

Adirondack Mountain Club-Ramapo

The Ramapough

www.hudsonhikers.org



Spring 2008

The View From The Summit

Let's face it- we're all getting older. It seems like yesterday that we were 18 years old and could do anything. However, time has a way of catching up with us, even though we all remain young at heart. This makes me think how fortunate we are to have outdoor activities that help to keep our bodies fit and our minds sharp. Of course, I'm speaking about the many hikes and bike rides that are featured in our quarterly outings schedule.

When you come out for a hike, regardless of the level or length, you get many benefits that help to keep you fit and feel younger. The cardio workout on your heart and lungs from the walk helps to build stamina and strength. Climbing up and down hills helps to increase your balance and confidence in your stride. In fact, the American Heart Association stated that hiking is one of the best cardio-fitness forms of exercise for people of all ages.

Our minds stay focused and sharp because we observe and become curious about the beauties of nature- the attractive flora and fauna that abound in our area. As you notice a hawk flying overhead or a deer scampering away, you may be thinking about the interesting differences that nature offers us. As we talk with each other on the trails, we share stories and past adventures. We can't stop the aging process, but we can help to delay its effects by participating in hikes and other outings that are available to us every week. Going "green" is on everyone's mind today. As ADK members, we have a greater opportunity beyond the common choices to recycle and avoid waste in energy and garbage. We can become involved in the issues for which ADK has been fighting for the past 80 years. These issues include preventing pollution of lakes, preservation of forests and open spaces, and fighting against the polluters causing acid rain and smog conditions. All you have to do is go to the ADK web site, www.adk.org/conservation, and you'll find a

series of issues and alerts for which ADK needs your support and involvement. Another way we can help with conservation is as simple as cleaning your boots with a brush after each outing. This will help to keep invasive non-native plants from spreading into your area.

We are starting to see results from our plan to have chapter members "get a member" to increase our number of Ramapo ADKers. Word-of-mouth is the best way for us to recruit new members and many of you have started talking to others about the benefits of joining ADK, and becoming a part of the Ramapo chapter. Let's talk to everyone we meet about our great outings and recreation activities. More people are looking for unique outdoor experiences, and we offer the opportunity to participate in bike trips, hikes and visits to beautiful locations in the Highlands, Catskills and Adirondacks. Who knows, the next person you speak with may become a future hike leader!

A members' survey conducted last year indicated that there was interest in a more diverse choice of outdoor activities. As spring is upon us, please consider volunteering in the next outings schedule to lead outings involving canoeing, kayaking, evening paddle, birding, biking, or geo-caching for your fellow members. All it takes is your initiative to organize and lead one of these new activities! I think there will be a good number of us who would appreciate the opportunity to try some new type of outing. With spring starting this month, warmer weather will return and you will have opportunity to put on those boots or trail shoes and come out for a hike. Take advantage and come see nature come alive again with a new season. And bring a friend with you as you join us on the trails.

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

Conservation Corner

- On February 12, the Town of Ramapo Planning Board gave the go-ahead to the 49-unit, 200-acre Byron Hill Estates/Pierson Lakes Phase I and II development, which is to be built at the intersection of Sterling Forest and Harriman Parks in New York and Ramapo Reservation and Ringwood State Park in New Jersey. The development would break an eight-and-one-half mile greenway of contiguous forest between the two states, as well as jeopardize the creation of a trail link in a prime trail-connector corridor.
- In his January State of the State message, New York Governor Eliot Spitzer announced plans to develop the Poughkeepsie Highland Railroad Bridge into a state park offering a walkway/bikeway over the Hudson River. The world's longest bridge when built in 1888, the bridge has not been used since the mid-1970s, when a fire made train traffic unsafe.
- On January 24, the New York Parks Department reported the protection of over 1200 acres along the Fishkill Ridge adjacent to Hudson Highlands State Park. The city of Beacon donated 600 acres surrounding its reservoir in the Town of Fishkill, and New York State paid \$3.3 million for another 639 acres that Scenic Hudson had worked to preserve. The acquisition creates a permanently protected open space corridor running from I-84 in Beacon south to Cold Spring.

NEWS ON THE TRAILS

NJ Audubon requests that all hike groups leaving from Weis Ecology Center in the Wyanokies register on the clipboard in the foyer (which is open every day except Mondays). This information is needed when the Center applies for trail improvement grants.

