

Guy Waterman Alpine Stewardship Fund End of Project Reporting Form

Project Title: *Adirondack Summit Stewardship Program's photo-monitoring project*

Organization Name and Mailing Address:

*Adirondack Nature Conservancy (ANC)
PO Box 65
Keene Valley, NY 12943*

*Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK)
Po Box 867
Lake Placid, NY 12946*

Contact and Title:

*Connie Prickett, Associate Director of Philanthropy/Communications (ANC)
Wes Lampman, Director of Field Programs (ADK)*

Date: *October 28, 2004*

E-mail Address:

cprickett@tnc.org (Connie)
adkinfo-trails@northnet.net (Wes)

Phone Number:

*(518) 576 – 2082 x162 (Connie)
(518) 523 – 3480 (Wes)*

Please answer the questions below:

1. What were your major accomplishments?

During the 2004 season, the Adirondack Summit Stewards located and re-photographed 21 photo-monitoring sites on the summits of Algonquin, Colden, Marcy, Whiteface and Wright that were established in 1999. By establishing a procedure for tracking vegetative changes in the alpine zone, the photo-point monitoring system has become an important element in the program's efforts to protect alpine habitat in the Adirondacks. The photographs produced this summer complete the second cycle of retakes for these 21 photo-points, extending information that was retrieved from a rich set of baseline data, some dating as far back as the 1960s. This photographic monitoring system is thus unique in alpine stewardship efforts in the Northeast as it uses an extensive collection of historical photographs as the basis for a systematic monitoring program.

The change, or lack of change, seen in the sequence of photographs (historical → 1999 → 2004) is a valuable tool for the Summit Stewardship Program. Using these photographs, we can gain a better understanding of both the health of the alpine zone and the impact of hikers on the alpine habitat. Conclusions that are drawn from these photographs about changes in the health of the alpine habitat can help evaluate the program's efforts to protect the alpine summits. Further, since many of the photo-points are of sites where active restoration work was performed, we will be able to assess the success of different alpine restoration techniques.

*The photo-point monitoring system is a useful tool for tracking changes to **specific** areas in the alpine zone. It is not meant to describe trends in the alpine habitat as a whole. A large majority of the photo-points (at least of the 21 that were re-photographed this summer) are of areas where active restoration work has taken place and a summit steward is often present nearby. Most of these areas show improvement to some degree, probably*

attributable to the active alpine protection efforts. Thus, the photo-point monitoring system as it is today must be accompanied by vigilant monitoring and extensive aerial photography to gauge larger trends and changes to the alpine.

2. Describe any setbacks and how you addressed them.

Re-photographing from the photo-point locations to make duplicate images proved to be the most difficult part of the project this summer, despite the good fortune to have decent weather on each of the days that the pictures were taken. Although most of the photography work was done alone, the process went much smoother when two stewards worked together. Aligning the tripod and camera to exactly match Scott's specifications of 1999 was difficult, especially in the high winds that are often encountered on the alpine summits. Setting up the tripod and camera according to the specifications on the record form sometimes did not make for a perfect match from the camera's viewfinder to the printed image we were using as a guide. Consequently, the camera alignment specifications were used more as a starting point for setting up the tripod and camera. The camera was then adjusted based on visual observation so that the frame matched the 1999 photograph as closely as possible.

3. Describe any unexpected results or findings.

The comparison photos from previous years proved to be effective teaching tools on the summits. When the stewards showed them to hikers, the laminated sequence of photographs re-enforced the message to tread lightly. Showing hikers the 'cutting edge' work helped to convey a greater sense of importance to our educational message. The photos also gave hikers a sense of ownership in the alpine stewardship effort by showing that changes can and do occur when a responsible hiking ethic is followed.

We also never thought alpine recovery could take place as quickly as the photos demonstrate. The differences between 1999 and 2004 are not as dramatic as the first set of photos, but nonetheless show a more rapid recovery than predicted in many areas.

4. Who else has funded this project, and at what level?

In 1999 when we launched the photo-monitoring project, we hired an additional steward to focus solely on carrying it out. This year, the project did not require additional staff and was built into the program's regular schedule. In addition to the Guy Waterman Alpine Stewardship Fund, the program received \$14,000 from the Adirondack 46R Conservation Trust, \$1,000 from the International Paper Company Foundation, and \$10,000 from New York State.

5. Will this project be sustainable? If so, how?

This project provides invaluable baseline data and is helping to direct the program's focus. In 2009, another 20 or so sites will be re-photographed and in subsequent years, more sites will be revisited.

6. Please attach a final accounting for the project, showing cash expenses, other sources of income and amounts, contributed volunteer labor with description and number of hours. *Financial summary attached.*

7. If there are documents, brochures or other items that are relevant to this project, please attach them. Jpeg photographs and electronic files are preferred.
A pdf of a page from ANC's annual report is attached.

Please e-mail completed form to Doug Mayer at dmayer@cartalk.com or mail to:

Guy Waterman Alpine Stewardship Fund
PO Box 1064
East Corinth, VT 0504