

MY TIME AS A TRAIL STEWARD

How I survived blazing heat and arctic cold to help save the Broom Crowberry on Gertrude's Nose by Ginny Fauci



Roberta Forest



Ginny Fauci

Left: the author in full winter regalia Above: Broom Crowberry

LATE LAST SPRING I noticed, in one of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference emails, a call for volunteers for a new Trail Steward program. They needed volunteers to police the Gertrude's Nose Trail in Minnewaska State Park Preserve and educate hikers about a very special plant there that needs our protection. Wow, one of my favorite hikes, great views, and a chance to help preserve the at-risk

Broom Crowberry. "I can do this," I said to myself and signed on with enthusiasm. I soon received an email from Zach Wesley-Krueger, the Minnewaska ranger in charge of training, telling me to show up for an orientation hike on June 23rd. Great!

Along comes June 22nd and my back goes out! But the next day I set off with

the orientation group, toting a light pack and trying to stand as straight as possible, knowing I would never make it to Gertrude's Nose. Not a problem! There was some Broom Crowberry on a rock ledge near the bottom of the trail! After taking a photo, I hobbled back down the carriage road, stopping at the lake and Beacon Hill for some photos of the mountain laurel, which was beautiful this year.

So this was my assignment: I was to go up to Gertrude's Nose on a Saturday or a Sunday at least four times before the end of October. I was to remain there four hours. I was to point out the Broom Crowberry to hikers, tell them all about it, and ask them to stay on the trail (or at least on the rocks; not the vegetation). That and to ask them to leash their dogs and pack out their trash. I was to keep a count of all hikers—human and canine. And, of course, answer all their questions. I signed up for a day each month from July to October.

My first day was **Saturday, July 21**. I stopped at Peterskill to pick up my gear

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Elected Officers

TITLE	NAME	EMAIL	PHONE
Chapter Chair	Daniel Jones Jr.	Jones.daniel.jr@gmail.com	845-797-9161
Vice Chair	Peter McGinnis	PMcgin1@aol.com	845-454-4428
Secretary	Ellen Zelig	ellenzeligcrs@aol.com	845-518-0488
Treasurer	Ralph Pollard	ralphpollard@verizon.net	845-462-3389
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Club Director	Jean-Claude Fouere	jcfouere@gmail.com	845-462-0142
Past-Chapter Chair	Lalita Malik	lalitamalik@aol.com	845-592-0204

Committee Chairs & Other Volunteers

TITLE	NAME	EMAIL	PHONE
Conservation	Sayi Nulu	sayileela@gmail.com	845-264-2270
New Members	Jennifer Anderson	djanderson@fairpoint.net	
News Media	Michele Van Hoesen	michelevh8@yahoo.com	845-691-7442
Education Chair	Don Urmston	mrurmston@gmail.com	845-457-4552
Social Events	Carole Marsh	nanagrace91@aol.com	845-849-2044
Webmaster	Georgette Weir	georgette.weir@gmail.com	845-462-0142
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NY-NJ Trail Conf. Del.	Salley Decker	sadecker2002@yahoo.com	845-454-4206
MeetUp	Sayi Nulu	sayileela@gmail.com	845-264-2270

Mid-Hudson ADK Annual Holiday Party & Potluck Supper!

Sunday, December 9, 2017

Locust Grove, Samuel F.B Morse Historic Site, Rt. 9 Poughkeepsie

RSVP to Carole Marsh by Thursday, December 6 at 845-849-2044, or nanagrace91@aol.com. Tell her what appetizer, main dish, salad or dessert you will contribute and whether you will attend the tour.

4 PM: Tour of Historic mansion @\$11 per person
 5:00 PM Social Hour with Appetizers and Drinks
 5:45 PM: Potluck dinner followed by Dessert Table
 8 PM: Cleanup commences

Contact Carole if you can help set up at noon or with the cleanup at 8.

ALL ABOARD!

AT THE RECENT MHADK Picnic and Annual Meeting, members voted in the new board officers who will guide the chapter for the next two years.

Georgette Weir will be the new Chapter Chair. The Chapter Vice Chair will be **Carla Barrett**. Both are also hike leaders. **Annette Caruso** will be Secretary and **Ralph Pollard** will continue as Treasurer.

It has been a pleasure for me to serve as Chapter Chair. There are a number of other members who serve in various positions that keep our chapter running smoothly. It is with their energetic and professional efforts that this chapter has continued to grow and my job has been made easier.

Thank you to all for making this such a great chapter,

Daniel Jones

LET US KNOW!

ARE YOU A MEMBER of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference as well as ADK? If so, please email Salley Decker at sadecker2002@yahoo.com and let her know. We are trying to see where our memberships overlap. (Heads up: NYNJTC is having a December sale on trail maps and publications.)

