

# Workgroup 6: Lani Ulrich

## Creating a regional identity

### Vision Excerpts

Our core vision is of interdependent yet self-reliant communities that:

- *Leverage unique historical, cultural and natural features* to maintain their own unique character and appeal, while increasing identification with broader Adirondack brands
- *Possess an engaged citizenry* that contributes ideas, money and time to community development and local sustainability and that is well educated in the cultural and environmental history of the Park and proud to live here.

*We brand the Adirondack wild experience as eco-tourism.*

Achieving an expansion in visitor numbers and diversity requires much *better branding and marketing*. We've been a pretty well-kept secret. A unified brand experience makes it clear to visitors that they are in a special place. In-hamlet trail heads take people into adjacent Forest Preserve lands and we promote hamlet-hopping trips, encouraging each community to 'sell' the next hamlet along the trail.

The heavy lift will be acting regionally.

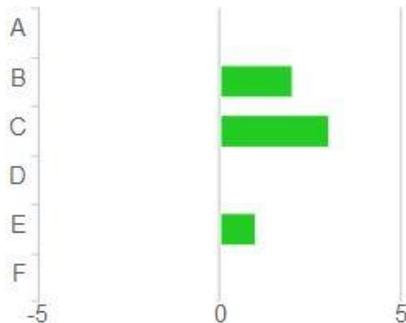
### Events

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## Adirondack Heritage Tourism Proves to be a Major Attraction

The region has done a good job of promoting its history and culture, including the Great Camps and other architectural attractions.

### Influenced Scenarios



### Likelihood



### Evidence

3 Warren Cty Towns Win \$554k for Heritage Corridor Work

This includes a number of park project, a white water area, and rest rooms in Hadley, Lake Luzerne and Stony Creek.

Turn to page 97 of the 2013 REDC booklet here.

Lake-to-Locks Geo Tourism Trail Effort Wins \$100k Grant

Ski Museum Being Proposed for Gore Mtn

ADK Museum Gets \$1.4m for New Exhibits

Restoration Work at Former Mining Village of Adirondac

Students Overlay Old County Maps to Produce Historic Data

ADK Museum in Blue Mtn Lake gets NCREDC grants for display renovations

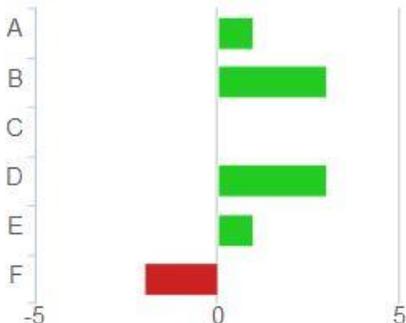
Great Camp Sagamore gets REDC grants for restoration

Ft Ticonderoga Wins a Big Grant

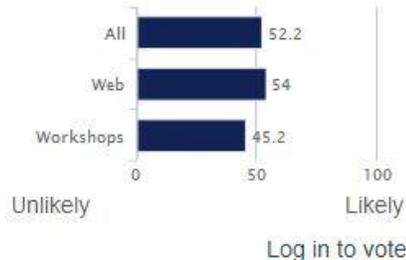
## “Adirondack” Recreational Goods Brand Goes National

An effort to develop a recreational goods manufacturing cluster, along with the corresponding activities and guide services, is launched using the “Adirondack” brand. The idea is to copy and expand how the company “Patagonia” used the attributes of that region of South America, but across multiple companies in the Park.

### Influenced Scenarios



### Likelihood



### Evidence

Hacker Boat Planning a Move from Ti to Queensbury, Expanding

The company produces fine mahogany boat designs. The move with triple their space and grown from 45 to 80 employees.

Read the news story here.

