

Adirondack Mountain Club-Ramapo

The Ramapough

www.hudsonhikers.org



Fall 2007

The View From The Summit

Which is the best season to be out hiking? Some say it's fall for many reasons. Fall is cooler, but still offers warm, sunny days. Fall provides leaves that change colors, and beautiful woodland scenes. Fall offers long days to hike, and beds of fallen leaves to crunch under your feet. With Fall upon us now, the kids back to school, vacation times over for the most part, it's time to come out and enjoy a fall hike. Our hike schedule has outdoor activities that fit everyone's ability and time schedules, from short hikes locally to long hikes in the Catskill Mountains. Come out this fall and enjoy the fine weather, friendly Ramapo hikers, and the great views from the woods and the peaks.

We have a need to fill three positions which are vital to our chapter. First, we are seeking a Conservation Chair who will keep all of us informed about conservation and open space issues that affect our area in New York and New Jersey. This is a Board member position and will help to ensure that we remain a proactive force to protect the open spaces around us. Second, we need a Webmaster to help us move our Website to a new level. A growing number of people find out about ADK and the Ramapo chapter from the Web. We need someone who will help to maintain and expand our Web site on a regular basis. Third, we are seeking someone who would like to lead hikes for single people. A recent survey showed there is a great deal of interest if we organize hikes and outings for Ramapo Chapter's singles. This Singles Hike Leader would conduct two hikes per season in any areas that he/she wants, and look for ways to engage more single people in our outings.

If you're interested in any of these positions or you know of someone who might be interested, please contact me by phone or email. Everyone on the Board is a volunteer and by volunteering you expand and grow and help our chapter to remain vibrant and attractive.

It's not too soon to put our Holiday Party scheduled for Thursday, December 6th on your calendar. Suzan Gordon has arranged for a delicious dinner at a great Italian res-

taurant in New City. It's an opportunity to come see old friends and to make new ones. Last year's Holiday Party was terrific and this one promises to be even better, so plan on joining us on December 6th to celebrate our 36th year.

I'd like to encourage everyone who leads a hike this fall to submit a brief trip report about your hike for our newsletter. It will let everyone know how and where the hike took place, and you can share something of the great views the hikers enjoyed. Please keep it brief, and email it to our newsletter editor, Lilo Kassel at lrkmels@verizon.net. This is also your chance to get your name in print.

This year a major ADK fundraiser, called "A Wilderness Affair- Bringing Mountains to You", will take place on Saturday, November 3rd at the Saratoga Hotel in Saratoga Springs NY. The affair will showcase auction items donated by ADK members and gift baskets donated by individual chapters. The live auction follows a wonderful meal; bidding on the chapter baskets is quite competitive. Your Ramapo Chapter will be donating a gift basket of local wines and food items to the auction. If you have a chance, attend the gala event and put in your bid on a wide variety of craft items.

Finally, I want to report that our membership is growing. We are gaining new members each month as more people have learned about our chapter from the many posters, cards and brochures that are displayed at public places. Keep this momentum growing by talking to family members, friends and co-workers about the many benefits of joining ADK Ramapo. Encourage them to go to our website, www.hudsonhikers.org, and encourage them to join.

See you on the trails.

Peter Reiner, President
845-634-7635 Psr7@aol.com

The Mission of the Adirondack Mountain Club

From Peter Reiner, Chapter President: The ADK has been in existence for more than 80 years and its mission statement has changed over time. This is the ADK's current mission statement that I think you can all relate to.

The Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK) is dedicated to the protection and responsible recreational use of the New York State Forest Preserve, and other parks, wild lands, and waters vital to our members and chapters. The Club, founded in 1922, is a member-directed organization committed to public service and stewardship. ADK employs a balanced approach to outdoor recreation, advocacy, environmental education and natural resource conservation.