NEW STUDY ON LYME-DISEASE RISK

AFTER ANALYZING nineteen years of data on the ecology of tick-borne disease, researchers from the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies say that fragmented forests with high rodent populations and low predator diversity are breeding grounds for infected ticks. Fragmented forests tend to lack midsize predators, like foxes and bobcats, which keep small mammals, like white-footed mice and chipmunks—reservoirs for the bacteria that causes Lyme disease—in check. At the bottom of the food chain, acorn production also plays a role. High acorn abundance gives a boost to rodent populations, increasing the number of infected ticks. The goal of the study was to identify ecological indicators that can be used to protect public health, allowing experts to more accurately predict times and locations of higher risk.

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(we were promised gear!) and papers. Nope. No gear. No paper. No clicker. Just a radio. I had brought a small notebook and a pen with me anyway. It was 90 degrees and humid. Heat and I do not get along. I trudged up the carriage road to the trailhead and on up to the top, chugging water along the way. It's about three and a half miles, which took me an hour and a half. I had forgotten about the rock scramble; it goes down on the way there but up (so unfair!) on the way back. If you've ever been on Gertrude's Nose, you know there's not a shady spot to be found and nowhere to sit but hard rock. I made myself as comfortable as I could (not very) and waited for the hikers. I had no way of indicating that I was an official trail steward, so I just greeted hikers with a "Welcome to Gertrude's Nose! Can I help you with anything?" The looks I got were priceless. I took a lot of pictures for people with their phones, pointed out the views, and showed them on my map where they were and where they were going. Most people were doing the loop, but had no clue what it entailed and were really not prepared. I counted 108 people, a few turkey vultures, some ravens, a red-tailed hawk, a black snake and two piles of bear scat in about two hours, which was about as much as I could stand in that heat. I still had an hour-and-a-half walk back with that uphill scramble.



The dreaded scramble



June in Minnewaska means Mountain Laurel

Ginny Fauci

My next workday was **Sunday, August 19**. This time I was prepared. I brought an orange safety vest and wrote Trail Steward on it in fat magic marker. I carried my Therm-a-Rest chair, so I'd have a place to sit. This time, besides a radio, there was a clicker. Best of all: it was 70 degrees! And I didn't have to greet people; now that I looked like a person in charge, they came to me. There were lots of questions about the trails, the views, what kind of snakes were around, and, the biggest one: Could I take their picture? Not a lot of visitors that day; only 81, plus 10 dogs. But a pileated woodpecker flew overhead!

My third day of stewardship, **Saturday, September 22**, was not without problems and delays, but it ended in a rather spectacular fashion. It was a beautiful fall day and the rock climbers were out in droves. It took me half an hour to get to Peterskill to sign in and pick up my gear. I didn't get to the upper parking lot until almost ten. My mind was saying "Hike faster!" to make up for the lost time. My body was saying "Nope. you'll get there when you get there." I talked to several groups of hikers on the way up about staying on the trail and following the blazes and keeping off the vegetation when they went off trail to a viewpoint. I met a group of eight with a dog headed back down. That's how late I was! I was able to point out some Broom Crowberry to them. On top, I found a group of young guys, including one who decided to jump down into a crevice to explore. I asked him to jump right back out. This required a lot of assistance from his friends. The orange "Trail Steward"

vest continued to work well for me. Many hikers came over to ask questions. A biology professor from Marist who had heard about the "endangered plant" asked me to point it out to him and his students. I counted 141 hikers and 12 dogs. As I was packing up to leave, I heard a loud engine sound. I looked around to see a man at the controls of a small black and white plane flying very close to the cliff. I had been watching for drones—they're not allowed in the park—but I never thought I'd see a daredevil flying a plane through a gully. Almost before I could register it, he was off.

I was dreading my fourth and last time at Gertrude's Nose, because it was **Sunday, October 21**—"peak" for color but also for long lines at the entrances. So I got to Peterskill at 8:30 and picked up my radio, clicker and log sheet while I talked to Laura (Environmental Educator) and Jorge (Assistant Park Manager), about getting in at the main gate. Wonderful news!! I was to follow a car that Laura was riding in through the gate and up to the garage, where they moved some cones for me to park. Then Laura drove me up the carriage roads to the trailhead in one of Minnewaska's four-wheelers. Yay!! (That would have been nice when it was 90 degrees!) Today was 35 degrees when I started, with wind gusts of 30 to 40 mph on top. I was layered with merino wool, a neck gaiter, heavy mittens and hat, and my down jacket. I was toasty! Got to the top at 10:15 and didn't see another person for more than a half hour. Quiet time. Put my chair together, but it was too

Ginny Fauci



My office

windy. Hooked it to my pack with a carabiner and eventually rolled it up and put it away. Too cold to sit still. Walked around. Got blown about. Chatted with many of the hikers who eventually wandered up. There were two very large groups, thirty in one and twenty in the other. I talked with one of the leaders about splitting up a little on the trails, to give others room to pass. They had a lot of questions. This is one of the most popular loop hikes in Minnewaska and most hikers seemed to be doing the loop, although many had no idea about the terrain. I had my map out most of the time. After talking to various groups and checking out their gear and footwear, I recommended that some take the carriage road back from Millbrook rather than the Millbrook Mountain Trail. Had a lot of thanks that day! Also had a few Mid-Hudson ADKers drop by to say hi on their way through. Counted 310 hikers and 16 dogs in all. Because I had a ride up, got there early and was dressed for the weather, the four hours flew by. It was a nice walk back down and, still wearing my vest, I was answering questions all the way.

