

The **Lookout**

December 2017 - January 2018



Adirondack Mountain Club — Schenectady Chapter

Dedicated to the preservation, protection and
enjoyment of the Forest Preserve

<http://www.adk-schenectady.org>

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On the
cover

*Department of Environmental Conservation technician Alex
Wyatt sprays pesticides on hemlocks in the Plotter Kill preserve.
Story on page 1
Photo by Mal Provost*

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December 2017 - January 2018

The Lookout

The newsletter for the Schenectady Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club

Plotter Kill Sprayed to Combat Adelgid Threat

On two chilly, early November mornings in the Plotter Kill Nature Preserve, professionals from the Department of Environmental Conservation aided by volunteers climbed the steep slopes and bushwhacked about 9 acres of hemlock forest as one step in a years-long effort to control a growing threat: the hemlock woolly adelgid.

The aphid-like pest – which is migrating from the Great Smokies and Appalachians up through the lower Hudson Valley and into the Finger Lakes – is clearly on its way into the Adirondacks, where stands of hemlock stabilize steep slopes and shade and protect stream environments. The adelgid's ability to degrade hemlock forests is already proven, so when it was discovered in the Plotter Kill Preserve this summer it triggered a strong response. The threat is to any hemlock stands, of course, but the Capital Region is a gateway to the Adirondacks, where the damage could be extreme. Prospect Mountain outside Lake George also was treated for an infestation this summer.

The Plotter Kill project was to spray the lower trunks of about 250 hemlocks – out of about 2,000 in the grove off Coplon Road - with systemic insecticides that will be absorbed by the tree and travel up to the branches and twigs and persist for about 5 years, killing any adelgids. An earlier foray of DEC personnel had marked the trees to receive the treatment - and tagged most of the hemlocks in the grove with small aluminum buttons - in the hopes that successive years will see the pesticide applications continue.

This is considered an interim or holding action to slow the spread, according to Jason Denham, a DEC forest health specialist who led the teams, in cooperation with the Invasive Species Committee of the Schenectady County Environmental Advisory Council. Denham said the longer-term hope is breeding and introduction of natural predators to the adelgid - "Little Larry" beetles and white flies - which is under way at Cornell University with state funding. Scientists and forest specialists are optimistic, Denham said, but so far the predator development has not advanced to a scale that can be effective.

Education and surveys

The ADK, DEC and numerous other organizations are leading the effort to prevent or arrest the spread of invasives, whether in land or aquatic environments, both animal and plant. The hemlock woolly adelgid is a major, immediate threat, but critters such as zebra mussels and the spiny waterflea or plants such as Eurasian watermilfoil and water chestnut are all too well-known already in water bodies including Lake George, Lake Champlain and the Great Sacandaga.

Training sessions for volunteers in the aquatic invasives program were conducted this summer by the ADK at Heart Lake and the Lake George Land Conservancy, as were eight outings for training and survey in the Adirondacks. Other surveys were made of 15 ponds, primarily isolated water bodies using small inflatable pack rafts. Training for HWA surveys was conducted in Warrensburg and Gloversville, plus extensive work in cooperation with state resources. Planning is under way for a new round of training programs and volunteer efforts in 2018.

--Mal Provost



The hemlock woolly adelgid infestation in Plotter Kill was discovered early this summer near the Coplon Road entrance.

Photo by Mal Provost

Eagle Restoration Highlights ADK Dinner

The decades-long effort to restore the bald eagle to New York State – an all-too-rare success story – is the history that Peter Nye lived and helped create, a subject he shared with the Schenectady Chapter, ADK, at its annual meeting Oct. 24 at Schenectady County Community College.

Nye retired from the Department of Environmental Conservation in 2010 after 36 years, having spent much of his time leading the Endangered Species Unit. He cited a benchmark in 1965 when there was one mated pair of eagles in the state, but which were unable to breed due to DDT contamination.



Peter Nye discusses the reintroduction of the bald eagle to New York State.

Photo by Mal Provost

His work to restore the eagle in New York began in 1975, with the study of the eagle's decline through the post World War II period. The population throughout the Northeast at that time totaled 9 mated pair due to pesticides and habitat loss, but there was a bright spot: DDT had been banned in 1972.

Early efforts at transplanting healthy eggs to nests of other pairs had a very low success rate. The rate was better with "fostering," or introducing chicks to other adults, but that worked only in eight cases over six years. Greater success was developed with a Cornell program of "hacking," bringing eaglets from Alaska and other northern states and raising them with technicians in blinds so the birds developed naturally. From 1976 to 1980, young birds totaling 23 were released into the wild at the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge and from 1976 to 1988 another 200 were released. By 1988 there were 10 breeding pairs in the state, enough to sustain a population.

Nye described the "startling recovery" of eagles into this century and said that by 2007 they were off the endangered species list. Technology is helping also, with satellite tracking capable of improving understanding of migration and nesting patterns.

Dinner Business

The dinner also serves as the final step of election of officers. Re-elected to one-year terms were Stan Stoklosa, chairman, Mike Brun, treasurer, Jacque McGinn, secretary, Jason Waters as project coordinator and Roy Keats, a two-year term as director. The vice-chair position is vacant. About 70 people attended.

DEC Camp Scholarships Offered for Summer

If you have a camper between the ages of 11 and 17 who is interested in the environment, then the Schenectady Chapter ADK wants to provide you with a scholarship to send him or her!

The New York State DEC offers a variety of programs at Rushford, Colby, DeBruce, and Pack Forest. More details can be found at the NYSDEC website: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/education/29.html>.

The Schenectady Chapter ADK will pay the entire \$350 cost for up to two eligible campers to be chosen from a list of nominees. To nominate a camper, please fill out an application found on the Schenectady Chapter ADK website: www.adk-schenectady.org

Applications should be mailed or emailed by Jan. 12.

For more information contact Stan Stoklosa at 518 383-3066 or 518 526-3393. Also: stanstok89@aol.com

Adirondack Routes Extend National Trail

The ADK, with a lot of input from the Schenectady Chapter plus some federal cash, is making progress with the Adirondack elements of the North Country National Scenic Trail.

ADK has obtained a grant from the National Park Service to build a new trail to the summit of Jones Hill, in the Hoffman Notch Wilderness northwest of Schroon Lake.



*Dave Loux does some heavy lifting for the new Jones Hill Trail
Photo by Norm Kuchar*

to cut large blowdowns along the route, and Walt Hayes and Norm Kuchar have formed a small volunteer group (mostly Schenectady Chapter members) to remove the sawed logs and clear lighter blowdown and debris from the trail corridor.

