2013 Adopt-a-Wildland Report

Essex Chain of Lakes
This report is a compilation of year-end reports as submitted by participating chapters and individuals for 2013. Where possible we have attempted to maintain the format of the report as has been used in the past. Individuals submit reports in a format or manner they choose. We have maintained those formats as best as possible while making this compendium report. The individual reports submitted are a means of communicating observations and activities within each adopted area. They may express concerns or issues that the ADK may want to address.

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ADK Niagara Frontier Chapter

ALLEGANY STATE PARK BOUNDARY MARKING PROJECT
The Niagara Frontier Chapter completed a 2-year project in May 2013 that consisted of marking 18 miles of boundary between Allegany State Park (Salamanca NY) and the State of Pennsylvania. Working in conjunction with Allegany State Park and New York State Parks Recreation & Historic Preservation, the project began with concerns about PA companies drilling too close to, or perhaps inside, the park boundary. Neil Woodworth, John Gilewicz, and Cathy Pedler (then of the Allegheny Defense Project) organized our effort and participated in several of the original efforts to identify and clearly mark the Allegany Park boundary.

I took the lead over the remaining 18+ months, recruiting, organizing, and leading teams of volunteers in cutting brush & small trees, removing blowdown, and posting state park signs. We effectively built a trail that could be patrolled in order to better monitor activities, and sometimes spills, by PA drilling companies. With 4 work days arranged in April and May 2013, we were able to complete the Allegany Boundary Marking Project on May 22, with the final miles of boundary being accessed from the south via the North Country Trail.

Overall, more than 40 volunteers helped with the project. Each volunteer provided his or her own tools and transportation, with a drive time of up to 2 hours each way from Buffalo. We had some good days in the forest, with many interesting observations during our often strenuous work days on the border.

Finally, our team of 5 celebrated the completion by popping a small bottle of New York State sparkling wine that I carried up the mountain that day. In October, I was honored to accept ADK’s Conservation Award on behalf of our Chapter, at the President’s Dinner in Highland Falls NY.

Advocacy:

RADIATION LEAKS. The Niagara Frontier Chapter’s Conservation Committee is raising awareness of the danger presented by deteriorating storage facilities at the West Valley Demonstration Project, where radioactive waste is stored. A leak there would contaminate local waterways, and potentially send radioactive
material into Lake Erie – a source of drinking water for millions of people in the US and Canada.

FRACKING. The NFC Conservation Committee (co-chairs Art Klein and Jay Wopperer) continued their work to permanently ban high-volume horizontal hydrofracking in New York State, and to ban the processing of frack waste at local water treatment plants. Members of our chapter attended public meetings and wrote letters to legislators.

ESSEX CHAIN & HUDSON HEADWATERS
NFC members attended meetings in Rochester and Tupper Lake to speak in favor of a Wilderness designation for the former Finch-Pruyn properties in the Newcomb-Indian Lake region. In late October, I paddled and photographed the Essex Chain of Lakes with fellow chapter member Bruce Lockwood.

GREAT LAKES – LAKE ERIE
The NFC Conservation Committee is planning a 1-day public seminar on April 5 to educate concerned citizens about the ecological problems that Lake Erie is facing, including pollution, algae blooms, and invasive species.

Bob Van Hise
Director, Niagara Frontier Chapter
Buffalo NY
The following is a summary and description of a paddle from Boomhower Road on Upper Chateaugay Lake, into the South Inlet, and then up the Middle Kiln Brook to the Springs. Keith Trombly, Ken Emery, Mary Holmes and dog, and Sue Smith made this trip on a perfect, sunny weekend. Our plan was to paddle to the campsite before the bridge to Hunter’s Home Camp set up our campsite and eat lunch and then do the paddle to the Springs and back to the campsite before dark. We then planned to paddle out the next day.

The winds can whip up around 10 am on Chateaugy Lake. We had our canoes and gear in the water by about 9:45 and the wind from the NW proved to be a problem for the two Hornbeck solo paddlers. Keith and I were tandem paddling an Old Town Tripper (a 17 ft Royalex) and we had no trouble. After entering the extensive marshland we had to carefully follow the bend of the grasses in the water to find the main channel. There are many false channels. As one enters the marsh rushes and then cattails and yellow water lilies are the prominent vegetation. Then these give way to Sweet gale, Alders, Joe Pye weed and native flowers. There are beaver sign everywhere from muddy areas to the water, dams, and lodges. We encountered 5 beaver dams before we reached our campsite. The water level was good, the water clear and cold and having a good current. The wind continued to impede our progress, so that wind and current made us work hard on our paddle. (See GPS Google maps from Keith Trombly for placement of beaver dams) We arrived at the campsite (on the left, this is the site that can be accessed from the ROW for Hunter’s Home through the state land) at about noon. After setting up tents and eating lunch, we were back on the water by 12:45. The high water this year made the paddle in this area much easier as there was always a way to paddle. We never had to get out of the boats and drag them. In other years we had to do that. We encountered 6 more beaver dams before we reach the Springs. We saw a moose in the stream and a baby beaver. We also saw bald eagles and ospreys. Many cedar waxwings and ducks.

