
NORTH WOODS NEWS

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH WOODS
CHAPTER OF THE ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN CLUB

From our Chapter Chair

Happy New Year!

I hope everyone had a wonderful Holiday Season! I won't dwell on 2022, other than to say that it was a challenging and trying year for some. As an organization there was a lot of uncertainty and change within the ADK. Nonetheless, let's double down, get out and exercise, stay active, and enjoy family and friends and our beautiful mountains.

I want to thank the Chapter officers and trip leaders for the dedication and work you put into the Chapter this past year. I and the members are lucky to have all of you!

Finally I'd like to wish everyone a Happy, Healthy and Safe 2023!

Tom



CHAPTER OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Chair

Tom Donavon

Vice Chair

John Omohundro

Secretary

Susan Omohundro

Treasurer

Cat Hadlow

Advisor

open

Outings

Carol Edmonds

Conservation

Leslie Gifford

Membership

open

Newsletter

Linda Roesner

Communications

Jim Edmonds

Programs

Marilyn Gillespie

ANNOUNCEMENTS

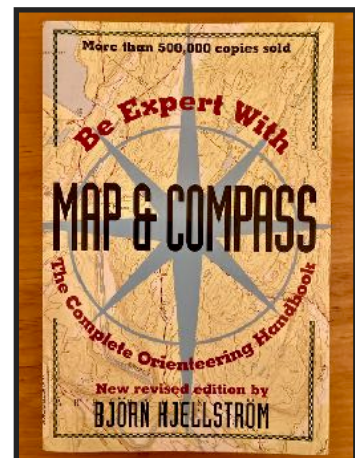
CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

The positions of NW Chapter Advisor and NW Membership Chair are open.

If you are interested in serving in either capacity, please contact Tom Donavon:
tommyjames464@gmail.com

Adirondack Guide Sheila Young of Tupper Lake offered a class on map and compass to chapter members in October 2022. After class she donated a copy of Björn Kjellström's *Be Expert with Map & Compass* to circulate among chapter members. The text starts by assuming no knowledge and builds to sophisticated use.

To borrow this book, contact John Omohundro:
omohunjt@northnet.org



Brandreth Park, Part 2

By The History Guy

In the last newsletter (Q4, 2022), I reported that after World War II the Brandreth Park families had finally installed telephone service and, with the railroad having been shut down, re-legitimized an old road for 12-month access. In this final installment of their history of their park, as reported in *Brandreth: A History of Brandreth Park, 1851-2010*, we bring the adventure of this unusual tract of Adirondacks up to date.

Heretofore the legal arrangements among descendants of founder Benjamin Brandreth were fairly informal. By 1950, the urban professionals in the group saw to the creation of a more formal Brandreth Lake Association. That created 120 shares, one to a family, with each share allowed a camp.

Since its creation, the Park had always aspired to earn money from its lands. Logging began in 1912, under the Brandreth Lake Lumber and Improvement Company. The association deeded most of its land to the BLLIC, which built a pulp and sawmill near Brandreth railroad station in 1925. It hired contractors to remove timber. At times there were 200 men at work, with six to eight camps operating at a time. Temporary rails were installed, and the logs loaded on a Linn tractor, a kind of tugboat of the rails. Alternatively a truck carried logs out the road to Whitney Park or Raquette Lake.

However, without a river to run the harvest, the transportation costs of removing logs from this isolated estate proved insurmountable. The BLLIC was insolvent by 1954, so the association sold off parcels to Syracuse University and two of the member families, leaving itself with just under 10,000 acres from the original 24,000.

Recreation by the camp families, of course, was the primary reason for the park. They'd been stocking the lakes since 1905 with salmon, trout, smelt, lake whitefish and black bass. They maintained a dozen hunting camps throughout the park. The "shingle shanties" that gave their name to the brook were originally shacks for making shingles, but eventually doubled as hunting camps. Logging had increased the populations of deer, bear, and coyotes, but as logging diminished, forest cover returned and reduced such game.

