. With the sponsorship and help of Congressman Bill Owens, a \$500,000 appropriation made it out of committee and into the proposed federal budget in December. Unfortunately, the appropriation was cut at the last minute, as were ALL earmarks for this year's budget. Owens' office reports there is little chance of an appropriation for the next two years.