

Adirondack Mountain Club-Ramapo

The Ramapough

www.hudsonhikers.org



Summer 2007

The View From The Summit

I've always enjoyed summer hikes for many reasons: the trees full of leaves that provide shade from the sun, the air filled with the sounds of birds, gentle breezes blowing and helping to cool us, a refreshing dip in a cool stream, no multiple layers of clothes to peel off, and the warmth of the sun on our faces when we're standing on top of a peak. For these reasons, summer is a great time for you to be on the trails with us.

There has been a great deal of good news in the area of land conservation and new trails. The "Conservation Corner" feature written primarily by Chris Connolly contains many interesting items about how ADK is helping to make a difference in the areas of saving the environment, being involved in land use decisions, and being your "voice" in the courts and with New York State Government.

I want to share with you what your Board members have been doing to try to increase our club membership.

- Thanks to everyone who responded to the membership survey that was mailed in April. I received a 20% response to the survey and your suggestions and opinions are summarized on page five of this newsletter. Overall, most of you are happy with the varied outings we plan, but you offered many good suggestions that are being discussed with the Board. I think your input is important as we consider ways to make your membership in ADK and the Ramapo Chapter more valuable and beneficial to you. Of course, you don't have to wait for a survey to give me your feedback. **You can call me at 845-634-7635 or email me at psr7@aol.com.**

- This spring Chris Connolly and I gave six presentations to local residents at libraries in Orange, Rockland and Bergen Counties on "The Joys of Hiking." I'd estimate we spoke to over 200 people who attended our presentations about the ADK and our Ramapo Chapter. A number of these people have come out for a hike to "try us out."

- Board members have begun calling every new member as they join and every member whose renewal is close to lapsing to engage them in the bene-

fits of ADK. Both Nancy Odson and Manny Silberberg follow up to every phone or email inquiry they receive.

- Hiking recruitment posters with tear off tabs, designed and produced by Peter Tilgner, have been placed in many places where outdoor enthusiasts can see them.

- Our Web site, www.hudsonhikers.org, has been updated and improved by Richard Sumner and our current hiking schedule and newsletter have been made available for all visitors.

However, the best way for us to recruit new Ramapo members is through word-of-mouth: yours. Speak to everyone you socialize with, work with, go to events with about the benefits of ADK and its recreation and conservation activities. Your recommendations make the difference when people are deciding which outdoor organization to join. Talk about ADK Ramapo to everyone you meet.

Finally, don't miss the talk being given at our September 17th Members Meeting at the Nanuet Library. Tom Rinaldi and Rob Yasinsac have written a wonderful book entitled, "Hudson Valley Ruins" and they will be guest speakers at our meeting. There are dozens of historical sites, many of which are listed in the National Register of Historical Places, that have been allowed to decay. Their book talks about these ruins and contains many photographs of these sites. Arthur Adams, author, "The Hudson Through The Years and The Hudson River Guidebook" said, "This book will be of interest to all who have an interest in the Hudson River and region, industrial archaeology, architectural history and preservation, land use and regional planning, and economic and transportation history. The book is highly accurate, well reasoned and articulated, thoroughly researched and documented and will be useful for reference as well as general reading."

The meeting starts at 7:30 PM and I think you will enjoy their presentation. When you come, bring a guest with you, as well.

See you on the trails.

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

Conservation Corner

Prospects for the expansion of the western portion of Harriman State Park have increased following Columbia University's sale of the historic 990-acre Arden property in Orange County. The northern section of the Arden property - showcased by the landmark 100,000 square foot Arden House estate completed by railroad magnate E.H. Harriman a month before his death in 1909 - is bounded on its eastern edge by a two-mile Long Path trail segment maintained by our Chapter.

At the end of March, Averell Harriman Mortimer, a relative of the Gilded Age tycoon, acquired the southern 540-acre Arden Homestead portion in the Town of Tuxedo. Approximately 400 acres of the Homestead section is subject to a conservation easement, and may become available to Harriman Park. On April 16, the Open Space Institute (OSI) paid almost \$4.5 million to purchase the northern 450-acre Arden House portion in the Town of Woodbury. OSI intends to re-sell the mansion and adjoining acreage to recoup its costs; the deed requires any occupant to be a religious, philanthropic or educational organization. It is anticipated that the 400 acres abutting the Long Path will be transferred to the Palisades Interstate Park commission for incorporation into Harriman Park.