This was the first year of the program, so kinks need to be worked out. Some suggestions: 1) Hide a chair in the woods attached to a tree so we don't have to carry one. 2) Put up a sign with descriptions of Broom Crowberry, a map of the loop route, descriptions of the views, "Leave No Trace" and other pertinent information. (We also need a new "Gertrude's Nose" sign, since the old one has been missing for a while and many people asked me if they were there yet.) 3) Shirts,

hats and vests for the trail stewards so they look like pros. We also could use some flyers explaining who the trail stewards are and why they're there and how to volunteer. All this takes money, so I've put a request in to the MHADK for a donation to the NYNJTC to be used specifically for the Gertrude's Nose Steward Program. I'm going to suggest to those in charge of the program that they transport the trail stewards to and from the Gertrude's Nose trail to cut out the two-mile carriage-road walk each way. It would give the trail stewards more time on the top, and more people would be likely to volunteer.



October: the air was nippy; the blueberries were red!

That's it for this year. I met a lot of people, answered a lot of questions and, I hope, spared a lot of Broom Crowberry. The best part was just being up there with those great views and enough quiet time to enjoy them. I started in 90-degree weather with the mountain laurel in its glory and ended in 35-degree weather with wind gusts of 30 to 40 mph and the blueberry bushes and trees starting to turn color. I'm looking forward to next year.

In 1989, the ADK, in partnership with the Nature Conservancy and the DEC, started a Summit Stewards program in the Adirondacks. It has been an invaluable tool in spreading the word about responsible enjoyment of our parks and the protection of delicate alpine ecosystems. Visit <https://www.adk.org/support-adk-summit-stewardship-program/> to learn more.

With more and more people visiting our parks and preserves it is more important than ever to protect them from the ravages of overuse by educating the public about 'Leave No Trace' and other conservation principles. If you or someone you know would like to volunteer to be a trail or summit steward in the Catskills, contact the Catskill Conservation Corps at <https://catskillconservationcorps.org/volunteer/>. To volunteer to be a steward in the East Hudson Region, contact the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference at <https://www.nynjtc.org/vop/trail-steward>.

OutingsLog



Hudson River Paddle Sept 30

Andrea Urmston

FOR THE 2018 SEASON, Dave Webber led nine evening paddles and two day paddles. He had an average of 3.5 paddlers per outing. Ask any of those who joined these paddles and they will tell you they were enjoyable. Given the warm October weather, he was able to lead a paddle on Chodikee Lake as late as October 23.

August 18 and beyond: Falling Waters Preserve and Saugerties Lighthouse

Leader: Carla Barrett

The monthly Falling Water Preserve hikes in combination with the Saugerties Lighthouse walks have proven to be popular as they provide easy access to beautiful sights: the Hudson river up close, two charming waterfalls, sloping trails through woods and along meadows, and a delightful lunch spot in the middle of the river beside the historic lighthouse. All in about three miles. Leader Carla hopes to continue this monthly, as it appeals to all ages and most fitness levels.

Sept 23: Sam's Point Preserve

Leader: Roberta Forest

This hike began with a shuttle from the Minnewaska Lower Lot to Sam's Point. There were a dozen of us, as it was a joint hike with Mohonk Preserve. Once we walked to Verkeederkill Falls we followed the scenic ridge almost all the way back. We covered about twelve miles.



Storm King Sept 23

John Ragusa

Sept 23: Storm King Mountain

Leader: John Ragusa

The day was overcast and cool. There were six participants and the leader. We picked up a couple who wanted to hike with us, since this was their first time there. We hiked up to the summit via the Highland and Stillman trails. The trails were challenging; some parts were steep and narrow, requiring hand holds. There were very nice lookouts along the way, culminating with a fantastic 360-degree view from the top, where we had a leisurely lunch before heading back.

Sept 27: Rondout Creek Paddle

Leader: Glenda Schwarze

In spite of the wind, a beautiful day. Charlotte's first paddle in an eight-foot kayak. Bet she was sore the next day.

September 30: Hudson River paddle

Leaders: Don and Andrea Urmston

Before the annual fall picnic at Norrie

Point, we led a brief yet beautiful paddle on the Hudson. Joined by fellow paddlers Ellie, Sam, Diane, and Martha, we ventured out onto the glass-like water for a couple of hours. We launched from the pavilion area at Mills Norrie State Park and paddled south to just past Bard Rock at the Vanderbilt Estate and returned to the park in time for a fabulous potluck lunch! Conditions were perfect and we all enjoyed the gorgeous scenery, both natural and man-made.

Sept 30: Mills Norrie Circular

Leader: Georgette Weir

Prior to our annual picnic, on a lovely early fall day, a group of fifteen members enjoyed a very leisurely, social walk, with plentiful opportunities to enjoy beautiful views along the Hudson River and the woodland trails at Mills Norrie.