Come Out for "The Joys of Hiking" at Your Local Library

These interesting presentations given by ADK board members will share all the basics, from proper clothing, using maps, hiking areas and types of hikes at several local libraries. The spring schedule of presentations is as follows:

Monday, April 7, 7:30 PM- Monroe, NY Library
Thursday, April 17, 7 PM- Ridgewood, NJ Library
Monday, April 21, 7 PM- Mahwah, NJ Library

Watch your local newspaper for articles submitted by our newest board member for publicity,
Eileen Turner.

Are Americans Afraid of the Outdoors?

Americans have been visiting national parks and other natural reserves less and less since 1987, new research confirms. Outdoor pursuits, ranging from camping to hunting, have entered a persistent and growing decline.

"Folks are going out into nature much less and decreasingly every year," says conservation ecologist Patricia Zaradic of the Environmental Leadership Program and co-author of the report published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA. "It would take 80 million more visits this year to get the per capita number back up to the level it was in 1987."

Zaradic and her colleague conservation biologist Oliver Pergams of the University of Illinois at Chicago analyzed trends in visits to national parks and forests, state parks, surveys on camping and the number of licenses for activities such as hunting or fishing. All peaked between 1981 and 1991 after 50 years of steady increase and have been declining at roughly 1 percent per year for an overall drop of as much as 25 percent.

Even a slight increase in the frequency of hiking and backpacking trips did nothing to offset the overall decline. "The average American backpacked once every 12.5 years in the past and is now backpacking once every 10 years," Zaradic notes. The conservationists believe that the electronic world has supplanted the natural world as the leading diversion. Their statistical analysis shows that the increase in video games, movie rentals and other electronic entertainment most closely matches the decrease in camping and park visits, as opposed to income, vacation time, park overcrowding, foreign travel or other potential causes.

The solution may be as simple as getting kids into the woods or other natural areas in the company of parents, grandparents or other relatives. "This isn't a bitter pill," said Richard Louv, chairman of the Santa Fe, N.Mex.-based Children and Nature Network. "In order to give kids some semblance of unorganized activity in nature, we're probably going to have to organize a lot of it. It's a paradox we'll have to deal with a sense of humor."

Submitted by Peter Reiner

Interested in "**Specific Stretching For Hikers**"?
 Offered on Wed. April 30th from 5-6pm in Suffern.
 Limited enrollment; contact Reena Mancuso LMT,
 MA at 914-391-3886 by April 4th.

HIKE REPORTS

NJ PALISADES/GREENBROOK - The last Sunday of 2007 afforded a fine day, mostly free of ice and leaves, to enjoy unobstructed views of the Palisades panorama and visit gated Greenbrook Nature Sanctuary atop the cliffs. Beginning at the PIPC Administration Building parking lot off Exit 2 of Palisades Parkway, 15 hikers led by Chris Connolly descended 460 feet on the steepish, zigzagging Closter Dock Trail to the Shore Trail hugging the Hudson River shoreline, where the group proceeded south past the Alpine Boat Basin to one of the Shore Trail's prettiest landscapes, built back in the 1930s. Thereafter, the walkers relived Revolutionary War history by ascending 440 feet up the moderately-graded Huyler Trail, which on a dark November night provided British forces with their entry point for the 1776 invasion of New Jersey. For those with a naturalist's bent, a wee (and probably sick) mouse was feeding outside its trailside burrow. Back on top the Palisades, a left turn on the Long Path brought the wanderers to Greenbrook's entrance, where the leader (a Greenbrook board member) unlocked the gate and the hungry hikers lunched on picnic tables while watching the resident turkeys finishing up their own feast. Greenbrook's 165 acres offer nearly seven miles of trails surrounding a dammed 5-acre pond, and the group sampled C trail - with its 300-foot cliffside vistas and precipices - and the upper portion of 250-foot Greenbrook Falls off B trail. Then down Old Lambier Road did the nature-gazers return to the Shore Trail, where they stopped along the way to admire dramatic lower Greenbrook Falls before proceeding past the Huyler junction to return home on the same Shore/Closter Dock Trail segments where they'd begun their journey. All felt they had more than fully exercised their leg (as well as their eye) muscles on this 7-mile or so adventurous outing.