Conservation Corner

On July 30, New York City announced a deal with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under which the City will save billions of dollars by not having to build filtration plants for its five-reservoir Catskill Mountain drinking water supply. Having already spent \$250 million in the last decade to acquire 80,000 acres of land around the reservoirs, the City has committed to spend another \$300 million to purchase additional open space lands in order to prevent development that could increase sewer runoff into the reservoir system. The City and New York State currently own or control more than 300,000 acres surrounding the reservoirs.

On August 14, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation confirmed that Ford Motor Company had completed clean-up of the 9-acre North of Sharp Industries site in Hillburn that Ford had used from 1958 to 1990 for illegal sludge waste dumping. The site, which is in a flood plain close to where the Town of Ramapo plans to route a bike/hike greenway, contains residual contamination that will limit any development to industrial or commercial purposes. In addition, Ford has agreed to clean up sludge deposits found at two more locations - in the Ramapo Valley Well Field off Torne Valley Road in Sloatsburg and off Camp Hill Road in Pomona.

New Jersey voters will decide this November whether to approve a one-year \$200 million bond issue for continuation of funding for the successful Green Acres open space preservation program. The bond measure is intended as a stopgap measure while the state legislature considers re-authorization of long-term open space funding.

Submitted by Chris Connolly

Bike Report –New Paltz North

Following up on the Chapter's successful May New Paltz South bike ride (reported in the Summer edition), trip leader Chris Connolly reversed course on Saturday, July 1 and led a 30-mile tour to the east and north. Of course, it was another sunny, clear day allowing uninterrupted views of gorgeous Gunks views. Starting at Huguenot Street beside the Wallkill River and proceeding easterly on backroads, the group turned north along orchard-strewn South Street with the occasional home decorated with the omnipresent tiger lily. A stop at the neighborhood golf course provided opportunity for a cold drink at the Orchard Cafe and a public restroom break. Crossing busy Route 299, the bikers turned north once again on pleasantly rolling North Ohioville Road, where several lazy miles through horse farms and orchard lands could be enjoyed with little traffic. Then came the thrill of a prolonged descent down Cow Hough Road to meet the Wallkill and, though no bovines were encountered, the denizens of a sheep pasture gave a glance at the racers speeding past. Riding by the river, the cyclists passed historic Perrine's Bridge built in 1823 - the second oldest covered bridge in New York - and soon escaped Route 32's confines to cruise into the Town of Rosendale along the ridge of Bloomington Road, a classic backcountry road with a stirring downhill at the end. Two-thirds done, the group chewed on a cheese platter at a funky eatery on Rosendale's charming main street before crossing Rondout Creek and attacking the sole substantial climb of the day. Fortunately, the ascent was punctuated by a visit to the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail's northern terminus half-way on a bridge high above the creek. There remained an idyllic 7-mile return journey to New Paltz traveling southbound on pastoral Springtown Road, where the not-yet-weary pedalers passed by a front-porch bluegrass jam session and relished the finish to a fine summer outing.

By Chris Connolly

NEWS ON THE TRAILS

The Millenium Pipeline project involves replacement of the natural gas line on a 100-foot wide strip stretching nearly eight miles through the southern Harriman and Sterling Forest State Parks. A 200-yard section of the Blue Disc Trail has already been re-routed, and hikers can expect similar relocations on other trails in the coming months. (More information to the right.)

The unofficial Old Red trail, which has long served the discriminating hiker as a more challenging and scenic scramble to the top of Ramapo Torne in Harriman Park, is now legit. After years of fruitless efforts by the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, park officials agreed to incorporate the 0.8 mile path - located between 7 Hills Trail and the Torne - as an extension of the orange-blazed Hillburn-Torne-Sebago (HTS) Trail that had previously terminated at the Torne. Trail Conference supervisor Jack Driller deserves the credit for his perseverance in garnering the long-denied approval.

The HTS extension is among the changes shown on the new 11th edition of the Harriman-Bear Mountain Trails map set published by the Trail Conference. This is the first edition to plot trail routes using more accurate GPS digital data. The Trail Conference has also recently issued a new 450-page guidebook - Hiking the Jersey Highlands by George Petty - which describes 35 hikes in that region and contains a 16-page color insert of more than 100 wildflowers that can be encountered on Highlands hikes.

