



*The*

*Cloudsplitter*

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# The Cloudsplitter

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of the Adirondack Mountain Club.

Albany Chapter ADK  
Empire State Plaza  
P.O. Box 2116 Albany,  
NY 12220  
<http://albany.adk.org>

**Editors:** Brad  
Schwebler  
[feketitsch@yahoo.com](mailto:feketitsch@yahoo.com)

**Assistants:**  
Virginia Boyle Traver  
Mark Plaat

**Send address changes to:**  
Adirondack Mountain Club  
814 Goggins Road  
Lake George, NY 12845-4117  
(518) 668-4447 (phone)  
(518) 668-3746 (fax)

**For orders or membership:**  
(800) 395-8080 or email [adkinfo@adk.org](mailto:adkinfo@adk.org)

***Many thanks to Gail Carr for her cover sketch of "Nest of Kestrels" and for her continued support of the Chapter with her time and talent!***

Business meetings are normally the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. at Little's Lake in Menands. However, during the pandemic executive meetings are being held on Zoom.

**Submission deadline for the Summer 2021 issue (October - December 2021) is September 15<sup>th</sup>.**

## Welcome Summer

As the weather heats up - just in time for some after-hike swimming - I've been happy to be part of the efforts to make it even easier to find out about the Albany ADK outings. These outings have been listed with much success on the MeetUp site and on our website, with the calendar also available on the statewide site. Now, you'll also see our events, including meetings, listed on Facebook. This new effort is thanks to help from Virginia, Doug, Brad, and others, especially our outing leaders. Thank you!

In my day job, I handle digital marketing and communications at the local PBS station, WMHT, with a focus on social media. Since joining the executive committee this winter, I'm excited to merge two of my worlds - hiking and social media/digital communications.

Using some of my connections from when I was a reporter for 10 years at The Record in Troy, I'm working with Jim Slavin, former chair of our chapter; Michael Barrett, ADK's statewide president; Cathy Pedler, ADK's statewide director of advocacy; and the leadership team at the Boys and Girls Club of the Capital Area to determine any collaborative programming we could do with the youth in Troy and Albany. Nothing is set in stone yet, but an initial thought is to do an urban trail series in Troy and Albany (in places like Washington Park, Prospect Park, The Narrows trails). This could get kids used to being in nature, on trails, and show them how close we are to natural spots even when in the city. Another facet of this could be to teach them map and compass skills. A potential goal with this program would be to eventually host these kids at the Adirondak Loj, where they can further be immersed in nature and learn more in what would likely be their first wilderness experience. I look forward to keeping everyone up to date on this as plans do unfold. And, if anyone has any ideas, please feel free to reach out to me.

In the midst of this work, I'm especially excited to be part of ADK's Trailhead Stewardship Program at the High Peaks Information Center, near Adirondak Loj and Heart Lake. I encourage others to reach out to Bobby Clark about this program which aims to educate hikers before they head out on the trail. Trailhead Stewards are volunteers with shifts ranging from a weekend to a full week. Maybe I'll see some of you on the trails this summer!

Danielle Sanzone  
ADK Chair, Young Adults

**\*Monthly Chapter meetings normally are held at the West Albany Firehouse Station #1, 113 Sand Creek Road, Albany starting at 6:30 pm on the second Tuesday of each month except July, August, and September. The next Executive Team meeting will be in September.**

**To view the Combined Activities Schedule, Activities Descriptions, and Echoes from the Trail, please visit the website for the Albany chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club.**

#### **Rules and Recommendations for ADK Chapter Outings**

- Life jackets (PFDs) must be worn on any ADK paddling trip while on the water. (You need to wear AND properly secure your PFD.)
- Participants are expected to have a realistic knowledge of their own ability to select activities within their capabilities and to carry clothing, food and equipment appropriate to the trip.
- Participants must be willing to accept the authority of the trip leader and to cooperate with him or her and other party members to make the trip safe and enjoyable.
- Participants should inform the leader if they feel unduly tired or if the trip is exceeding their capability. Concealing such information to avoid embarrassment or other reasons endangers the safety of all participants.
  
- Participants must not leave the party at any time without permission of the leader. Participants must not leave the trip area until all party members have safely returned, unless given permission by the trip leader.
- Party Coordination: It is recommended that leaders establish procedures to ensure the cohesiveness of the group. They should explain the concept of having a leader and sweep and stress the importance of maintaining contact within the group
- Safety Considerations: It is recommended that trip leaders and participants observe reasonable safety precautions and that all trip decisions be made with safety as the primary concern.