WHITE BAR WORKOUT - A sunny January 13th Sunday in the high 40s saw 15 hikers warm up on one of Harriman's classic aerobic routes - a 6-mile circular going up and down the summits of Black Rock, Tom Jones, Parker Cabin and Carr Pond Mountains (the last offering two humps). Chris Con-

nolly led the group out of the White Bar parking area off Route 106 on a clockwise circuit, though one can also get the same workout going counter-clockwise or starting further east from the R-D parking area - in each case the heart-thumping tour follows the White Bar, Nurian, and R-D Trails. Each hilltop also rewarded the trekkers with wondrous lake and ridgeline views, and there were few ice patches to worry about in the January thaw season. This hike is a treat for the hardy and heart-y!

SILVERMINE STROLL - On yet another sunny Sunday, Chris Connolly led a group of seven (including a Connecticut-er who arrived too late for Naomi Sutter's birthday bash in the woods) on a February 3rd reprise of his first hike as a Ramapo leader. Leaving the Silvermine parking area, the hikers took the Menomine past Lake Nawahunta and up the saddle of Stockbridge Mountain, where a turn to the left led them south onto a Long Path section opposite Arden House that Ramapo maintains for the NY-NJ Trail Conference (the Chapter's new maintainer for the section, Reena Mancuso, was among the band that day, and at first failed to recognize her assigned footpath veiled in wintry guise!). The sun-shadowed LP was ice-encrusted from a winter storm the previous week, so the leader skipped and slid his way while his more prudent stabilicer-clad followers tried to keep a safe distance. A short walk east on old Arden Valley Road brought the septet to the sun-exposed AT going north, where a capacious rock outcrop soon provided a panoramic lunch stop and high 50's temperatures allowed the leader to strip to short sleeves and pants. The afternoon saw the group homeward-bound on the AT to the William Brien Shelter and then downhill to the Menomine past Lake Silvermine and back to the parking lot, completing a 7 ½ mile circuit on moderate terrain.

Submitted by Chris Connolly

**NH AT III/White Mountain Trip XIX - Pace: C, Miles: up to 15, Terrain: A
Sunday, July 13 thru Tuesday, July 22**

This annual trip to the White Mountains of New Hampshire will include almost 50 miles of hiking along the Appalachian Trail and the climbing of twenty NH 4,000 footers. Mileages range from 10-15 miles per day. Elevation gain per hike will be 3000-4000 feet. This will be a strenuous trip. Accommodations will be staying at various AMC huts in the White Mountains and Ravine Lodge at the base of Mt. Moosilauke. Hikers are welcome to attend for shorter duration. Contact Aaron for detailed itinerary. Deadline to register: May 31. Aaron Schoenberg askus3@optonline.net (preferred); 845-986-8645.

ADK Needs Your Help: EPF Being Raided for Budget Relief

We are at a critical juncture in the history of open-space protection in New York State. Right now, we have a unique opportunity to protect tens thousands of acres of wild lands in the Adirondacks and across the state, but a proposed raid on the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) is jeopardizing that opportunity.

In his 2008-09 Executive Budget, Governor Spitzer proposed sweeping \$125 million of unspent EPF funds into the General Fund for non-environmental purposes. The Governor also proposed additional sweeps totaling \$75 million over the next three years. That would bring the total amount "borrowed" from the EPF to more than half a billion dollars – and not a penny has been paid back to the fund.

Over the next two years, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation are expected to need \$300 million for land acquisition projects. ADK supports an increase in the current EPF funding level from \$250 million to \$300 million. The proposed budget would increase the land acquisition category by \$11 million to \$66 million, but we are requesting that category be increased to \$100 million for the coming fiscal year.

ADK is also concerned about the proposed reduction of the land stewardship category from \$22 million to \$5 million, a 78 percent cut. This category funds ADK's professional trail crews, the Summit Steward program and other important initiatives for building and maintaining backcountry trails. While ADK applauds the Governor's proposal to provide \$100 million for New York's 350,000-acre state park system, we also recognize that DEC needs sufficient funding to properly maintain the 4.5 million acres it manages.

ADK needs your help in urging the Assembly and Senate to:

- **Reject the \$125 million EPF sweep this year and any future sweeps.**
- **Increase land acquisition funding in the EPF to \$100 million.**
- **Restore the EPF land stewardship category to \$22 million.**

We expect the state budget to be adopted by April 1, so please write to your legislators as soon as possible. (Letters to the editor in your local newspaper would help as well.)