The Jones Hill trail will be the second new piece of the NCNST constructed in the Adirondacks, after construction of a short connector trail in the Siamese Ponds Wilderness this past summer. In 2019, DEC hopes to continue the Jones Hill trail down the north side of the hill to reach U.S. 9 near Schroon Falls.

As of November 8, our volunteers have held three work sessions and have cleared about one mile. The volunteer crew has included Kraig Armstrong, Tom Bolton, Walt Hayes, Norm Kuchar, Dave Loux, Mary MacDonald and Ray Sergott.

Additional work sessions are scheduled for this fall, and the effort will probably continue next spring. Contact Norm if you want to lend a hand to these projects.

This trail will become part of the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST). Jones Hill has magnificent views of Hoffman Mountain and north to the High Peaks, and this new trail will become one of the most scenic sections along the entire 4,600-mile NCNST. That stretches piecemeal from North Dakota through the Northern Plains, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania before looping back north around the Finger Lakes and into the Adirondacks. Completion is years away but projects such as ours in the Adirondacks are adding miles constantly; 1,900 are already certified by the National Parks Service. Eventually this will become the longest continuous hiking trail in the nation.

The ADK Professional Trail Crew will do most of the Jones Hill work next summer, but the route has already been flagged. Since the amount of the grant - \$15,000 - will probably not cover the total cost of building the 3.2-mile trail, we are teaming with DEC to do some preliminary work this fall. DEC is sending a chainsaw crew



*Ray Sergott removes heavy blowdown on the trail.
Photo by Norm Kuchar*

--Norm Kuchar

Conservation Report

Oil Tanker Cars Parked in Boreas Corridor

A new migraine is being visited upon the Adirondacks: Storage of oil tanker cars along the wild and scenic Boreas River near Minerva. What was rumored and proposed for several years by the Iowa Pacific rail company has become a reality despite opposition from local governments, Gov. Andrew Cuomo and environmental groups. A legal challenge is brewing.

In a report to the Adirondack Mountain Club's Conservation Committee Nov. 4, Neil Woodworth, executive director, said that 53 rail cars already had been parked on a rail siding parallel to the "stillwater" section of that whitewater river. That number of cars was an increase from first reports a couple weeks earlier that 29 cars had been deposited there for indefinite storage. An inspection at that time showed 27 tanker cars of the DOT 111 type and two decrepit passenger cars.

Iowa Pacific controls 30 miles of track, Woodworth said, with the potential space to park 1,000 to 2,000 cars, turning a scenic and historic region into a "junkyard." He said the company is receiving \$4 to \$5 per day per car stored, which would mean serious money if the upper limits were reached.

The rail company owns part of the track and leases the remainder but does not own the cars, Woodworth said; they are the surplus property of other commercial interests including Berkshire-Hathaway and Wells Fargo. So the storage deal is a boon for the shaky finances of the rail company, which has struggled with making a go of a scenic train out of North Creek and an earlier scheme to sell rock tailings from the historic Tahawus mine at the northern terminus of the rails.

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Twenty seven tanker cars are parked in mid October on a siding near the Boreas River Stillwater, about three miles north of Northwoods Club Road.

Photo by Mal Provost

Conservation Report

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These developments are the outgrowth of a long and complicated history. The heyday of the use of the rail line was World War II, when titanium dioxide was in high demand from the mine for steel alloys. Against the wishes of New York State, even then, the federal government granted a right of way for extraction of the ore. The post war period ended that market, and the easement to operate the line was purchased by National Lead, which did little with it. In 2011 the idea of a tourist train was floated and the Essex County Industrial Development Agency sold the easement to Iowa Pacific, which tried to make money with the Saratoga and North Creek Railway. That has never made enough to justify itself to the owners, and now decades of limited use and lack of maintenance are confronted by more aggressive environmental activism and fury over the "storage" scheme.

A rail company lawyer quoted in the Adirondack Explorer stated that Iowa Pacific has the right to use its tracks as storage and that they do not constitute an environmental threat. But that is a minority view, including opposition now from the board of supervisors of Essex and Warren counties, top state officials, the ADK and other environmental groups. Fears expressed by Woodworth and others include that the cars will deteriorate to the point that they cannot be moved, or that deterioration of the tracks or the trestle over the Hudson River near the Boreas confluence will similarly lock them in place.

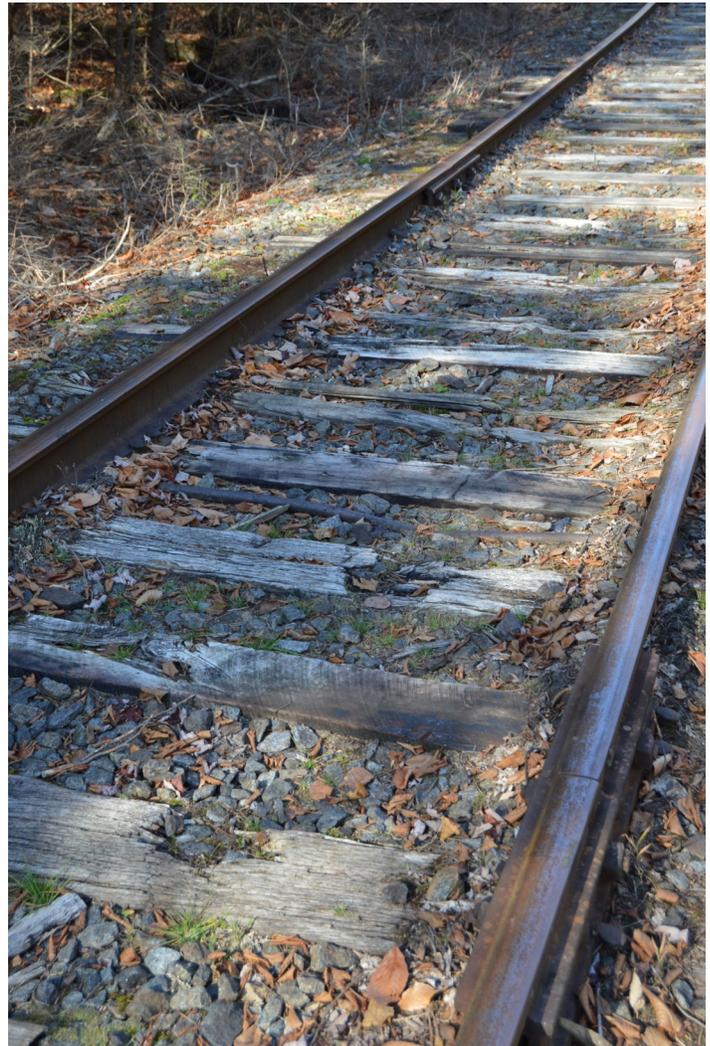
Too many boots on the ground

Also at the ConCom meeting, Woodworth again highlighted the problem of hiking congestion on the popular trails of the High Peaks. That is both a matter of stress on the trails, aesthetics, and a serious parking safety situation along Route 73 in the Keene Valley area and beyond. On good weather weekends, he said, 400 to 500 hikers have been counted on the Cascade and Pitchoff trails. He termed it, "a real safety issue as well as an environmental degradation issue."

