

The CATSKILL CANISTER



Volume 57 - Number 4
October - December 2024



View from Twin in the Fall. Photo courtesy of Siu Samantha Yuen #2894 W1311



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The Catskill Canister

Volume 57 - No. 4 | October- December 2024

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The Catskill Canister is published quarterly by the Catskill 3500 Club, Inc., a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization. P.O. Box 294, West Hurley, NY 12491 For more information about the club please visit www.catskill3500club.org

President's Column by Michael Bongar



As I read Jack Walker's latest edition of the Catskill Canister, my takeaway is this Club is a group effort by generous members. Our dedicated volunteers are putting together this beautiful magazine, planning volunteer hike schedules, welcoming and documenting new Club members, reporting numbers and maintaining the trailless peaks' canisters, working on our website, planning educational programs, providing trailhead stewards at Slide and Woodland Valley, doing trail maintenance on the Table-Peekamoose Trail, highway clean-up, planning events for our club, doing accounting and paperwork for Club finances and fundraising, and offering search and rescue and wilderness first aid. I think if you reflect on this scope of activities and check our website for our dedicated Board Members and volunteers you can see who I'm talking about. Particularly gratifying is that we have recently had several members reach out to us and offer well needed service. Please contact us at any time if you would like to get involved with this wonderful organization. Vice President Lori Herpen and I thank all of you.

I love reading these articles. In fact, I read them more than once. I have made numerous lifelong friends through the Club and especially by leading hikes. I am thrilled that several of you are authors of the articles herein. These articles and our membership represent this amazing group of accomplished, esoteric and eclectic members of the Catskill 3500 Club.

We had a terrific time at our 58th Annual Club Dinner at the Ashokan Center on July 27, 2024. David White outdid himself by personally welcoming many new members. We have a 60th Anniversary event coming up in 2026. Keep your eyes open about that and let me know if you have any ideas.

Winter Weekend is slated for January 18 and 19, 2025. We will be offering many winter hikes, and we are planning a fun dinner on Saturday evening. This year we will make recommendations for lodging spots and our Winter Weekend elves will be trying hard to negotiate some good deals for members. Please attend a hike and the Winter Weekend Dinner.

And contact me any time. I would love to hear from all of you. Really, I would.

On the cover: Blackhead Reflections. Photo courtesy of Steve Aaron #3199

Winter CATSKILL 3500 CLUB WEEKEND JANUARY 18-19, 2025

Save the Date!

WINTER WEEKEND 2025 will be held on January 18 and 19, 2025. There will be a wide selection of winter hikes for members and aspirants. We are planning a fun club dinner get-together on Saturday, January 18. Please save the dates and look for more information including lodging suggestions and dinner plans.

How You Can Support the Catskill 3500 Club



As a member of the Catskill 3500 Club, you are a “Steward of the Catskills” and a vital part of our hiking community. The club is managed solely by volunteers who dedicate their time and resources to doing what we all love; hiking in the mountains!

Since the very beginning, the club has engaged in stewardship and conservation efforts in the Catskills region; from our Trailhead Stewards program; to our Adopt-A-Highway clean-ups; to our Trail Maintenance; to regularly advocating for good policies and legislation affecting the region’s natural resources.

The Club also hosts annual events, and provides the community with courses on navigation, shelter building, and wilderness first aid. Club volunteers run the highly trained Catskill Mountain Search and Rescue Team (CMSAR).

The club offers group-led hikes almost every weekend and some weekdays throughout the year. The club encourages respect, equality and inclusion among the hiking community.

Value Statement

We value and celebrate those who have ascended, on foot, the 33 highest peaks on public lands in the Catskill Mountains, as well as those who have additionally hiked these mountains in winter.

Mission Statement

The Catskill 3500 Club, founded in 1962, continues to uphold the following principles for its members:

- Foster interest in hiking;
- Provide on-going education on outdoor skills;
and
- Engage in public service, stewardship, and responsible conservation of our region’s natural resources.

Your support means MOUNTAINS to us!
Please consider making a tax-deductible gift to the club and help sustain all these important initiatives.

BY CHECK

Checks can be made out to: Catskill 3500 Club, Inc.
and sent by mail to:
P.O. Box 294, West Hurley, NY 12491

Does your employer offer a match for charitable donations? If so, please apply for a match through your employer, or your employer’s foundation’s, web portal.