ADK Packworks Distributed through WholeFoods

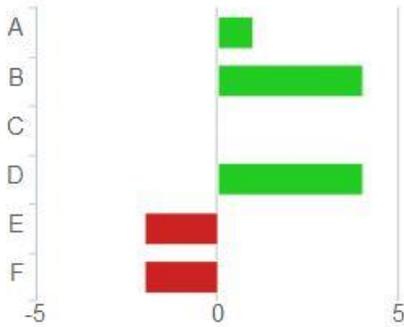
ANCA Wins \$100k Grant to Launch ADK North Country Branding Effort

Placid Boatworks burns down and rebuilds

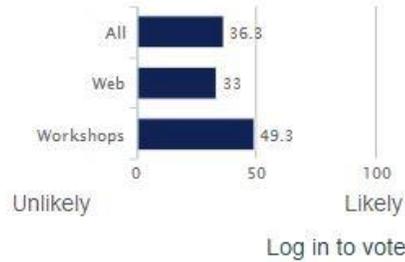
## Adirondack Brand Now Leads Yellowstone and Vermont

A study of global brands related to rural/parkland tourism shows that Adirondack now leads Vermont in recognition in North America, Europe and Japan/China. Serious work on developing the Adirondack brand did not begin until 2014 when the project was funded under State-wide program to follow up on the I Love New York campaign.

### Influenced Scenarios



### Likelihood



### Evidence

#### NYS Launches Hunting, Fishing, Wildlife App

The new app is on both Apple and Android phones and uses GPS features to show current activity.

[Read the news story here.](#)

#### Tupper Lake Contracts With ROOST for Tourism Marketing

#### Lake Placid Getting Lots of TV Time During the Olympics

#### Essex Cty Bed Tax Revenue Data Proves Value of ROOST Promotion

#### New Guide for 235 Long Trek Highlights Scale of the Park

#### ROOST Plans a Big Promotional Tie-In to the Sochi Olympics

#### NY Times Run a Big Lake Placid Feature

#### ROOST Takes on Marketing Work for Essex and Hamilton

#### ADK Economic Dev Council wins \$2.3 million for tourism promotion

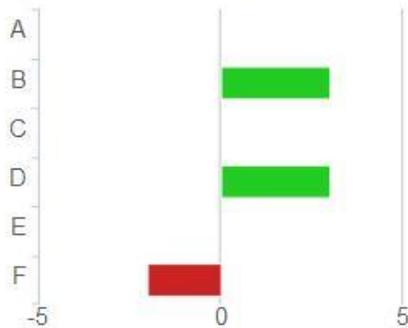
#### Whiteface Wins "Top 10" International Ski Ranking

#### Cuomo Launches \$4.5m Winter Sports Promotion

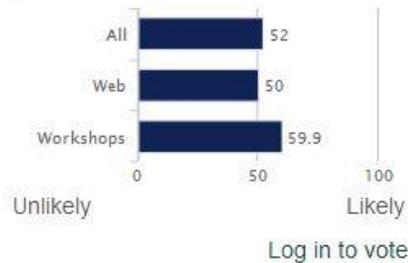
## Broader Marketing Changes the Profile of Visitors

Efforts to brand and market the region to Asian, Latino and other non-white communities are working, as are efforts to attract more international visitors. Non-white and foreign people are now 25% of visitors to the Park and their numbers are still climbing. To many international visitors, especially Canadians, the US is an affordable vacation destination. The issue is attracting them to the Park versus other US destinations.

### Influenced Scenarios



### Likelihood



### Evidence

#### NYS Tourism Promotion Budget Doubles

The State's promotion budget for tourism will hit \$45m, higher than any other State. Only a few years ago it was just \$4m

[Read the announcement here.](#)

#### Promoting the Adks as a "Wellness Destination"

#### Cuomo Brings a Winter Sports Challenge to the Park

#### Cuomo's whitewater challenge brings press to Indian Lake

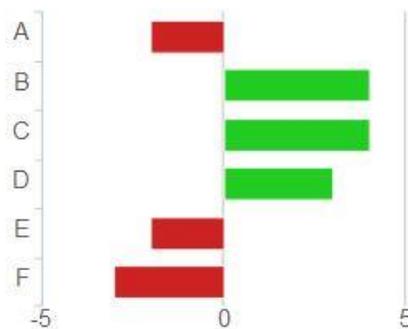
#### Fishing Tournaments Aim to Broaden Exposure