We arrived at the Springs about 4 pm. We encountered a small last beaver dam before entering this large open water. At least a large as a football field the open water was about 6 inches deep and covered at least 6 inches of loose muck covered by green algae and spots of pink (algae that thrives in iron rich areas). The NW side of this opening was a hill with large evergreens. The SE side was open and marshy. We were able to climb onto the treed bank, but the water was too shallow to gain the marshy area. Our friend, Ken Humiston, who is from the area says there are more springs near the marsh and there used to be a cabin there. The Springs is near the Springs hunting camp that can be accessed from a road off the wolf Pond Road. That road and the hunting camp are on limited easement lands and we could not get permission to use that route. The water at the Springs is noticeably colder that the stream water. Overhead many cedar waxwings were working the air.
I have nothing new to report on the parcel of Wild Forest called Panther Hill. I would like to report that the full easement land to the NW of this parcel was heavily logged this year. This logging has opened up some really nice views of Chateaugay Lake. The Bigelow Road that leads to this area has recently been electrified and there are several permanent dwellings along the road. Without this conservation easement there would surely be houses here. The UMP for this area was started over 1 ½ years ago. Shatagee Woods sent written comments to the Forester Dan Levy about our desire to have a trail on Panther Hill. The top of this hill has significant ledges that are used for rock climbing and has beautiful views of Upper Chateaugay Lake. This is a Summer Camp area that is hungry for some trails. The only marked trail in the area is Lyon Mountain. Hopefully the UMP will make some forward progress. There has never been a UMP for the Chazy Highlands.

Susan Smith
Shatagee Woods ADK
In keeping with our tradition of trail work in the Ha-de-ron-dah, the Iroquois Chapter had its trail day on the last Saturday of April 2013. This date has become our default trail day and for the past few years has proved great for trail work, with comfortable temperatures and most importantly, no bugs.

The crew of 9 met at the Scusa parking lot on Rte. 28 and divided into 2 groups to brush out the Browns Tract Trail, one group starting in Thendara and the other behind Okara Lakes. Three hours proved adequate to the task, and after lunch we headed to Nelson Lake to clear the trail along the Middle Branch. As many of you may know, Nelson Lake is the new owner of a lean-to, courtesy of the Lean2Rescue crew. As luck would have it, the very same crew happened to be at Nelson Lake putting together and placing the outhouse. Hats off to Paul DeLucia and his crew for the amazing work they've done throughout the Adirondacks. They certainly represent the pinnacle of what volunteerism can achieve.

That said, our trip to Nelson Lake was to reconnoiter for a later-season (post bugs) trail workday on the trail between Nelson Lake and Remsen Falls. My DEC contact suggested it needed work and it probably hadn't seen any since our chapter workday 5 years ago. Some of you may realize that Nelson Lake is not in the Ha-de-ron-dah Wilderness, but rather the Black River Wild Forrest. While focusing on the Ha-de-ron-dah for our trail work, if the DEC has requests for trail work in adjacent areas we are receptive to do so. In light of the recent issue of the DEC not covering volunteer workers under Workman's Comp, each of our volunteers submits a volunteer application along with a form of identification and is covered for 1 year.

During September various crews did work on several areas of trail around Nelson Lake. At the DEC's request one crew rerouted the trail from the railroad tracks away from the Middle Branch of the Moose and along the ridgeline up above the river. This involved brushing, clearing, and marking an old, overgrown trail. Several other crews worked on the section of the #78 trail from the trail junction east of Nelson Lake up to the confluence of the Middle and South Branches of the Moose. Given that the distance from the Nelson Lake parking lot to Remsen Falls is 9 miles one-way, we employed mt. bikes, and canoe to expedite travel. Our spring trail day in 2014 will involve finishing this trail.

