

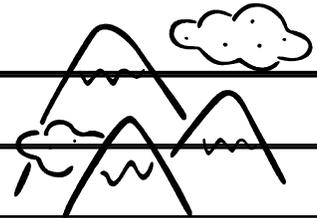
Adirondack Mountain Club-Ramapo

The Ramapough

www.hudsonhikers.org

Summer 2006

The View From The Summit



Summertime, and the livin' is easy...well, anyway, we hikers should be takin' it easy on the trails, as heat and humidity slow down the long-striding hiker's gait. But there is, surely, sufficient recompense in a more languid pace if we only let in the sights and sounds of summer-saturated footpaths. For, while hiking is always in some sense a "natural" experience, summertime is an especially good time to enjoy hiking as a sensuous experience.

See... The grand mountaintop vistas are oft haze-beclouded, but look down and about your immediate surroundings. A bouquet of colors is at hand, from the bold pinks and more demure violets of summery onset to the white aster and goldenrod meadows of September. No Hudson Valley hiker, though, can ignore the pageantry of mountain laurel in full June bloom; truly Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like these. Fluttering by are multi-hued butterflies, winged Matisses in miniature - the showy spectacle of swallowtails (tiger and spicebush and pipevine), red admirals and majestic migrating monarchs. For me, though, no artist's palette can surpass the gem-like luster of the forest ponds' dragons and damsels, whose names can only hint at their gleaming beauty - ebony jewelwing, ruby meadowhawk, azure bluet, green darner, blue-tipped dancer, brush-tipped emerald.

Hear... August's raucous chorus of crickets and katydids resound in summery depths, but my auditory preference is for the symphony of bird-song (and for my favorite musician, the flute-voiced wood thrush). The songsters can perform solo and chamber pieces, and their repertoire extends well beyond the classical - they were accomplished jazz scat-singers and atonal modernists long before we imitated them. Nor are they shy for performing for hikers behind leafy verdant curtains; you'd be surprised at the number of birds who breed and raise their young along trail waysides. Greenbrook Sanctuary in Tenafly did a count along

a mile-and-a-half stretch of the Long Path and confirmed the presence of an avian alphabet of trailside nesters: cedar waxwing, cardinal, catbird, chickadee, crow, flicker, flycatcher, goldfinch, goose, indigo bunting, jay, kingbird, oriole, phoebe, red-winged blackbird, robin, scarlet tanager, sparrow (chipping and house), titmouse, towhee, veery, warbler and (last but not least) wood thrush. Thrill to their trills!

Taste... All hikers, I suppose, have their prized blueberry patch whose fruits they may choose to share with others (or not). I must confess, however, my partiality for an alien Asiatic invader - the tapering, thorny red vines of the wineberry. Not for the vine, of course, which disfigures too many trailsides, but for the blackberry-like fruit, which it is impossible not to eat when in August prime. Maybe it's ecologically sinful to savor wineberry succulence, but it's a temptation not to be thwarted.

Touch... In clammy, steamy summer weather I yearn for what I can touch but not hold onto - the waters of a stream pool to soak the head or, better yet, of a lake or pond to plunk in the body. Tis a pity we law-abiding hikers must, in this instance, take the Fifth on public disclosure of our favorite summertime swimming holes.

So this summer learn to be a sensuous hiker. As for me, see you at the Jersey shore

Chris Connolly

President

NEWS ON THE TRAILS

That we live in a hiker's paradise is becoming known to one and all. Trail.com's 4th annual listing of the nation's top 100 trails and hiking/walking areas again showed the Breakneck Ridge Trail in the no. 1 spot (which it has occupied all four years). But it was not alone; other local hiking hangouts that made the list were:

- No. 4 - Harriman State Park
- No. 21 - Bear Mountain State Park
- No. 26 - Bear Mountain Loop
- No. 34 - Anthony's Nose
- No. 48 - Appalachian Trail (Harriman/Bear Mountain)
- No. 84 - Palisades Interstate Park/Long Path
- No. 86 - Hudson Highlands State Park

The Stillman Trail segment in Storm King State Park on the north side of the mountain nearest to Mountain Road has been closed between the Bluebird and Bypass Trail junctions. The closure is due to a deteriorating foot bridge that crosses a steep rock ledge; the trail section will be re-opened once the bridge can

be replaced.