#### National Parks Do Not Appeal to Minorities

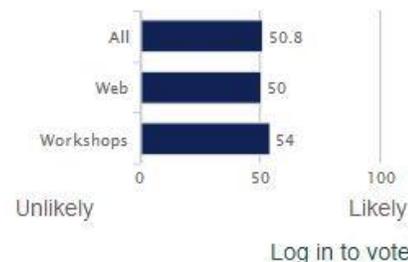
## Major Promotion for Jobs, Entrepreneurs and Net-Workers

People just didn't think of coming to the Adirondacks to start a company or open an office. They thought it was a Park. A major promotional campaign is started to tell the rest of North America that the Adirondacks is a great place to live and work. We have broadband and the other infrastructure needed and a great quality of life. The campaign includes money to go give pitches to major employers in NY, Ontario and Quebec.

### Influenced Scenarios



### Likelihood



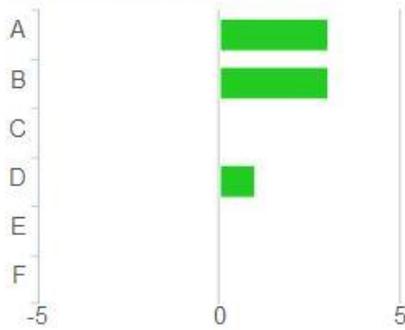
### Evidence

[Log in to add evidence](#)

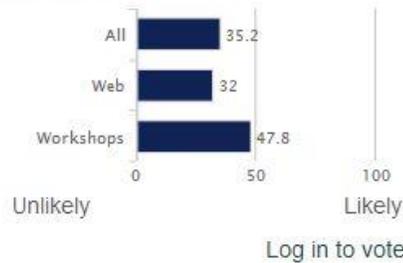
## Park Leverages Its UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Designation

The UNESCO Man and Biosphere Programme established in 1977 promotes research, training and communications in ecosystem conservation and rational use of natural resources. In the early 1990s, the program's focus shifted to promoting interactions of mankind with nature in terms of sustainable living, income generation and reducing poverty. The Park leverages its Champlain-Adirondack Biosphere designation (made in 1989) to increase research attention on the area as well as boosting domestic and international tourism.

### Influenced Scenarios



### Likelihood



### Evidence

#### Champlain Adirondack Biosphere Reserve

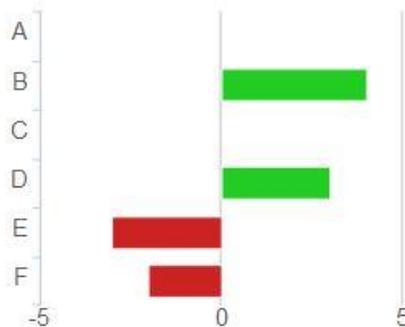
The region was designated in 1989. It appears to be largely about research. At the time of the designation, there was all sorts of anti-UN feeling so it is largely unused as a marketing asset. You can find more details here.

[Log in to add evidence](#)

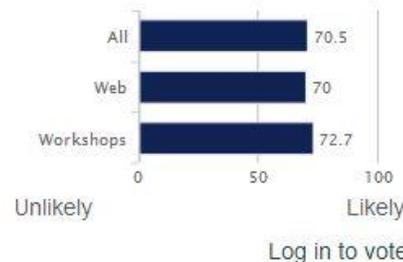
## Highway "Branding" Efforts Stepped Up

After years of neglect, there is now renewed investment in distinctive signage, guardrails, informational stops, and rest areas within the Park. This cohesiveness makes it clear to visitors that they have crossed the Blue Line. Officials have come to an agreement with the US Dept of Transportation with respect to signage.

### Influenced Scenarios



### Likelihood



### Evidence

#### New Washington Cty Tourism Map Online

The map is intended to guide tourists to numerous small sites the county has to offer. The county includes the eastern shore of Lake George.

Check out the map here.  
Read the news story here.