On April 30, ADK won a major victory in its efforts to end the plague of acid rain and mercury deposited in New York and

other Northeast states from Midwest power plants. The U.S. Supreme Court turned down a request from the Environmental Protection Agency and the utility industry to seek review of D.C. federal appeals court rulings that had adopted ADK's position in holding that the Clean Air Act and its amendments prevent owners of aging coal-fired plants from delaying the installation of flue gas scrubbers and other pollution controls when they seek to extend a plant's service life or replace major components. This victory follows on this year's earlier win in the Duke Energy case, where the Supreme Court turned back another effort by coal-burning utilities to avoid installing air pollution controls. Great credit for these successes are due to Executive Director Neil Woodworth and Conservation Director Marisa Tedesco. On March 21, the U.S. Department of the Interior announced that it would request \$2 million in funding for the Highlands Conservation Act for FY2007. Congress passed the Act in 2004 to authorize \$100 million over 10 years to preserve the Highlands running from Pennsylvania-New Jersey-New York-Connecticut, but this marks the first time that any funds will be appropriated under the Act. Among the first tier of targeted areas for land acquisition are Arrow Park in New York and the Wy-anokies in New Jersey.

SAVING STERLING FOREST

Last year's completion of the Sterling Forest State Park system, marked by New York State's purchase of the 571-acre "hole-in-the-doughnut" parcel, provides an opportune time for a recap of the quarter-century-plus effort to preserve the 25,000-acre Sterling Forest watershed in the New York-New Jersey Highlands. Such a study has now appeared with the publication of Ann Botshon's 193-page *Saving Sterling Forest: The Epic Struggle to Preserve New York's Highlands* by the State University of New York Press. After opening with a review of the Forest's rich iron industry heritage, the author traces a tangled tale of corporate and political intrigue beginning in 1971 as the Forest's dominant landowner, Sterling Forest Corporation (SFC), unveiled an ever-evolving series of proposals for residential and commercial development, all of which were nipped in the bud by a combination of citizen/environmental activist pluck and good old plain luck. What started in the 1970s as a local Town of Tuxedo planning board dispute mushroomed in the 1980s into a battle by a broad-based grassroots coalition to conserve intact the entire Forest area owned by SFC.

Because Sterling Forest streams feed into water systems supplying water to two million New Jersey residents, the clear public interest in pristine aquifers united New Jersey politicians to act first in the late 1980s by seizing its smaller 2,074-acre Passaic County piece of SFC land through eminent domain. In New York, the lures of economic development long proved to be as potent a motivation to local and state politicians as the several hundred thousand who relied on the Forest for drinking water, thus leading to a more protracted preservation struggle through the 1990s. Two important factors prevented early development - the National Park Service (NPS) in the 1970s and 1980s took otherwise easily developable SFC land in the northern Forest as part of the Appalachian Trail watershed corridor, and NPS and the Palisades Interstate Park Commission refused land permissions that effectively blocked any possibility of a New York Thruway exit that SFC wanted to facilitate development. As the 1990s progressed, the preservation coalition brilliantly assembled by the wife-and-husband team of JoAnn and Paul Dolan had generated sufficient momentum that a government buy-out was SFC's best option to make easy money on its landholding (or, as one SFC officer colorfully put it, "We'll exchange their green for our green"). This scenario came to fruition in 1996 with federal appropriation of the critical funding needed to pay SFC for the new park's initial 14,500 acres, which were subsequently enlarged over the next decade with acquisitions of smaller parcels.

Although Ann Botshon died in 2004 just months after finishing this book, her study is a fitting memorial for a woman who loved the Hudson Valley and a tribute to the many citizens, great and small, who worked together to save Sterling Forest.