The park constantly adjusted to stay viable. In the 1970s a group of park members bought back the peripheral forest land the association had sold to Syracuse University and soon sold much of it to International Paper. IP sold it to the Nature Conservancy in 2001, which sold it to the Sweetwater Trust, which in 2007 sold it to Friends of Thayer Lake, a corporation made up mostly of Brandreth Park members. The Friends in turn leased the acreage the next year to the nonprofit Shingle Shanty Preserve and Research Station for ecological studies, but retained the access rights. Today the Shingle Shanty research station is still in operation, managed by an acquaintance of mine—perhaps the chapter should arrange a visit?

In 1991 the massive vision for the park in the 21st century was published under the first Governor Cuomo, creating widespread anxiety among private estates like Brandreth because of loose talk of "eminent domain." In response, the Brandreth Park co-founded the Adirondack Landowners Association, a lobbying group to protect private property from the excesses of wilderness advocates.

And as we see from its suit to keep paddlers like Phil Brown off its streams, the park still is very sensitive to incursion. On the other hand, the park families have been longtime members of Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks and, presumably, its descendant, Protect The Adirondacks.



Brandreth Park members celebrate their sesquicentennial in 2001 with a guideboat regatta.
From Brandreth: *A History of Brandreth Park*.

Typically for family enterprises, continuity can pose a challenge. In this case, the population of members began to increase faster each generation. Twenty-five adults shared the place in 1949, but 116 shared it in 2001. In 1990 there were 28 camps, focused on Brandreth Lake. The members conducted a survey and concluded that 15 more could be added to the shore. In 1998 it purchased a professional long term plan, approved by the APA in 2009, which allows 102 more sites in the park. It appears that the Brandreth Park, the oldest family park in the Adirondacks, can expect to survive a good deal longer.



Conservation Report

By Leslie Gifford, Conservation Chair

This quarter’s conservation report largely summarizes information you may already have heard. I wrote it shortly after reading the paper mentioned below. Since then, I have seen several references to its conclusions and to discussions with its authors, including an online discussion with Curt Stager that I attended on October 27th. Clearly it is an issue that resonates with many Adirondack residents.

Curt Stager, Brendan Wiltse, and Skylar Murphy of Paul Smiths and the Adirondack Watershed Institute have authored a paper titled “Once and future changes in climate and phenology within the Adirondacks uplands.” Google defines “phenology” as “the study of cyclic and seasonal natural phenomena, especially in relation to climate and plant and animal life.”

The authors used climate data, information on lake temperatures and ice cover, and 30 years of data on seasonal changes, like plant flowering times and bird arrivals, some of which was collected by Paul Smiths students. For instance, ice on Lower Saint Regis Lake now thaws about one week earlier, on average, than it did in 1909, and it freezes later. The Adirondacks are warming about 0.14-degrees Celsius per decade, which is much higher than the 0.09-degree global average. Those data can be used to determine what the Adirondacks might look like by 2100 if global fossil fuel emissions continue on their current path.

Winters are predicted to become milder and shorter by 2100, from 16-17 weeks to 14-15 weeks. Climate changes could cause critical interspecies relationships to be disrupted and the broad ecology of the region could be affected. The flowering times of our favorite plants, like trillium in the spring, could happen up to three weeks earlier, and be out of synch with the arrival time of their pollinators. And the early spring flowers would be affected if their flowering time became out of synch with the time the overhead trees leafed out, robbing the flowers of their needed sunshine.

It is not only plants and animals that will be affected by long-term warming of the Adirondacks. Winter sports will slowly disappear, changing the human experience here. Economically and culturally important winter activities such as ice-fishing, snowmobiling, and skiing depend on snow and frozen water. Frozen ground makes it easier for timber-harvesting equipment to move in forests, so that industry would be affected. And the Adirondacks could be inundated with climate refugees who move north to escape the hot temperatures farther south.

This paints a dismal picture. Hopefully the world at large can come together to mitigate climate change before things become so dire.