October 9: Buttercup Farm Audubon Sanctuary

Leaders: Jennifer and David Anderson

Four of us met in the morning at Buttercup Farm Audubon Sanctuary to walk the trails, happy that finally it wasn't raining. We set out across the fields of Buttercup West, but were soon met by a lake of water in the trails. Rather than get soaked, we retraced steps to higher ground at Buttercup East to enjoy the perimeter walk through fields and hedgerows and into a wood. The streams

were rushing. We saw monarch butterflies, milkweed, bittersweet and New York asters in bloom. At the height of land we had a splendid view of Stissing Mountain just as the skies were clearing, and farther on we picnicked and concluded our visit. It was a pleasant morning by all accounts.



Paw Paw Tree Oct 6

Georgette Weir

October 6: Fahnestock State Park

Leader: Georgette Weir

First time that I have ever seen this native tree in the wild. Tried a ripe fruit. Yum. Margaret Douglas was the only person to join me. A great hike. (If you don't know what a Paw Paw is: <https://www.nps.gov/articles/pawpaw.htm>)

October 16: Sharon Audubon Center

Leaders: Jennifer and David Anderson

It was a perfect, breezy morning to hike through the magnificent acres of Audubon's wildlife sanctuary at Sharon, CT. We hiked down a lush and wet ravine, crossed the stream three times and climbed through hemlock to an upland of oak trees, the sun filtering through. After coming to a clearing of native grass and an old rock wall, we arrived at the shoreline of Bog Meadow Pond, where we watched migrating ducks busily congregating. We then looped back to the Center to picnic and visit Audubon's raptor aviary, housing several different hawks and owls and a handsome raven. Then we went our separate ways. It was great day to be out.

Oct 21: Minnewaska State Park

Leader: Roberta Forest

This is my annual autumn-leaf hike. This year, the colors were muted and the wind blew strongly. So our two mountain views, Gertrude's Nose and Millbrook Mountain,

Mid-Hudson ADKers & Guests Enjoy Unique Trip to the Adirondacks

ON LABOR DAY WEEKEND, seven ADKers, two AMCers and one guest traveled to a unique area in the Adirondack Mountains. The leader has dubbed the place "Cape Cod in the Adirondacks," because the entire shoreline of this man-made lake is ringed by wide sandy beaches. There are even sand bars! The water is clear and a joy for swimmers. Its real name is the Carey Falls Reservoir, in the northwest Adirondacks.

We base-camped on one of the wide sandy beaches. People did whatever they felt like doing that day. Some took an all-day hike, followed by a bushwhack into an old-growth forest. Ron Gonzalez identified and estimated the approximate ages of the first-growth trees, as well as identifying certain flora on the ground. Others took half-day hikes. Some did an all-day paddles. Others took a half-day paddle to Radio Island. Some just hung out at camp and swam. One person fished every day. He caught so many fish that he had to throw them back. He later said it was the best fishing he has had in 5 years.

Participants were: Carla Barrett, Roger Dietlin, Karen Snowman, Ron Gonzalez, Paul and Betsy Silverstein (all ADKers), Joseph O'Neil and Jules Petot (both AMCers), Mitch Stahl (guest) and the leader, Russ Faller.



Russ Faller

were not places anyone wanted to linger. The temperature was fine for hiking, but there were some random snowflakes to remind us of what will be coming.

Oct 21: Burger Hill and Ferncliff Forest

Leader: Annette Caruso

Five stoic hikers braved the October winds to crest Burger Hill and enjoy the serene sights of the Catskills, the distant peaks of the Taconics, the tops of oli-

garch's mansions, and autumn leaves for about two minutes. Then headed off to Fernwood forest for lunch, where veteran ADKers Carol and Marie joined the troop. Dave K bid us adieu after directing us to the long way loop, delightfully sheltered by trees, to the fire tower. Joey, visiting from southern California, even climbed to the top in flip-flops, which he wore for the entire hike. (This trip's a keeper. David Kaplan designed this hike and led it for



Guilder Pond Oct 26

several years. His knees have worn out so Annette has stepped in. Thanks to both.)

October 26: Mount Everett and Guilder Pond

Leaders: Jennifer and David Anderson

It was pretty cold on top of Mt. Everett, a breezy 36 degrees, but we had an expansive cloud cover of pink and grey and great views. The three of us were layered well for the day and hiked briskly up the Mt. Everett approach road to the AT, which leads to a stone lean-to and a 180-degree view to the east. After visiting the summit we returned to the viewpoint to lunch in the protection of the lean-to before continuing down the mountain to do the loop trail around Guilder Pond. Guilder Pond is the highest water to be found in Massachusetts. The trail around it is a beautiful, narrow earthen path that winds through hemlock and laurel high above the water and passes by rock ledges decidedly perfect for picnicking the next time we come. Margaret Douglas and the leaders.