As a 501c3 organization, all contributions to the Catskill 3500 Club, Inc are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

CMSAR FALL WFA and CPR TRAINING

September 20-22



The **Catskill Mountain Search and Rescue** team still has available spots for our Fall WFA and CPR training classes on **September 20-22**. Please take a look at the links below for more details.

[Wilderness First Aid Training](#)

[CPR Training](#)

If you can't make it in September, our friends at **Trail Bound Project** offer a WFA class and a getaway at the Frost Valley YMCA campus, with lodging and meals included.

[Wilderness First Aid - Frost Valley YMCA](#)

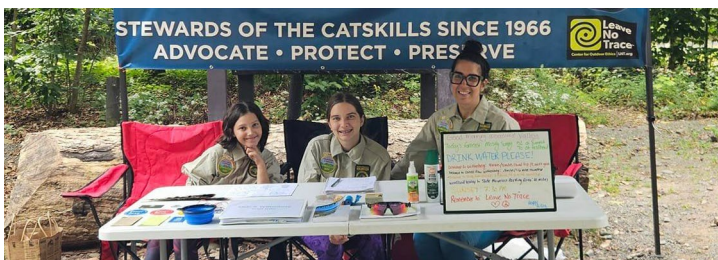


Catskill 3500 Club Service Award Recipients



Besides recognizing hiking accomplishments, the 3500 Club also acknowledges members who give back to the Club and the Catskill Forest Preserve. The purpose of the 3500 Club Service Award is to recognize service to the Club by its members. The award is open to any member in good standing who accumulates seven points by participating in various volunteering activities. Points earned as an Aspirant count toward your total.

We would like to acknowledge the following most recent 3500 Club Service Award qualifiers: **Erica Miranda #3934**, **JD Szalla #3935**, **Izzy Miranda #3936**, and **Ruby Miranda #3937**. The family has been very active volunteers for the Club's Adopt-A-Trailhead program at both Slide Mountain and Woodland Valley trailheads.



Thank you for your dedication, stewardship and commitment to the Club!

Mark your calendars for our upcoming Fall Trail Maintenance and Adopt-A-Highway events!



Saturday, October 26, 2024

Join us on Saturday, October 26, 2024 for the Peekamoosetown-Table Trail Maintenance outing.

This is a great opportunity to connect with other members. First timers to trail maintenance are welcome. Rain date Oct 27.

Sunday, November 3, 2024

On Sunday, November 3, 2024, we will be cleaning up Route 214 for Adopt-A-Highway.

All you need to bring is your good attitude and work gloves. We'll take care of the rest, including refreshments afterwards.

If you're interested in future volunteer opportunities, contact Lourdes Sonera to join our volunteer list. Let's work together to keep the Catskills beautiful!

- Lourdes Sonera, Trail Maintenance Chair

THE BLACKHEAD RANGE

Kurtz Method Painting by Nathan Laing



Blackhead Range, painted with Kurtz Method, instructions available here:
<https://soilpainting.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/soil-painting-sop-2022.pdf>



