CHAMPLAIN ADIRONDACK BIOSPHERE

What is the Champlain-Adirondack Biosphere Region?

The Champlain-Adirondack Biosphere Region is **an extraordinary place** that spans the towering peaks of the Adirondacks and the Green Mountains, the shores of Lake Champlain, and all the working landscapes in between. The Champlain-Adirondack Biosphere Network (CABN) is a group of individuals and organizations that **celebrates the connections** between our region's incredible natural spaces and the people who live, work, and play within them.

CABN Connects and Convenes Partners

CABN was established to facilitate communication among **local, national, and international partners** working toward the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Sustainable Development Goals, with emphasis on enhancing our communities' capacities to thrive amid the stresses of climate change. The Network provides **a critical channel** between communities and organizations across the Champlain-Adirondack Biosphere Region and beyond.

Adopted in 2015, the 17 UNESCO Sustainable Development Goals aid in the implementation of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda.

THE NETWORK

A Global Distinction

Designated by the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme in 1989, our biosphere region is **internationally recognized** for its rugged mountains, vast forests, abundant fresh water, rich culture, and working landscapes. Collaborations and scientific innovations across the region support **positive relationships** between people and their environments.

> "What remains of natural resources across the globe are just vital to me and to my generation. We need to protect and promote them in any way we can, and CABN both protects this amazing landscape and shares it with people everywhere. We've got so much to learn and so much to share!"
>
> – CODY BARRY
> Lake Placid, NY

Here, scientists, natural resource managers, and farmers **work together** to reduce water pollution, businesses collaborate with state agencies to create sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities, and nonprofits partner with communities to make this **a thriving and healthy place** to live.

A Larger Community

There are 738 biosphere reserves in 134 countries, including 22 transboundary sites. Our region is part of a global system of **remarkable places** such as the Swiss Alps, African savannahs, South American rainforests, Australian shorelines, the steppes of Asia, and the oceans' islands and atolls, and is part of the World Network of Mountain Biosphere Reserves. These special places help us understand that **humans and nature are indivisible** and interdependent.

World Network of Biosphere Reserves

738 Biosphere Reserves

134 Countries with Biosphere Reserves

262 Million People live in a Biosphere Reserve

5% of the Earth's Surface About the size of Australia

The UNESCO Man and Biosphere Program has supported human stewardship of natural landscapes since 1971.

THE PLACE

A landscape shaped by glaciers.

A Frigid Past

Much of the landscape surrounding you was left behind by the last **ice age.** Immense boulders, peaceful kettle ponds, and widespread grooves and scratches on rocky outcrops are all that remains of the **mile-high ice sheet** that scoured the landscape over 11,000 years ago. Atop Vermont and New York's highest peaks, you'll encounter the same species of hardy plants that are found in the polar regions, adapted to grow in thin soil and to withstand **brutal wind and cold.** Step carefully—those alpine plants have been growing for **10,000 years** but are easily harmed by hiking boots!

Land of Ten Thousand Lakes

Our biosphere region is home to more than **10,000 lakes and ponds,** ranging from the vastness of Lake Champlain to humble beaver ponds. In a world where clean freshwater is increasingly scarce, our water bodies make the Champlain-Adirondack region ever more treasured. Our storied waterways provide **essential habitat** for fish and wildlife, offer recreational opportunities, and add to the beauty and resilience of this **special place.**

Seeing both the Forest and the Trees

This region is home to over **1 billion trees.** The range of forest types spans boreal forests consisting of red spruce, balsam fir and eastern larch trees, to flourishing hickory and oaks, and between them, transitional forests with yellow birch, American beech, white pine, eastern hemlock, and sugar maple. Most old growth forests were cut decades ago, but you can still **visit places with ancient trees** such as the Five Ponds Wilderness Area in Cranberry Lake, New York and Gifford Woods State Park in Killington, Vermont.

> "What we need for hope is community. We need to work together with a one mind way of thinking. In the Abenaki language, MOWKAWOGAN represents the spine of the land, home to the community of all life. Community embraces everything: insects, plants, birds, fish, humans, and those beings in between."
>
> – JUDY DOW,
> Executive Director, Gedakina

A Place Called "Home"

Ancestors of the Kaniakehaka (Mohawk), Mohican and Abenaki people lived and farmed the rich soils of our Biosphere Region's valleys as long as **13,000 years ago** and Indigenous people are vital members of the community today. More recently, Europeans arrived and cleared the forests for farming, to build towns and industry and to raise sheep and cows, displacing Indigenous communities. Immigrants arrived from around the globe to run farms, cut timber, work in mills and factories, mine the hills, or simply make a living. Today, the Champlain-Adirondack region is home to over **500,000 people.** Dairy farms remain an integral part of the region's agriculture, and recent "locavore" and "farm to table" movements have **diversified agriculture** with farmers markets, food stands, and CSAs becoming an important part of a **resilient food system.** Our biosphere region's culture is a growing mosaic, **mixing tradition with new perspectives** as people create and enjoy a high quality of life across the region.

People of several Indigenous Nations have lived in the Champlain-Adirondack region for thousands of years and continue to harvest wild rice among many other sustainable uses of the landscape.

THE RISKS

Several factors **threaten our environment** and the region's way of life. The size and scale of our biosphere region allows CABN's partners to share information, analyze problems, and **explore solutions** in innovative ways.

Maple producers working to understand and adapt to the impacts of climate change on syrup production.