Moneyhole Mtn. Nov 4

Oct 28: Croton Dam Gorge

Leader: Sayi Nulu

It was a beautiful day and a wonderful place to go. I had only Annette Cruso join me on this hike. No one else came. (We've had a lot of outings attended by only two or three people over the last period.) Annette and I walked part of Aquaduct trail and went over the bridge at the end of the Croton Dam. The sun came out a bit and the view was fantastic. Fall colors were showing almost peak. We had lunch together and hot tea that Annette brought in her thermos. The drive back was enlivened with more fall colors.

Nov 4: Moneyhole Mountain, Fahnestock State Park

Leader: Margaret Douglas

(We welcome Margaret as a first-time leader for MHADK.)

Eight members—JoAnn Norris, Kathy Steeves, Eileen West, Connie Haven, Mary Scott, Marsha Kramer, Georgette Weir, and the leader—enjoyed a beautiful, sunny fall day undaunted by the newly created mud and streams from the previous night's rain. Our perseverance was rewarded by a vista of late fall colors with Storm King and Breakneck Ridge flanking the Hudson River. Everyone was pleasant and cooperative with the leader's directions to wait at trail junctions for the slower hikers to catch up and attend to physical necessities. In addition to the vista we enjoyed conversations and treats during lunch near the Stone Chimney.

NEW D.E.C. REGULATIONS AT KAATERSKILL FALLS

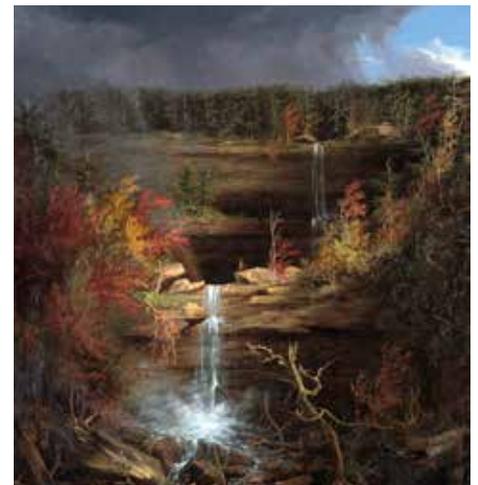
THE D.E.C. ESTIMATES that over 100,000 people visit Kaaterskill Falls each year. It is the highest cascading waterfall in New York State and the crown jewel of the Catskill Park. But it has also been the scene of tragedy. There have been eight fatal accidents in the last thirty years.

The D.E.C. has announced new regulations designed to improve public safety and enhance the user experience at Kaaterskill Falls. The regulations complement the State's \$1.25 million investments to improve safety and accessibility at the falls (which include a new viewing platform, the installation of a cable hand rails, trail extensions and improvements, including a 200-step stone staircase, new fences, new warning signs and more) without sacrificing its natural qualities.

The newly adopted regulations prohibit:

- Camp fires and portable stoves (except when camping at designated campsites)
- Glass containers
- Audio devices without the use of headphones
- Alcohol (except when camping at designated campsites)
- The public is prohibited from going within six feet of cliff edges, except on marked trails
- The public is prohibited from entering the water within 150 feet upstream of the falls
- The public is not allowed in one-half hour after sunset and one-half hour before sunrise, except for those camping in accordance with D.E.C. regulations or licensed hunters, anglers and trappers

Kaaterskill Falls, by Thomas Cole



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MHADKers Start to Reopen the Fishkill Creek Water Trail

by Russ Faller

MHADK Paddling and Water Trails Chair

HIS PAST JUNE 30TH, an MHADK exploratory paddle was launched on the Fishkill Creek to assess the condition of the water trail. In May, two severe storms had ripped through Beacon and Fishkill; one of them reportedly had 100 mph winds. Our purpose was to see what these storms might have done to the water trail.

We launched from Doug Phillips Park, in the Brinckerhoff section of Fishkill, and paddled downstream. The creek was open and the paddling was good.

It wasn't until we carried around the dam, below the Rt. 52 bridge, that the challenges began. We were blocked by downfall just below the dam. Since we hadn't brought tools (this was just a scouting trip), we began breaking branches with our hands. Clyde Clounie even used his feet! We dragged boats over downed trees and ducked and weaved to squeeze through.

In the end, we had to turn back, because the closer we got to Fishkill Village, the more downed trees we encountered. It was getting late and we were getting tired and frustrated. So we paddled back to the take-out below the dam and walked back to Doug Phillips Park to get the cars. (Clyde and Nancy Jacobs decided to pad-

dle upstream to their cars.) We had only gone less than half the way to our shuttle cars, in Fishkill, in more than twice the time it should have taken. We left determined to reopen the creek.

On September 15th, a few of the paddlers from June 30th and others who hadn't paddled that day returned to the launch, below the dam, to tackle as much of the blowdown as possible. (This was not an ADK outing.) We had hoped that the water would be at its typical end-of-summer low point, but we found it as high and fast as in the spring. We decided to go in anyway. Even though the conditions were not optimal, we opened a few blockades.