*A leader may curtail further participation by an individual and amend trip objectives if, in the leader's judgment, the safety of the individual or group requires such action. It is recommended that if a trip participant is unable to continue with the trip and must turn back that he or she be accompanied by at least one other person.*

#### **Additional rules and precautions that must be abided by during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Leaders will screen participants for symptoms and/or recent contact with an infected person.

Everyone should bring face masks, sanitizer and/or soap.




Avoid hiking or paddling in wilderness and high-use areas, overnight trips to the backcountry, and carpooling (unless members of the same household).

Leaders are advised to keep outings local, local being identified as being within 30 miles.

## ACTIVITIES RATINGS

Each outing listed in this issue is rated by the leader for its level of effort. Remember that "level of effort" is not the same as the level of difficulty! A "moderate" hike for a physically fit person may mean a very strenuous hike for a novice or unconditioned person.

**It is incumbent on each participant to know their own level of fitness and limitations.** The trip leader will ask questions about your experience, fitness, equipment, medical condition, expectations, etc. *Be Honest*

 <b>HIKING</b>	<b>RATING</b>	<b>LEVEL OF EFFORT</b>	<b>FEET OF ELEVATION GAIN</b>	<b>MILES</b>	<b>TIME (HOURS)</b>
	A+	Very strenuous	4,000+	10+	10+
	A	Strenuous	3,000+	5-10	8-10
	B+	Moderately Strenuous	2,000+	5-10	6-8
	B	Moderate	1,000+	8-10	5-7
	C+	Fairly Easy	1,000+	5-8	4-6
	C	Easy	Under 1,000	Under 5	Under 5
<b>PADDLING</b>	<b>RATING</b>	<b>MILES</b>	<b>PORTAGES</b>	<b>WATER CLASS</b>	
	A	12+	Long (1/2 mile+)	II - Whitewater	
	B	6-12	Short	I - Moving	
	C	Under 6	None	Flat	
<b>BIKING</b>	<b>RATING</b>	<b>MILES</b>	<b>TERRAIN</b>		
	A	30+	Moderate to steep		
	B	15-30	Moderate		
	C	Under 15	Flat to Moderate		

Not all trips fit cleanly into one of these categories. Whenever you are unclear about a rating for a trip, leaders will be happy to explain what their designated rating means.

**Please Note:** Unless otherwise stated, please sign up with the leader for all Chapter activities. Do not simply show up at the designated meeting place. Arrive at the designated site before the stated departure time. Remember, no carpooling unless you are members of a family. Do not bring a pet unless the trip leader agrees that it is okay, and bring a leash. Please stay with the group or ask to proceed and stop at the first intersection and wait for the entire group to reassemble. Practice social distancing and don your mask when passing other hikers. You are expected to carry adequate equipment, water and food. If in doubt about what to bring, ask the trip leader!

<b>Suggested Gear For All Seasons:</b>		<b>Winter Add-Ons</b>
Water (2-3 quarts)	Food	Extra Food
Sturdy Boots	Sunglasses/Sunscreen	Ski Pole or Ice Axe
Extra Socks	First Aid Kit	Skis or Snowshoes
Waterproof Matches	Crampons	Warm Liquids
Headlamp	Layered Clothing (NO cotton)	Extra Layers
Map & Compass	Wind and Rain Shell	
Emergency Blanket	Extra Sweater or Jacket	
Hat/Gloves		

### General Information for Paddling Trips

On most Tuesday (some Wednesday) evenings from May thru October, the ADK Albany Chapter paddles various waterways in the Capital District area. There are typically 2 groups (Fast and Relaxed). The Relaxed Group goes as slow as the slowest paddler and may be best for short wide boats or less skilled paddlers. The Fast Group is for most everyone else and goes about 3-4 mph. If there are a large number of paddlers, we may form a moderate group. Expect to paddle for about two hours. Scheduled trips launch rain or shine. It is suggested that you obtain a good roadmap of the Capital District or use [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com) for directions to the launch site locations. It is customary, after the paddle, for the group Leader to pick a nearby restaurant and convene the Paddlers Committee Meeting (PCM) to socialize, plan future trips, and enjoy a meal with old and new friends. Everyone who paddles is automatically a Committee Member and is invited to participate. If new paddlers would like to join the weekly paddling email list, please email Pamela Bentien and Alison Zoske at [albany.adk.paddlers@gmail.com](mailto:albany.adk.paddlers@gmail.com).