The Trail Conference's West Hudson North Trail Crew has replaced the collapsing Stillman Trail bridge along the north side of Storm King Mountain. The entire trail is now reopened.

A new three-mile extension of the Warner Creek Trail/Long Path (LP) over Daley Ridge now connects the LP directly to the Devil's Path at Plateau Mountain in the Catskills, thereby eliminating a previous 5-mile detour and road walk. In addition, volunteer trail crews have cleared the massive Catskill trail blow downs resulting from the April 15 ice storm.

The LP section in High Tor State Park has been re-opened following a closure caused by coyote attacks on dogs of trail walkers. It is surmised that the coyote was protecting a nearby den.

Submitted by Chris Connolly

Pipeline Work Underway in Sterling Forest and Harriman Park

A natural gas pipeline is being installed in portions of Sterling Forest and Harriman Park. Some trails such as the Blue Disc trail off Johnstown Circle have been re-routed. The following other trails have also been affected by the installation of the pipeline: Kakiat, Triangle, Ramapo-Dunderberg, Pine Meadow, Stony Brook, Raccoon Brook Hill and Sufferen-Bear Mtn Trails. In Sterling Forest the project has affected the Allis Trail and Sterling Valley Loop. The AT will be affected but not closed. After the pipe is installed, the trench will be filled and completed, with final grading and restoration of the construction work area. Some of this construction work will be completed in 2008. Be aware that there is a short reroute on the Blue Disc Trail due to heavy clearing activity on the pipeline. The reroute begins a few hundred yards uphill from the Johnstown Road trailhead and blue flagging tape has been placed to show hikers where the trail continues.

New Catskills Accord Ends Seven Year Standoff on Belleayre Development

The seven-year standoff over the sprawling Belleayre Resort development plan in the heart of the Catskills ended with a new accord that permanently protects 86% of the land encompassed in the original proposal and ensures that construction on the remaining parcels will be as energy efficient and environmentally friendly as possible. The agreement was engineered with the help of the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) over 10 months of intensive negotiations.

The resort, which is still subject to public review, will now be built on 620 acres of land located on the western side of the State-owned Belleayre Ski Center in the Towns of Shandaken and Middletown, which straddles the border between Ulster and Delaware counties.

The \$400 million project is a smart-growth design that concentrates development on a small portion of the original development site. The new plan includes two hotels, 259 residential units, a conference center and spa, as well as an organically-treated golf course. All of the development project's buildings are expected to meet the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED silver standard in green building design. To protect against erosion, no individual lodging units will be constructed on mountain slopes steeper than 20% grade.

Under the settlement, twelve hundred acres on the eastern side of the development - approximately two-thirds of the land in the original proposal - will be sold to the state for inclusion as "forever wild" lands in the Catskill Forest Preserve. The new plan will also be redesigned to protect world-famous fishing streams in the region and safeguard New York City's watershed, which provides approximately 1 billion gallons of safe clean drinking water to 9 million New York residents each day.

Iona Island History

Iona Island is located along Route 9W just south of the Bear Mountain Bridge. It is part of the Palisades Interstate Park System but few people venture on the island today. This marsh bordered area links the island with the shore and is home to a variety of birds. While the island has a long history, over the past two hundred years it went from a grape vineyard to ammunition supply depot, and today to a nature preserve.

It was first called Iona Island by C.W. Grant of Newburg who purchased the property in 1849. He found the island's climate ideal for apples, pears and grapes. Within two decades of moving there, Grant built a large white mansion on the southeastern side of the island and planted long vineyards to produce commercially grown fruit. He developed a new grape that he called The Iona, which was turned into wine by a local wine maker. In time, he had over 2,000 fruit trees and 20 acres of grapevines, plus many greenhouses.