▶ [One Scenic Byway Turning to a Phone App](#)

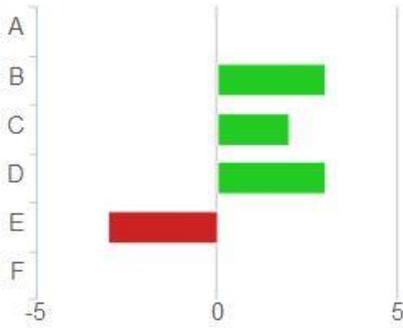
▶ [State Spends \\$12m to Rebuild Whiteface Mtn Highway](#)

▶ [Scenic Byways, Bikeways and Blueways growing](#)

## Many Park-Wide Efforts to Build/Strengthen Interdependence

There are more gatherings like Common Ground Alliance and the ADK Futures Project at the community and regional level. These gatherings spark new, focused, projects and regional interactions allowing a positive sense of direction to emerge. Having a regional sense of alignment to a positive direction motivates a lot of people and groups to take independent action to move their projects and dreams forward.

### Influenced Scenarios



### Likelihood



### Evidence

#### First Ever Adirondack Nonprofit Summit Held

Read about it here.

#### Common Ground Alliance to Receive ALA Award

Log in to add evidence

## **North Country Product Brand**

CFA funded in 2013 as a NCREDC priority project to develop business plan  
CFA Application pending for 2014 to complete and launch the Brand

### **Statement of Need**

For many years, the Adirondack North Country region has faced an economic disadvantage because its qualities have not been widely appreciated by consumers. From square one, this puts every business in the region at a competitive disadvantage, and collectively, it undermines the prospects of the entire region.

The North Country region is poised for economic transformation. The energy that Governor Cuomo talks about feeling when he visits the region and meets with its leadership is real. Local food efforts are growing increasingly sophisticated. The Adirondack Futures Project is coalescing a new and shared vision for the region. The arrival of high-speed broadband is creating widespread economic opportunity. The NCREDC has achieved unprecedented success in bringing major state support to meaningful economic initiatives.

There is also a growing sense that the region's greatest assets — including its small towns, natural beauty, and recreational opportunities, and the products that are made here — have a timely appeal, especially with the arrival of broadband as a game-changing job creator. In addition, a new generation of traveler, dubbed “Geotraveler” by National Geographic, and comprising over half the traveling American public, “go local.” They patronize locally owned businesses and guides. They buy from local craftspeople and eat at restaurants serving regional cuisine. They seek out traditional music and dance. As a result, the money they spend helps local people earn a living and preserves the place's authenticity.

The travel habits of these geotraveler segments are guided by a high awareness of the world around them. These travelers have ceaseless expectations for unique and culturally authentic travel experiences that protect and preserve the ecological and cultural environment.

Given all of these trends, there is a growing demand in the region's business community for an effort that would give all of that energy and progress a tangible and material expression through a strong, compelling and memorable brand.

The North Country is also primed for this kind of development on its own merits. One would be hard-pressed to find a greater disparity between an area's reputation in the eyes of its enthusiasts and of those ignorant to its charms. The Adirondack North Country is completely unique in the country and the world, but poorly understood by people outside the region. A powerful product brand identity is the perfect tool to get that insiders' passion out to the bigger world.

The brand is expressly not a tourism brand. This project will create an umbrella brand that will provide support for a wide range of enterprises in the region.

“Brand” is an all-too-often-misunderstood term and concept. Many people define a brand as a logo, or a slogan, or a marketing strategy, or a positioning. All of these things can be components of a brand, but none of them — in and of themselves — constitutes a brand.

A brand is a set of shared convictions. Just like a person's 'identity' describes all those traits that make them definable and recognizable to others, a brand is simply the way something is understood. A brand is not what the owner says it is, it is what everyone else agrees it is. A brand identity system comprises the vocabulary, symbols, and tools that help people recognize and share that agreement with others.

## **Regional Collaboration**

Enduring brands require a commitment to build, manage and grow, and most individual businesses in the region simply can't afford to build and broadly share meaningful identities for themselves. This project aims at a big-tent solution that marshals all the region's character and assets behind a unified idea that can be understood in common by outsiders. In turn, this single idea will support those constituent enterprises by lending caché to their goods and services that they would struggle to attain on their own.

This has been done successfully in the past, whether organically or deliberately. When people all over the United States look around the cheese section of their local supermarket, they see "Made In Vermont" and ascribe some value to that product indiscriminate of its manufacturer. It's important to note that they probably don't *think* about this value — they simply feel it — and that this is a hallmark of a working brand identity. No one necessarily *told them* cheese from Vermont was better than other cheese, but they believe it to be true. This has also been executed successfully at a regional level, in places like Napa, California.