The following are the Albany Chapter guidelines to participate in the Evening Paddles:

- 1) **Respect Other Users of the Waterways** - Steer clear of fishermen. Don't forget their fishing lines go well out into the water. Stay close to shore when motorboats are out. Red & Green Buoys mark the deepwater channels so stay between the buoys and shore. Paddle in a tight group when crossing large bodies of water.
- 2) **Launch on Time** - Please be in your boats on the water and congregated near shore before the launch time. People launching after start time are not officially with the group. The leaders will conduct a short On-the-Water Meeting with the group to discuss the water, weather conditions and plans for the paddle.
- 3) **Duty of the Paddler** - It is the responsibility of the paddler to stay with the group and know who the leaders are. If you don't know, ask someone.

- 4) **Leaving the Group** - The leaders take a headcount at the On-the-Water Meeting. Therefore, please notify one of the leaders if you need to leave the group for any reason. ADK is not responsible for paddlers who choose not to paddle with the group.
- 5) **Required Gear** - All paddlers must bring along a white light (a headlamp is good), a whistle (a pealess one is best) and must wear a PFD (Personal Flootation Device aka life jacket). Your PFD needs to be securely fastened (zippered and buckled). There are no exceptions to these requirements. It is also a good idea to bring raingear, water, bug-dope (mosquitoes are quite active in summer at dusk) and an extra set of clothes in the car.
- 6) **Clothing** - Other than in July and August, all paddlers should not wear cotton clothing, If you must wear cotton, bring along a full change of clothing in a dry bag. Expect to have your feet in the water when launching. Some of the launch spots are slippery and have underwater debris. Waterproof footwear (most experienced paddlers use neoprene booties or mukluks) is highly recommended in the cooler months.
- 7) **Guests** - You may bring a guest. He/she is your responsibility and must adhere to all of the Evening Paddle Guidelines.

## Calendar of Events

**July 31:** Tent sale and gear exchange:

ADK member service center, 814 Goggins Rd., Lake George, NY

9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Gear sellers please arrive at 8:45 AM for setup.

Have gear labelled with name and price

Cash only, 10% goes to club as a contribution

Any questions: Call Laurie at 518-668-4447, Ext. 211

**June 28 – October 8:** ADK member services center will be open from 10 AM to 4:00 PM on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays.

**ADK HQ Store needs volunteers.** They are looking for knowledgeable and personable people to help provide information on outdoor recreation to store customers. They are looking for volunteers for all three days from 10 AM to 2 PM. Hours are flexible, but there is a minimum of 2 hours per shift. Contact Laurie Scheighardt at 518-668-4447, Ext. 211 if interested.

### Atmospheric Sciences Research Center's Summer 2021 Falconer Series

Tuesdays Biweekly at 7 PM, July 13<sup>th</sup> to August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Open and free to the public virtually via Zoom

Register to attend at: <http://bit.ly/2OWAxdS>

**July 13:** Overview of the New York State Mesonet, Regional Weather Patterns and Phenomenon Uncovered. Scott McKim, Research Support Specialist, Atmospheric Science Research Center, University of Albany.

**July 27:** Birds and Climate in New York's High-Elevation Boreal Forest. Jeremy Kirchman, Ph.D., Curator and Ornithologist, New York State Albany, NY.

**August 10:** The History of the ASRC Whiteface Mountain Field Station Summer Weather Observatory. Paul Casson, Operations Manager, ASCRC, Whiteface Mountain Field Station.

**August 24:** Ecological Restoration and a Practice of Healing. Craig Milewski, Ph.D., MFA, Professor, Natural Sciences, Paul Smith's College.

## **Conservation Notes**

(The following are excerpts from a report by David Figura)

A state Court of Appeals decision early last month blocking completion of a 27 mile snowmobile trail on state forest preserve land in the eastern part of the Adirondack Park was heralded as a victory by environmentalists.

The decision, though, has left questions in the minds of snowmobilers, in addition to hikers and horse-riding enthusiasts, about how the decision will impact their activities – specifically the construction of new trails in the park.

The court ruled on the constitutional language protecting the Adirondack and Catskill forest preserves. In a 4-2 decision, the court sided with Protect the Adirondacks! group that sued the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and Adirondack Park Agency. The suit concerned a partially built snowmobile trail, a wide "Class II" connector trail that was to be part of a larger network.

Opponents claimed the Class II trail violated the "Forever Wild" clause of the state constitution, which protects state-owned forest preserve land. DEC lawyers argued that the number of trees affected per mile would be relatively small and that any impact would be justified by increased recreational opportunities in the popular winter tourist destination according to the decision.