The Importance of Drinking Water When Hiking

Drinking ample amounts of water is one of the most important aspects of outdoor hiking for a variety of reasons:

- Outdoor activities, such as hiking or biking, impose high energy demands on the body. In parts of the food-burning process, the body must use water to make new energy.
- In warm weather, high sweat rates often accompany strenuous activity, which uses up lots of water.
- The human body requires an adequate body-water percentage to keep its metabolism going at the energy levels needed for extended exercise.

If someone becomes dehydrated by even 5%, they can experience a 20 to 30% decrease in their metabolism, an effect they certainly will feel. Mild dehydration results in headache, weakness, fatigue, irritability, loss of appetite, and decreased resistance to hot and cold. You can estimate your state of hydration by checking the color of your urine: clearer means that you are better hydrated, darker yellow indicates dehydration. Keep in mind that when we hike on elevated trails our thirst mechanism becomes suppressed, and it often requires conscious effort to drink enough. On a typical summer's day trip, we lose four liters of water (about one gallon), more than most people probably drink. You should load up on water (and calories) before heading out, perhaps by drinking a liter of water with breakfast, and then re-hydrate after finishing the day's hike. Each person should drink two to three liters of water during the day. However, it doesn't do any good to drink too much water at once. Our bodies cannot absorb it that fast, and it will go right through us.

Along with water, our bodies also need electrolytes.

Body fluids contain minerals such as sodium, potassium, calcium, and others, that keep muscles contracting and nerves working. Fruit-type drinks help, as do certain foods (such as bananas). Keep a water bottle accessible and suggest to beginners that they can carry a water bottle outside their pack in a water bottle carrier. Wide-mouth Nalgene type bottles are good because they don't leak. The key is to remind everyone on a hike to keep drinking water throughout the day to ensure that all are properly hydrated.

Ramapo 2007- Biennial Meeting of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy

There will be over 100 hikes and 70 workshops on trail and natural topics taking place from July 13-20, 2007 as part of the Biennial of the ATC. It will be sponsored by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and be headquartered at Ramapo College in Mahwah, NJ. This is an opportunity to learn new leadership skills, trail building and maintenance techniques and trail ecology during this week-long series of events. Complete details and registration are available at: www.ramapo2007.org. Several ADK Ramapo members will be leading outings during this event, so be sure and come and support them.



THANK YOU OUTING LEADERS

For many of us, chapter outings are an important reason we chose to become members of ADK. The Ramapo Chapter is very fortunate to have a group of enthusiastic and dedicated volunteer leaders who enable the Chapter to offer a varied program of outings throughout the year. Our Outings Schedules are filled with many hikes, bike rides, weekends, and trips all over the Hudson Valley, Northern New Jersey, the Catskills, and New England. Many thanks to the Ramapo leaders/organizers who devote their time and talents to making our hike schedule a success:

Janice Bortree, Rita Boyd, Sol Braun, Chris Connolly, Ilse Dunham, Dean Gletsos, Suzan Gordon, Pete Heckler, John Jurasek, Chuck Klatzko, Denis Kmiec, Joan Kmiec, Pat Marcotullio, Lou O'Neill, Nancy Odson, George Preoteasa, Peter Reiner, Aaron Schoenberg, Ike Siskind, Mary Sive, Manny Silberberg, Richard Sumner, Alta Sumner, June Slade, Pete Tilgner, Nick Viggiano, Richard Zinn.