A Warming Planet

Summers are getting hotter, winters warmer, and spring and fall are increasingly unpredictable. The Champlain Valley's annual **temperature has risen** almost 3°F in the past 80 years. Lake Champlain rarely freezes over now. It's predicted that the average temperature in the biosphere region will rise 8°F by 2080! Such warming will mean the end of boreal bogs, spruce-fir forests, and alpine tundra in the mountains, and the loss of untold numbers of wildlife and plant species throughout the region. Climate change also brings **more frequent and devastating** storms that destroy property, ravage forests, and pollute our rivers and lakes.

Damage to eastern hemlock caused by the hemlock woolly adelgid, an invasive, aphid-like insect. In order to slow the spread of this disease, don't transport firewood, and report damaged trees to your county forester.

Tree Killers

The once healthy populations of trees in our region are now challenged by **disease, invasive insects, and a changing climate.** Dutch elm disease has decimated the elm species across North America. A fungus blight has **killed nearly 3.5 billion** American chestnuts. Beech trees are covered with cankers caused by a tiny scale insect and two fungi. The invasive emerald ash borer is working its way into our region, killing countless ash trees. More recently, the hemlock woolly adelgid threatens the hemlock trees found along our lakes and rivers..

Aquatic Hitchhikers

Each year, **unsuspecting boaters** carry damaging plants and animals on boats, trailers and fishing equipment into the regions' lakes, ponds and rivers. These invasive mollusks, plants, and animals can grow to become big problems by **threatening native ecosystems,** clogging waterways, and reducing both recreational activity and property values.

Stop the spread of aquatic invasive species in the region's beautiful waterways by inspecting your boat, making sure it's clean, drained and dry, and cooperating with boat stewards. New York and Vermont's cooperating watershed inspection programs have made significant progress in educating and empowering the public about the threat of invasive species.

Increasing Popularity

As the Biosphere Region's cultural and natural characteristics become better known both nationally and globally, increased visitation and seasonal residency have presented the region's communities, roads, trails, waters, and cultural attractions with the challenge of **managing growing use.** Physical and ecological impacts on soils, water, wildlife and vegetation are increasing, along with social dilemmas such as crowding at popular sites, diminishing opportunities for solitude and rapidly shrinking availability of long term housing.

> "When it comes to solving the environmental challenges of places like Lake Champlain, it's about so much more than creating new technology or developing new policies. It's about how our communities value the natural world and what our relationship with that natural world is. If we can establish a true sense of place, a sense of belonging here, we're more likely to act to protect it."
>
> – JORDAN ROWELL
> Filmmaker, Essex Junction, VT

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In the face of rapid environmental and social change, **CABN finds hope** in our ability to build positive connections between people and the environment.

THE FUTURE

Connection to the Future

Across our biosphere region, **youth are mobilizing** to support sustainable development, steward natural resources, and shape their future. The Wild Center's visionary and transformative Youth Climate Program has inspired hundreds of students across the biosphere region and around the world to develop climate action plans for their communities. The Champlain-Adirondack Biosphere Network's Youth Board aims to increase youth participation in conservation governance and bring forward **fresh ideas** to create strong, enduring, and generative connections to our region's nature and culture.

> "I became passionate about climate change while in high school, when I learned that Lake Champlain rarely freezes in winter. This was happening in my own backyard! It is so special to live in a protected area, and when I travel between New York and Vermont, I realize how grateful I am to call the Champlain-Adirondacks home."
>
> – GINA FIORILE
> Saranac Lake, NY

Connection to Community

CABN enhances our relationships with people who are working towards a more sustainable way of life. This helps us support and **co-create innovative solutions** to the problems facing our region. The collaborative network allows us to learn from international partners, regionally connect organizations working on shared local and global challenges, and celebrate **people working hard** to make our cities, towns, villages, and rural areas vibrant and healthy places to live, work, and play.

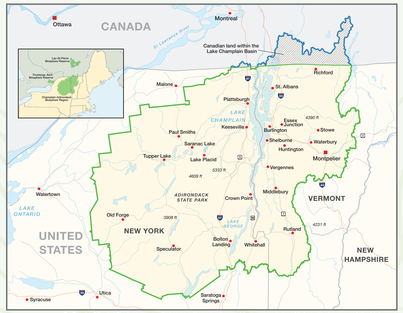
Connection to Landscape

Human relationships with our environment have changed over time — and not always for the better. By healing and strengthening our relationship to our environment and communities, we can **rechart our path** to a sustainable future for ourselves and generations to come. CABN aims to **elevate and celebrate** the work being done across our region to restore positive connections between our shared lands, waters, and people.

Connect With Us

The Champlain-Adirondack Biosphere Network invites you to join us to **create a more sustainable future.** Whether you call our Biosphere Region home or are just visiting, there are many things you can do to contribute to a future where people and nature thrive. Stay on marked trails to avoid damage to the landscape, properly dispose of waste to keep our lands and waters healthy, and prevent the spread of invasive species by using only clean, drained and dry watercraft and transporting only treated firewood. Most importantly, take a deep breath and **appreciate the beauty** of this special place. Scan the QR code below to learn more and to stay connected with CABN.

THE CHAMPLAIN-ADIRONDACK BIOSPHERE REGION



The Champlain-Adirondack Biosphere connects and unites communities scattered across a 9.8 million acre region, one of the largest biosphere reserves in the global network. The Biosphere is the home of over 380,000 permanent residents, and falls within a day's drive of 60 million people in the U.S. and Canada.

Visit our website to learn more and stay connected with the Champlain-Adirondack Biosphere Network.