Discussions are in process, he said, about "some kind of rationing permit system," which has bubbled up over past decades but now is increasingly serious. Some of this is reflected in the number of aid calls that Forest Rangers are facing, he said, with very limited staffing. "We've got to figure out a better way to do this."

Boreas Ponds planning in limbo

The classification decision on the Boreas Ponds Tract and numerous other parcels remains stalled before the Adirondack Park Agency, Woodworth reported. He cited the governor's late proposal for what would be spot zoning to allow "glamping" on a five-acre parcel near the ponds; that proposal threw the classification decision into disarray despite statewide hearings and strong environmental pressure for wilderness status. "The governor is definitely telling the agency what he wants," Woodworth said. Now the schedule and shape of any decision is muddled. The better news is, access is as it has been all year, with a three-mile drive to a parking area (until snowfall) and another three-mile hike on logging road to the ponds.



*Poor track conditions evident along the Boreas corridor.
Photo by Mal Provost*

--Mal Provost

Innings and Outings

How do I sign up for a hike?

For further details or to sign up for a hike, call the trip leader. Try to call at least two days in advance, as leaders may cancel on the day before an outing if there is insufficient interest. Leaders reserve the right to refuse participants for any reason, including lack of experience and/or lack of physical fitness. All equipment and supplies are the sole responsibility of the trip participants.

What do I need to bring?

The trip leader will let you know if any special equipment (crampons, snowshoes, etc.) will be needed. In general, you should always carry food, water, rain gear, map, compass, headlamp, first aid kit and extra clothing, including hat and gloves in case temperatures drop. Clothing for wet or cold weather should not be made of cotton — use a synthetic fleece or wool. If in doubt, ask the leader.

What if I don't have snowshoes/crampons?

The chapter has hi-tech snowshoes and one pair of universal fit crampons available for rental at \$5/trip. Contact Stan Stoklosa at 383-3066 to arrange for pick up from his convenient location in Clifton Park. Gear is also available to rent at local retailers..

Should I reimburse drivers for gas?

Yes! Each rider should pay their driver four to five cents per mile, depending on the current cost of gasoline. With gas at \$2 per gallon, four cents per mile should be used and at \$2.50 per gallon, five cents should be used (\$3/gallon – six cents, etc).

The kind of hikes I'd like to do aren't listed here — what can I do?

Trip leaders may be willing to plan trips based on member suggestions. If there's a specific trip you'd like to do, contact Larry Woods at 518- 810-7552 and let him know.

Wilderness First Aid Course

The Schenectady Chapter Board agreed to provide partial tuition refund for outings leaders who take Wilderness First Aid courses. The program is modeled after the 46ers current program so people who are both 46ers and Schenectady trip leaders can reimbursement. For further information, call Roy Keats at 518-370-0399

HIKE CLASSIFICATIONS

<u>Distance</u>	<u>Leader's Pace</u>	<u>Terrain</u>	<u>Examples</u>
A+ 13 Miles or More	1. Fast	A Very Difficult	A+1A Most Difficult Trip
A 8-12 Miles	2. Moderate	B Strenuous	B2C Moderate Trip
B 5-8 Miles	3. Slow	C Average	C3D Easy Trip
C Under 5 Miles		D Easy	

Whitewater Film Reopens 'Innings' Offerings

Come to the Clifton Park Library Jan. 18 at 7 p.m. and enjoy an exciting story of four brave men paddling the last "unrunnable" section of the Congo River in Central Africa. This is big whitewater kayaking at its best, and the movie is free, with refreshments and sponsored by the Schenectady Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club.

The film is "CONGO: The Grand Inga Project," and the trip earned Steve Fisher a nomination for National Geographic's Adventurer of the Year award.

The Schenectady Chapter of the ADK is trying to renew its "Innings" tradition -- having speakers and other offerings at a regular time and place. We featured this for years but it fell out of practice. Restarting the gatherings will be a work in progress but your board members are focusing on it as a tool to engage members, provide education and entertainment, get new ideas for travels, and get involved with the community.

For example, as this edition of Lookout is in production, we are featuring a talk and slide show Nov. 16 about trekking in the Peruvian Andes with Luis Espinasa, a professor at Marist College

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Innings and Outings



A team of big water kayakers risks life and limb in the infamous Congo River rapids.

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Please join us and enjoy great speakers with interesting tales, photos, and adventures and an occasional movie night. We'll also provide refreshments. Come see old friends and new members and catch up with ADK activities.

We are very open to suggestions. If you have ideas for speakers please contact Sally Dewes at stanger01@gmail.com or other board members. If you would like to help organize or do refreshments or help in any other way we'd love it! Again, contact Sally.

Enjoy the holidays and we hope to see you Jan. 18. It is just what you'll need to warm up and get the adrenaline flowing in January!!!

--Sally Dewes

Saturday, December 2

Young Member Hike Cascade & Porter

Class B2B

Dustin Wright, pastor@messiahschenectady.org or 603.953.8782

Looking to try out hiking the High Peaks in winter conditions? Bag two of the easiest Adirondack High Peaks and enjoy some great early winter views this December with the Schenectady Chapter's Young Member Group! This is a 5.6 miles long, highly trafficked out and back trail beginning at Route 73. Total elevation gain is roughly 2300 feet with microspikes and snowshoes likely required. Young member outings are open to all ADK members no matter your age!

Saturday, December 9

Hike or Snowshoe Hennig Preserve and Homestead County Forest

Class B2D

Walt Hayes, 518.399.7482

This is a must do if you have never been to these adjacent preserves in the Town of Providence, Saratoga County. There is some climbing on this circuit but not excessive. The trees make you think you are in the Adirondacks but you will be in the Capital District not that far from home. About five miles. Meeting time about 9:30 a.m. with return about 3 p.m. If conditions are icy, stabilicers may be needed.

Saturday, December 9

Cross Country Ski to Santanoni Lodge

Class B2B

Mike Brun, brunmcts@verizon.net or 518.487.8054

Round trip is about 10 miles on road with gentle slopes. Trip is suitable for beginner and intermediate skiers. The lodge is one of the Adirondack great lodges with nice views over the lake. All the buildings have been restored. It is a popular destination so we will probably not need to make our own tracks.