On National Trails Day, June 3, a new trailhead parking access to Pine Meadow Lake was opened at the Town of Ramapo Equestrian Center on the west side of Route 202 (a mile south of Ladentown Road). Hikers can now reach the Lake from the east by taking the newly extended Pine Meadow Trail from the Center's parking area. Chapter member Pete Heckler is to be congratulated for his instrumental role in making possible this new hiker's entry way into Harriman Park.

Trail crews from the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference completed construction of the mile-long Brooks Lake Trail encircling the lake and its picturesque views in Fort Montgomery. Hiker parking is available in the town-operated Brooks Lake Park; the new trail hooks up with the Timp-Torne Trail and is an alternative access point to the Popolopen Gorge hiking area.

Conservation Corner

Un-reserve-dly good news! On March 10, New York State purchased the 2,518-acre Awosting Reserve for \$17 million from The Trust for Public Land (TPL) and the Open Space Institute

(OSI), which, in turn, had closed that same day on a contract to buy the property. The State immediately incorporated the Reserve, which occupies the east ridge of the Shawangunks in the Towns of Gardiner, Wawarsing and Shawangunk, as part of adjoining Minnewaska State Park. TPL/OSI had won a spirited courthouse auction the previous November to save the Reserve from threatened development.

On March 17, a federal appeals court in Washington, D.C. handed ADK a fittingly "green" victory by striking down a recent attempt by the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to relax congressionally-mandated air pollution control requirements enacted in 1977 for older coal-burning power plants. At issue was the EPA's reinterpretation of a 25-year-old agency rule that requires old plants, being upgraded or rebuilt to extend their normal service life, to install the same pollution reduction equipment as new plants when they make "any" change increasing air pollution emissions.

The court rejected EPA's effort to let power plants - many of which are located upwind of New York and New Jersey in the Midwest -

construct major modifications without simultaneously installing scrubbers to deal with the increased pollutants that would result.

ADK - represented by current Executive Director Neil Woodworth - successfully joined with several states, including New York and New Jersey, to strike down the proposed reinterpretation.

The Orange County Legislature unanimously authorized up to \$3.5 million in open space matching funds for 2006, the second in a five-year program to fund responsible land use planning and open space protection projects.

On May 19, Governor Pataki announced the creation of a new state park consisting of two tracts totaling 436 acres in Westchester and Putnam Counties located near the Taconic State Parkway. The park is named for the individual who donated the lands (after having first fought, unsuccessfully, to build golf courses on them), but because this individual - a real estate/casino mogul and current TV celebrity - is notorious for modesty of ego and demeanor, the Chapter will preserve his penchant for staying out of the limelight by not publicizing his name (although we most reluctantly disclose the initials DJT).

Hudson Palisades Trails

Looking for somewhere close to hike that won't use up a lot of gas to get to? Try the Hudson Palisades Trails. These are a series of trails that start at Fort Lee Park, NJ and travel north along both the Hudson shore and the woods that parallel the Palisades Parkway.

Start your hike in such places as the Englewood Boat basin, Alpine Boat basin or State Line Lookout and explore the river and the Palisades from many points.

There are a number of easy access points to view the Palisades, including Allison Park, Rockefeller Lookout, Alpine Lookout, State Line Lookout. The Long Path begins in Fort Lee, by the George Washington Bridge. For the next twelve miles to the New York State line, it follows along the Palisades through lands of the Palisades Interstate Park. There are many spectacular views of the Hudson

River and New York City and Yonkers along the way.

Do you need maps? The New York-New Jersey Trail map set for the Hudson Palisades Trails contains five maps of all the trails in the New Jersey 12 mile stretch and also includes parts of Rockland trails as well.