However the court wrote that the Class II trail, which required rock removal, grading, and cutting down 25,000 trees is "constitutionally forbidden" without a voter-approved amendment. It held that the state's plan to build trails connecting North

Hudson to Newcomb, Minerva, and Indian Lake would result in too much tree cutting. The trails were to be 9 to 12 feet in width, as reported in the Adirondack Explorer.

DEC estimated it would have to clear an estimated 6,184 trees to build the trails. The DEC's estimate was based on a tree being 3 inches in diameter at breast height. Protect the Adirondacks! estimated some 25,000 trees would have to be removed based on trees one inch in diameter at breast height.

Peter Bauer, Executive Director of Protect the Adirondacks! said the smaller trees were included in his group's count because tree diameter is not the sole indicator of a tree's age. He noted many of the alpine trees in the Adirondack High Peaks are older than they might seem as their growth is stunted, as reported in the Adirondack Explorer.

Dominic Jacangelo, executive director of the New York State Snowmobile Association, pointed out that the court decision is limited to land the state owns in the Adirondack Park, "the Forest Preserve" and does not mean the end of snowmobiling in the Adirondack Park. At most, he said, the decision impacts 50 miles of planned trail out of the couple of thousand that are in the Park on public and private land. The decision does not impact easement land upon which the state holds a recreational interest, as those are still private land,

Jacangelo said another negative impact of the decision will be that it will reduce community support for state land acquisitions, such as former timberlands that New York added to its preserve and had planned to cross with trails.

Bauer said the decision about Class II trails "will not prevent crews in the Adirondacks from building or maintaining hiking, mountain biking and cross-country skiing trails, which require significantly less tree cutting,"

Officials at the Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK), which along with the Nature Conservancy, wrote court briefs in support of the DEC in the court case, don't share Bauer's opinion. The club released the following statement about the court ruling.

"The Adirondack Park's hiking trails are in great need of repair and redesign. ADK's lone concern regarding the tree cutting case has always been the uncertainty associated with our collective ability to solve this issue by maintaining and building sustainable foot trails. This concern will remain until we are confident that this decision will not have a deleterious impact on those efforts. At this point, we are waiting for updated guidance from the DEC before resuming projects that involve any level of tree cutting."

Dan Gruen, vice president of the New York State Horse Council, said, "The recent ruling prohibiting excess tree cutting has seriously curtailed new trails and even maintaining existing ones. However, that ruling does not prohibit making new foot trails



for equine and people. I think what we will see is a hold on making new trails until DEC has more time to evaluate the ruling and interpret how it affects the work DEC does.”

The future of Debar Lodge and Debar Pond is under review and is being debated. PROTECT makes the case for removal of the buildings and restoration of the tract to a wild forest setting.

Mark your calendars. PROTECT is planning on holding an in-person, outdoor annual meeting on Saturday July 17th.

If you have not signed the [online petition to save the 36,000-acre Whitney Park](#), please do so today. This tract is now threatened with development into ten 3,200-acre lots that will fragment and degrade the forest.

## Other Important Notes

- **Shuttle in Keene area:** The shuttle designed to ease chronic parking shortages at popular Adirondack High Peak trailheads has not started running yet because of a shortage of shuttle drivers. – Rick Karlin
- **NYSDEC and AMR Pilot Reservation System:** NYS DEC and AMR design a reservation system for parking in AMR's 70 car parking lot. Reservations must now be made for this parking lot from May 10 to October 31, 2021 and can be made on-line at [www.hikeamr.org](http://www.hikeamr.org) free of charge. See this site for rules and particulars.
- **Blue Hole day use permit:** Permits costing \$10 must be acquired in advance to visit Blue Hole, a popular swimming hole by Peekamoose Road in Ulster County. Permits can be obtained from the Town of Denning or on-line through Reserve America.
- **Minnewaska State Park trail closure:** Currently the Stonykill Carriageway is closed in Minnewaska State Park, which I discovered recently.

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## Reflections from the Trail

by Brad Schwebler

Recently I have led hikes in areas I have been to before and saw these places in a new light. When I was young my family often vacationed in Hague, a small community on Lake George, and in Lake George village. I had done a little hiking up Prospect

Mountain and to Shelving Rock Falls. Now I have discovered there is so much more: Pilot Knob Ridge, Shelving Rock Mountain, Pole Hill Pond, Fifth Peak, Sleeping Beauty Mountain, The Pinnacle, Cat Mountain, and more I have yet to explore. In the course of these hikes I also found pretty waterfalls, one of which, Northwest Bay Falls, is so huge I could see it on my GPS. I also discovered scenic views of Lake George, pleasant wooded trails, and the most fringed polygala I've ever seen.

