

New Guide Outlines Strategies For Ecological Based Local Planning In The Adirondacks

By Pat Bradley,
WAMC Northeast Public Radio

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Pathways to a Connected Adirondack Park cover

The environmental group **Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve** has issued a new guide to provide communities within the Blue Line with strategies for ecologically-based local planning.

Pathways to a Connected Adirondack Park - Practical Steps to Better Land Use Decisions is a follow up to [Adirondack Wild](http://www.adirondackwild.org)'s 2015 report *Adirondack Park at a Crossroad – A Roadmap for Action*. The most recent publication includes

methods that local governments can use for what it calls ecologically informed site planning. Partner David Gibson says the report's author is an expert in conservation design, applying science to development. "We thought we would offer towns and villages in the Park some tested strategies for how they can develop in ways that on a macro, micro scale can allow development to proceed in the Park with minimal ecological impacts."

The 10 strategies outlined include creating a natural resource inventory and maintaining uniform standards for the collection of baseline data; making conservation design standard for all development; and encouraging local landowners to promote ecologically friendly land use practices.

Gibson says they are all common sense strategies that towns may already be using. "A lot of towns it'll just be validation for what they're already doing. I think a lot of towns are thinking about doing this or are actually doing it without knowing it. Dr. Klemens, the conservation scientist who wrote this on our behalf, finds that if one or more towns work together then it's more effective. For example Keene and Jay and Wilmington share a watershed, the Ausable River, and they can work on these strategies together. That's the way we hope to apply these strategies is through a consortium of towns that are willing to work together on it."

Town of Keene Supervisor Joe Pete Wilson was appointed to the post in January. He says the guidelines in Adirondack Wild's report will help him build a methodology for how he approaches land use regulation. "One of the things that is so important about the Town of Keene is our natural environment. We host a lot of tourists in the hiking season, a lot of temporary visitors, and they're here because of nature, the environment, the rivers, the mountains, the streams and all these connected ecosystems. And so it's really critical to me and to our town to make sure that we're allowing for development but making land use decisions that really protect and in any ways we can enhance the environment we have here."

But Wilson also points out a missing element in the report. "How do you address these types of strategies in a way that can bring people together with different political views? You know this is nuts and bolts hands on strategies. But without sort of recognizing that political piece there is a gap there from having these tools and being able to put them to use."

Pathways to a Connected Adirondack Park includes a glossary of key terms such as ecological continuum and fragmentation.