Annual Meeting and Awards



Dr. Kara Belinsky Montane Birds Presentation



Moe Lemire and the Camp Catskill Pop-up Shop



Sue Hall - 2023 Hike Leader of the Year

THE CATSKILL 3500 CLUB'S 58TH ANNUAL DINNER RECAP

All photos courtesy of Eric Adams

There was a heaping helping of camaraderie on Sat., July 27, 2024 when over 150 club members gathered at the Ashokan Center for our 58th Annual Dinner. If you've never attended this event, it's a great time to catch up with hiking friends and to meet some epic Catskill 3500 Club Members. **Larry Leslie** shared a ribald tale about placing the canister on Southwest Hunter many moons ago. **Sue Hall** was honored as the 2023 Hike Leader of the Year. Five past presidents and the current president gathered and among this lot was **Mike Doehring** who came in with the lowest number in attendance, #144. **Dr. Kara Belinsky** packed the loft space with two special presentations on montane birds and **Fred Gillen, Jr.** had members groovin' to original songs from his new album "Canyon of Light." The weather was splendid. Our friend and aspirant photographer **Eric Adams** caught many magic moments and inspiring sights. Lined up under the portico were tables featuring **David and Carol White** and their books, along with Tom Rankin's recent book. Tabletop presentations included Trailhead Stewards, Catskill Mountain Search and Rescue and a pop-up store from Camp Catskill hosted by **Moe Lemire**. **Emily Oakhill** outdid herself with another Catskill Mountain theme quilt. The quilt was raffled by Catskill Mountain Search and Rescue with the proceeds going to help fund this esteemed group of men and women. Of course, the highlight of the evening is always David White welcoming our new members. In fact, the class included 244 new members and 62 new winter members. Not all were in attendance. If you noticed an intense focus on art, it was the kids' craft table where young members created mountain theme shopping bags and frolicked with bubbles. We thank our Board Members most of whom were present, for their generosity in sharing their time and energies working for the Club. Board members included several new energetic faces including our treasurer, Christopher Hummel and Board Members, Julie McGuire and Jack Walker. Food and Arnold Palmers and adult beverages from the cash bar were in abundance. Please come back and join us again next year and stay tuned for epic plans for the 60th in 2026!



L to R: Past President Joe Bogardus, Current President, Michael Bongar, Past Presidents: Mike Doehring, Tom Rankin, Maria Bedo-Calhoun, Jeff Glans



Club Officers L to R: Colin DeVries, Secretary, Lori Herpen, Vice President, Michael Bongar, President, Chris Hummel, Treasurer



Dave & Carol White Merch Table



Special Musical Guest Fred Gillen Jr.



Board Members Julie McGuire and Lourdes Sonera with "The Rippers"



Dave White welcoming our newest members



Catskill Mountains Search & Rescue Team



Kid's Craft Table

HAIKUBOX

Could Aldo Leopold resist it?

By Kevin Armstrong

Haiku: A classic style of Japanese poetry, aimed at capturing a moment of keen perception or understanding in a short form.

Example: a cuckoo cries

and through a thicket of bamboo

The late moon shines

—Matsuo Basho



About 50 years ago I was browsing the shelves of a small local book store looking for nothing in particular. Little did I know I was about to purchase a little paperback book that would be my "North Star" for the rest of my life. The book was A SAND COUNTY ALMANAC by Aldo Leopold. One of the cautionary points of Aldo's conservation philosophy was to not allow "gadgets" to erode our woodcraft or diminish our outdoor experience. Aldo lived between 1887 and 1948. He could never have imagined cell phones and global positioning (GPS) but I have a hunch that if he were among us today, he would make use of those two gadgets. I was fascinated that Aldo would rise before daylight, and take a pot of coffee and his notebook to a picnic table and record the time, order and light level of the various bird's morning songs.

After a recent Eaton Birding Society field trip, as is our custom, we birders gathered at a nearby diner for breakfast. One fellow told us about a new "gadget" he was using. He had purchased a Haikubox. The receiver is mounted outdoors on your porch, deck, or wall, and plugged into a ground fault interrupted outlet. It records every bird song in the immediate area. There are a very few simple step by step instructions to set up the receiver and pair it with your phone and/or computer. You can set it to list the songs for the last 2, 12, or 24 hours. In your app you can see a picture of the birds that were recorded, the last time they sang, hear the song,

and verify the song. There is also have a button that links to Birdcast which records real time migration data, and tells you which species are currently in migration, all based on telemetry. Everything is in real time and transmitted wirelessly. You can view what's happening with your backyard birds in real time from anywhere. What's more, you can see what other Haikuboxes are recording. I regularly check a friend's recordings 40 miles away.



I've had my Haikubox up and running for about 3 weeks now. I'm amazed by the recorded songs of birds that I rarely (if ever) see in my yard. For example, I've been picking up a Yellow-billed cuckoo the last 3 mornings. This guy is not "a regular" in my yard so I'm looking for the Tent caterpillars that no doubt brought him to my neighborhood. For decades I've noticed that American Robins seem to be the last birds to go to roost. My Haikubox confirms the last bird song of the day, in my yard, most evening is the American Robin.

I bought my Haikubox on Amazon for about \$250. After the first year there is a small subscription fee.

I still heed Aldo's cautionary note but I have to think that if he were still inhabiting his shack in Wisconsin's Sand County, he might be hanging a Haikubox and checking his app several times a day.