There was also Plotter Kill Preserve and North Lake State Park, both of which I had been to during the summer, but visiting these places during the winter were beautiful in their winter mantle and presented different challenges, microspikes at Plotter Kill, snowshoes at North Lake.

Then there was Arizona Mountain. I have been in the area of Round Top hiking to the various waterfalls in the area. One hiker who was going to hike with me decided to hike someplace else. I asked her where she went. She said she hiked Arizona Mountain. Where is that? As it turned out it was around the corner from the waterfalls I was familiar with. I didn't even know there was an Arizona Mountain in New York, and it is right next to Blackhead.

While we were up on Arizona Mountain we met two fellows from Pennsylvania who were running the escarpment, 22 miles from Blackhead to North Lake. The trails are treacherous enough walking on them. I couldn't imagine running on them. I also wondered if they noticed any of the beauty of nature as they ran. Did they see the red trillium or the Clintonia lilies?

Another thought, as I see my elderly parents or aging friends and relatives, some no older than I am, some younger, with ailments and limitations, I am increasingly aware of the limitations of time and the feeling of urgency to explore and accomplish as much as I can while I am still healthy and able. There are so many beautiful places to see and experience in the world, in our country, and even in our own backyards. It seems a shame to let time pass without taking the time to see what nature has to offer.

## **From The Archives**

The Albany chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club was organized on October 13<sup>th</sup>, 1922. That means the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our local chapter is little more than a year away.

When it was first organized three people were elected to the executive team: Meade C. Dobson was chairman, Dr. H. D. Cochrane as vice-chairman, and Thomas C. Stowell as secretary. Our chapter started with 30 members. The Albany chapter now has over 1400 members.

The first hiking program was developed and all members were encouraged to take advantage of as many events as possible and members interested in photography were encouraged to bring their cameras.

Camping and trail rules were established based on those suggested by the California Alpine Club. Already at the time nature conservation was a concern as hiking was becoming popular and trails were more crowded.

## Gallery



On top of Mount Beacon

Mt. Beacon casino ruins



Milk snake



Wild roses



Mountain azalea



Lupine





Lake George



fringed polygala



Colgate Lake



columbine





Shelving Rock Falls



yellow flower



Lady Slippers



On top of Bear Mtn., Conn.





Water lilly



Paddling on the Hudson



Great blue heron



Lake George islands



Group at Pole Hill Pond



falls in Sages Ravine

## ALBANY CHAPTER - OFFICERS and COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Chairperson	John Clarkson	adkclarkson@gmail.com
Vice Chairperson	Patrick Van Roey	pvanroey@verizon.net
Treasurer	Frank Kuwik	frankthek@hotmail.com
Recording Secretary	Gerry Magnes	gmagnes1@gmail.com
Corresponding Secretary	<b>Vacant</b>	
Members at Large	Carl Klinowski	cklinowski@nycap.rr.com
	James Slavin	jaslavin1@gmail.com
Finance	Patrick Van Roey	pvanroey@verizon.net
Audio Video	Jake Bortscheller	jbortsch@nycap.rr.com
Banquet	<b>Vacant</b>	
Cloudsplitter	Brad Schwebler	feketitsch@yahoo.com
	<b>Vacant</b>	
Conservation / Wilderness	<b>Vacant</b>	
Education/ Programs	<b>Vacant</b>	
Membership	Doug Rosenberry	ADK.albanymember@gmail.com
Nominations	Mark Janey	markjaney@gmail.com
Outings	Virginia Boyle Traver	virginiabt28@hotmail.com
Paddlers	Pamela Bentien	auntmayor@aol.com
	Alison Zoske	Saville1127@gmail.com
Refreshments	Ellen Luchsinger	kayakerL@yahoo.com
Trails	Gene Reilly	genehikes46@gmail.com
Ways and Means	Sue Jordan	suej9999@yahoo.com
	Martha Waldman	martha829r@aol.com
Webmaster	Brandon Finucan	brandon.finucan@gmail.com
Young Adults	Danielle Sanzone	daniellesnewsgmail.com
ADK Advisory Council Trustee	John Sheehan	jgsheehan01@yahoo.com
Representative to Board	John Gansfuss	jgansfuss@gmail.com