In the late 1880's, the days of local agriculture were fading and the property changed hands several times. Eventually Iona became a public picnic ground with an amusement park. The two story mansion was converted into a hotel, and a large pavilion was constructed where weekend excursion boats would dock. The fare from Peekskill to Iona to bring tourists was only 10 cents in 1887.

In 1899, The U.S. Navy purchased Iona for \$160,000 and constructed a military complex that totaled nearly 150 buildings. In addition, they constructed an assortment of concrete bunkers and underground tunnels that ran the length of the island. All kinds of munitions were assembled there, and practically all the bombs and ammunition used in the Atlantic war theater during World Wars I and II came from Iona. During the 1940s, over 800 men were working at Iona, involved in the assembly of bombs. Finally, in 1951 the Navy declared the Iona munitions depot obsolete, though the government continued to store rubber and copper there until the mid-1960s. Iona was acquired by the Palisades Park Commission in 1965, which demolished most of the buildings in preparation for a big public recreation area. The complex never was built due to lack of available funding and probably never will because the island is a sanctuary of the endangered bald eagle. In 1976, the National Park Service designated Iona Island a National Natural Landmark. Iona Island is one of four wetlands that make up the Hudson River Estuarine Reserve. Today, there are restrictions on touring Iona and only people with permits from the PIPC Pioneer Camp Site are allowed access. It is hoped that the Palisades Park Commissions will open the island for all to explore the scenic marsh area and the ruins of some of the previous buildings.

By Peter Reiner

Ramapo Chapter History 1991-2006

By Chris Connolly

Part 1.

Since 1991, a new generation of Ramapo leaders has built upon the achievements of the Chapter's founders during the first 20 years. With the aid of a dedicated corps of hike leaders, long-serving Hiking Chairs June Slade and Pete Tilgner scheduled a full complement of weekend hikes throughout the year. Harriman remains the most popular hiking venue, followed by NJ Ramapos, Schunemunk/Storm King, Minnewaska and East Hudson Highlands. While an annual 23.5-mile SBM sojourn is no longer a regular feature of the hike schedule, Ramapoers still had the opportunity of long-distance local treks like Aaron Schoenberg's 21-mile R-D cakewalk.

Over the years, Ike Siskind, Aaron Schoenberg and, currently, George Preoteasa have led Catskill high peak day trips. Mid-week hike events were added in 1999 when Betty Heald began leading North Jersey Chapter-sponsored Thursday hikes, which have since become a regular part of the hike schedule. The growing cooperation between the Ramapo and North Jersey Chapters culminated in 2001 under Chapter President Pete Tilgner with both Chapters jointly opening up most of their hikes to the other's members. Starting in 2005, Ramapo began leading hikes in September for the annual New York Hudson River Valley Ramble. In addition, Ramapo has offered Minnewaska and Darlington cross-country ski outings and road bike trips in, among other locales, Greenwood Lake, Schunemunk/Cornwall and the Monroe-Goshen Heritage Trail.

Perhaps the Chapter's most remarkable hiking legacy began in 1990, when master hike leader Aaron Schoenberg commenced the first of what has turned out to be annual week-long excursions to the White Mountains in New Hampshire. Expeditions covering the Appalachian Trail (AT) in Maine were added from 2001 to 2006, and Vermont Long Trail treks are planned to start in 2007. Aaron's incomparable planning has introduced the wonder of the Whites and other New England heights to a grateful group of Ramapo members, including his most faithful follower, Dean Gletsos, who has accompanied Aaron on 15 White Mountain trips. Each expedition has been memorialized in comprehensive trip reports with photo albums. (See page five for Aaron's article.)

To be continued in our next newsletter.

