

Adirondack Mountain Club-Ramapo

The Ramapough

www.hudsonhikers.org



Winter 2008

The View From The Summit

On a recent fall hike, a glorious sunny day with a good group of people, someone said, "This is a lift for the soul". He was describing that feeling you get when you are on a vigorous hike, enjoying the serenity of the woods, following a trail and exercising your body. You feel glad you got up early on a weekend, packed a lunch and joined other ADKers on a hike in the woods. Our hikes will usually take you to see awe inspiring views of wooded hills and valleys, mountains in the distance and a clear blue sky everywhere you look. It's motivating, fulfilling and a "lift for the soul". Don't miss out on the opportunity that's available every weekend.

Our chapter's membership numbers are looking good as we increase the number of new members each month. ADK attracts new people who join for conservation advocacy, because they are outdoor enthusiasts and want to help protect New York's wild lands and forests, but may not regularly join our hikes. Regardless of the reasons for joining, every new member in ADK adds to our strength in being able to help in the protection of our waters and open space lands. Your dues help to support ADK's ability to advocate for the proper stewardship of the areas in the Adirondacks, the Catskills and parklands that surround us in New York and New Jersey. Show your support for this important work and help us expand our influence by encouraging other people to join ADK and, of course, the Ramapo Chapter.

Have you visited our web site-www.hudsonhikers.org recently? It contains everything you need to know about our outdoor activities and events. On our website you can find our latest newsletter, hiking sched-

ule, and links to ADK headquarters. If you have some photos from recent hikes, send them to webmaster@hudsonhikers.org. The website will rotate photos, displaying your special shots for everyone to enjoy.

We'd like to start a Younger Members' Group, which would be a sub-group aimed toward younger adults in their 20s, 30s and 40s. The goal is to increase participation by providing activities that would appeal to that group. It would help like-minded people in the same age-range enjoy outings of their own choosing. Having a range of hikers ages will lead to an increase in their levels of experience, which can result in a more well-rounded hiking experience. If you are interested in becoming a part of the Younger Members' Group, contact me at psr7@aol.com. It will be fun!

With the latest hike schedule, you have a wide variety of hikes to choose from- more than 46 different ones, scheduled every weekend, and even some during the week. The winter months are wonderful times to get out of the house, breathe some fresh air, and exercise your legs. It seems that the sky is the clearest and the sun is the brightest during the winter. The woods are quieter and, without the leaves, you see greater distances. Spend a few hours with other ADKers on the trails in the Catskills, Harriman Park and Sterling Forest and you will come away feeling refreshed. And, if you like more exercise, wait until we have some snow the ground and bring out your snow shoes for a trek.

Finally, I want to wish everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Peter Reiner President

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Conservation Corner

New York City's Department of Environmental Protection and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation provided hikers with a Thanksgiving gift by reaching an agreement providing open access to over 10 percent of the 100,000-plus acres of Catskill reservoir watershed lands owned by the City beginning with the 2008 hunting season. While permits have generally been required to enter City watershed property, hikers will no longer need them to use the 11,000 acres adjacent to state Forest Preserve lands, which will also be open for hunting, fishing and trapping.

The State of New Jersey, using its share of the first \$2 million in funds appropriated under the federal Highlands Conservation Act, is purchasing 310-acre Camp Vacamas in the Wyanokie Highlands.

NY-NJ Tail Conference staffer Brenda Holzinger appeared before the Town of Chester planning board over the summer to prevent the Highlands Trail from being severed by the proposed 157-lot Belleville housing subdivision on the site of old Camp Monroe, just south of Goose Pond Mountain State Park. The board agreed that the project's draft scoping document must address preservation of the existing Highlands Trail through the project site.

In November, the Town of Tuxedo planning board resumed hearings on the 105-unit first phase of the proposed Tuxedo Reserve housing development adjacent to Sterling Forest. The Ramapo Highlands Coalition and other groups have raised concerns about the development's effect on drinking water quality- the Reserve's aquifer feeds into the Ramapo River and reservoirs downstream - and on the view shed from Sterling Forest hiking trails.