Sunday, December 10 (Afternoon)

Little Explorer's Club at Vischer Ferry Preserve

Class C2C

Herb Ternes, 518.372.8478 or trailhed@verizon.net

This will be a three or four mile hike along the wide paths of the Vischer Ferry Preserve. We'll look for eagles, ducks and geese. Since this follows the old Erie towpath there may be a round of *Low Bridge* "got me a mule and her name is Sal." Our Little Explorer is seven years old but all ages are welcome. Possible post-hike hot chocolate stop in Vischer Ferry or Clifton Park.

Tuesday, December 12

Prospect Mountain Hike

Class B2B

Norm Kuchar, 518.399.6243 or nkuchar@nycap.rr.com

Despite its low elevation of 2030 ft., Prospect Mountain offers great views of the southern end of Lake George and, on a clear day, more distant views of Mt. Marcy, Killington and Equinox in Vermont, the northern Catskills and the towers of the Empire State Plaza in Albany. We will use an unmarked trail that starts at the Lake George Village Rec Center and ascends to the summit from the south. This trail is longer, but less steep than the marked trail from Lake George Village. Hike distance is about 5.6 miles, with about 1300 ft. of climb. Snowshoes and/or traction aids (e.g., microspikes) may be necessary.

Thursday, December 14, from 7- 9 p.m.

Young Member Holiday Outing: Wolff's Biergarten

Dustin Wright, pastor@messiahschenectady.org or 603.953.8782

If you're roughly in your twenties and thirties and looking to build some community with other like minded young adults in the Schenectady area, join us for a good (and free) food and great conversation! We'll spend an evening of holiday fun at that little piece of old-world charm in the heart of Schenectady. In addition to discussing the many opportunities avail-

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Innings and Outings

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able through the ADK for young members and brainstorming about how to increase our young member programming, we'll also do a Yankee Swap of gifts costing \$5 or less so be sure to bring something! All are welcome, members and prospective members alike!

Friday, December 15

Cross Country Ski to Boreas Ponds

Class A+2B Limit: 10

Mike Brun, brunmcts@verizon.net or 518.487.8054

This will be about a 13.4 mile round trip on a road into the dam at Boreas Ponds. There should be spectacular views from the dam. There is a long uphill (about a mile) coming out of the parking lot. This should make a great return to the car. Beyond that uphill there are smaller undulations going into the ponds. We should be out between 3 and 4 pm, but bring a headlamp just in case.

Thursday, December 21

Whiteface Mountain Memorial Highway Winter Solstice Ski

Class A2B

Roy Keats, 518.370.0399 or royskipaddle@gmail.com

This is a beautiful ski tour up a road with great scenery all the way up (and down). It is approximately an 11 mile round trip including a quarter mile stair climb from the end of the road to the top. The last quarter mile requires snowshoes with grippers. It is probably one of the easiest ways to bag a winter peak! There is a total of approximately 2500 feet of vertical ascent. A fairly constant 8 or 9 percent grade makes for a continuous downhill run out. Everyone should come layered (no cotton) because the long uphill will warm you up, and the long downhill will cool you off. This is rated as an intermediate trip. Please call or email by Thursday evening before the ski to sign up. This is a joint trip with the Cold River Chapter. Note: skis with metal edges are recommended. This trip could take up to 6 hours.

Saturday, December 23

Young Member Hike Bearpen & Vly

Difficulty: Moderate 6.5 miles; bushwhacking required for Vly

Mary Zawacki, Text 914.373.8733

It's Christmas break and we're kicking off the season with a hike up two Catskills 3500 footers. Bearpen and Vly are known to be absolutely magnificent in the winter. Bearpen features fantastic views, and Vly will be a bushwhacking adventure to bag a Catskills high peak! All participants must be prepared for a winter trek, and bring microspikes, snowshoes, and winter gear.

Wednesday December 27

Indian Head & Twin Mountains

Class B+2B

John Susko, 518.383.1284 or jpsusko@netzero.net

We'll take the trail from Prediger Road to these two Catskill peaks on the Devil's Path. Both summits of Twin have good views to the west and south. Depending on conditions we could take the longer, loop trail to Indian Head which has good views to the east. The distance is 7 - 9 miles with 2500 feet of ascent. At this time of year snowshoes, crampons or other traction devices may be needed.

Saturday, December 30

Young Member Hike Tupper Lake Winter Triad

Difficulty: Easy 8 miles on three separate mountains

Mary Zawacki, Text 914.373.8733 - Jason Waters Text 518.369.5516

We're tackling the Tupper Lake Winter Triad, and hitting up a local brewery to celebrate. Join us for three easy mountain climbs (Arab, Coney, and Goodman), which boast outstanding views of the surrounding mountains and lakes. After successfully hiking all three peaks, register on the official Triad Roster and receive a patch -- and winter bragging rights, of course. All participants must be prepared for a winter trek, and bring microspikes, snowshoes, and winter gear.

Saturday, January 6

Young Member Hike Mount Adams

Class B2B

Dustin Wright, pastor@messiahshenectady.org or 603.953.8782

(with Dan Kemp training as a new leader)

Working on your Fire Tower Challenge list and looking for some fantastic views? Join the Young Member Group for a brisk winter hike up Mount Adams! The trail is a roughly 5 miles out and back hike to a fire-tower with exceptional views of the high peaks! Total elevation gain is approximately 1800 ft. Total elevation gain is roughly 2300 feet with micro spikes and snowshoes required. Young member outings are open to all ADK members no matter your age!

Thursday, January 11, 7-9 p.m.

Young Member Outing Bombers Burrito Bar

Dustin Wright, pastor@messiahshenectady.org or 603.953.8782

Great conversation awaits about how we can better protect the beautiful natural places we have a blast in! All members and prospective members are welcome and apps are free! Join us as we reconnect after the holidays and plan out some future winter outings!

Saturday, January 13

Thacher State Park Hike

Class B2C

Norm Kuchar, 518.399.6243 or nkuchar@nycap.rr.com

We'll begin this hike by stopping in at the new visitor center on the edge of the Helderberg Escarpment, which has exhibits about the natural and geological histories of the park. We'll then do a thru-hike on the Long Path through the northern section of the park, from the visitor center to the Old Stage Road parking lot. This trail passes the High Point overlook, with views of the village of Altamont, Albany, and (on a clear day) Mts. Everett and Greylock in Massachusetts and Killington and Pico Peak in Vermont. If conditions are good, we may also hike the short spur to the Hang Glider overlook. Hike distance is about 5 miles (including Hang Glider spur), with about 400 ft of climb. Snowshoes and/or microspikes will probably be necessary.