WHITE MOUNTAIN TRIP XVIII

From June 19-27, I led my eighteenth in a series of annual trips to the White Mountains for the ADK Ramapo Chapter. This particular trip included peak bagging sixteen 4,000 footers and followed a stretch of the Appalachian Trail through the White Mountains of New Hampshire from US 2 near Gorham to US 302 in Crawford Notch. This was without a doubt the toughest hiking trip I have ever put together, probably because a majority of the trip was spent carrying backpacks ranging up to 35 pounds for six days plus! Also, there was a lot of significant climbing involved. We had one day when we climbed over 5,700 feet of accumulated elevation gain. It was a great and successful trip. We enjoyed spectacular scenery from start to finish. The weather was good to excellent most of the time, which enhanced the pleasure of the trip. However, we were hit with hail on Middle Carter, and had winds that knocked us off our feet on Mt. High (80 mph). We saw ice on Wildcat "C". We had overall ten hikers joining for parts of this trip with Chris Connolly and myself completing what was planned for all nine days. Several participants only took part in portions of this journey due to limited time or interest. Aside from the terrific views, the spring alpine wildflowers were in bloom.

Along the trail we met several thru-hikers who were traversing the Appalachian Trail in both directions. On a couple of hikes we saw nobody and on others we met an incredible number of hikers. Visibility was up to 100 miles at times and five feet (from cairn to cairn) at others. Trails for the most part were in excellent shape, with a blow down here or there. Stream crossings were all easy with water levels low. Chris had a couple of swims in pools on Moriah Brook and in the Dry River Falls. Temperatures ranged from just above freezing at Carter Notch Hut to near 90 degrees at Crawford Notch where we finished the hike on Wed. June 27 at around 1 PM.

Our accommodations included a motel in Gorham, Colonial Fort Inn, Hikers Paradise (a hikers' hostel), and four AMC mountain huts where everyone slept dormitory style, and also the main headquarters lodging facility for the Appalachian Mountain Club in Pinkham Notch. Meals were also included and the food was good and plentiful.

Aside from the great hiking, it is worthy to note that Ramapo and United States presidents had a common bond on this trip, since we had four Ramapo Chapter Presidents, (current president) Peter Reiner and (former presidents) Chris Connolly, Constantine Gletsos and Aaron Schoenberg climb over the five highest American presidential mountains (Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe). At the summit of the highest peak, Mt. Washington, we had the attached photo taken of the four Ramapo Chapter presidents enjoying the camaraderie and beauty of the region. It was a fun trip for all, loving the outdoors, and getting our fill of strenuous exercise.

Submitted by Aaron Schoenberg



Top Row: Chris Connolly, Peter Reiner

Bottom Row: Aaron Schoenberg (hike leader), Dean Gletsos

A Warm Welcome to New Ramapo Members

Pat Arnesto, Airmont, NY
 Martin Bedell, Spring valley, NY
 Fabio and Marina Cianchetta, Mahwah, NJ
 Elana Danberg, Fort Lee, NJ
 Larry D'Andrea, New City, NY
 Steve Galla, Scarsdale, NY
 Christina Grenga, Haverstraw, NY
 Hilda Kogut, Chestnut Ridge, NY
 Tatiana Koudinova, Mahwah, NJ
 Jean Lee, Scarsdale NY
 Louis and John Parnell, Pomona, NY
 Barbara Pease, Pearl River, NY
 Jerry and Irma Romero, Suffern, NY
 Louis Schneider, Warwick, NY
 Alice Spalding, White Plains, NY

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ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

**Our holiday party will be held at Pasta Cucina, 261 Little Tor Road,
New City, NY on Thursday, December 6th.**

The festivities will begin at 7PM in a large private room at this excellent Italian restaurant. It was selected after trying other places by a tasting committee of six (we enjoyed our job). Our four course dinner will include: salad, pasta, five entree choices, dessert, coffee or tea, and soft drinks.

The cost is an unbelievable \$25.00 per person.

A cash bar will be available before and during dinner.

Join in the fun, bring friends and family.

RSVP to Suzan Gordon by December 1st. Make out a check in the amount of \$25.00 per person to ADK Ramapo and send after you RSVP.

Call 201-871-3531 or e-mail gordon.tilgner@verizon.net.