HIKE REPORT - SKANNATATI CIRCULAR

On Saturday, March 3, Pete Tilgner and Suzan Gordon led 14 ADKers from the Lake Skannatati parking lot on Seven Lakes Drive on a hike that followed many favorite trails in a new configuration. A two-inch rainfall two days previously after past light snowfalls left a surface of snow/slush/ice that provided wintry, watery vistas that welcomed the stabilicer-shod explorers. The group started out on the familiar Arden-Surebridge (ASB) route, but then veered right onto a woods road that lopes downhill to Lake Tiorati across Seven Lakes Drive. Before reaching the Drive the trekkers turned left onto the Hurst Trail and ascended a mountain laurel pathway that ended at the Appalachian Trail (AT). Left again the group turned, taking the AT over Fingerboard Mountain and continuing on the Surebridge Mine Road to its Bottle Cap Trail intersection, all the while savoring the sight of fresh rainwater flowing over ice-crusted Surebridge Brook. Next came the pleasures of crossing the waterlogged brook's ice-bound surface and lurching (at 3.7 miles) on rock outcroppings with fine views overlooking Surebridge Swamp with the Ramapo-Dunderberg (RD) massif to the south. After the repast the hikers remained on the picturesque Bottle Cap across Surebridge Mountain and down to its western terminus at the ASB, where a turn to the left took the troop steeply up Surebridge Mountain coated with iced-up cascades across the trail. Then came a right up the Lichen Trail with frozen Island Pond scenes and left onto the R-D and down the ridgeline (seen at lunch) to Times Square. From there the Long Path lured the weary group to the starting point after 7.7 miles and 5.25 stimulating hours.

BIKE REPORT - NEW PALTZ SOUTH

On Saturday, May 5, Chris Connolly presided over the Ramapo riders' first (but surely not last) outing to the land of the Gunks in New Paltz. The seven bikers met on a Spring-perfect day at the free parking area on historic Huguenot Street beside the east side of the Wallkill River. From there the group pedaled country roads south along a low ridge, with Sand Hill Road between Gardiner and the Village of Wallkill boasting particularly panoramic Gunks views to the right. After a leisurely jaunt of 14.5 miles, the happy band consumed sandwiches at a picnic table off Route 208 next to the Wallkill River, which was fleetly flowing from the Great Nor'easter of 2007. After lunch the bikers crossed the River to the west side and proceeded to Bates Lane, which may have afforded the finest of so many fine sights that memorable day, as the riders passed through the center of Blue Chip horse farm. Hundreds of handsome equines, including days-old foals, greeted a gaping group. West the racers wended their way to Red Mills Road, where a turn north through the expansive Watchtower Farm on the Shawangunk foothills featured further scenic spectacles. But all good rides must come to an end, though the return on County Route 7 afforded one last ooh as the bikers passed a goat pen with newborns sporting puppy-like floppy ears. The 36-mile tour left all thrilled if ever so slightly tired.

NEWS ON THE TRAILS

The northern section of the Stonetown Circular Trail in Ringwood has been **relocated** onto a footpath reaching the shore and views of Monksville Reservoir and Dam, replacing a 0.9 mile road walk between White Road and Lake Riconda Drive. The relocation increases the trail route by 0.4 mile. The previous 0.6 mile trail segment on the west connecting Lake Riconda Drive and Harrison Mountain is now part of Horse Pond Mountain Trail, while the former segment between White Road and Board Mountain on the east is now a Highlands Trail connector.

The Crossover Trail connecting the Stillman Spring and Howell Trails in Storm King State Park has been closed. The trail was constructed as a temporary bypass while ordnance clean-up work was ongoing, but that work is now finished.

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference announced that seven miles of trails in the southern

Shawangunks have been constructed by volunteers on land acquired by the Trail Conference. The Shawangunks are a series of ridge mountains, located in Orange and Ulster Counties. They mean different things to different people. You may be familiar with the Mohonk Preserve, a 6,400 acre preserve that surrounds the 129-year-old Mohonk Mountain House. Or you may have visited Minnewaska State Park Preserve, formerly the Lake Minnewaska Resort, and a state park since 1987. These well known, protected lands total only 18,300 acres, barely one half of the natural and unspoiled lands that make up the Northern Shawangunks.

The **new trail routes** are located in Orange County and contain a five mile loop that connects Port Jervis to the Lenape Ridge. A longer loop comprises the new Lenape Ridge and Minisink Trails. The new trails are part of a plan to protect the 35-mile long Shawangunk Ridge Trail corridor and link it to communities and protected open spaces in New York.

