

The Waterman Alpine Stewardship Fund

Grant Application December 2008

2009 Northeast Alpine Stewardship Gathering

The Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK) is pleased to present this proposal to the Waterman Fund to support the sixth Northeastern Alpine Stewardship Gathering, scheduled for May 29-30th, 2009. A grant of \$2,480 from the Waterman Fund would greatly enhance the quality of the gathering by allowing ADK to rent a conference space, invite renowned speakers, and keep the registration fees down by offsetting some of the costs of the gathering.

1. Organizational Overview:

The Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK) is dedicated to the protection and responsible recreational use of the New York State Forest Preserve and other parks, wild lands and waters vital to our members and chapters. The Club, founded in 1922, is a member-directed organization committed to public service and stewardship. ADK employs a balanced approach to outdoor recreation, advocacy, environmental education, and natural resource conservation.

ADK has over 30,000 members who are either members-at-large or belong to one of our 25 chapters across New York State and one in New Jersey. ADK is a member-directed organization, with a volunteer board of directors responsible for steering all aspects of the organization with fifteen volunteer committees overseeing the activities of our programs and services along with volunteer governance of each chapter.

ADK has a long history of promoting alpine stewardship in the Adirondacks through the Summit Steward Program. This program, which has been in existence for twenty years, is a successful partnership between ADK, the Adirondack Chapter of the Nature Conservancy (ANC), and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). This program staffs four summit stewards on the summits of Mount Marcy, Algonquin Peak, and several other Adirondack high peaks to educate hikers about the unique alpine ecology and encourage them to help protect the vegetation by remaining on solid bedrock. In addition to their education and outreach work, summit stewards also participate in trail work, research and monitoring, and photo documentation of the alpine zone.

While summit stewards and other ADK staff have attended past gatherings, ADK has never been in a position to host the event before. With the addition of a full time summit stewardship coordinator, funded in part by a generous grant from the Waterman Fund, ADK now has the staff to dedicate to the planning necessary for a successful gathering. In 2009, ADK intends to build upon the accomplishments of past gatherings by inviting experts and practitioners from across the northeast to come together to share ideas,

management approaches, and research in the field of alpine stewardship. Holding this event in the Adirondacks will help to expand the potential audience and will help increase visibility of outlying alpine areas.

2. Project Description

The 2009 Northeastern Alpine Stewardship Gathering will be held on May 29-30th in Lake Placid, New York. ADK has invited the Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks, Paul Smiths College, and the Adirondack Chapter of The Nature Conservancy to co-host the gathering. ADK intends to use the Adirondack Loj as a base for the gathering, as it offers accommodations and is central for all field trip destinations. An additional conference space will be rented or otherwise provided for the first day of presentations and workshops.

ADK plans to invite a range of participants providing research, management experience, and ideas applicable to alpine stewardship efforts throughout the northeast US and Canada. While all alpine zones in the northeast are different, all face a similar threat in global climate change. Similarly, while management techniques vary widely throughout the northeast alpine zones, all face challenges related to visitor expectations and use.

A group representing ADK, the Adirondack Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, the Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks, the New York Natural Heritage Program, and Paul Smiths College is working together to identify a theme and keynote speakers, as well as to draft the agenda and determine different field trip options. Based upon the agendas of past gatherings, Day one will consist of three different sessions, each covering a different topic relating to alpine research, management, or stewardship. Each session will last approximately one hour and 45 minutes and will include presentations from several different speakers as well as time for questions. There will be meals and breaks between the different sessions to encourage discussion among participants. At least one session will be dedicated to climate change impacts in the northeast. ADK envisions one session relating to visitor expectation/ management issues. The third session may showcase research related to other type of alpine species, such as birds, butterflies, and non-vascular plants. The evening program of the first day will feature a keynote speaker. Targeted potential speakers include author Bill McKibben or Nancy Slack.

