

2026 TRAILS PROGRAM END OF SEASON REPORT

ADK | ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN CLUB



OVERVIEW

The 2026 trails season was another great season for ADK's professional staff and volunteers. ADK hired 9 seasonal staff for the Trails Program this year, including the Professional Trail Crew (Pro Crew) which consisted of one Crew Leader and five Crew Members, two Volunteer Crew Leaders, and a Food Coordinator.

The Professional and Volunteer crews worked in 13 locations in and around the Adirondack Park this year. The Pro Crew dedicated a total of 2729 people-hours to Adirondack trails, 2449 of which were spent on the Forest Preserve.

The volunteer trail crew program hosted a total of 116 volunteers this summer. Volunteer crews worked a total of 2496 people-hours.

In addition, ADK boasted 278 volunteers in the Trail Steward and Adopt a Lean-to Programs this year, who volunteered 2883 hours of their time on trails and lean-tos across the Adirondack Park.

PROFESSIONAL AND VOLUNTEER TRAIL CREWS



HEART LAKE PROGRAM CENTER

TRAINING SEASON

The Professional Trail Crew and Volunteer Crew Leaders began the summer honing their skills at the Heart Lake Program Center. New members learned the basics of sustainable trail design, rock and wood working, and the use of hand tools. The crew spent four days along the Heart Lake Trail learning how to build rock turnpiking, stepping-stones, and how to use rigging equipment. By the end, they installed 20 linear feet of turnpiking and set 5 new stepping-stones.

NATIONAL TRAILS DAY

Following training season, we celebrated National Trails Day where we tackled several trail projects at the Heart Lake Program Center, including: building two new bridges, repairing one bridge and side-cutting 4 miles of trail corridor on our ski trails, as well as clearing drainages and installing new signs along the Mt. Jo trail. There were over 50 volunteers involved!

MT JO ROCK WORK

On Mt. Jo we hosted a Teen Volunteer Crew from YMCA's Frost Valley summer camp. The crew installed a total of 15 stepping-stones along the Long Trail.

For the second time, ADK hosted an all-girls volunteer trail crew on Mt. Jo. The crew put in 12 stepping-stones along the Long Trail.

FALL TRAILS DAY

To wrap up the season, three ADK staff and 11 volunteers spent a day sidecutting and clearing blowdown on the Heart Lake Ski trails to get them ready for the winter. By the end of the day, 8 blowdown were removed and 8800 linear feet of sidecutting was done.





ELK LAKE PRESERVE

Elk Lake Lodge hosted an adult Volunteer Trail Crew that worked on replacing a 29-foot span bridge that had failed along the Clear Pond Trail. They used native timber for the stringers and decked it with boards that were milled by Elk Lake Lodge staff. Additionally, they completed a blowdown patrol of the trail removing trees that had fallen in the trail corridor.

WILMINGTON WILD FOREST

The Professional Trail Crew partnered with Barkeater Trails Alliance to do tread rehabilitation on trails that had become eroded in the Flume Trails Network. They groomed the Marble Mountain Biking Trail including doing a few small cribbing projects, smoothing the tread by removing cobble, awkward rocks, and roots that were fully exposed. They also put a small dent in the Bear Claw Trail. In sum, their efforts improved 0.9 miles of trail over the course of a week.





Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest

At Ragged Mountain, the Professional and Volunteer Trail Crews took on a plethora of projects at a rock-climbing/ hiking destination. The crews installed three new span bridges over intermittent streams, a large 18 stone staircase as well as various tread improvement projects.

BLUE MOUNTAIN WILD FOREST

Continuing a project from 2025, the Professional Trail Crew installed 220 linear feet of bog bridging on the Northville-Placid Trail (NPT) in Blue Mountain Wild Forest. This section of the NPT is iconic for having over 1000 feet of continuous bridging; over the course of two weeks the Pro Crew put in a major effort to replace some of the most slippery and rotted sections.

Additionally, they were able to complete a patrol of the Three Brook Loop Ski Trail where they removed 48 blowdowns from the trail corridor.



HIGH PEAKS WILDERNESS

In the heart of the High Peaks Region, the Professional Trail Crew spent three weeks working on the trail near Lake Colden, installing hardened drainages and building rock steps. They installed one 20-linear foot drainage ditch, 15 linear feet of rock cribbing, 10 stone stairs, and 3 stepping-stones.

The Professional Trail Crew also spent a week rehabilitating tread along the Lake Arnold Trail laying crush in an eroded section and surfacing it with compacted mineral soil. In total they installed two new drainages that were a combined 55 linear feet in length and rehabilitated 68 linear feet of trail tread.

Additionally, the Volunteer Trail Crew replaced a 12-foot span bridge along the Avalanche Pass Trail.