The successful development of a nationally recognized brand will require participation and collaboration across all sectors. The project is supported by and will rely on input from institutions located in the North Country, including consultation with North Country-based agricultural and craft producers and other small businesses who want to capitalize on the fact that they produce products in the North Country led to a recommendation to create a powerful certification-based North Country product brand. The Region's greatest assets — including its small towns, natural beauty, and recreational opportunities, and the products that are made here — have a timeless appeal, and the timing is right to capitalize on these assets, especially with the Regional expansion of broadband as a game-changing job creator.

## **Project Deliverables**

With assistance from NYS, the project coordinator, ANCA, will launch the development of a product brand that will increase market share for North Country products and services; attract and retain start-ups in Innovative Hot Spots; allow producers to raise their price point and compete with well-branded products from other regions such as Vermont. The project will help to sustain and grow North Country businesses and communities by building an awareness of North Country-grown and built products. A regional product brand will allow the North Country to capitalize on the trend of "buying local" and enhance the national competitiveness of the region's products. For years, underfunded marketing efforts in the Adirondack North Country region have not been successful in the marketing and promotion of the region's products. All the region's businesses have suffered from this lack of a coherent brand and competitive disadvantage.

This project will deliver a detailed business and implementation plan to create a powerful certification based North Country product brand, describing how the brand will be professionally researched and developed, how it will gain market share, how it will be managed and how it will be sustainably financed. An effective brand demands a sustainable business plan, because a brand does not operate itself. Large enterprises devote manpower to the management of their brands, and this product brand will also demand sustained support. It needs to have an organization responsible to manage it, and it needs a coherent plan for its ongoing operation. Developing a Business Plan for this brand will allow the region to professionally operate its brand so that it has a long term impact. The Plan will define and quantify the potential types of users for the brand. The user groups are likely to include:

- Manufacturers
- Artisan Producers
- Technology Companies
- Service Businesses
- Universities and Colleges
- Value Added Agricultural Enterprises including Craft Breweries
- NotForProfits
- Local Governments
- Independent Retailers

The Master Plan will define a roadmap to help users understand the brand's value to them, build awareness, build demand, and define expected rates of adoption for each of the categories and will establish Key Performance Indicators for market share and share of mind. It will describe the launch plan, including how a professional brand development process that invites participation will help build a following for the brand, how the brand will launch, and how successive phases will be marketed. It will map an initial user base, how that user base is retained, and how it attracts new users. The plan will explore a variety of pricing options, including a free option phase for new users to reduce the barrier to entry, and a scaled pricing option that recognizes the true potential benefit to the business, and creates a transparent and trusted pricing scale. It will assess potential startup funding sources, and deliver options for funding the operation at a breakeven (or better) rate, from the brand's own revenue streams. The income sources part of the plan will present rates of adoption, renewal and fee structures for each of the user categories of enterprises that will be able to take advantage of the brand at launch, and over the first three years of operation after the launch.

### **Project Beneficiaries**

This project is region wide, including all seven North Country counties, and will benefit all user groups that participate, even beyond the seven county region, including those in the entire Adirondack Park and contiguous geographies.

The Master Plan will reflect the input from experienced brand managers and ANCA in presenting a realistic budget for ongoing operation. This is a long term effort, and as such it is vital that the Master Plan define the ways the brand will be managed.

This Brand will be an imprimatur of quality for products and services that originate in the Adirondack North Country region of New York State, attracting new businesses, adding jobs to existing businesses, allowing producers to capture price points, and creating a more business friendly

environment in the North Country. It will be available to technology companies, agricultural enterprises, artisans, service businesses, universities and other nonprofits based in the region. For those who are able to gain certification, it will carry tremendous cachet and economic advantage. The brand extends far beyond the limitations of a simple “*Made in XYZ*” stamp — it signifies a set of ethics and a lifestyle that carry emotional weight with customers. It will allow certified businesses to charge a premium price, secure new markets, access preferential financing, and attract higher quality employees.