Annual Meeting of the North Woods Chapter: 11/5/2022. Minutes

The meeting was held at 10:00 a.m., on Zoom. In attendance: Tom Donavon, Chair; John Omohundro, Vice-chair; Susan Omohundro, Secretary; Carol Edmonds, Outings chair; Jim Edmonds, Publisher; Linda Roesner, *North Woods News* Editor; Marilyn Gillespie, Potluck/Programs Chair, and Leslie Gifford, Conservation Chair. Also chapter members Frank and Lethe Lescinsky, Warren Gifford, Sheila Young, and Diana Webster.

Tom Donovan reported that the positions of Advisor and Membership Chair are still open. He will approach Dave Harvey about the Advisor position. A call for volunteers will be put in the next newsletter.

It was moved and seconded that Sue Omohundro be elected Secretary for 2023-24; approved unanimously. It was moved and seconded that Tammy (“Cat”) Hadlow be elected Treasurer for 2023-24; approved unanimously.

Marilyn Gillespie wishes to retire from the Potluck/Programs position as of January. She was thanked for her service. Tom may be able to line up speakers from ADK for the winter months.

The 2023 budget was discussed. The chapter will continue to draw down its bank account, now about \$5,000. We do not expect to receive money from ADK until it is gone. It was acknowledged that the budget is only an approximation for next year’s expenditures; for example, the annual church rental cost is \$700, not \$1200. We estimated spending \$1,900 next year, but we may spend less. A spreadsheet detailing the budget is available for viewing by contacting the Secretary.

Tom reported on work at ADK’s Cascade Ski Center. The club will groom the trails and offer free skiing to club members this winter. He also reported that the Lake Placid Chapter has been dissolved. We may be able to absorb its members to improve participation in chapter programs, but not its money.

The meeting adjourned at 10:50.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Omohundro, Secretary



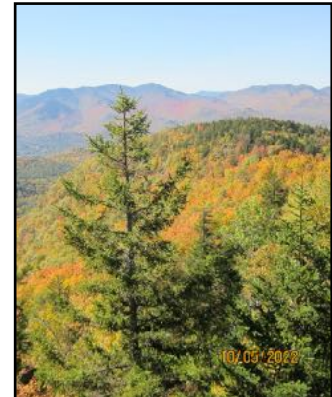
TRIP REPORTS — Written by the Leaders of last quarter's Chapter Outings

October 3, Paddle: Black Pond — Leader: Elisabeth Craven

Nice day if a little chilly. We took a leisurely paddle around the pond and had lunch in a sunny spot near the lean-to closest to the put-in. Two loons were spotted: an adult and a juvenile. Pleasant way to spend time with like-minded people.

October 5, Hike: The Crows — Leader: Tom Donavon

Perfect Fall day! Spotted cars and started hike on Hurricane Road. Climbed up Little Crow to Big Crow where we had lunch. Many good spots to do some leaf peeping. Great day and Great Company. Photos by Tom Donavon



October 6, Paddle: Lake Lila — Leader: Linda Roesner

The beginning of this trip is always a challenge: first, manipulating one's car through the potholes and rocks on the Lake Lila access road (which, however, had seen some modest improvements), then the carry to the lake, about 1/3 mile over large rocks and roots. But all 8 paddlers reached the lovely beach at the eastern shore of this Adirondack gem without incident and we launched onto a glass-like surface. The reflections on the water of the autumn colors were stunning. We enjoyed the absence of a breeze for the entire morning as we paddled clockwise around the lake, stopping on the white-sand beach near site 16 to look for moose tracks. And we found them! We also watched a Bald Eagle leisurely surveying



it's territory. We had hoped to lunch at site 16, but it was occupied, so, after some discussion, we headed directly across this part of the lake and lunched in warm sunshine on the rocks and beach at site 19. A light breeze struck up after lunch as we headed toward the Beaver River. Here the group split up: some to paddle on the river, some to climb Mount Frederica, which was clothed in peak fall color. After enjoying the scenery on the river, the main group stopped for a snack on the shore where the great camp Nehasane had stood. The site of Nehasane is now—more than 40 years since the buildings were torn down—almost completely returned to nature. Aided by a west wind, we sailed back to our starting point and tackled the uphill carry to the parking area. It was a bit more difficult than the carry down to the lake, but we all made it! A beautiful paddle. We had the lake almost entirely to ourselves.
Photos by Em Ellithorpe



