

**Title:** Wild Waypoints: A Project of Lake Placid Land Conservancy

**Organization info:**

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**Mission:**

The Lake Placid Land Conservancy (LPLC) is a small, community land trust whose mission is to conserve land and water in Lake Placid and the Ausable and Saranac River watersheds. We work closely with residents, visitors, non-profit organizations and other stakeholders to conserve beautiful spaces and provide opportunities for learning more about the Adirondacks' natural resources through programming and recreation.

**Project Description:**

Will a self-driven, environmentally-focused outreach project increase LPLC's visibility in the Lake Placid area, or is the market already saturated with this type of tool? LPLC seeks a student researcher to finish developing, roll out, and track the progress of a new outreach project called Wild Waypoints. The student will identify publicly-accessible sites in and around Lake Placid that visitors and residents can frequent to enjoy their conservation values (scenic view, unique habitat, etc...). Visitors to the sites will be instructed to take an identically framed photograph from each site, upload the photo to social media, and tag it with #LPLCWildWaypoints. Photographs will be used by LPLC to track views and climate change over time, engage the public, and be used as content on social media and in marketing. Participants will be awarded a "prize," such as an LPLC hat or bumper sticker, if they collect photos from every site on LPLC's list. Sites will feature LPLC signage with instructions and will be sponsored by local businesses.

LPLC seeks to increase our visibility in the area as a community land trust, to encourage visitation to interesting, quickly-accessed sites that have conservation value, and to collect crowd-sourced data that informs climate change in the Adirondacks. We would like the student to finish developing the project's concept, roll out the project to the public, and track its success through the busy summer months of 2019. Throughout the summer, the student researcher would create a metric for measuring engagement and success of the project while also researching and implementing mechanisms to optimize the project's efficacy. They would also develop a system for cataloging crowd-sourced photographs and sharing findings. At the end of the summer, the student would analyze the metric to evaluate the project's success and potential for longevity.

**Project Goals:**

The aim of the project is three-fold:

- to increase LPLC's visibility in greater Adirondack communities as their local, community land trust;
- to encourage visitation to interesting, quickly-accessed sites in the area that have conservation value, and;
- to collect regular, crowd-sourced data using photographs and inform climate change in the Adirondacks.

**Logistics:**

The student researcher will be working full-time on this project given the need for development, roll-out, and tracking. The student will work out of LPLC's office in Lake Placid, NY for the majority of the work in order to be able to visit the conservation sites, install signage, work on promotion, and then track the project's success. Some development work, such as marketing and design, could be performed off-site.

The student will need to provide her/his own transportation, as travel to the Wild Waypoints sites will require a vehicle. Access to a smartphone with the ability to install social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) is preferred. LPLC will provide the student with in-office materials, including but not limited to a computer, design software, and access to mapping software. The student will need access to a laptop, Microsoft Suite (including Publisher), and access to a smartphone and the internet for any marketing or design work to be completed off-site.

**Training & Skills:**

The successful candidate is self-motivated, creative, and outgoing. The student must be organized, have an eye for design and be adept at using social media and the Microsoft Suite, including Publisher. Familiarity with mapping/ArcGIS is preferred but not required. Willingness and ability to perform mechanical tasks such as setting posts and signs (digging post holes, using hand tools) is also preferred. Most importantly, the student must like the Adirondacks and engaging with the public. A portion of your time will be spent outside identifying Wild Waypoints sites, so you must be confident on the trails. You will also be working a lot with members of the public through conversations, inviting feedback, and interacting with businessowners and site managers.

Through your work with LPLC and this project you will gain an understanding of project development, from design and implementation to tracking and adjustment. You will become familiar with ArcGIS and how to create basic maps and storybooks. You will improve your understanding of public programming and how to engage the public effectively. You will gain public relations, project management, and marketing skills. You will improve your understanding of how climate change is/is expected to impact the Adirondacks. You will become familiar with WordPress and basic webpage design and maintenance. You will also learn the work a land trust performs and have the opportunity to develop programming that invites the public to better understand our work and areas of conservation.

## **Wild Waypoints: A Community Project by Lake Placid Land Conservancy**

**Proposal:** Wild Waypoints is a project that will allow LPLC to track environmental and human-caused change over time while increasing our organization's visibility. Wild Waypoints directs citizens to take identically framed photos at specific locations throughout our focus area. LPLC can then mine these photos for scientific data to use in studies or compile into time-lapse videos for social media and other marketing. LPLC will install interpretive signage and "L" brackets as camera stands at locations around the High Peaks Region. People will be instructed to take photos from the "L" brackets (ensuring that the photos are framed identically with no filter or zoom) and tag us on social media with #LPLCwildwaypoints. Local businesses will be approached to sponsor waypoint stations in return for featuring their logo on signage. These sponsorships will allow LPLC to raise the necessary funding for advertising and maintenance of this program. To encourage participation, bumper stickers or similar LPLC merchandise will be given to participants who take photos and tag them with #LPLCwildwaypoints at all of the waypoint stations. Wild Waypoints will appeal to tourists looking for a fun, family-friendly activity or to community members looking to track change in their hometown. It is a win-win for the community and our organization.

### **Benefits to the Community:**

- Wild Waypoints will allow LPLC to collect data that can be used to inform future conservation efforts or research critical issues like climate change.
- Wild Waypoints will allow for the construction of time-lapse videos, a sort of living historical record.
- Wild Waypoints will be a fun, family-friendly challenge, similar to the 46ers or Saranac 6ers, but less focused on exercise and more focused on conservation values like scenic views and critical habitats.

### **Benefits to Lake Placid Land Conservancy**

- Wild Waypoints will extend LPLC's reach in the community and increase our public presence.
- Wild Waypoints will associate LPLC with community-minded scientific research.
- Wild Waypoints will direct the public toward properties we manage, which will help people to see the great work we do in person.
- Wild Waypoints will create lasting partnerships between LPLC and like-minded, local businesses and other organizations.
- Wild Waypoints may generate more interest in donating to the organization or starting a conservation project.
- Wild Waypoints may identify conservation needs or interests in our communities.
- Wild Waypoints furthers our community conservation strategy by encouraging community members to participate in a fun, yet meaningful, citizen science project.