Photo by Margo Moss



Welcome New Ramapo Members

- Reena Mancuso, Tuxedo, NY
- Matthew Rubinoff, Piermont, NY
- Karen Tarapata, Upper Nyack, NY
- Stephen & Terri Zubarik, Tomkins Cove, NY
- Kathleen Tabor, Kinnelon, NJ
- Liz Tressman, Suffern, NY

Mountain Biking at Minnewaska

For spectacular mountain scenery, this 17-mile loop thru Minnewaska State Park may qualify as one of the best on the East Coast. The carriage roads gently switchback up the mountain face, revealing grander views of the surrounding mountains and lakes at each turn. From Castle Point, the nearly 360-degree view is breathtaking, as mountain ridges recede in the distance in all directions. You don't need to be super-fit to enjoy this ride. Although there are some long climbs, most of the riding is on six-foot-wide converted carriage roads with gentle grades. The trails are well maintained and heavily used. There is a \$6 per car entrance fee.

Prehistoric Native American Sites Program

The next chapter meeting on Thursday, September 21st will be a fascinating program about the Native American sites within Harriman, Bear Mountain, and Sterling Forest State Parks. Our speaker will tell us about the one hundred confirmed sites and forty or more possible sites and their associated artifacts that represent more than ten thousand years of indigenous life in our area. Native American have lived in this area for thousands of years before European settlers arrived in the sixteenth century.

Michelle Houser is involved with saving these sites from destruction through the program, Cultural Resources Site Stewards located at Bear Mountain's Trail-side Museum. She will give us an opportunity to get involved in the program to save these sites. Join us at the **Nanuet Public Library, 7:30PM on September 21st** to hear this interesting and informative talk. Refreshments will be served. Bring your guests.

Suzan Gordon
ADK Ramapo Programs Chair

Don't Step on The Science!

Beginning mid-May, the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference and Rutgers University started an invasive plant-monitoring project, in which 40 pairs of volunteer "Citizen Scientists" - recruited by the Trail Conference and trained in collaboration with the Brooklyn Botanic Garden - are monitoring 20 species of invasives on two-mile trail segments in Ramapo Mountain State Forest/Ringwood State Park and Harriman State Park.

The project's two-mile segments will be marked in 1/10-mile increments with small research flags located one yard off the trails, and also by a tiny yellow paint dot at the very edge of the trail. The volunteer teams will be collecting data through July 9, after which the flags will be picked up and saved for the 2007 and 2008 research seasons.

If you, or anyone you hike with, encounter any of the science project signage, please do not touch! Also alert the Trail Conference if any signage seems to be damaged, missing or needs attention.



This season's monitoring is the beginning of a three-year project to understand better the spread of non-indigenous invasive plants in forested parklands with high conservation value and high levels of public use (in this case, foot travel by us hikers, among other things). More information is needed in our area to assess the magnitude of the problem. The 22 plant species on the Most Wanted list are:

Trees

Norway maple
ailanthus/tree of heaven
paulownia/princess tree
Hercules club/Japanese angelica

Shrubs

Japanese barberry
Siebold vibernum
winged euonymus
common privet
bush honeysuckles
common buckthorn
multiflora rose
jet-bead
wineberry

Vines

Oriental bittersweet
Japanese honeysuckle
mile-a-minute
five-leaf akebia
porcelain berry
black swallow-wort

Herbs

garlic mustard, narrowleaf bittercress

Grass

Japanese stiltgrass

A DAY AT MOHONK MOUNTAIN HOUSE

How about another day (or a first time) and dinner at the unique and delightful Mohonk Mountain House? Last September many of us spent a wonderful day hiking (choice of two organized walks), having tea on the veranda, and then enjoying a delicious four course dinner at 6:30 PM in the spacious dining room facing the mountains while viewing the sunset. We will be planning it again on **Saturday, September 16th** for those who missed it or for those of us who wish to experience the day again. But, this time the cost is LESS...\$49 per person for of all the above including taxes and tips.

We can shower and change in the new health club before dinner. Men are required to wear a dinner jacket and no jeans or sneakers are allowed in the dining room. We will pay in advance making a check payable to Ramapo ADK, and sending it to me, Suzan, by July 30th after you call to RSVP. PLEASE call me before that date and I will give you the additional information needed. It will be a marvelous day at Mohonk.