Saturday, January 13

Cross Country Ski to Botheration Pond

Class B2B

Mike Brun, brunmcts@verizon.net or 518.487.8054

We will ski to Botheration Pond from the Old Farm Clearing and return via a different trail. The round trip is 7 miles on hiking trails with some moderate slopes. This trip is for intermediate skiers. The trail winds through the woods, but there are views of surrounding mountains from the pond.

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Innings and Outings

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Saturday, January 13

Young Member Hike Cat and Thomas Mountain

Difficulty: Moderate 7.1 miles

Jason Waters, 518.369.5516 or Jwate78@gmail.com

Join us as we hike two of the Lake George 12s in winter. The hike consists of hiking up Thomas which has a nice cabin on the peak and then over to Cat Mountain which has great 270 degree views of the Lake George. The right winter hiking gear will be needed. Canines are welcome.

Sunday, January 14

Young Member Hike Slide Mountain Loop

Difficulty: Moderate 6 miles

Mary Zawacki, Text 914.373.8733

Slide is the tallest mountain in the Catskills, and a winter requirement for aspiring 3500ers. Join us for a moderate climb through beautiful, dense forest, enjoying some views near the summit. All participants must be prepared for a winter trek, and bring microspikes, snowshoes, and winter gear.

Thursday, January 18, 7 p.m.

Clifton Park Library

Movie night on kayaking the Congo River

The film is "CONGO: The Grand Inga Project," and the trip it records earned Steve Fisher a nomination for National Geographic's Adventurer of the Year award. The film chronicles the efforts of Steve Fisher and big water pros Ben Marr, Rush Sturges and Tyler Bradt as they battle seemingly insurmountable obstacles, navigate through the maddening politics of a central African country and face their own worst fears in an attempt to survive the dirty and ferocious Inga Rapids. Refreshments provided.

Saturday, January 20

Stephens Pond Cross Country Ski

Class B2B

Roy Keats, 518.466.8544 or royskipaddle@gmail.com

This ski starts at the Lake Durant Public Campsite and climbs to Stephens Pond via the Northville Lake Placid Trail. It has a few downhill sections with make it a lower intermediate rating. From Stephens Pond we could ski across the lake, and bushwhack a quarter mile back to the main trail to avoid a steep uphill climb out from the pond. The trip is 6 to 7 miles long depending on pond ice conditions.

Wednesday, January 24

Snowshoe Willie Marsh

Class C3D

Walt Hayes, 518.399.7482

A nearby hiking area in a NYS Forest in the Town of Johnstown, Fulton County. The leader's first midwinter visit to this area. There may be newly constructed bridges out on the marsh. About 4 miles on rolling terrain. Meeting at 9 a.m. with return about 4.

Saturday January 27

Balsam Lake & Graham, Class A2B

John Susko, 518.383.1284 or jpsusko@netzero.net

Balsam Lake Mtn. has a fire tower and Graham has good views near the summit; both are on the list of Catskill 3500 peaks. We'll hike in from

the Mill Brook Road trailhead mostly along old woods roads. The distance is ~10 miles with ~2000 feet of ascent. At this time of year snowshoes, crampons or other traction devices may be needed.

Saturday, January 27

Cross Country Ski to Rock Pond

Class B2B

Mike Brun, brunmcts@verizon.net or 518.487.8054

We will ski from Benson (the old starting point on NPT) to Rock pond, 7 mile round trip. Trail parallels the stream bed through most of the trip. Trail climbs steadily to the Rock Pond.

Sunday, January 28

Young Member Hike Overlook Mountain

Difficulty: Moderate 4.8 miles

Jason Waters, 518.369.5516 or jwate78@gmail.com

We will be hiking up Overlook Mountain in the Catskills which has a 60 foot fire tower on top. The fire tower offers some great views of the Hudson River Valley across to the Berkshires. This hike is canine friendly. Bring the right winter hiking gear such as microspikes, snowshoes.

Sunday, February 4

Young Member Hike Balsam Mountain

Difficulty: Moderate 5.5 miles; features many stream crossings

Mary Zawacki, Text 914.373.8733

Balsam Mountain is a winter requirement for aspiring 3500ers. Join us for a gorgeous loop trek that crosses streams, and features great views near the summit. All participants must be prepared for a winter trek, and bring microspikes, snowshoes, and winter gear. Be advised that there are many stream crossings on this trail, which may be icy, slippery, or dangerous.

NPT Trail Remains A Popular Long Haul Challenge for Hikers

Despite a soggy start to the Adirondack hiking season, the Schenectady Chapter awarded 106 patches for folks who completed the 135-mile trek of the Northville-Placid Trail, a service the chapter has performed since 1970.

The chapter works in cooperation with the NPT Chapter and the state Department of Environmental Conservation. The trail is a classic of the Northeast, having been cut in 1922 and maintained and upgraded over the years since. There is a new trail handbook published in 2017, and the trail offers overlooks and lakes, wildlife and leantos.

It is a great wilderness experience and can be done piecemeal or as an extended hike from either end. It also helps to relieve the hiking pressure on the High Peaks region, a growing concern. Contact the chapter, adk-schenectady.org, or NPT chairwoman Mary MacDonald, nptrail@adk-schenectady.org for detailed information including the contact for the award patch.

2017 A Busy Year for Whitewater Paddlers

We certainly covered a lot of territory in 2017 in both rivers paddled and training accomplished. Just a few years ago our trips numbered in the 40s, but this year it was into the 60s, with 20 trip leaders actively engaged.



*Paddlers take a lunch break during the October Run on the Middle Branch of the Moose River.
Photo by Mal Provost*

With more favorable rains than last year, we had scheduled trips and pickup groups on the water from March into November. Almost a dozen runs were made down the Hudson Gorge – one of our classic trips – and we wore a groove in the Sacandaga, using its regular releases to polish our techniques and safety practices. We paddled the Pork Barrel section of the Westfield in Massachusetts to the Nantamaha in North Carolina, the Schroon, Deerfield and Middle Branch of the Moose, to name some.

For expanded skill training and leadership education we included swift water rescue, first aid, group planning and instructor certification. Not only did we have a record number of trips, the number of paddlers on each trip was impressive, with several trips breaking down into sub groups to improve safety and awareness.

This year also saw expanded use of duckies – inflatable kayaks often paddled tandem with less experienced folks – so we concentrated on those techniques also. As a result of these new wrinkles in our activities, we are now updating our Trip Leader Guide. Our trip leaders are dedicated to providing a safe and fun experience for all who paddle with the ADK. The whitewater tradition at the Schenectady ADK continues.

I would like to thank the board of the Schenectady Chapter of the ADK and our dedicated trip leaders for their continued giving of their time, talent and expertise, making this whitewater program the tremendous paddle experience that it is.