We were a small but effective team, which included Rich Holod, Bob Clark, Clyde Clounie, chain-sawyer extraordinaire Andy Pecoraro and the-one-who-always-volunteers, Stan Augie, as well as the author. All future paddlers can be grateful to these few for beginning the reopening. This is a seemingly remote water trail in the midst of a highly suburban area close to home.

More work must be done, however. There'll be more work parties next season. To get involved, contact Russ at 845-297-5126 or russoutdoors@yahoo.com.



**MHADK Planning Meeting
December 2, 11 AM**

The 2019 MHADK planning meeting will be on Sunday at 11 AM. It will be a pot-luck lunch at the home of Lalita Malik.

Members of the current board and the new board will share ideas for events and other suggestions for a successful 2019.

Members are welcome to attend but must RSVP to Ellen Zelig. Cell: 845-518-0488, Res: 845-473-5557, Email: ellenzeligcrs@aol.com.

**"Go with the Snow" Ski Weekend
MLK Birthday Weekend
January 16-21**

**Leader: Ron Gonzalez
iamrongon@gmail.com**

JANUARY IS A FRUSTRATING MONTH for skiers. It can be the coldest month of the year. There is one place near us where there's always snow in mid-January. The Tug Hill Plateau of north-central New York State gets copious amounts of snow in December and January. I've been leading MLK ski weekends on the Tug Hill for over a decade now, and "The Hill" hasn't let me down (yet!). While we can never absolutely guarantee snow anywhere in the Northeast on any given day in the winter, this is as close as it gets to a sure thing. The Tug Hill Plateau has fairly gentle, rolling terrain, interspersed with deep "gulfs" (ravines) formed by the rivers that flow west to Lake Ontario. There are several State Forest areas with designated cross-country ski-trail networks. While the snow is not exactly groomed, local volunteers use snowmobiles and weighted sleds to pack it down. This makes for a great intro-

duction to backcountry skiing, completely suitable for novices and intermediates. Expert skiers can go off the trails and ski through the woods, which are often covered in feet of beautiful lake-effect powder. We typically divide the participants into two groups. One is for the novices and intermediates, which will stay on the trails, travel at a slower pace, and may not travel as far in the day (usually less than 8 miles). The second group is for advanced/expert skiers, who will usually go off-trail for at least part of the day, will take on tougher terrain, and may go farther in the day (10+ miles). Each group has it's own leader. There is a top-notch Nordic center in the area, which has great snow, first-rate grooming, lots of fun trails, an excellent ski shop, and is reasonably priced. It's not fancy, but it's one of the best skier's centers in the East. We stay at a nice "hostel"—actually a house we hire to share—complete with full kitchen, large dining table, and full bedding (with blankets, sheets and towels included). There's a living room with a sofa and a TV with DVD player.

**Presidents' Day Weekend at
Wiezel Cabin at Heart Lake
February 15-16**

**Leader: Pete McGinnis
pmcgin1@aol.com or 845-797-7945**

ONCE AGAIN our chapter is leading a Presidents' Day weekend at the Wiezel Trails Cabin. It will be on from Friday, February 15th, to Monday, February 18th. Cost will again be \$80 per person. (Please make checks payable to Mid-Hudson Chapter ADK, mail to Pete McGinnis, 515 Haight



Wiezel Cabin

Avenue, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603.) Space is limited and many of the same folks attend year after year. Make your decision and get your reservations to Pete soon.

The Weizel Trails Cabin is situated eight miles south of Lake Placid on ADK's Heart Lake property. Hiking, snowshoeing and cross-country ski opportunities abound right outside the front door, and groups will be organized to accommodate varying ambitions and abilities. The cabin has four bunk rooms, each containing two sets of bunk beds, and can accommodate a maximum of sixteen people. You must bring your own bedding, including pillowcases and bath towels. The cabin has electricity (heat is electric) as well as hot and cold running water. The men and women's washrooms include showers. There are pillows on the bunks and a kitchen.

Reminder: Keep your 2018 Empire Pass!

Beginning in mid-November, you will be able to renew your existing Empire Pass online with a discount for the 2019 season!





Stay Safe this Winter!

WINTER IS A GREAT TIME to get outdoors. The cold, crisp air is exhilarating. The scenery is spectacular, even more wondrous than in summer. There are no biting insects and fewer people on the trails. The quiet and solitude is remarkable. Here are some safety tips from the D.E.C. to help you enjoy winter outdoors.

Plan Ahead

- Learn about the area you'll be visiting ahead of time; know the opportunities and the regulations. Check maps, guidebooks and websites.
- Arrange to go with a group or at least one other person.
- Know your skill level and physical capabilities. Choose trails within your or your group's ability. Remember it takes more effort and energy to move through snow.
- Days are short. Know what time the sun sets and plan your hike so you can return before dark.
- Inform others of your travel plans. Let them know where you are going, your planned route, when you plan to return, and emergency numbers to call if you do not return at the scheduled time.
- Program cell phones with the D.E.C. Dispatch phone number (518-408-5850), but do not rely on cell service in all areas.
- Check the weather forecast, but keep in mind that temperatures will be lower, winds will be stronger, and snow will be deeper on mountain summits. Prepare accordingly and postpone your trip if the conditions are too harsh.

