Title: The Future of Adirondack Forest Preserve Stewardship

Community Partner: Adirondack Council

A survey and social media project located in Elizabethtown, NY for a student interested in conservation issues and land management

Project Description:
The Adirondack Park is a national treasure that must be protected for future generations. Without improved stewardship, the Park’s public lands and waters are at risk of being loved to death. With increased popularity in hiking, the addition of thousands of acres of new state Forest Preserve lands and waters, an impactful state investment in tourism promotion, and the influence of social media, record crowds are enjoying the Adirondacks’ natural resources.

The Adirondack Council has stewardship of the lands and waters in the Adirondack Park as a priority issue in the coming year, including Forest Preserve (public land), state conservation easements, and private lands. A specific focus is addressing how stewardship of these lands impacts natural resource protection and opportunities related to outdoor recreation. Integration, innovation, and adoption of successful wild land management practices proven elsewhere around the world can help re-establish the Adirondack Park as a leader in large landscape conservation and a model for people and nature thriving together.

The Field School Fellow will provide additional capacity to the Adirondack Council Conservation Team to 1) Identify and articulate the problems and challenges of stewardship in a way that resonates with natural resource experts, recreational users, local citizens and government officials; and 2) Research and compile the best management practices that are currently used in other large landscape protected areas.

Specific tasks will include:
• Working with Council staff to develop, conduct, compile, analyze and present a survey of current use of targeted trail heads and boat launches, attitudes of users regarding current stewardship conditions, and user responses to potential actions to address overcrowding and other stewardship issues;
• Developing social media campaigns (posts, photographs, video, blogs) to gather attitudes about stewardship issues and build user support for potential solutions;
• Researching the current situation related to overuse and stewardship in other large landscape protected areas; and,
• Conducting a literature review of best management practices in other protected areas.

About the Community Partner:
The Adirondack Council is a privately funded not-for-profit organization whose mission is to ensure the ecological integrity and wild character of the Adirondack Park. The Council envisions a Park with clean water and clean air, comprised of core wilderness areas, surrounded by farms and working forests, as well as vibrant communities. The Adirondack Council carries out its mission through research, education, advocacy and legal action. Adirondack Council members live in all 50 United States. For more information about the Council’s work, please visit their website: www.AdirondackCouncil.org or accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Required Skills:
A student well-suited for a Summer Field School Fellowship with the Adirondack Council will have skills, experience or interest in the following areas: research, analysis, and writing; survey design; verbal/people communication skills; graphs/infographics/heat maps and other design skills for communicating data; and, photography, video, and social media. The Fellow will participate in regular activities involving the conservation staff including weekly staff meetings, relevant public hearings and partner meetings, and reviewing and editing conservation memos, press releases, and blog posts.

**Logistics:**
This is a full-time paid research position (35 hours per week) to last approximately 10 weeks, conducted under the joint supervision of the Upstate Institute and the Adirondack Council at the Council’s Elizabethtown office. In Elizabethtown, the Fellow will be supervised by Jackie Bowen, Conservation Associate with additional support from Rocci Aguirre, Conservation Director and Mary Godnick, Marketing and Communications Associate. The Fellow will need transportation to travel to survey locations, and can expect to spend some time each week (and weekends) out at target locations speaking with the public and taking photographs and videos. Field School Fellows receive a research stipend of $4500. The cost of transportation will be covered by the Upstate Institute, but a Fellow will need a U.S. drivers’ license to complete this work. Housing will also be provided and paid for by the Upstate Institute.

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