--Ralph Pascale, Whitewater Chairman

Kayak Rolling Sessions Begin January

Sessions will be on Thursday evenings from 7:30- to 9:30 at the Duanesburg YMCA, but one has to get out of the pool at 9:15 to leave time to reset lanes and finish in the locker room. **Make sure your boats are clean – no leaves or debris in the pool!**

The sessions will begin on January 11 and continue through April 19

The Fall schedule is also listed on <http://www.npmb.com/3/events/events-list/> or the **YMCA Website:** <http://www.CDYMCA.ORG/> (and click on Duanesburg)

Call ahead and reserve a spot on or before the day that you plan to attend to ensure space is available. Space will be limited to ~15 paddlers. If you reserve and then cannot make it please call to cancel, so that others may take your spot. Boats enter the pool through the double doors on the right side of the building when facing the front entrance. Bring in your boat and walk around the building to the main entrance to pay or check in.

Free admission for YMCA members, \$15 per person per session for non-members or you may purchase a discount four session pass card for \$50 (\$12.50 per session). These may be purchased at the main entrance desk.

The Duanesburg Y may close early during winter storms, so it is best to call and confirm they are open before making the drive if the weather is questionable. Contact the Y at 518-895-9500.

Kayak instruction is available with reservation. There is no charge for instruction. For recreational/touring/sea kayaking, basic strokes and/or rolling contact: John Ozard ozardjw@netscape.net or Ralph Pascal at rpascale@spendwood.com

Top End Training for Five Chapter Members

Practice may not make perfect, but in whitewater paddling it at least leads to fewer swims (we hope).

Five members of the Schenectady ADK Chapter immersed themselves in advanced training during the summer, above and beyond the chapter's continued efforts to refine technique on the water. Two of them even took a double dip.



Nelson Miller seal launches as part of whitewater training at The Nantahala Outdoor Center with ADK members in September.

His assessment was affirmative: "In all, the instruction was great and a very worthwhile learning experience. It was also great to paddle new rivers, learn new skills, and reinforce old ones. The group looks forward to passing on some of the tips and suggestions acquired by the group to other ADK members."

Ed Martuscello came out of the Zoar (American Canoe Association) training with a certification for Level 3 instruction. He wrote: "I wanted to focus on improving my skills and the certification was a perk of the experience. I feel that that I can always learn something. Since I can't see for myself what I am doing (either right or wrong) I like to take advantage of the opportunity to have another person observe and provide feedback."

Clarke received ACA certification at Level 2, but had the bad luck of being injured in a fall before the completion of the training and did not make the Level 3.

Kudos to all for the enthusiasm and commitment to improve and bring back improved skills... plus some good stories.

--Mal Provost

In the last week in September, Anthony Cagino, Clarke Darlington, Nelson Miller, Ed Martuscello and Ed Cunningham journeyed to North Carolina for five days of training on class III rivers with the Nantahala Outdoor Center. Earlier in the summer Clarke and Ed Martuscello spent two weekends with Zoar Outdoor Center trainers on the Deerfield River in Massachusetts. They all came back mostly dried out, enthusiastic, and full of praise for these well-known training centers.

Clarke, in his report on the Nantahala trip, wrote: "The names of the rapids and features gave clues as to these challenges: Broken Nose rapids, Double Suck (2 big holes), Flipper, Table Saw, Hell Hole, Double Trouble, etc. There were several swims -- one paddler had three swims. It was a long and somewhat stressful day (especially for some of us), but productive from the standpoint of learning." These features were on the Ocoee River, he wrote, while the training also included the Nantahala and French Broad rivers.



The boys at Nantahala; from left, Ed Cunningham, Clarke Darlington, Anthony Cagino, Ed Martuscello and Nelson Miller.

Trip Tales

Sacandaga River Whitewater

September 10

We had a beautiful day for a trip down the SOC release. Water was warmer (than the Hudson anyway) the sun was out and it was a great day for a paddle. We did some rolling practice on the bottom after we were satisfied we took full advantage of a great day on our local release. A good time was had by all and we are waiting to get out there again. Maybe a few more times before the season ends. Leader: Ed Cunningham

West River Whitewater

September 23 and 24

We saw two fabulous days on the West River at the annual festival. Sunny skies and temperatures topped 75 degrees for a super festival, with more than a dozen of our own folks, including two open boats, kayaks and a paddle cat. As always a great time was had by all! Trip Leader Ralph Pascale

Bailey Pond Trail

and South End Hoffman Notch Trail Maintenance

September 23

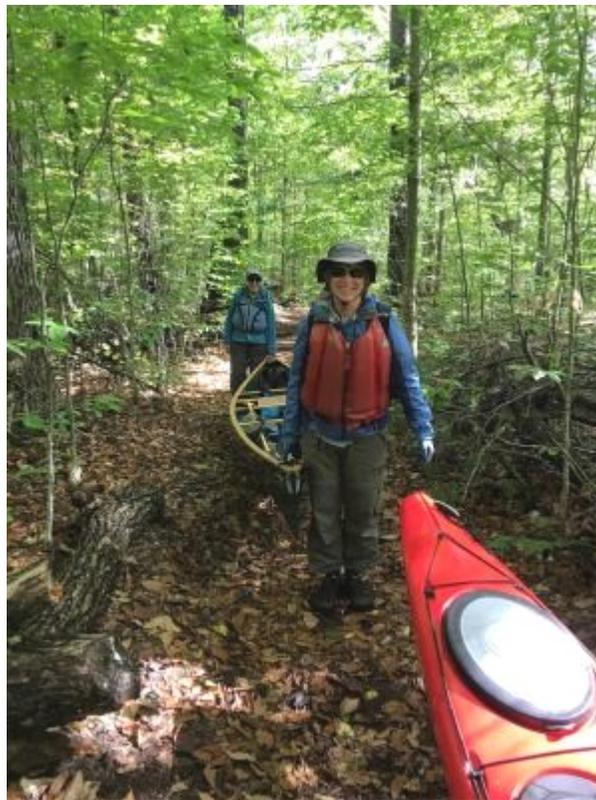
Earlier this year, our chapter adopted the Bailey Pond trail and part of the Hoffman Notch trail, both in the Hoffman Notch Wilderness west of Schroon Lake. Three of us went out on North Country National Scenic Trail Day to maintain these trails, which will become sections of the NCNST. We removed 14 logs (diameters up to 12") and lots of smaller branches, brush and snags from the trails. The locations of ten larger logs were reported to DEC, for removal by its chain saw crew. We covered about 4.5 miles, out and back. Rewards for the work were a restful lunch spot by the bridge over the north branch of Trout Brook and the great view of Hayes Mountain across Bailey Pond. The trail workers were Walt Hayes, Lin Neil and the leader, Norm Kuchar.