October 15, Map and Compass: Class and Field Practice — Leaders: Sheila Young and John Omohundro

Sheila Young, chapter member and experienced Adirondack Guide, was our instructor. Members of both the Laurentian and North Woods chapters convened at Tupper Lake Library to learn to read the mountains of information on a topographic map and to use our compasses on that map to navigate “on paper.” We then repaired to the Woodsman’s Park for a brief lunch and lawn exercises taking accurate bearings (the operant word there is “accurate”). For our final exam, Sheila led us to the Fernow Nature Trail on Rte 30, where we bushwhacked through quite a mess, trying to maintain our bearing (and our good dispositions). No one was lost, and we learned scads today, thanks to our fine teacher. Now it’s up to us to remember it.

Photos by John Omohundro



October 19, Hike: Otis Mountain — Leaders: John and Susan Omohundro

This funky 1960s ex-ski mountain has lots of scenery and a complex network of bike trails maintained by BETA. At the base and the top of the old runs remain machinery and structures associated with the ski era, as well as bandstands for the mini-Woodstock music festivals it still hosts.

Away from the human-built, we were impressed by the massive white pines and the numerous cedar trees. It took all of us sometimes to pathfind at the many leaf-obscured junctions. High points included finding heron nests at the marsh and admiring the vista from the cliffs at “California.” Color was still good at this lower elevation near Elizabethtown.

Photos by Jerry Gnann



October 29, Paddle: Route of the Seven Carries — Leader: Jerry Gnann

It was a crisp morning but it was clear and calm. A perfect late-season paddle. Our group of 4 paddlers headed out onto Little Clear Pond and quickly encountered a group of 4 or 5 loons. The paddling on the calm water was easy and the sun felt warm, so we were not anxious to get to the first and longest of the six carries and I think we held back a bit to make it last longer. The carries split up the water sections nicely, but it was always a relief to set the boats down. It was a perfect day and it was questionable whether we were happy to see the Paul Smiths campus come into view, or if we wanted the day to last. The trip ended with hopes to get in another paddle like this before calling it quits for the season.

Photos by Jerry Gnann



November 2, Hike: Castle Rock — Leader: Jerry Gnann

The day started a bit overcast and foggy worrying us a bit, but it improved rapidly giving us a calm, beautiful, warm early November day. The thick coat of leaves on the ground served to hide some of the worst of the mud, so we hoped for the best with each step. This was a pleasant hike with a tremendous view

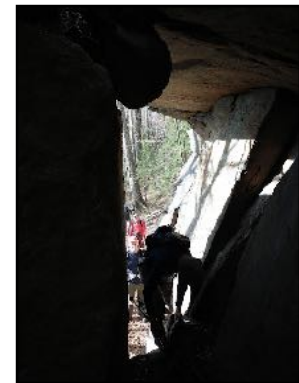


of Blue Mountain Lake from the top.



The views just improved as we stopped for a leisurely lunch. On the way down we did some exploring in the caves underneath, where the group learned not necessarily to believe everything their

leader told them. Does that cave actually come out the other side? A side trip on the way down brought us to the edge of the lake for a view across the placid water. Along the trail we encountered some interesting, man-made objects. One appeared to be an old stone cistern and another was labeled as earthquake monitoring equipment. All in all, an enjoyable hike. One worth repeating.



Photos by Jenn Grisi, Jerry Gnann, and Linda Roesner

November 8, Hike: Poke-O-Moonshine Mountain — Leader: Elisabeth Craven

A sunny, not-a-cloud-in-the-sky, beautiful day to climb to the fire tower. Expansive view over Lake Champlain and the Vermont mountains as well as the Champlain Valley. We rendezvoused on the summit for lunch with a couple who had taken the steeper, shorter trail from the old campground. The main group hiked the “Ranger Trail”.