OUR MEMBERSHIP SURVEY RESULTS

In April, we conducted a mail survey with our members which covered a number of areas about our current outings and interest in new types of outings. It asked questions about our members meetings, presentations, and current location, plus it requested members to identify how active they wanted to become in the Ramapo Chapter. Finally, it asked if members wanted to be added to our members email list to be kept informed about Ramapo Chapter events and updates. We received responses from about 20% of you, which from research experts is a good response rate! Here is a summary of the responses from the members who returned their surveys.

What types of outings are you interested in?

Most wanted moderate hikes; almost a third of you were interested in strenuous hikes. For the winter months, almost one third would like to participate in snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. A small number, less than 10%, were interested in backpacking, biking, or overnight camping.

What places would you like to see added to the hike schedule?

A number of suggestions were made including: Black Rock Forest, Catskills, East Hudson and Taconic area, and North Jersey parks.

Would you be interested in family hikes or singles hikes?

An overwhelming majority would **not** be interested in family hikes, with children. About half the responders would participate in singles hikes.

Do you come to the quarterly Members Meetings and what would you like to see presented?

A majority of our members do not attend but almost all feel the Nanuet Library is a good location to hold the meetings. Your suggestions for future presentations at these meetings included: history of local hiking areas, birds, personal travel slides, natural history of the Hudson Valley area.

Would you be interested in becoming more involved in Chapter activities?

A large majority of you said not at this time, but about 10% were interested in greater participation.

Would you like to be added to our Chapter Email list?

Almost everyone who had an email address said they would like to be added to the list to be kept informed about Chapter events and activities.

To everyone who responded to the members' survey, a big thanks. Your input is valuable to the Board. We will try to make your membership in ADK Ramapo more beneficial.



On the Long Path atop the Palisades

Courtesy of Peter Tilgner

Welcome New Ramapo Members

Elie Bijou-Brooklyn NY (Afil.)
 Thomas & Linda Falconieri- Middletown, NY
 Lin Goetz- New City, NY
 Barbara Goldberg- Glen Rock, NJ (Afil.)
 Albert Gorman-Long Branch, NJ
 Camille Kempsey- Nanuet, NY
 Richard Levine, Upper Saddle River, NJ
 (Afil.)
 Tony Petrak- Warwick, NY
 Donna Ramos- Cornwall, NY
 Karen Schectman-Mount Kisco, NY (Afil.)
 Denis Sullivan- Parsippany, NJ (Afil.)
 William Weaver- Suffern, NY

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NEXT CHAPTER MEETING, MONDAY, SEPT. 17TH

A VERY EXCITING ADK MEETING will be held on **MONDAY, September 17th , 7:30 PM at the Nanuet Public Library**. Our speakers will be Thomas E. Rinaldi and Robert J. Yasinsac, co-authors of many books, most recently, "Hudson Valley Ruins: Forgotten Landmarks of an American Landscape". The program will feature the countless abandoned buildings located up and down the Hudson Valley that have long been forgotten. The authors/photographers will share their fascination with the dozens of these once grand, but now abandoned, old factories, homes, train stations, schools and other sites and structures that are located throughout our Hudson Valley landscape. A book signing and refreshments will follow the meeting. Please go to their website for more detailed information about the authors and their endeavors www.hudsonvalleyruins.org.

Suzan Gordon Programs, Chair ADK Ramapo

MARK THE DATE FOR MOHONK MOUNTAIN HOUSE

On **Saturday, September 8th**, we will again spend a wonderful day at **Mohonk Mountain House**. We'll be arriving in the morning for a day's hike(rock scrambling led by Chris Connolly, a 5-6 mile hike led by Pete Tilgner and Suzan Gordon) or a stroll for non-hikers on the grounds and gardens. Tea will be served at 3:30, take a shower and change in their new health club, and then enjoy a fine four course dinner at 6PM. The cost for the day is \$52 per person. Attire for dinner is "resort casual", jackets NOT required for men. If you are interested in joining us for a fun filled day call or email Suzan Gordon before August 1st. Payment by check made out to ADK Ramapo should be sent to me by August 15th. Suzan Gordon, Programs Chair Ramapo ADK 201-871-3531 or email gordon.tilgner@verizon.net