Mid-Hudson TRAILS

News and activities of the Mid-Hudson Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club

Summer 2018

Tea at Miss Daisy’s
Daisy Suckley was a special friend to the ADK—and to FDR.

In 1947, Margaret (Daisy) Suckley and a small group of intimate friends formed our chapter of the ADK. They met regularly to hike and explore and kept loose-leaf notebooks filled with snapshots and accounts of their adventures. A hike was usually followed by some sort of social gathering—often tea at Wilderstein, Daisy’s majestic home on the Hudson.

Daisy grew up at Wilderstein and spent all of her 99 years there. She never married, but she was a close friend, cousin and confidante of her neighbor Franklin Roosevelt. He enjoyed driving her around Hyde Park in his specially equipped, hand-controlled car. She took the only two photographs of him in a wheelchair known to exist. His beloved Scotch Terrier, Fala, was her gift to him. She helped him plan Top Cottage, spent a great deal of time at the White House, and was with him at Warm Springs when he died.

Daisy lived on at Wilderstein until her death, in 1991. A box of intimate letters from FDR was found among her belongings.

Tours of Wilderstein are offered Thursday through Sunday from May to October (go to wilderstein.org), and MHADK member Chris Cring has organized a guided hike of the Wilderstein landscape with tea to follow.

Saturday, June 16th – 2 PM
ADK has partnered with Wilderstein for a guided hike.
Come explore Wilderstein’s landscape and trails with the Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK). This hike will recreate one of many hosted by Daisy Suckley at Wilderstein. Tea and light refreshments will be served immediately following the hike. Tickets are $15 ($10 for Wilderstein and ADK members). To register and for additional information, please call 845-876-4818.
**Elected Officers**

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**Chapter Offers Support, Scholarships for Outdoor Education**

In the last couple of years, the Adirondacks and the Catskills have become increasingly fashionable among young people from New York City and other downstate areas. The result has been a striking increase in the number of hikers. On the one hand, it’s wonderful to see more people enjoying these beautiful natural places and reaping the benefits of exercise, fresh air, and closer contact with the natural world. But all this activity has put added stress on the trails and the summits.

In response, the ADK has implemented a Summit Stewardship Program. It provides training to staff members and volunteers and deploys them to the summits, where you can find them educating hikers about flora and plant communities—and about the importance of protecting them from trampling and other forms of abuse. Our Mid-Hudson Chapter regularly donates funds to support the program.

In addition, the Chapter has made scholarships available to young people to help them attend outdoor programs and youth environmental camps. Contact the Chapter Chair Dan Jones (jones.daniel.jr@gmail.com) to learn more.

**Hudson Valley Majesty on Display**

Governor Cuomo recently announced major milestones in the Hudson River SkyWalk project, a scenic pedestrian trail linking Olana State Historic Site with Thomas Cole National Historic Site, across the Hudson. The mile-long walkway on the Rip Van Winkle Bridge has been completely rebuilt by the New York State Bridge Authority. Three scenic viewpoints have been added, each 50 feet long by 10 feet wide. They will provide the public with unparalleled views of the Hudson and the Catskills. Later this year, the State Department of Transportation will create a pedestrian-friendly roundabout that will provide tourists a direct connection from the bridge’s east end to Olana.

**Navigate Dutchess**

Did you know that Dutchess County has more than 76 trail systems, totaling 350 miles? Find free online maps at Dutchess-ny.gov.

**Crampons. Don’t leave home without ‘em ... even in late April!**

On April 23rd around 2 PM, Greene County 911 asked Forest Rangers to assist two hikers unable to return down the Batavia Kill Trail owing to icy conditions. The hikers were in good health and within cell range, but they did not have crampons and could not get off the trail without assistance. Two Forest Rangers set off up the trail, found the hikers, provided them with crampons, and led them back down. They reached the trailhead by 8 PM.

**Lend a hand to the NY-NJ Trail Conference**

The NY-NJ Trail Conference has tons of trail work to do this summer and is looking for volunteers. If you can lend a hand, contact Salley Decker at 845-454-4206. Leave a message with your telephone number or send an email to: sadecker2002@yahoo.com with “NY-NJTC trail crew work trips” in subject line.