Photos by Gerry Gnann



November 10, Hike: Roostercomb Mountain — Leader: Tom Donavon

Beautiful day! Low 60's partly cloudy. Very interesting trail. Lots of rock formations, varieties of trees. Trail is nice. Lots of switchbacks. Fine views from the summit. Great hike and great company!

Photos by Tom Donavon



November 15, Walk: Bloomingdale Bog — Leader: Patty Troischt

Eleven of us walked 4 miles out and back on a beautiful but cold morning. Lots of evidence of beaver activity. Managed to feed some chickadees and nuthatches. Great views of Whiteface Mountain. Some of the group stopped at Blue Line Brew Pub for lunch afterwards. Good food and company.

Photos by Jerry Gnann



November 19, Hike: Rattlesnake Mountain — Leaders: John & Susan Omohundro

Rattlesnake Mountain surely got its name from the reptile, but none were in evidence today; a couple inches of wet snow were on the ground. The first half of this charming trail is a rocky ancient road, so we didn't bother with spikes, and then, when we turned off onto the steeper summit trail, we were too lazy to don them, so we slithered to the two fine lookouts at the top. Willsboro Bay spread out blue before us, and we could see Burlington in the distance. We had to lurk behind a large erratic to avoid the wind during lunch, and we wisely chose to wear spikes on the descent. Being a Saturday, even though it was shoulder season, we encountered three other parties going up. Photo by John Omohundro



November 29, Hike: Trombley Landing — Leader: Carol Edmonds

The date for this hike had to be changed because of a bad-weather forecast, but luckily, most people were able to come anyway. It turned out to be a very pleasant day and an easy walk into the Trombley Landing lean-to on the Raquette River. The trail was muddy in places, but otherwise the footing was fine. Once at the lean-to we had a leisurely lunch with discussion of chapter issues. The river was amazingly calm and quiet with just a tiny bit of skim ice near the shore. One the way back we explored a side trail which probably once led to a campsite, but is now impassible due to a collapsed bridge. The walk out was otherwise uneventful. We were all grateful for a few quiet hours in the woods. Photos by Jerry Gnann

Photos by Jerry Gnann



December 14, Hike/Bushwhack: Little Seymour — Leader: Tom Donavon

We Started the hike at the Leader's house, hiking the trail on his sister's property out to Averyville Road, where we crossed over to the Little Seymour trailhead, which begins on private property. The trail is relatively flat for about ¾ mile. Then the elevation gradually rises before becoming steep for the last third of the hike. Nice views of Algonquin, Marcy, Street and Nye, the Chubb river and the ski jumps. A fine brisk day and, as always, good company.

Photos by Jenn Grisi and Jerry Gnann





December 22, Hike/Cookout: Copperas Pond — Leader: Carol Edmonds

We were fortunate that this outing was scheduled just before the big melt. As it was, snowshoes were necessary on the trail. We were split into two groups. Two individuals (both licensed guides) were to tackle the short steep trail, while the rest of us would take the longer, more scenic approach and we would all meet at the lean-to for lunch. Those on the short trail had to contend with unbroken trail conditions. However, their big problem was lack of adequate trail markings.

Eventually they realized they were not going in the right direction and followed their tracks back to the trailhead.

The rest of us were treated to a well-marked, broken-out trail. We stopped to admire Owens Pond and, later, the view of Whiteface from the first outlook over Copperas Pond. Once at the lean-to, we quickly got a fire started and roasted hot dogs and marshmallows followed by a dessert treat brought along by one of us. It was not windy

and the temperature was just about perfect for a hike. Our trip out was uneventful except for the climb by one of the bolder members of our group to the top of the huge glacial erratic that is topped by an equally large tree. This provided a perfect photo-op for the rest of us.

Photos by Jerry Gnann



The Anchor

The erratic on the hill past the shed,
Festooned with lichens, green, violet, and red,
Settled deep in the earth,
A thick girdle of moss 'round its girth,
A stout buttress to the world rich
with life that surrounds.

- The Bard of Birch Street

01/2018