Submitted by Chris Connolly

Bike Report

I led two Chapter bike rides on Fall Thursdays, though atmospherically both warm and humid days were more characteristic of this year's Long Summer. The October 18th ride was a 35-mile jaunt up and down the Westchester North County Trailway from Route 134 to the trail's northern terminus in Carmel in Putnam County. This section of paved trail along a mostly graded old railroad bed begins with a crossing of the Croton Reservoir and provides especially pleasant woodsy scenery throughout. The group enjoyed an outdoors lunchtime break in Carmel at Millie's Café which further endeared itself by providing a wrench-and-socket tool kit for an emergency flat tire repair. For those interested in exploring this bike path, cross the Tappan Zee Bridge and go north on the Saw Mill and Taconic Parkways to the Route 134 exit, where a two-mile drive east leads to road shoulder parking by a trailway sign.

The November 1st ride featured what has become a perennial favorite - the hilly 23-mile Schunemunk/Cornwall loop starting from the Taylor Road parking area across from the Jes-sup/Sweet Clover trailhead. The cyclists first skirted the edges of Schunemunk and Woodcock Mountains on Taylor and Otterkill Roads before turning east onto Orrs Mills Road, which at its intersection with Jackson Avenue presents a marvelous mountain scene to the west showcasing the 99-year-old iron-fabricated Moodna Viaduct, the longest (3200 feet) and highest (193 feet) railroad trestle east of the Mississippi. Once across Route 32 into Cornwall, the pedalers enjoyed vistas of Black Rock Forest and Schunemunk from the golf links atop Hasbrouck Avenue before an exhilarating mile-long descent down Boulevard, Mountain and Dock Hill Roads to the Cornwall waterfront, where sublime views of Storm King, Breakneck Ridge and the Hudson always enchant. Several miles later, the group stopped for lunch at Painter's in Cornwall-on-Hudson before leaving Cornwall via Willow Avenue and Mill Street, which towers above the Woodbury Creek gorge. Safely re-crossing Route 32 and back on Orrs Mills Road, the riders returned to their starting point by way of Pleasant Hill Road, a most aptly-named country road.

Chris Connolly

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

Do you have a friend or co-worker who has an interest in hiking but doesn't know how to get started? Invite them to one of our scheduled presentations called "The Joys of Hiking." These interesting presentations given by 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:

Thursday, Feb. 28, 7 PM- Goshen, NY Library

Tuesday, March 25, 7 PM- Suffern, NY Library

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

We hope to see you at one of the presentations.

HIKE REPORTS

This past July, with Nancy Lentner as co-leader, I was honored to lead a hike for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, to Mt Taurus, near Cold Spring. I will never forget the expression and comments from the participants looking down at the river, West Point, and the mountains across. They told us that this was among the most beautiful and interesting day hikes they had been on. The safety of the hikers and what I described above is all about being a leader! Pat Marcotullio

On 9/30 I was scheduled to lead a hike to Terrace Pond which I had intended to approach from the north. However, Peter Tilgner had emailed me that he had recently encountered 32 blow downs on the route. Accordingly, I chose a route from the south from Union Valley & Stevens Rds, which had been recommended some 2 yrs prior in a Bergen Record "Hike Of the Week", written by Dan Chazen. Although I had never used that route before, Dan's directions were still "right on the money"; I much preferred the new route. As a result of some flexibility and team work extended through "the Hikers Network", a good time was enjoyed by all of us. Pete Heckler

ROCKEFELLER STATE PARK—On October 21, under a beautiful fall sky, I led a group of hikers on the carriage trails from the Visitor's Center to Rt. 448 in Rockefeller State Park. We stopped for lunch at the Stone Barn, touring the farm and viewing the gardens and livestock. We returned along different trails which took us around Swan Lake and back to the Visitor's Center. Overall, it was a wonderful 4 mile walk along beautiful trails. After the hike, some of the hikers stopped at the Union Church in Tarrytown where they viewed the multiple colorful windows by Chagall. Peter Reiner