ADK members working to clear the new Bailey Pond Trail. Photo by Norm Kuchar



Above, paddlers make an October outing on Fish Creek. Below, Mary MacDonald and Sue Keats portage. Photos by Roy Keats



Fish Creek Paddle

October 5

Driving up to Fish Creek for a day-long loop paddle, the autumn color that had been muted for so long this fall, seemed to explode. Gray clouds gave way to sunshine as eight of us (4 Hornbecks, 1 kayak and one single and one tandem canoe) started

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Trip Tales

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from the Fish Creek campground and worked our way across Copperas, Whey, Rollins, and Floodwood Ponds back to our Fish Creek put-in, with a few portages along the way. We spent the morning heading into the wind that got pretty intense before lunch on Rollins Pond, but was at our back during the homeward swing. A great blue heron, a pair of loons and a family of mergansers were among the waterfowl we saw as we paddled. Brilliant maples stood out against the pine trees on the shore. The last stretch down Fish Creek was magical as we quietly made our way through the fern forest on the slow-moving water. We covered about nine miles altogether -- a truly wonderful fall paddle. Participants were Nancy King Smith (writeup author), Mary MacDonald, Tom and Pam Speer, John Ravas, Greg Schaefer, and Sue and Roy Keats leaders.

Haystack Mountain (Wilmington, Vermont)

October 6

A very nice mountain of 3400 feet with hiker parking lot at 2400 feet. There was a little drizzle and lots of fog. The view from the top is supposed to be great but we could only see trees about 100 feet away. In spite of the weather we enjoyed the day. We will be back on a good day. The trail starts out steeply up a gravel road. After that the foot path is on an easy grade the rest of the way to the top. Kathy Gorman-Combs, Norm Kuchar, Mary MacDonald, Ginny Parsons and leader Walt Hayes.

Esopus Whitewater

October 7

Seven ADK paddlers and three AMC paddlers had a good trip on the Esopus. It was unseasonably warm and the fall colors were beautiful. The paddlers were: Clarke Darlington, trip leader, Charles Murray (ADK co-leader and AMC group leader), Bob Wright, Tom Flynn, Norm Labbe, Horst DeLorenzi, Don Orr, Karl VonHeilman, Bill Warren and Bill Turner (AMC). There were 3 swims which were uneventful. The ADK group ended their trip at the hot dog stand rest stop and the AMC group went all the way down to the IGA take out. Two paddlers were trying out new boats. This was a good trip and we were fortunate to have such nice warm weather.

Number Seven Mountain

October 10

Six hikers had a beautiful fall day to climb this small peak near the Hudson River, between Lake Luzerne and Warrensburg. Starting near the northern parking area on River/Buttermilk Road, we continued on the gated road north along the Hudson about a mile to a logging road leading steeply into Joe Baker Sag. When the grade of this road moderated, we began a bushwhack up the southwest side of Number Seven Mountain. The woods were quite open except for a short section of land recently acquired by the state, which had been logged and is now covered with a dense growth of small trees. The view from open ledges near the summit of Number Seven is perhaps the best in this

area. It extends from south to west and north, giving a broad view of Spruce, Hadley, Roundtop, Baldhead, Moose and Crane Mountains, across the Hudson River and 1200 feet below. Fall colors and blue skies added to the spectacle. On the return, we avoided whacking our way through the section of second-growth thickets by navigating through the network of logging roads. Enjoying the day were Bob and Nancy Buckley, Mary MacDonald, Nate Mack, Kathy Miles and leader Norm Kuchar.



John DeBrita and Roy Keats work on the Stephens Pond trail.

Northville-Placid Trail Steward Trip - Stephens Pond

October 14

We had a great day working our way to the Stephens Pond lean-to from the Lake Durant campsite. We cleaned out over 20 drainages, cut out 4 trees across the trail, which we could handle with a hand saw, and widened the trail to DEC standards by side cutting. Now the trail should be in great shape for skiing, assuming Mother Nature supplies the snow! We had a nice relaxed lunch at the lake and returned to our cars. The participants were Mary MacDonald, Russel Hart, John DeBrita, Tom Miller, and Roy Keats, the leader.

OK Slip Falls

October 20

On a wonderful sunny and warming day, seven hikers walked in to OK Slip Falls off Rte. 28 west of North River. The trail was in excellent condition. The trees continued to drop many leaves. We had our lunch while we viewed the falls. The new walkway away from the highway helps greatly to descend and later ascend that steep and muddy section. A few other hikers came along the trail in the afternoon. Our hikers: Kathie Armstrong, Sue Wright, Linda Hutchins, Jane McCloskey, Ginny Parsons, Christiane Mulvihill, and Mary MacDonald, leader.

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Trip Tales

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Saturday, October 14

Young Member Outing: Phelps & Tabletop

This was a sweet hike! We had six people and two furry friends join us for an awesome day in the High Peaks. Our only issue really was trying to find one another in what was a very busy Adirondac Loj parking lot. We made quick work of the well-marked herd path up Tabletop and then summited Phelps right as clouds briefly broke, treating us to exceptional views! The participants were Rusty, Mary Zawacki, Emily Litwin, Dustin Wright (leader), Cheng Yuan-Ming, Willard E. Bear, Davey Kelley and Heather Ipsen.

Panther Peak Young Members Hike

September 24

Our hike up Panther Peak may have been the hottest, most humid young members hike of 2017. Five of us (and two pups) began our ascent around 10 a.m., and made it down in time for a late lunch. Views from the ledges were fantastic, though no fall foliage was visible yet. The trail was very quiet, and we enjoyed having the summit to ourselves. Participants: Scott Birdsey, Jill Morretto, Jen Schutten, Kevin Zawacki, Mary Zawacki, dogs Rusty and Jim.



Celebrating the Phelps Mountain climb from left, Mary Zawacki holding Rusty, Emily Litwin, Dustin Wright with Willy Bear, Cheng Yuan-Ming, Davey Kelley, Heather Ipsen.



Dan Kemp and Rich Rogers take a break as they approach the summit of Hurricane.

Young Member Outing: Hurricane Mountain

November 4

We made quick work of this six mile beauty of a hike, getting up and down from one of the top fire tower mountains in only about two and a half hours of hike time. Our crew of five humans and of course the president of the ADK Canine Chapter, the one, Willard E. Bear had an awesome time on a beautiful late fall day. The trip was led by Dustin Wright.

DEC's Drone Program Adds Fleet of 22 UAVs

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has announced that the agency has deployed a fleet of 22 unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), or drones, across the state. An announcement from the state agency said the drones will “enhance the state’s environmental management, conservation and emergency response efforts.”