**Help us out. Please!**

Are you a writer, poet, cartoonist, illustrator or photographer? Got ideas? Wanna contribute to Mid-Hudson Trails? We need your input! Get in touch with Dana Bennet at dana.f.bennet@gmail.com.

www.midhudsonadk.org
March 10 Ticeteneyck and Silver Hollow Mountains  
Leader: Russ Faller  
This outing became a comedy of errors. We got off to a late start for Ticeteneyck, then thought we went the wrong way (but didn’t) and tried another approach. This wandering, plus a slow hiker, didn’t allow us to gain the summit, but we did see the nice view of the Ashokan Reservoir. The mountain will wait for us to try again. After really nice lunches and socializing at Bread Alone in Boiceville, we headed out for Silver Hollow Mountain only to run into even greater bad luck. Russ’s car started sliding backward down the icy road leading to the trailhead and ended up in a snowbank. We spent the rest of the day getting the car out. A nice couple who live near the trailhead gave us road salt and even a pot of hot coffee and cups. Lesson learned: never expect that a winter hike will go off as planned. Our only reward: the time spent at Bread Alone and meeting that nice couple. Participants were: Pete Cantline, Tom Amisson, Connie Haven, Ginny Fauci, Marcia Kramer, Lauren Doucette, Mark Tatro, Lalita Malik, Annette Caruso and the luckless leader.

March 11 James Baird Park  
Leader: Annette Caruso  
Six hikers, five ADKers and one non-member sprang forward March 11th on a four-mile tramp through the snowy trails of James Baird State Park, in LaGrange. Conditions were good for snowshoes, though a few wore micro spikes. The day was clear and relatively warm. We traversed the red-trail loop around the park, which is hilly but not too steep. It was a good workout and enjoyable. Participants were: John Ragusa, Shirley Freitas, Connie Haven, Margaret Douglas and guest.

March 24 Bear Mountain  
Leader: Georgette Weir  
Three ADKers and two international student guests from Vassar College enjoyed a spectacular hike up and down the Appalachian Trail at Bear Mountain. The leader was pleasantly surprised to find the trail clear of snow and ice, so no spikes or snowshoes were required. Bright sun and leafless trees created fabulous views over the Hudson River and Highlands all along the trail. A wonderful spring hike!

March 25 Palisades Park  
Leader: John Ragusa  
We met at the Palisades Park Headquarters at 1 PM. The day was cloudy and cold. There were three participants besides the leader. We walked north along the Long Path. The trails were snow-free and muddy in spots. At two miles, we passed the Women’s Federation Monument, which is dedicated to the women who stopped development on the Palisades. We continued north and climbed stone stairs to the top of the ridge for great views of the river and across to Westchester County. We then passed the State Line Lookout and ended at the State Border Monument. We walked back to the State Line Lookout and enjoyed lunch.

![Group photo of hikers at Bear Mountain with the Hudson River in the background.](image-url)
**Going out in the spring**

**by Sue Mackson**

**WRITING THIS** after a May 1st and 2nd when summer heat was upon us, it’s hard to imagine how I felt in April. Winter kept seeming to win. Historic average temperatures for April 1st pretty much coincided with 2018’s. On April 8th, however, historic averages were high/low 58/34 while 2018’s were 40/25. April 15th was similarly lower than historic averages: 61/37, while the current year’s temperatures on that date were 41/33. Of course, reciting low temperatures doesn’t quite make clear how cold it feels when the wind is blowing and the rain descends.

So I was particularly happy when April 22nd felt like spring—sunny but not hot, not a hint of frost in the air, blue sky. And the following three days continued the pattern. It felt like spring was not going away and those days felt like a treasure. I had to get out, and so headed one afternoon for Bowdoin Park, to look for those little spring flowers that appear suddenly among the trees. Saw no spring ephemerals as I walked a lovely trail through a wooded part of the park. The bright sun of that month shone through the leafless trees—glorious. Walked for a while, following a trail, traipsing through dead leaves, seeing no flowers, and came out to a road where I turned left to return to the park entrance. Road walk—nothing special. The sides of the road covered in those dead leaves. And then, through the leaves, I saw them—perhaps six white water-lily-looking flowers livening the small spot on the otherwise dull road—Bloodroot.