On the Calamity Brook Trail the Volunteer Crew worked on rehabilitating tread on the downhill side of two drainages, which were improved to keep water from flowing down the trail. A total of 30 linear feet of trail was rehabilitated.







JOHNS BROOK PROPERTY

ADK had one Volunteer Crew spend three days at the Johns Brook Lodge where they installed a new eight-foot span bridge on Johns Brook Property and patrolled three miles of trail up Big Slide via the Yard Mountain trail.

GIANT MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS

One of our Volunteer Crews spent a weekend on Iron Mountain, helping to improve the new trail to the summit. The crew installed 9 feet of rock turnpiking, 2 rock steps and one drain.

WEST CANADA LAKE WILDERNESS

ADK hosted a day-long project on a remote section of the North Country National Scenic Trail in the West Canada Lake Wilderness. Five volunteers and two staff spent the day removing 6 blowdown and sidecutting 7750 feet of the Brooktrout Lake Trail.



TRAIL STEWARD AND ADOPT A LEAN-TO PROGRAMS

This year, ADK brought on 73 new volunteers in the Trail Steward and Adopt a Lean-to Programs for a total of 278 volunteers in both programs. In April and May, six training days were held to teach volunteers about their respective duties. Trail Stewards learned about sidecutting, drainage clearing, blowdown removal and trail marking. Lean-to Adopters learned about their maintenance duties as well as how to move and repair privies.

In 2026, Trail Stewards removed 1242 blowdown, cleared 454 drainage structures, and sidecut 45 miles of trail. Lean-to Adopters swept 119 lean-tos, removed trash from 115, cleared debris from the roofs of 76, dug out or rebuilt 58 fire pits, cleared deadfall at 50 lean-to sites, and moved 5 privies. These volunteers traveled from all over New York, as well as from Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Quebec, to work on their adopted trails and lean-tos.



In Conclusion

BELOW IS A BREAKDOWN OF THE TOTAL WORK COMPLETED BY ADK'S PROFESSIONAL AND VOLUNTEER CREWS IN 2026.

	Total Crew Members	Total People-hours Worked	Rocks Set	Bridge Feet Built	Miles Patrolled
Pro Crew	7	2,729	68	234	8.4
Volunteer Crews	116	2,496	72	120	14.5

Below is a breakdown of time volunteered by ADK's Trail Stewards and Lean-to Adopters in 2026.

	Driving to/from Trailhead (Hours)	Hiking and Working (Hours)
Adopt a Lean-to	560	1,030
Trail Stewards	388	905

Trail construction and maintenance is a core mission of the Adirondack Mountain Club since its founding, and ADK's Trails Program continues its commitment to trail work now and into the future. ADK proudly collaborates with the DEC and other partners to build and maintain hiking, biking, skiing, and equestrian trails in and outside the Adirondack Park.

Our trail crews focus on and excel in sustainable backcountry trail work, utilizing mainly hand-powered tools and natural materials sourced on-site. ADK takes pride in recruiting people with grit and determination for work in these remote wilderness areas, as well as equipping these individuals with the expertise required for building trails of professional quality. As the outdoor recreation industry continues to expand, and as more and more people hit the trails, demand for skilled trail work grows. ADK is committed to meeting this demand and cultivating trail-building professionals who go on to work for organizations throughout the Adirondacks and beyond.



THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS, DONORS, SPONSORS, AND PARTNERS!

Our heartfelt thanks go out to the volunteers who took time out of their summers to work with us out on the trails, as well as our generous donors, sponsors, and partners who supported our work.

We'd like to say thank you to those who applied to the Sean A. Kelleher Memorial Scholarship, the Jane C. Neale Memorial Scholarship and the Susquehanna Chapter Scholarship. Seven teenagers were awarded scholarships this year. These scholarships are critical to our program's goal of promoting stewardship and building the next generation of trail builders in the Adirondack Park.

A special thank you goes to the Adirondack 46ers, the Miller Family Charitable Trust, L.L.Bean, NBT Bank, the Devlin, the North Star Sustainability Fund, generous individual donors, North Country Trails Association, Barkeater Trails Alliance, donations made in Mary Coffin's memory, and to the New York State DEC. We would not have been able to do the work described above without your help and support!

The Adirondack Park stands as a unique national treasure, offering unparalleled wilderness experiences and recreational opportunities. It is an honor for us to contribute to the building and maintenance of sustainable trails that both protect these pristine landscapes and facilitate meaningful connections between people and the natural world, now and into the future. If you have any questions or comments regarding the Professional Trail Crew, the work of the Volunteer Trail Crew, Adopt a Lean-to Program, or Trail Steward Program and the work they do, please contact Zach Campbell.

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