Check it out at <http://haikubox.com>

WILD CATSKILL WETLANDS

By Nathan Laing #3165

Many of you have likely encountered a wetland alongside a trail or exploring off the trail. On the surface, the plants, soil, and water are the mosaic that better classify and describe a particular wetland. Generally, wetlands have a moisture component, however this does not mean they remain wet year-round. The soil color in wetlands can differ from the soil color in uplands. In soils that remain saturated, the element iron is removed, turning soils muted colors, often varying shades of grey. Black soil often results from organic matter deposition/accumulation. Soils with fluctuating moisture levels can cause iron deposits to form within the soil or along roots, turning them shades of orange or red. Here in the Catskills, the predominately red soils and bedrock can obscure these iron deposits, thus requiring a keen eye to identify those.

Vegetation on the other hand, can require a keen eye for changes in the presence or abundance of certain plant species, known as hydrophytic vegetation, that unlike upland plants, can tolerate the moisture regime of a wetland. Here in the northeast, species like Red Maple Yellow Birch, or Balsam Fir have equal chances of being found in wetlands or uplands, with other herbaceous species such as Leatherleaf, Blue Flag Iris, Cardinal Flower, Cranberry, and Cattail are almost always found in wetlands.



Bedrock seepage below Rocky Mountain. Photo courtesy of Nathan Laing.

Next time you find yourself in or around wet lands, take a moment to appreciate the wafting aroma of Balsam Fir needles, the sunlit sphagnum, the decaying detritus, leaf litter, and the complexity of an ecosystem that functions on lengthened times scales beyond our perspectives. Slow to form, slow to change, wetlands are a reminder of patience and the ecosystem entropy across both season and millennia.

Recommended readings: *Newcomb's Wildflower Guide. Peterson Field Guide for Trees and Shrubs. The Catskill Forest: A History, By Dr. Michael Kudish. Dr. Kudish includes information on the topic of wetlands, specifically the high elevation bogs nestled throughout the Catskill region.*

Recommended Websites: *National Wetlands Inventory – <https://fwsprimary.wim.usgs.gov/wetlands/apps/wetlands-mapper/>*

NYSDEC Environmental Resource Mapper – <https://gisservices.dec.ny.gov/gis/erm/>

Lesson on soil color change: <https://www.earthsciweek.org/resources/classroom-activities/soil-color-and-redox-chemistry/>

Nathan is a wetland consultant in the civil engineering field who enjoys working outside as much as outdoor recreation. When not working, Nathan can be found running/biking the roads or trails, relaxing by a stream or lake, or researching new places to explore!

Board Member Spotlight: A Q&A with Dick Vincent #3055

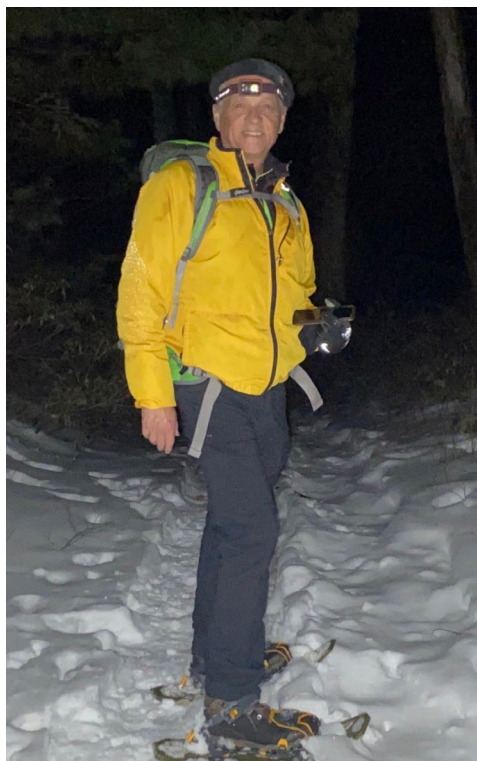
By Julie McGuire #3500 | Photos courtesy of Dick Vincent



In this issue, we will be featuring Dick Vincent, Outgoing Board Member and NYNJ Trail Conference Representative for the Club. Dick shares his experiences as a runner, coach and his love of the Catskills.

How old were you when you first got into hiking? How did that come about?

Dick Vincent: I started running in 1972. In 1973 I began trail running with the late Barry Hopkins. Barry was also an avid hiker. Sometimes he would be leading an outdoor education hike and I would rendezvous with his group, often running to meet them on the trail, hike with them for a while, and then run out. I began trail running first and hiking followed along. Barry was my inspiration into trail running and hiking.