Carl Anderson
Iroquois Chapter Trail Stewardship
Iroquois Chapter work crew at Nelson Falls on the Middle Branch of the Moose 4/27/13.
from left: Dave Kuhn, Norm Landis, Mike O'Donnell, Karen Hoffman, Paul Sirtoli, Mike "Axe-Man" McEarney, Gail Hoffman, Bob Huchins
Pharaoh Wilderness Area
Adopted by Glens Falls-Saratoga Chapter
Jim Schneider, Wilderness Chair
Wild Lands Report 2013

My visits this past year took place:
- January 1
- April 20
- October 27

This year’s efforts focused on Pharaoh Lake lean-to clean up. The January trip was simply a ski-in to have a look around and make sure things were still in good shape from the previous autumn. There is nothing of significance to report from that trip.

The April trip on the other hand was another story. I visited the 3 lean-tos on the east side of the lake. With my backpacking pack stuffed with trash and conductor trash bags hanging from all lash points, I still could not haul all the trash.

October’s trip was again different. Every lean-to was perfectly clean.

Why were the April and October trips so vastly different?

During the summer the Pharaoh Wilderness Area benefits from the presence of a NYSDEC Assistant Forest Ranger and a Backcountry Steward. I know this because I have met them on the trail and I have read their entries in the lean-to registers. As well, the lean-to adopters are active in maintaining their lean-tos during the summer months. So, what happens during the early to mid-spring season?

Two things occur at the same time. First, there is a different type of visitor during this time. People come in to fish – the fishing is very good after ice-out. I have seen all sorts of bizarre behavior. For example, heavy Radisson canoes are hauled in from Mill Brook necessitating multiple trips back and forth. Pillows and bedding, cases of bottled water (carried to a lake?), cases of beer, cartons full of liquor, and massive quantities of packaged and processed food are shuttled the 2.5 miles each way reminding me of the climb up the Chilkoot Pass during the Klondike Gold Rush in 1898.

During the April 20 visit there was a party camped on the northeast shore of Whortleberry Pond. I abandoned my planned walk around the pond due to gunfire. Loud music and liquor in large quantities greeted me at lean-to #1.

This leads me to my second point with regards to this time of year at Pharaoh Wilderness Area. There is essentially a very limited DEC presence. The Forest Ranger assigned to this area has such a
large territory to patrol; it is not possible for him to have a presence. He is assisted in the summer by the Assistant Forest Ranger and the Backcountry Steward, but these are seasonal positions.

I continue to recommend that more resources be available to this area during the early to mid-spring, if only on an occasional basis. The Mill Brook entrance near Brant Lake is one of first Adirondack wilderness areas encountered as one drives northbound on I-87. As well, it is a flat walk of 2.5 miles to the lake shore. This ease of access attracts all types of backcountry users including those that want to party in the woods and those that have a total disregard for anything other than their own self-interest which may include liquor and weapons. These early spring visitors exhibiting selfish behaviors are responsible for the trash left behind at the lean-tos, leave me and other caring individuals to clean up their messes.
To: David Pisaneschi, chair of ADK’s Conservation Committee  
Scott Healy, Supervising Forester, Region 6  
Wes Lampman, ADK Director of Field Programs  

From: Sigi Schwinge, steward and coordinator of PLWA work hikes  

Re: Pigeon Lake Wilderness Area Annual 2013 Report, incl. West Mtn. Trail  

Date: 12/30/2013  

Chapter (ADK-ON) Contacts:  
1. Sigi Schwinge is ADK-ON’s PLWA contact person and West Mtn. steward, sigischwinge@aol.com, 212 Tilden Dr. E. Syracuse, NY 13057-1630  
2. Kathy Disque is Norridgewock Trail Steward, kathydisque@yahoo.com  
3. Tony Rodriguez is ADK-ON Trails Chair, boricua1037@verizon.net  

Overview: To give our adopted PLWA a high profile with the chapter membership, we include articles in our local newspaper and our website. Work hikes are either listed in our outing schedule, or I arrange them on short notice with our Wednesday hiking group.  

West Mountain Trail  

May 19, 2013 - 12 ADK-ON volunteers (78 work hrs., 6 hrs. driving in 3 cars) came to the annual clearing of the 5.7 miles trail from Uncas Rd. to the summit with a 2-man saw, handsaws, loppers, and a drainage tool.  

Trail condition is generally good to very good, bridges and signage is good.  

Shallow Lake Trail: with 12 people I could send one crew of 4 to this trail. We cleared all blowdown to Beaver Creek and cut all but one large tree trunk at the beginning of the trail. Two men were able to cross Beaver Creek which is flooded with deep water on both sides of the good bridge (beaver activity upstream, I suppose) and cleared a bit more. Ranger Miller informed me that he cleared the rest of the trail and cut the large trunk. The trail is very popular with campers from Brown Tract Pond Campground, and visitors to Raquette Lake. Therefore the bridge needs to be extended on both sides.  