It’s great to get out in the spring!
Fri. Apr. 27-29 Appalachian Trail in CT
Backpack: St. Johns Ledges (Joint with Appalachian Mountain Club)
Leader: Russ Faller
Cancelled for ADK—no registrants. However, twelve AMCers turned out and we had a wonderful time, despite the frequent rainy spells. The temps were just right for backpacking. This section of the Appalachian Trail, in southwest Connecticut, is one of the most beautiful and varied parts of the entire AT.

April 27 Ferncliff Forest
Leader: Carla Barrett
The trip attendees, June Post, Glenda Schwarz and the leader, were forced to abandon our planned walk due to rain.

April 28 Bonticou Crag and Guyot Hill
Leader: Martin Carp.
Four intrepid hikers set off on the old and mostly forgotten Northeast trail out of the Pine Road trailhead. Rocky Mountain National Park guide Tom Dewitz led a fast pace for the first 3 miles. I slowed the pace for the next two miles, for which Mariane was appreciative. When it was Mariane’s turn to lead, I don’t know that she went any slower than Tom! In any event, it was clear that we would reach our lunch spot atop Bonticou Crag in time for breakfast! Just before ascending the Crag, however, we spotted my rock-climbing friend Ranger Dan. Perfect timing. Dan clued us in on the location of Hal’s Cave--off to the left,midway up, barely visible red blaze, yellow rust on rectangular boulder etc. I did spot the red blaze as we scrambled up the Crag, but by this time my risk-management clock told me to forget the cave for today and also to forgo the scramble down the Crag. Over lunch looking out toward Guyot Hill, Tom and I made plans to co-lead four or five fourteen-thousand-footers out of Estes Park, Colorado, in midsommer 2019—when the window for non-technical ascents is open. If you are interested please let me know—ASAP.

May 12 Easy Walk at Vanderbilt Estate.
Leader: Sayi Nulu
As I waited in the rain in the parking lot at Vanderbilt Mansion, a few folks showed up. The rain eased, so we decided go ahead and walk. And all five of us were glad we did as the rain stopped and left a beautiful mist in the air. We observed very healthy skunk-cabbage areas—with big leaves and no flower stalks. We noted the differences between poison ivy and Virginia creeper plants and passed a couple of areas where hemlock trees are dying. A big barge came along the river while we relaxed at Bard Rock. The hike took two hours and we returned to the parking lot with good cheer. Paul Miroff, Frances Song, Sandi Zero, Rick Haug and the leader.

May 13 Innisfree Gardens
Leader: Annette Caruso
On a not quite spring day, ten of us—five ADK members and five non (all guests of members)—explored Innisfree Gardens, in Millbrook, and then walked the lake loop. Just three of us stayed for a picnic—until the rain started. We all had a thoroughly enjoyable time in this glorious Eden of parks.
An Early Spring Snowshoe at Elm Ridge Wild Forest

On Sunday, March 4th, Mark Tatro, Lauren Doucette and Carla Barrett snowshoed in the Elm Ridge Wild Forest near Windham. Two days after a big snow and rain storm (depending on where you lived) that left many powerless for days, there were fourteen inches of heavy snow on the ground. Lucky for us, a young man had snowshoed in the day before and spent the night in a shelter on the Escarpment. We met him on the way out covered in sweat after coming back over the trail he had broken the day before. We still worked hard until we were passed by a group of younger folks up from NYC. They made the trail flat and smooth, but they couldn’t erase the hill. We didn’t break any distance records (saved the Escarpment for a summer sojourn), but we had a dandy time in a winter wonderland. In the car on the way home, Carla clocked the distance from the trailhead to the Saugerties Thruway entrance at 31 miles—an easy, pleasant drive.

We were pleased to see that this group of MHADKers snowshoed in Elm Ridge Wild Forest after that area was featured in the spring issue of this newsletter. We don’t know if their interest was sparked by that article, but we hope so. There are many areas of the Catskills and throughout the Hudson Valley that don’t see all that much use and other areas that are overused and suffer the consequences. We will continue to try to draw attention to these equally beautiful but less trod upon places. If you know of any, please give us a tip: dana.f.bennet@gmail.com
PLACES TO GO...