Suzan Gordon
ADK Ramapo Programs Chair
201-871-3531

Become A Hike Leader

Leading a hike is not difficult - use your common sense and the entire group will enjoy the hike!
Some key points:

- Know your group. The leader should have some idea about the experience and physical abilities of group members, particularly for a difficult hike. The leader should make sure everyone is properly equipped and clothed for the hike and the weather.
- Know the hike. The leader should carry map, and compass – even if the leader is very familiar with the area and the trail is well marked.
- At the meeting place, announce the estimated return time. If someone has a commitment later and wants the group to hike quickly so they can keep their commitment, they should be encouraged to drive separately or not go. .
- Arrange any car shuttling needed. This can depend on the hike, the number of vehicles available, and the wishes of the group:

-A loop hike, in which the beginning and end points are the same, requires no



shuttling. A car shuttle, in which one or more cars are left at the end point of the hike. At the end of the hike, the cars left at the beginning point are retrieved.

- Keep the group together. Let the group set the pace, or specifically let the slowest person set the pace. The hike leader does not need to be in front all the time if the group stays together. The hiker in the front should stop periodically to let the rest of the group catch up and anytime the route of the trail is unclear. The leader should designate a trail "sweep" to bring up the rear.
- Be considerate of the group. Allow time for rest and separation stops, lunch, and a chance to look at special views.
- Be aware of special features of the area. Some areas have a fascinating history, unusual geology, or other interesting features.

Enjoy yourself and have fun! If you volunteer to be a hike leader, you will be assured of enjoying at least one hike. Volunteer to be a hike leader for the Ramapo Chapter.



The Highlands Trail

The Highlands Trail shows the natural beauty of the New Jersey and New York Highlands region, and draws the public's attention to this endangered resource. It is a cooperative effort of the New York - New Jersey Trail Conference, conservation organizations, state and local governments, and local businesses. When completed, it will extend over 150 miles from Storm King Mountain on the Hudson River in New York south to Phillipsburg, New Jersey, on the Delaware River. The route will connect major scenic attractions in both states. Ultimately, a network of trails including alternate routes and multi-use paths is envisioned. The Highlands Trail is a combination of co-alignment on established trails, new trails, and road walking. The co-aligned sections bear both trails' blazes, except for

the Appalachian, Sterling Ridge, and Allis Trails, which have plastic Highlands Trail logos at critical points. Hikers must pay attention at intersections as the Highlands Trail often leaves one trail to join another. The Highlands Trail blaze is a teal-colored diamond.

The Highlands Trail, under the stewardship of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, has recently earned the Millennium Legacy Trail designation which gives it singular status among New Jersey's natural and historic pathways. Trail sections range from easy to challenging. You can choose whether to enjoy historic sites, or the beauty of wildness depending on your preferences on your day hike.

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Save The Date

Looking ahead to December, the Ramapo Chapter will be celebrating its 35th Anniversary on **Thursday evening, December 7th** at the fine restaurant La Terrazza located in New City, NY. A complete dinner of appetizer (3 choices), entree (6 selections), dessert and all the coffee or tea you wish will cost \$28 per person which includes tax and tip.

Soft drinks are included also, but alcoholic beverages will be paid individually. More information will be in the next newsletter, but save the date. The anniversary celebration will also be our holiday gathering.

Suzan Gordon
ADK Ramapo Programs Chair

Canoeing Is Fun

Canoeing is one of the more relaxing and pastoral of the outdoor sports. It can take you to wild places where other boats could never go, and it can provide you with a sense of peace, serenity and quietude. But canoeing can also mean outdoor adventure and excitement. If nothing else, canoes are versatile.

They can be used for a lazy paddle on a still marsh or lake; outfitted for a relaxing afternoon of fishing; packed up for a family camping adventure; or used to test your paddling skills on a set of whitewater rapids. Regardless of the area, mastery of a canoe does require a certain set of skills and some basic safety awareness.

To try canoeing, join a canoe club or go to an a canoe outfitter who will teach the basics such as getting in and out of a canoe, steering and moving across currents. Once you learn the basics you can enjoy a beautiful sunset on the Hudson River or a nearby lake.