The Long Path Trail

The Long Path was the vision of Vincent J. Schaefer of Schenectady, who proposed that New York establish its own "Long Path" similar to the Long Trail in Vermont. Unlike the Long Trail, he saw the Long Path as an unmarked route meandering from the George Washington Bridge to Whiteface Mountain in the Adirondacks, connecting together a series of landmarks. The name of the trail came from Walt Whitman's poem *Song of the Open Road*: "There lies before me a long brown path, leading wherever I choose".

Beginning in the 1960's the New York - New Jersey Trail Conference took that vision a step further by creating a blazed hiking trail along Schaefer's route. Today the Long Path is a 326 mile hiking trail extending from the George Washington Bridge, north to John Boyd Thacher Park near Albany. Future plans are to extend the trail to the Mohawk River and eventually into the Adirondacks.

The Long Path begins in Fort Lee at the historical park, on the New Jersey side of the George Washington Bridge. For the first 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 along the way.

After crossing into New York, the Long Path turns away from the Hudson River, but continues to follow the Palisades Escarpment to its end in Mt. Ivy. Much of the route is through State Parks but the trail also serves as a link to smaller county and town parks. There is some road walking through the towns of Piermont and Nyack. There are extensive views of the lower Hudson River valley along the way, with the most dramatic views on Hook Mountain and High Tor.

In 1989 the Trail Conference explored an alternative route for the Long Path from Harriman State Park to the Shawangunks using the Appalachian Trail and the Shawangunk Ridge. The result is the 36 mile Shawangunk Ridge Trail, extending from High Point New Jersey to Minnewaska State Park.

This trail is part of an alternative route on the Long Path for the hiker who wishes to avoid the lowlands of Orange County. Upon reaching the intersection with the Appalachian Trail in Harriman Park, the hiker follows the AT south to High Point State Park in New Jersey.

For most of its length the Long Path is marked with turquoise paint blazes. In the Catskill Forest Preserve, the trail is marked with round, plastic discs of varying colors. Sections of the Long Path are on private land with the generous permission of the landowners.

To learn more, refer to the small Backpacker's Guide to the LP in the 5th edition of the *Long Path Guide*. Submitted by Peter Reiner

RAMAPO CHAPTER HISTORY 1991-2006

By Chris Connolly

Part 3

The Chapter celebrated its 20th anniversary festivities at Bear Mountain Inn, its 25th at Duck Cedar Inn in Tuxedo, and its 30th at the Unitarian Society in Pomona. Fifty-nine party-goers celebrated Ramapo's 35th year in 2006 at La Terraza Restaurant in New City, along with ADK Executive Director Neil Woodworth and New York-New Jersey Trail Conference Executive Director Ed Goodell. After 35 years, the Chapter still counts ten loyal charter members who attended the first meeting in November 1971 - Jim Bates, Rita Boyd, Elliot and Kate Gorman, Julius and Hermine Levine, Ike and Marilyn Siskind, Mary Sive and Kip Smith.

The advocacy of veteran Conservation Chair Ron Javier kept Ramapo in the forefront of land preservation efforts in the region. Beginning in 1999, Ron enlisted the Chapter in the multi-year and, ultimately, successful campaign to prevent power plant construction in the Torne Valley on Harriman Park's south border. In 2006, he was instrumental in the Chapter's joining the Ramapo Highlands Coalition, which advocates the protection of aquifer lands in the Ramapo River watershed that provides drinking water to two million people in Rockland, Bergen and Passaic Counties. Also worthy of note are the contributions of long-time member Betty Hedges, who served with distinction as Chair of the Rockland County Conservation Association.

Communications with the Chapter's members markedly increased with the onset of the new millennium. While Ramapough newsletters throughout the 1990s featured inimitable poetic verse contributions from Paul Leikin, it was Peter Reiner's ascension as Newsletter Editor in 2001 that transformed the Ramapough into a consistently high-quality quarterly publication. That success enabled the newsletter to expand from four to six pages each issue in 2005, with regular coverage of recreational and conservation news. At the same time, Denis Kmiec managed the transition to bulk postage mailing of the newsletter, a change that engendered substantial cost savings in addition to the savings in printing costs due to Neil Zimmerman's assistance. The Ramapo website made its internet debut in 2000 thanks to the Chapter's first webmaster, George Preoteasa. In 2006, due to the hard work of Richard Sumner, the website received a substantial upgrade when Ramapo's web address changed to www.hudsonhikers.org. The Chapter's outreach to

prospective members also benefited beginning in 2004 from the placement of Pete Tilgner-designed recruiting posters at well-frequented hiker venues, with Campmor and Anthony Wayne Visitor Center being the most popular locations.