WANAQUE RIDGE TRAIL—Proud trail parent Pete Heckler led the first Chapter hike on Sunday, Oct. 28 featuring the Wanaque Ridge Trail that he established only months ago. Starting from Back Beach Park in Wanaque on a brisk sunny day, the dozen-strong throng ascended the red-blazed Indian Rock Trail to its terminus, where turns, first right onto the Cannonball and then left onto the Hoeflerin Trails, led down to the edge of Ramapo Lake after impressive lake views from the southeast. A traverse of the shore-hugging MacEvoy and steep Castle Point Trails led up to a lunchtime vista with lake and NYC views. Making its way back to the MacEvoy, the group turned left onto the northern junction of the orange-blazed Wanaque Ridge Trail and followed it (and a white spur trail) to panoramic overlooks above Raymond Dam and Wanaque Reservoir to the west, framed by the Wy-anokies in the background (and Pete's home in the foreground). The new trail has its southern terminus

at the Indian Rock Trail, which the walkers retraced back to the park. This loop hike covered 7.5 miles, though a shorter 5.5-miler is also possible by turning left (rather than right) onto the Cannonball and proceeding along the west shore of Ramapo Lake to the MacEvoy. (See pg. 4 for more about the Wanaque Ridge Trail.) Chris Connolly

SOUTH TACONIC TRAIL—On Sunday, November 4, Aaron Schoenberg led a group of seven on a bistate 13-mile Fall classic along the South Taconic Trail straddling Columbia County in NY and Berkshire County in Mass. Although getting to the trailhead involved a two-and-one-half-hour commute and car shuttle, the group started hiking at 8:45 am, climbed 4070 feet of cumulative elevation and finished in fine form eight hours later, just ahead of the fading daylight. It was a beautiful day, seasonably pleasant, and the fall foliage was still quite spectacular. After reaching the South Taconic via a steady one-mile ascent up the Robert Brook Trail off Under Mountain Road, the first panoramic views in all directions came atop the Alander Mountain summit and ridgeline. The highlight of the day was a 1.7 mile detour off the South Taconic to follow the Bash Bish Falls Trail, which required a vertiginous 540-foot descent in half a mile to ford the often impassable Bash Bish Brook, which because of the recent drought was a rock hop presenting no problem. The group's reward was lunching at the pool edge of spring-fed Bash Bish Falls six miles into the hike. Rejoining the main trail, the hikers strode on the South Taconic to its northern terminus on Route 23. A. Schoenberg & C. Connolly

NORVIN GREEN—On Saturday, November 24, Eileen Turner led her first Chapter hike barely a year after enrolling as a Ramapo member. Joining her out of Weis Ecology Center were a fabulous fourteen, including as sweep Eileen's son Kevin. Eileen chose a moderate six-mile loop that, on a crisp but sunny 40-degree day, afforded, in under four hours, stunning Wanaque Reservoir and NYC views on Wy-anokie summits atop Carris Hill and Yoo-Hoo and High Points. To reach these scenes the group first trod the red Wy-anokie Circular Trail to the white Lower Trail, whose recent relocation now offers a more pleasing ridge walk before meeting the yellow Carris Hill Trail. There a vigorous ascent was rewarded with a luncheon repast overlooking the Wanaque Reservoir. Afterwards, the blue Hewitt-Butler Trail led the group past the other viewpoints, with a short side trip up to renowned High Point, before they took the green Otter Hole Trail back to the parking lot. Congratulations to Eileen for a triumphant inaugural! Chris Connolly

MR. HECKLER BUILDS HIS DREAM TRAIL

When Pete and Rita Heckler made their momentous cross-county move last year from Bergen to Passaic, they found themselves ensconced in the Wanaque Reserve development at the foot of Wanaque Reservoir's Raymond Dam with Ramapo State Forest behind. Such fine views, with no trails to go to them, was not a prospect pleasing to Pete, so he took matters in hand in his usual inimitable problem-solving way. He persuaded his new Reserve neighbors to locate a new hiking trail - the Wanaque Ridge Trail - on their ridgeline property; he persuaded Wanaque town officials to provide public access to the new trail by connecting it with the previously unofficial Indian Rock Trail that starts from municipal Back Beach Park; and he persuaded Ramapo State Forest officials to link the Indian Rock and Wanaque Ridge Trails to their existing trail system, thereby creating an access point to the Forest from the west. Remarkably, all the sundry permits and permissions were obtained within months and, voila, Pete has opened his dream trail to an admiring hiking public. That Mr. Heckler, he's a persuasive feller! Chris Connolly

Pleasant Walking Places in New Jersey

There are three small parks in northern New Jersey you may enjoy for a pleasant walk without any planning or need for maps.