Norridgewock Trail  

Steward Kathy Disque led 4 work hikes clearing different sections of the 7.6 miles trail:  

7/27 – 9 people cleared 2 miles from Oswego Pond outlet north, and re-opened the old trail route at Oswego Pond outlet which had been closed due to beaver flooding.
8/7 – 1 person cleared a section on the northern half of the trail.

8/31 – 2 people also cleared brush on the northern part.

9/14 – 2 volunteers cut blow-down 1.5 miles from the south end to Oswego Pond, while 10 hikers hiked the whole trail to Beaver River.

**PLWA from Big Moose/Higby Rd.**

7/7 – 7 people cleared (we always work with a 2-man-saw, handsaws and loppers) a loop starting at Windfall Pond trailhead, worked the Cascade Lake connector trail and the Chain Ponds Trail. Then we cleared everything coming back on the Queer Lake Trail. Condition is now very good overall, but quite wet in places, signage is good, but the Chain Ponds trail color does not conform with the big wood trailhead sign. The Lean2Rescue group later replaced 2 bridges near the beginning of the trail. (work hrs. 55.5, driving time 5 hrs in 3 cars).

9/7 – 9 people cleared from the Higby Rd. trailhead to Chub pond and the ¼ mile to Chub Pond Inlet. Extensive side cutting was done in the Constable Pond area. Trail is now in good condition, but the broken 2-plank bridge over the pond inlet needs replacing. Branches and small trees thrown helter-skelter widened the wet area considerably below the beaver dam. (54 work hrs., 4.5 hrs. driving in 2 cars).

10/9 – 4 people hiked in from Higby Rd. to the Chub Pond turn-off (cleared a month before) and worked from there to the Constable Creek crossing. This section has not been cleared in a few years, and we had lots to do. Bridges are a problem here: the second one after the turn-off is only attached with a rope at the east end and turned sideways; it needs to be reattached. The third creek needs a bridge. We did not have time to cross Constable Creek, but beaver activity has rearranged the landscape there and the trail reshaped to be able to cross. This is work for a professional crew. (30 work hrs., 5 hrs driving time).
Trail Maintenance along the Raquette River in 2013 – ADK Laurentian Chapter

John Barron, Chair (until 12/31/2013)  johnbarron@sympatico.ca or (613) 828-2296

John Omohundro, Vice Chair Conservation  omohunjt@northnet.org or (315) 265-8365

The Laurentian Chapter is the primary maintainer of two trail systems running along the Raquette River in St. Lawrence County: Stone Valley, located between Hannawa Falls and Colton; and the Red Sandstone Trail, located between Hannawa Falls and Potsdam. John Omohundro of Hannawa Falls, who is Vice Chair, Conservation of the Laurentian Chapter, is our contact person on the Raquette River Advisory Council, which provides access and funding for recreational activity along the Raquette as a condition of the power generation license of the largest landowner, Brookfield Renewable Power, and on the Stone Valley Cooperative Recreational Area, an umbrella organization of landowners and groups with an interest in the area.

Stone Valley

The Stone Valley Trail Coordinator, who plans and manages the trail network in conjunction with the landowners (Brookfield Renewable Power, St Lawrence County, and the Town of Colton), is Mark Simon of the Laurentian Chapter and SUNY Potsdam’s Wilderness Education program. All year long Mark and a few of his colleagues carry out minor repairs, inspect the trail system, and plan a maintenance blitz in October. This year’s October work weekend involved more than fifty students from area colleges and a number of local residents, guided by a handful of Mark’s crew leaders.

Saturday morning, several crews from SUNY Potsdam tackled a stretch of trail with an extremely steep sideways slope toward the fast-moving, powerful Raquette some fifty feet below, a safety hazard that was compounded by many slippery tree roots crossing the trail. The crews broke up and removed many of the roots using pulaskis, placed large tree trunks on the downhill side to provide a base; and filled in the trail with gravel, sand, and earth. After several hours’ work, the treacherous slant was replaced by level, high-quality trail.

Saturday afternoon the focus shifted to the south end of the trail near the Colton fire station. Some students moved down the trail rectifying single-point or short-stretch problems on the trail, including widening the trail where it ran along the side of a steep embankment and creating drainage channels to prevent pooling of water on the trail. One crew refurbished a long, low-level bog bridge that crosses a low point of the trail.

Other crews were out simultaneously working on other projects. A few students and area residents cleaned up trash along the Lenny Road. A crew from SUNY Canton joined Ben Yandeau in continuing a summer of work that has gone into constructing a new mountain bike
trail on County land adjacent Stone Valley. Bob Dowman and a crew from the St Lawrence Mountain Bike Association carried out maintenance of a mountain bike trail on The Ledges, an area high above the river on the east side of the Lenny Road.