Exploring in and about Middleburgh, NY

If you’re getting tired of the same old Mid-Hudson/Catskill landscape, geology, flora and fauna, take a trip up to Middleburgh, in Schoharie County. It’s just an hour and a half from Poughkeepsie and has an entirely different vibe. There you’ll find Vroman’s Nose which seems like a magical island-mountain in a sea of the most lush, prosperous-looking and decidedly flat farmland we’ve seen outside the Midwest.

According to ancientforest.com: “This unusual geological feature is undoubtedly the result of glacial action about 50,000 years ago, when a lobe of the great continental glacier moved across this part of New York and carved the slopes which form the present Schoharie Valley. This massive ice sheet gouged out the broad and deep valley, which was later filled with sediments deposited by a river of post-glacial meltwaters. This combination of glacial scouring and riverine erosion left an island of rock cutoff from the main body of bedrock that today is the plateau named Table Mountain. And Vroman’s Nose is that isolated island of bedrock.”

The top of Vroman’s Nose has an extensive flat area known as The Dance Floor, because that was the purpose it served during Prohibition when people used to go there to party.

Getting to the party was easy. To the summit and back is just a two-mile trip, with an elevation gain of about 500 feet. For very little effort, you get a huge payoff: the phenomenal views over the Schoharie Valley all the way to the distant Catskills.

But you didn’t come all this way for such a short hike ... even one with great views. So complete the loop hike and head over to the Middleburgh Cliffs for something more challenging. This hike is about three miles and features a lemon-squeeze scramble just before the summit and a 500-year-old Eastern Cedar tree near the lemon-squeeze entrance. Once you reach the summit, you’ll find a nice view of Vroman’s Nose to the south and of Middleburgh village, which definitely warrants a visit if you fancy fancy beer.

The Green Wolf Brewing Company, on Main Street in the village, offers an array of craft beers brewed using locally sourced ingredients. Snacks are available. The tap room is pleasant and there is a seating area outside. If sweet is more your thing (or you have multiple things), try Under the Nose, at 207 Mill Valley Road. They have ice cream and bakery things.

For more specific information about these hikes, including directions, visit theoutbound.com.

EELS ON PARADE!

We had 43 eel’s tonight and the water is very cold!

Every Friday in the spring at about 5 PM, our friend counts eels. In March, he counts glass eels. Those are the babies. They look like clear Gummy Worms. Later, he counts elvers as well. Those are what you might call teenage eels. He does his counting at Black Creek Preserve, but eel counting is going on at other sites around the Hudson River Valley. Our friend is not himself an official eel counter, but he goes with a mutual friend who volunteered through Scenic Hudson, which organizes the monitoring at Black Creek Preserve. Statewide monitoring seems to be in the hands of the DEC. We found this on their website:

We are looking for volunteers to help monitor juvenile glass eels as they enter Hudson River tributary streams from the ocean. The American eel (Anguilla rostrata) is in decline over much of its range, and we are conducting baseline studies to aid conservation efforts. Volunteers help collect glass eels using specialized nets and traps on Hudson River tributaries. The young eels are counted, weighed, and released upstream, often above barriers to continue their migration. Volunteers can assist at streams from New York City to Greene County. This requires mostly outdoor field work from late March through May, with very flexible schedules. All volunteers under 18 are accompanied by an adult experienced in the eel research project. On-site training is provided. For more information visit the Eel Project or contact: grace.ballou@dec.ny.gov or aiden.mabley@dec.ny.gov at the Hudson River Research Reserve.

We had 195 cute baby eel’s tonight and 11 elvers (yearlings)

It’s true. You could volunteer to do many things; lead a hike, do some trail work, edit a newsletter—but this sounds like a lovely way to spend a Friday afternoon. Can’t wait until next spring!

We had 867 eels tonight! And all the plants are in bloom! Blood root, trillium, Dutchman’s breeches. Very nice!

www.midhudsonadk.org
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NY–NJ Trail Conference: www.nynjtc.org

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