- Check trail conditions before hiking.
- When planning to hike in remote locations, make sure you know how to use a map and compass.

What to Wear

- Base layers of moisture-wicking fabric to keep your skin dry, insulating layers such as wool or fleece, and waterproof or water-resistant outer layers. Avoid cotton fabrics, which hold moisture.
- Thick socks, a winter hat, and gloves or mittens.
- Waterproof, insulated boots.
- Skis or snowshoes, if snow depths are deeper than eight inches.
- Sunscreen (sunburns occur year-round) and sun glasses.
- A watch or other time-keeping device.

What to Pack

- Day pack large enough to carry your gear
- Plenty of water and high energy snacks
- First aid kit
- Trail map and compass and/or GPS unit
- Extra clothing, including extra hat, socks and mittens
- Plastic whistle (avoid metal, which can freeze)
- Microspikes and/or crampons for icy conditions
- Flashlight and/or headlamp and extra batteries
- Pocket knife
- Trekking poles

- Bivy sack, space blanket and heavy-duty garbage bags for emergency shelter
- Fire-starter kit: matches in waterproof container and cotton balls soaked in petroleum jelly

On the Trail

- Keep an eye on the weather. If conditions worsen, head back immediately.
- Drink water regularly; eat and rest often.
- Add or remove layers of clothing to keep body temperature comfortable. Overheating and sweating can result in significant cooling and hypothermia.
- Keep track of time and remember it will take you as long to return to your starting point as it did to hike out.
- Turn off cellphones or switch to "airplane mode" to conserve the battery. Do not use your cell phone as a light source, which will drain the batteries. Use the flashlight you packed instead.
- Stay on trails to avoid unseen obstacles covered by snow.
- Use snowshoes or skis in deep snow to reduce injuries and ease travel. Their use also prevents "post-holing"—leaving deep footprints in the snow—which makes trails more difficult and hazardous for others to use. When hiking with dogs, keep them to the side of trails to avoid "paw post-holing" as well.
- Skiers and snowshoers using snowmobile trails should keep to the side and move off the trail to allow safe passage of snowmobiles. Snowmobilers should slow down when passing skiers and snowshoers.

Places to go!

- Use caution when on ice over water bodies. Ice that holds snow may not hold the weight of a person.
- Check ice thickness before traveling across it.
- Avoid ice over running water, and near inlets, outlets, boathouses, and docks (especially those with “bubblers” or other ice-prevention devices).

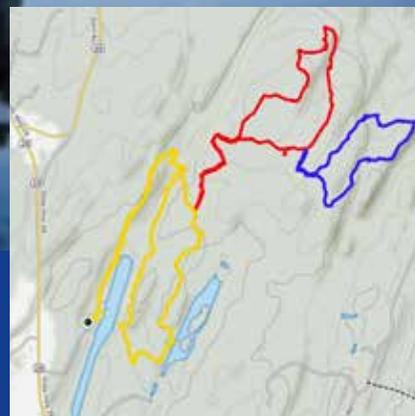
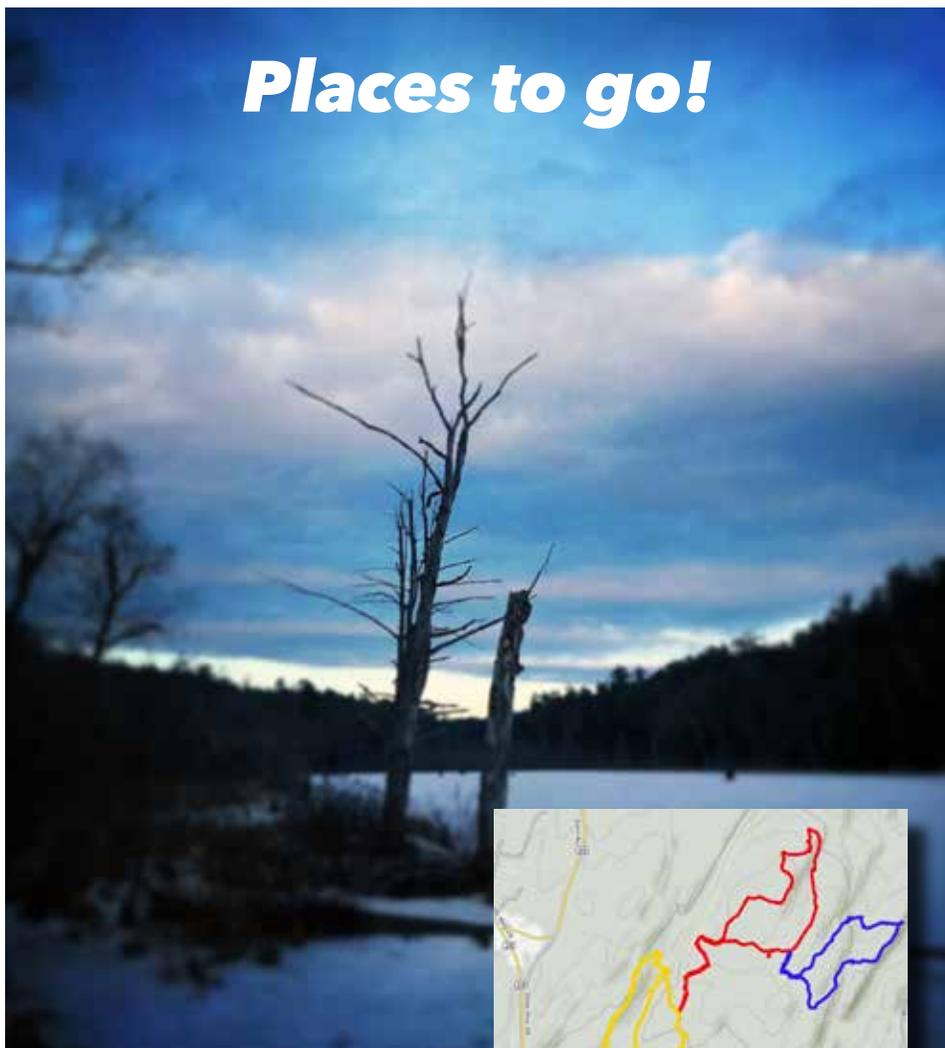
If you get Lost