Sunday’s activities focused on general maintenance, including removal of unwanted brush from the sides of trails in some places, and in other places the deliberate placement of brush to conceal unwanted paths and discourage access that would cause erosion.
Red Sandstone Trail

The Red Sandstone trail is a 3.5-mile foot trail on the west side of the Raquette River in St. Lawrence County, north of the Blue Line. The Laurentian Chapter of ADK promoted, designed, built, and maintains this trail, established in 2003. In 2013 the trail had two construction days for building steps into a gulch, making c. 20 hours total work. It had two days of help from a crew of Youth Conservation Corps, doing side cutting, for 24 hours total work. It had c. 4 days of inspection and light work by the trail coordinators, totaling c. 10 hours work. Plans for 2014 include replacement of some old mud bridges and additional gulch step-building. John Omohundro is Red Sandstone Trail Coordinator.
ADK – ALBANY CHAPTER
TRAIL / LEAN-TO STEWARD WORK REPORT

Trail Section: Eleventh Mountain Trail; Rt.8 Trailhead to Siamese Ponds - Siamese Ponds Wilderness

Date: August 3, 2013

ADOPTERS: David Pisaneschi
Rosemary Daley
180 South Main Ave
Albany, NY 12208
(518) 459 – 5969
dpisanes@nycap.rr.com

ADK TRAIL CREW
David Pisaneschi
Jay Flavin
James Harrison (DEC)

Date Work Performed: August 3, 2013
CHAPTER: Albany (ADK)

DETAILS OF WORK PERFORMED: The trail from the lean-to to the ponds was brushed out and we checked on the condition of the lean-to. We also cleared two blow downs on the section of the trail from the lean-to to the trailhead on our way out.

CONDITION OF TRAIL / LEAN-TO.

Trail: There were several trees down along the entire trail which require chainsaw work. There are also many wet areas throughout the trail. I’m sure that the wet summer has not helped.

Lean – to: The picnic table was not there, probably used for firewood. The privy at the lean-to is full and needs to be moved. The door is missing and there’s a hole on the back wall. It looks like bear damage.

Trash on the trail, lean –to and parking lot was minimal.
The Taconic Crest Trail

Adopted by the Taconic Hiking Club and Members of the Adirondack Mountain Club

Beginning in the late 1940’s, the Taconic Hiking Club (THC) began developing the Taconic Crest Trail (TCT). It is now over 35 miles in length and runs northward from Route 20 near Pittsfield, Massachusetts to Route 346 near Petersburg, New York. The club continues to maintain the TCT and its many access trails with the assistance of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and members of the Albany and Schenectady chapters of the Adirondack Mountain Club.

As part of its effort to encourage and record trail use, the club collects the logs from trail registers, reviews them, and forwards the information to the DEC. What those trail logs reveal is a trail appreciated by hikers from near and afar. These include day hikers, thru hikers, local Scout troops and geocachers. The TCT has even drawn visitors from Toronto, Hawaii, Great Britain, and Central and South America.

The club also promotes responsible use of the trail through its biennial “End-to-End Challenge,” which includes the original 29 miles of the trail. The Massachusetts Chapter of the Cystic Fibrosis Society held a similar event in 2013, which covered 25 miles of the northern part of the trail. It plans to do the same in 2014.

The THC maintains the TCT by periodically scheduling trail work throughout the year, and club members report trail conditions to the Trail Coordinator. Trail work includes:

- removing downed trees
- clearing brush
- replacing signs
- rerouting the trail due to damage by ATVs and 4X4 trucks
- restore/install water bars to mitigate erosion

Future club projects include:

- remapping the trail and updating the trail guidebook
- installing more memorial benches in honor of deceased club members
- digging wells at some of the muddier sites on the trail
- erecting foot bridges similar to those used on the Long Path at Partridge Run

The most significant threat to the trail continues to be damage from ATVs and 4x4 trucks. ATVs have repeatedly destroyed foot bridges and gouged out portions of the Route 346 section of the trail. However, the most destructive single event in the TCT's history occurred in March, 2012, when two four-wheel drive trucks rutted the trail for more than a mile. As a result the trail had to be rerouted, and the TCT lost one of its major attractions: the glorious views from Rounds Mountain.
The most effective way to prevent such damage is to have more hikers on the trail. Their presence tends to dissuade violators, and they can report damage so that this wonderful trail can be maintained for posterity.

Respectfully submitted,

Colin Campbell and Cliff Prewencki