“DEC has a wide range of responsibilities in protecting the state’s environment and ensuring the safety of our citizens and visitors, and well-being of our communities,” DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos said in the statement, which was sent to the press. “The use of drone technology will help us do our jobs better and faster while saving taxpayer dollars. We live in a changing world with technological advances being made at an exponential rate, and UAVs give us a safe and efficient way to collect and analyze data, assess threats to the environment, and quickly respond to emergencies. This technology is helping DEC with everything from petroleum spills and wildlife surveys to search and rescue missions, forest fires, and natural disasters.”



DEC says it developed its UAV program with guidance from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and received a Certificate of Authorization (COA) from the FAA authorizing use of UAVs within national airspace.

Fourteen DEC pilots trained under the guidance of the Northeast UAS Airspace Integration Research (NUAIR) team, the agency said, at FAA’s UAS test site at Griffiss International Airport in Rome, with staff from SkyOp, a private UAS training company. The drones are equipped with both standard and thermal infrared cameras and can legally fly at heights below 400 feet. Each drone is operated by a human pilot that can control the vehicle with a remote control from the ground and at a distances of up to three miles. Currently, DEC stations drones in DEC Region 1 (Long Island), Region 2 (NYC Metro), Region 4 (Capital District), Region 5 (Adirondacks), Region 6 (Tug Hill), Region 7 (Central New York), and Region 9 (Western New York). DEC’s statement said the majority of the drones will be piloted by UAS-certified Forest Rangers and Environmental Conservation Officers (ECOs).

DEC anticipates using drones for a number of duties, including but not limited to search and rescue missions, forest fire suppression, wildlife management and surveys, invasive species detection, and forest health evaluations. DEC also anticipates that drones will help staff to quickly assess environmental damage from natural disasters such as dam breaks, ice jams, flooding, hurricanes, tornadoes, and air quality events. Drones can also give scientists new opportunities to observe landscapes from above and provide baseline and change-comparisons over time for enhanced data analysis.

Each year, Forest Rangers respond to approximately 250 search and rescue calls, and many times environmental conditions, such as low visibility and night conditions, prevent manned aircraft from providing support. This lack of information often increases the time to respond to stranded and distressed persons in critical need of medical attention. To solve this problem, UAVs equipped with infrared sensors will have the ability to transmit real-time location information to ground search-and-rescue crews, potentially saving time and lives.

--Reprinted Courtesy of Adirondack Almanack

DEC Creates New High Peaks Trail Crew

By Mike Lynch

The state Department of Environmental Conservation had a busy year for its new 5-person trail crew for the High Peaks. According to DEC spokesman Delamater Benning, this is the DEC's "first five-person trail crew in more than 20 years, and they are going to focus on high priority High Peak projects."

Benning said the new trail crew was created after DEC Region 5 staff said there was a need to upgrade high priority trails in the High Peaks. The DEC also uses trails crews from the Adirondack Mountain Club, Adirondack 46ers, Student Conservation Association and other organizations to perform trail work in the Adirondacks. The announcement of the new trail crew came on June 2, one day before National Trails Day, which is dedicated to performing stewardship on hiking trails.

The DEC announcement said the High Peaks is one of the most popular hiking destinations in the state and sees an increase in users every year. The increase in hiker traffic and need for more DEC trail crews has been written about previously on the *Almanack*. The DEC statement said the new trail crew will help maintain and improve these areas, which will improve public safety and enhance outdoor experiences for its users.

"The long-term stewardship of trails in the High Peaks Wilderness is critical to the preservation of wilderness values, the protection of natural resources, and the enjoyment of the recreating public," said Josh Wilson, Executive Director of the Barkeater Trails Alliance, in a press release about the new crew. "The new DEC Trail Crew will add great value to the work being done by volunteer and professional trail crews from Barkeater Trails Alliance, Adirondack Mountain Club and other organizations in the greater High Peaks region. This is truly great news for all of us who share a common interest in Adirondack trails."



The trail crew's original spring priority list:

- **Avalanche Pass Trail and Bridge/Ladder Replacement**

Trail Hardening (Turnpiking), Drainage Replacement, Replacement of 15 ladders, 10 small bridges and various Bog Bridges along the length of trail from Avalanche Camp to Lake Colden.

- **Lake Colden-Flowed Lands Campsite Relocations**

Permanent relocation of ~9 campsites in the Lake Colden/Flowed Lands area. Sites established with earthen tent pads, signage and new privies. Old sites fully restored, brushed in and planted.

- **Marcy Dam Campsite Relocations**

Permanent relocation of four campsites in the Marcy Dam. Sites established with earthen tent pads, signage and new privies. Old sites fully restored, brushed in and planted.

--Reprinted courtesy of the Adirondack Almanack

Schenectady ADK
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<http://www.adk-schenectady.org>



CHAPTER BOARD MEETINGS: Are held regularly on the 4th Tuesday of the month. No meetings are held in July or August. Any concerns members have may be expressed to any board member listed on the inside front cover, or attend the meetings which are open to the membership. Call a board member for date, time & directions.

CHAPTER DISCLAIMER: People who attend outings reminded that such activities entail a certain degree of danger; and persons participating do so at their own risk. This disclaimer is for both whitewater and regular outings of the chapter.

SCHENECTADY CHAPTER PATCH: This lovely patch (shown at right) can be purchased by mailing a check (payable to Schenectady Chapter ADK) to Mary MacDonald, 27 Woodside Drive, Clifton Park NY 12065. The cost is \$3 per patch, which includes the mailing cost.

TRIP LEADERS: If you do not want your trip listed in the local newspapers, call Publicity Chair Roy Keats at 518-370-0399, or roysueski@yahoo.com. This newsletter goes out over the Internet.

EQUIPMENT RENTAL: The chapter has hi-tech snowshoes and one pair of universal fit crampons available to rent at \$5/trip. Call Stan Stoklosa at 383-3066 to arrange for pick-up.

WEBSITE: <http://www.adk-schenectady.org> — All of the latest information will be posted on the Web, i.e. any changes or corrections. Please review our website and related Internet resources Acceptable Use Policy.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: If you move, you must inform the ADK in order to continue receiving The Lookout. The Lookout is sent via bulk mail, which the Postal Service will not forward. Send changes of address to the Main Club to ensure uninterrupted delivery.

Membership Application

To join the Schenectady Chapter, send this form with payment to:

Adirondack Mountain Club 814 Goggins Road, Lake George, NY 12845 or drop it off at Adirondak Loj or Headquarters.

Check Membership Level:

- Family Life \$1950
- Individual Life \$1300
- Adult \$50
- Family \$60
- Senior (65+) \$40
- Senior Family 65+ \$50
- Student (full time 18+) \$25
- School _____

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List spouse & children under 18 and birth dates

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