- Stop where you are. Keep calm and assess your situation.
- Try to determine your location. Look for recognizable landmarks and listen for vehicles on nearby roads.
- If you are sure you can get yourself out of the woods using a map and compass, do so. Otherwise, stay put.
- If you have cell service, call the D.E.C. Dispatch (518-408-5850). The dispatcher will ask questions to collect information needed to help searchers locate you quickly.
- If you don't have cell service, move to a location close by where you are visible to searchers on the ground or in the air. If you have something brightly colored, wear it or place it in a conspicuous location.
- If it appears that you will need to spend the night: Clear an area of snow to build a campfire for heat, light and comfort. A fire will help searchers locate you. Using snow or items from your pack, build a shelter that will serve as a “cocoon” to keep you warm and sheltered from the weather. You can also use dead branches, conifer boughs and leaf litter to insulate the shelter.

If someone is injured or stricken...

- If there is no cell service, at least one person should remain with the injured person while the others note their location and leave to contact DEC Dispatch.
- If there isn't anyone to stay behind, make sure the injured person has shelter and supplies before leaving to seek help.

Enjoy and STAY SAFE!



Onteora Lake Kingston, New York

SAY YOU'VE GOT a lot of errands to run in the Kingston area but want to squeeze in a quick hike, snowshoe, ski, paddle, swim or bike ride. Onteora Lake is a hidden gem, just off busy Route 28 in a fairly commercial district, but once you get on the trail you'll think it's just you and Mother Nature.

There are a total of 7.5 miles of trail, divided into three loops—yellow, red and blue. I hiked there recently on a chilly Sunday afternoon with a couple of friends, and we did all three trails in a little less than four hours. Judging by the trail log, it seems that the bulk of visitors only do the yellow trail; it's the one you start on, is the longest (at close to three miles) and has the prettiest views of the lake. But it would be a shame to miss the blue trail—it has some handsome rock formations and ledges. Other than a few short, steep

ascents and descents, the terrain is not very taxing and would be lovely on snowshoes.

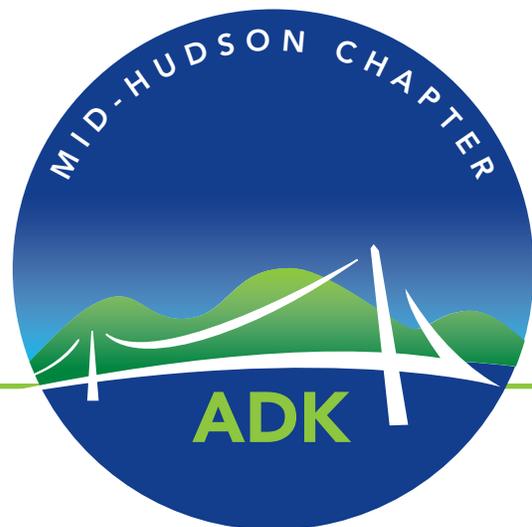
My only quibble: the trails are not well marked. You can easily go off trail even when you're paying attention. It's best to take a picture of the trail map at the parking lot before starting off.

The site offers several campsites, some quite close to the lake—a nice, easy place to share a first overnight experience with kids or grandkids.

There are two parking lots—one on Route 28 and another a little closer to the lake. When we finished our hike, we walked from the parking lot to *Bistro to Go*, on Route 28, and had some hot soup.

—Dana Bennet

Stay Connected...



Adirondack Mountain Club: www.adk.org

Mid-Hudson Chapter: www.midhudsonadk.org

NY–NJ Trail Conference: www.nynjtc.org

To make a change of address, phone, or email,
send a message with specifics to adkinfo@adk.org
or call 1-800-395-8080 x2

To be included in the Mid-Hudson Chapter email list
or to change your email, please send a message to
ebc12533@yahoo.com