## **Who will benefit and why?**

### **Universities**

- ✓ Because the brand supports startups in incubator hot spots
- ✓ Because the brand halo has a positive impact on their own brand
- ✓ Because graduates see more opportunity in remaining in the region
- ✓ Because they have a positive story to tell alumni

### **Manufacturers**

- ✓ Because they can raise their pricepoint
- ✓ Because they can add new products and extend their brand more easily
- ✓ Because they can reduce cost of sales per unit with higher awareness

### **Service industries:**

- ✓ Because they can maximize their price
- ✓ Because through increased awareness, they can reduce their sales costs
- ✓ Because they can more easily diversify their range of offerings

### **Value added agriculture**

- ✓ Because they can raise their price point
- ✓ Because they can add new brand extensions
- ✓ Because through increased awareness, they can reduce their per unit sales costs

### **NotForProfits**

- ✓ Because they can use the brand for their own product sales
- ✓ Because the brand adds value to the regional story they depend on
- ✓ Because they played a part in its success and can claim shared credit

### **Local governments**

- ✓ Because they have a free tool to attract new businesses
- ✓ Because the certification process is managed by an outside professional group
- ✓ Because they trust the process
- ✓ Because it increases their tax base

### **Independent Retailers**

- ✓ Because they can use the brand for their product sales
- ✓ Because the brand attracts new customers to their sites
- ✓ Because their own brand can be linked to a larger story

### **Artisan Producers**

- ✓ Because their product is linked to a larger story
- ✓ Because they can develop new products responsive to the brand
- ✓ Because their product reinforces the brand

The research process for this brand will include a publically-visible outreach and input process, including the use of social media channels to collect data. Engaging and imaginatively-run public

programs will gain insight from diverse constituencies, and will support both the substance of the brand and the commitment to its adoption.

This Plan assumes that the Brand will be developed through a serious and professional brand development process by experts experienced at surfacing and expressing brands. This process must draw upon quantitative and qualitative research, extensive personal inquiry with all key stakeholders, a comprehensive competitive assessment and a thorough creative process to develop the language, both in words and images, for the brand.

#### Actions Year 1:

- Prepare and administer qualitative and quantitative research surveys to select stakeholders, potential investors, past and potential visitors, current and prospective customers for regional artisans and manufacturers
- Involve 750 to 1000 residents through a series of 40-50 facilitated meetings to seek opinions and concepts for a brand identity, with local community leaders, representative organizations for local food production and distribution, cultural organizations, tourism promotion agencies, tourism destinations, hospitality venues, farmers, loggers, artisans, local communities, chambers of commerce, business owners, existing manufacturers, schools and universities, and potential investors in those strategic clusters identified by the North Country Regional Council that would benefit from a coordinated and coherent brand identity and marketing effort
- Analyze and synthesize the information obtained
- Develop brand identity usage guidelines
- Develop authentication guidelines for food producers, artisans, manufacturers, “made in the region” stakeholders

#### Actions Year 2:

- Complete research and outreach effort
- Identify creative resources necessary to assist with implementation of the program
- Create oversight brand team with representatives from the major stakeholders to provide perspective and advice on the implementation and success of the branding program
- Develop a complete brand identity system based on research and outreach
- Communicate the brand identity system to stakeholders and outreach meeting participants
- Develop brand messages based on research for both internal and external target audiences
- Develop and design collateral in digital, print, and electronic media; include focus group testing of messages and materials and fine-tuning as necessary.

- Coordinate global brand launch using media (all formats)
- Create sustainable web-based brand platform including a web 2.0 site and social media presence.
- Plan and implement media buys (all formats) to promote the brand to a global community and help recruit investors and entrepreneurs
- Hire and train staff to handle social media and website requirements

#### Actions Year 3 and Beyond:

- Continuing research to measure and advance effectiveness
- Compile and communicate success metrics annually
- Adapt the messages to stay current
- Expand digital market penetration to measurably increase share of mind for the Region
- Enhance penetration of global markets with effective and targeted messages
- Recruit private sector investment share to more than 50% of annual program costs
- Negotiate sustained public sector financial support by a dedicated share of the increased revenues generated in the region