Tenaflly Nature Center- is a 65 acre park which adjoins the Lost Brook Preserve and combined offers 7 miles of trails through woodlands and a pond. Trails are open from dawn to dusk and are free of charge.

Flat Rock Brook Nature Center- is a 150 acre preserve and education center located on the western slope of the Palisades in Englewood. Its network of self-guiding trails is free and open from dawn to dusk. Nature features include a cascading stream, wetlands, wildflower meadows, quarry cliffs and woodlands.

Teaneck Creek Conservancy. This 46 acre open space features three trails that can be combined to make a short excursion of just over 1 mile. You can walk along the banks of the Teaneck Creek, meander on a boardwalk across wetlands; or step off the trail to explore a meditative walk in the site's Peace Labyrinth . There is no charge to visitors.

Source: NY-NJ Trail Conference, "Trail Walker"
Submitted by Peter Reiner

RAMAPO CHAPTER HISTORY 1991-2006

By Chris Connolly

Part 2. (Read Part 1 in Fall 2007 newsletter.)

Ramapo members have continued to roll up individual peak-bagging accomplishments. Former Chapter presidents George Perkinson and George Sheedy completed section-hiking the AT in 2005 and 2006, respectively, while Dean Gletsos in 2006 became only the third Chapter member to ascend all one hundred fifteen 4000-footers in the Northeast. The host of members who joined the Catskill 3500ers, Adirondack 46ers and White Mountain 4000-footers also continued to grow. Among other highlights, Ed Walsh and his then 13 year-old son Eddie bagged their final Adirondack 46er together in 1991; Paul Leikin in 1996 topped all 35 Catskill peaks after turning 80; and Aaron Schoenberg claimed his 35th Catskill peak in 2005, precisely 35 years from bagging his first peak. But the laurels for most prolific peak-toppers must go to Norm and Kip Smith - they have conquered the AT, Catskill 3500s, Adirondack 46ers, Whites 4000-footers and the Northeast 115 while, in their spare time, climbing the highest points in all 50 states.

Thanks in large part to Programs/Special Outings Chair Suzan Gordon, the Chapter has offered a varied program of social events and educational speakers. Beginning in December 1998, under Chapter President George Sheedy, the annual December holiday party - the brainchild of Susan Gerhardt and Suzan Gordon - is a friendly place for conviviality and cheer, whether staged at Nanuet Public Library in the beginning or at the Unitarian Society in Pomona. The Mohonk Day outing inaugurated in 2005 by Suzan has proved a smashing success with its combination of daytime Gunks recreation and sunset 5-course gastronomic delight - there were 22 attendees in 2005 and 30 in 2006. Quarterly Chapter meetings at the Nanuet Public Library have featured presentations on a diverse array of topics - fauna (bears, hawks, snakes and wolves), fungi, Hudson River geology and local history (Erie Railroad, Storm King, Palisades Interstate Park and Rockland Lake). One popular tradition, the Strauss House winter weekend in the Catskills, came to an end in 2003 after a quarter century due to a change in hotel management.

To be continued in our next newsletter.

SEARCHING FOR THE PAST

For a number of years Harriman State Park has had an Archaeological Steward Program. The program identifies, explores, and preserves archaeological sites including native American rock shelters. Several Ramapo members have been and are now involved with monitoring these sites. Their responsibilities include being on the lookout for evidence of looters, and removal of trash left by contemporary shelter users. Their findings alert park authorities to the shelter sites' current condition. These sites have yielded numerous artifacts relating to the native peoples that once roamed and inhabited the region. A selection of these relics from the past can be viewed at the Bear Mountain Museum.