Day two of the gathering will be field trips to various alpine areas to discuss management techniques, research projects, and changes within the Adirondack alpine zone. Trip destinations may include Cascade Mountain to discuss management possibilities, Whiteface Mountain to look at a heavily used area with a relatively intact alpine ecosystem, Algonquin Peak to look at the recovery over the past twenty years, Wright Peak to discuss the Carry a Rock program, and the Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks to look at alpine outreach in a non-alpine zone.

ADK has committed the time of the Summit Steward Coordinator and the Director of Field Programs to organize the gathering, including inviting speakers and participants. Staff from the Adirondack Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, the New York Natural Heritage

Program, the Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks, and Paul Smiths College are also helping to shape the gathering. Financial support from the Waterman Fund would help cover the cost of a conference space, travel costs and honoraria for invited speakers, and would help to keep the registration costs down for participants. Since the Adirondacks are a significant distance from alpine areas, particularly in New Hampshire and Maine, and since travel costs have escalated with higher gas prices, ADK would like to have the ability to offer scholarship assistance with registration fees for the gathering. Support from the Waterman Fund would make all of these things possible and would ultimately help make for a better gathering overall.

Matching funds have been provided by the 46er Conservation Trust and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to support conference administration costs. The Adirondack Mountain Club has also provided support in a 25% reduction in meal and lodging fees at the Adirondack Loj. Partnering organizations, such as the New York Natural Heritage Program, the Adirondack Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, the Adirondack Park Agency's Visitor's Interpretive Center, and Paul Smiths College, are providing additional support in the form of staff time. A grant from the Waterman Fund of \$2,480 would make a significant difference in our ability to offer a well-run and meaningful gathering without raising registration fees.

Work Schedule

October- November 2008

- Initial publicity through Waterman Fund newsletter and ADK publications
- Reservation of lodging space and conference space
- Contact with partnering organizations

December 2008

- Partner meeting to discuss session themes and speakers
- Outreach to potential speakers

January 2009

- Initial mailing to potential participants
- Request for presentations and abstracts
- Continued planning for sessions
- Select field trip locations
- Secure keynote speaker

February 2009

- Continued planning, publicity (*Adirondack* magazine)
- Secure additional speakers

March 2009

- Select presentations
- Work on Friday evening mixer event at Adirondack Loj
- Second mailing to potential participants with registration information

April 2009

Process registrations
Prepare abstract list, select session moderators

May 2009

Process registrations
Final preparations
Gathering!

Final Report

To document the content of the Northeastern Alpine Stewardship Gathering, ADK will ask that speakers provide an abstract of their presentations. We will compile the abstracts into a single document that can be made available online under the "Alpine Resources" section of the Waterman Fund web page. We will also invite presenters using PowerPoint to allow those presentations to be posted, either on the Waterman Fund web page under the "Alpine Gathering" section or on the ADK web site under the summit steward page.

ADK will also maintain an invitation and participant list, as well as preparing a final report summarizing the strengths and areas for improvement of the 2009 gathering. The report will also make recommendations for future gatherings, and it will be made available to organizations responsible for hosting the gathering, as well as all financial supporters.

Budget

Grant Request:

Travel, lodging, & meals for New England speakers @ \$400 (2 speakers):

\$800

Travel, lodging, meals, and honorarium for keynote speaker:

\$600

Conference space:

\$450

**Transportation from Adirondak Loj to conference space & field trips
(rented vehicles or reimbursement to drivers):**

\$

\$480

Registration scholarships:

\$150

Waterman Fund request total:

\$2,480

Match:

ADK and Summit Steward Program

Administrative costs:

Conference planning: (150 hours staff time):

\$5,300

Printing & postage:

\$300

Summit Stewards (15 hours: 3 stewards for 5 hours each):

\$ \$163

Registration, assistance during gathering

Lodging discount @ 25%:

\$670

Matching Funds total:

\$6,433

Comment: Don't know how to give a monetary amount for this?