Ramapo's record in giving back to the trails used by its members has continued to be outstanding. The Chapter currently maintains a 4-mile Long Path (LP) section on the western border of Harriman State Park - between Arden Valley Road and Route 6 - adjoining the Arden House property. The LP maintainer ranks have included Ruth Livant, Mary Sive, Fred Engel, Paul Leikin, Dick Warner, Elliot Gorman, Jim Quinn, John Troy, Marty Last, Chris Connolly and, currently, Rudy Garfinkel and Reena Mancuso. Under the initiative of Chapter president George Sheedy, Ramapo donated funding and volunteer labor for the 1998 construction of the Frank Bouton Shelter on Table Mountain in the Catskills, as a memorial to a beloved Chapter member who served as Secretary and Treasurer. In concert with the N.Y. DEC, Ike Siskind supervised the labor of a dozen other Ramapo members on this project - Jim Bates, John Giuffrida, Don Hendrickson, Ron Javier, George Perkinson, Aaron Schoenberg, Richie Schwartz, Mary Sive, June Slade, Norm Smith, Nick Viggiano and Ed Walsh. (The Chapter's photo album commemorates the Bouton Shelter's construction efforts and September 1998 dedication). In June 1997, Pete Heckler, Aaron Schoenberg, George Sheedy and Dale Timpe were among the hike leaders who placed mountaineers on the summits of all Catskill 3500 peaks on the same day - an enterprise that rewarded ADK with the kudos of a Ten Best National Trail Day event designation.

To be completed in our next newsletter.

A Warm Welcome to New Ramapo Members

Karen D'Alessandri, Pomona, NY
 Freda Levine, New City, NY
 Stephen & Maryann Olmstead,
 West Nyack, NY
 Tom Parliment, New City, NY
 Robert & Julie Permutt, White Plains, NY
 David Smith, Pompton Plains, NJ
 Duncan and Ann Still, New City, NY
 Jane Trebig, Nyack, NY
 Stephen Van Sant, Pompton Plains, NJ

**Adirondack Mountain
Club-Ramapo Chapter
20 Gerlach Drive
New City, NY 10956**

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SAVE THESE DATES

Chapter Meeting: On Thurs., June 19th at the Nanuet Public Library, Donald "Doc" Baynes, Educator and Ranger, will talk about Sterling Forest State Park. His historical account of Sterling begins in 1736, with emphasis on its mining until 1923, and proceeds to a discussion of the impact of mining on the environment and how the environment has recovered, as well as the animals that are currently living in the Park. Please note that the meeting will begin promptly at 7 PM so that we can have time to ask questions and enjoy refreshments.

We have planned a **follow up** to this program by arranging a four mile history hike on the following Saturday, June 20th, with Doc as our leader and historian. We'll be meeting at noon for a leisurely picnic lunch (bring your own) on the lawn of the Sterling Forest Visitor Center. At 1 PM Doc will take us on a walk past the furnaces and on a new iron mine trail to the upper California Mine, down Lakeville Road to the tenant home areas and the long house, visiting much of what he described at our meeting. We hope to see you at one or both events.

Outdoors Weekend (Oct. 31- Nov. 2) at the Shawnee Inn and Resort in Shawnee on the Delaware, Penn.75 miles from NYNJTC office in Mahwah. Also for swimmers, golfers, walkers, etc., The hotel overlooks the Delaware River and is adjacent to National Park lands. Dinner on Friday evening, October 31; breakfast on Saturday, a pack lunch, and hike or engage in other activities, and evening dinner.

Check-out after breakfast on Sunday, November 2. Optional additional hikes are possible on Sunday. Hotel's web site is www.shawneeinn.com. Call or e mail me for more details.

Suzan Gordon Programs Chair, Ramapo ADK 201-871-3531 or browning.27@verizon.net