Sterling Forest State Park has initiated a survey program aimed at identifying potential rock shelter sites within its borders. As NY-NJ Trail Conference Trail Supervisors for Sterling Forest, Suzan Gordon and I have volunteered to be one of the Park's shelter search teams. A training session provided us with the information and tools needed to identify and survey potential sites within a prescribed area of the Park. These shelter sites could date back to the end of the last ice age. Armed with map, GPS unit, compass, tape measure, camera, and clip board, we have so far located and documented ten sites of interest. Based on the information we have collected, an archaeologist will visit the sites that appear promising.

Although sites have been documented in Harriman State Park and are being searched for in Sterling Forest, one has to wonder just how much undocumented early history lies outside the borders of the parks. In addition to exploring for potential rock shelter sites, Suzan and I have begun to put our feet on unfamiliar ground. This kind of first hand knowledge will enable us to consider future trail possibilities in Sterling Forest.
Peter Tilgner

LONG TRAIL II PLUS (B-15-A)

Wed., June 11 thru Wed., June 18 This is the second in a six year project to dayhike the Long Trail of Vermont from the Canadian border to Mass. southbound. We will hike over 70 miles; the hiking will be strenuous and we will go at a steady pace. Carpooling and car shuttles will be arranged. Our accommodations will be fully furnished houses with complete modern kitchens, and shared bedrooms and baths in Stowe, VT. Contact L for detailed itinerary. Deadline to register: Monday, April 28. Leader Aaron Schoenberg askus3@optonline.net (preferred); 845-986-8645.

YEAR END HIKE ROUNDUP

In 2007, twenty eight Ramapo Hike Leaders lead 96 hikes. These hikes averaged 7 miles in length. If you participated in all the Ramapo outings you would have hiked 675 miles of trail. The majority of the Chapter's hike outings took place in Harriman State Park while northern New Jersey Parks and Sterling Forest accounted for a number of others. Trails in Maine, New Hampshire, the Jersey shore and the east side of the Hudson were led and hiked by the more adventurous.

The Ramapo Chapter gained three new hike leaders in 2007. Supporting all of our leaders' volunteer efforts is every member's responsibility. If you enjoy a good walk in the woods, stepping up to lead a hike is one more way to support your Ramapo Chapter. Open dates in the hike schedule can only be filled by those willing to take on the responsibility. It has been my experience that hike leaders are the best resource for finding and encouraging other hikers to assume a leadership role. If you are curious or know of someone who would be willing to try leading a hike, please contact me. Peter Tilgner, Outings Schedule Coordinator

**A Warm Welcome to
New Ramapo Members**

- Patrick Brenne, New City, NY
- Matthew Butler, Highland Falls, NY
- Sandra and Bill DeBovoise, New City, NY
- Van DelGreco, Demarest, NJ
- Maureen Dinkelmeyer, Florida, NY
- Dawn Dowd, Middletown, NY
- Karen Emmerich, Warwick, NY
- Larry & Margaret Gilbert, Chester, NY
- Paul and Ellen Gluck, Pleasantville, NY
- Robin Judd, Suffern, NY
- Allen & Doris Kossover, Monroe, NY
- David Lipman, Spring Valley, NY
- Paul Mapelli, West Nyack, NY
- Harold Marciari, Elmont, NY
- Rochelle Marshall, Monroe, NY
- Anne Mattei, Edison, NJ
- Barbara & Keith Noyes & family, Blauvelt, NY
- Sarah Savage & Peter Ferrara, Middletown, NY
- Patsy and Roy Wooters, Suffern, NY

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**NEXT CHAPTER MEETING THURSDAY, MARCH 20th 7:30 PM
"SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF SPRING"**

Spring will soon be upon us and wouldn't you like to know who is that singing or peeping or what is that blooming on the path as we walk through the woods? We may ask ourselves what is the name of that pretty little pink flower or yellow bud? Join us on Thursday, March 20th at the Nanuet Public Library when Greenbrook Sanctuary naturalist, Nancy Slowik, will present a slide-and-tape show of the flora and fauna - including birds, trees, and flowers- that hikers meet trailside during the spring season on the Hudson Highlands.

The meeting will begin at 7:30 PM; refreshments and discussion will follow the presentation. Please plan to join us for this informative and enjoyable evening.

Suzan Gordon, Programs Chair ADK Ramapo