When did you become a 3500 Club member? What inspired you to hike the 35's?

DV: I became a Catskill 3500 Club Member in 2019. Although I was an avid hiker, I wasn't a peak bagger, so to speak. I hiked often, mostly the Catskills, but also the Adirondacks, the Berkshires, etc.

My good running friends, Joe Brown and Amy Hanlon, were working on their peaks, so I decided that I would seek out the peaks I hadn't done and become a member. Although I had done some of the peaks dozens of times (a few over a hundred),

I hadn't documented every summit. Inspired by Joe and Amy (and often accompanied by them), I finished my 35's.

Describe your journey from being a Club member to joining the board. What made you want to take on this responsibility? What role(s) do you play on the board?

DV: I was a member for a year or two and one day while I was backcountry skiing on the Colgate Lake Trail, I crossed paths with Maria Bedo-Calhoun, who was also skiing on the trail. We chatted for a few minutes and then went our separate ways. Shortly after meeting Maria, she contacted me and asked me if I would be interested in joining the board. We met for coffee and the rest is history.



I became the representative between the Catskill 3500 Club and the New York/New Jersey Trail Conference. Luckily for me, I was good friends with Charlie GadoL, who is involved with the T.C. and it made communication much easier. When the creation of the Official Catskill 3500 Community Page went into effect, I became part of the social media committee.

What are some things that you are most proud of when it comes to your work with the Club?

DV: Interacting with the people has been the most rewarding part of the club. The interaction between the established members of the club and the newcomers, from aspirants to those who have just achieved their 3500 status, has been wonderful. When we do something for a long time, there is a tendency to take it for granted. The spirit and excitement displayed by the newcomers reminds me how much fun this activity is and how lucky I am to have discovered it.

How did the Escarpment race come to be? What inspired you to take on the task of organizing this event? How does one qualify for the event if they were interested?

DV: The Escarpment Trail Race didn't have a profound or well thought out beginning. I was running trails with Barry Hopkins. Back then there were only a few, hard to find, books on trails. I heard about this thing called the Escarpment Trail. It was described by those familiar with it, as a very technical, gnarly, arduous, and dangerous trail. I began talking with other runners-hikers about putting a race on over the trail. Everyone seemed to think it was a very bad idea and with that I knew I had to do it. I wrote up a rough draft for an application. Barry Hopkins, who was an art teacher, ran off copies on a mimeograph machine (remember those?), long before computers and copy machines and distributed them to all the running stores and clubs I knew of.

Interacting with the people has been the most rewarding part of the club.

22 runners from around the northeast came to that first race. We had no aid stations, no idea what we were getting into. Although I suggested people carry water, nobody did. We didn't have hydration systems or packs like we do today. So almost everyone decided to go without water. Paul Fetscher, who had won the Earth Day Marathon that year, wrote this article for a now defunct running periodical. I think it caught the spirit of that first race. <https://escarpmenttrail.com/articles/ultimate-test.html>

Are you going to continue coaching runners? How did you get into coaching? What kind of coaching programs do you facilitate and how would people get involved?

DV: I have been running for years. I would put on track workouts for friends and design the workout itself. Sunday mornings I always did my long run and friends would join me. In 1986 I got my Level 1 USAT&F Coaching certification. Saugerties High School quickly contacted me to coach the track team. I did that for two years. I continued to coach informally for years. About 15 or more years ago, people started contacting me to coach. I had since received my USAT&F Level 2 and then Level 3 Certification at the Olympic training Center (the highest offered) along with my I.A.A.F Level 5 (International Amateur Athletics Federation). My mom had health issues

and I retired from my sales job to be closer to home and pursue my love for running instead. Somehow I have managed to make a living doing it.

I currently coach the Albany Running Exchange Club in Albany, along with their racing team. I am the private coach for approximately 30 athletes who hire me to help create a training program for whatever their goals are. The part I love most about coaching is the interaction with the athletes, helping them believe in themselves and attain a level of fitness that they themselves may have doubted. That comes from a mutual respect we have for one another. Belief is the greatest power in the world and it goes with athletics. If you can show them that they can make progress and achieve their dreams, they will do anything to achieve their goals.

The athletes I coach compete at various distances, from 1 mile on the track to 100 mile trail races in the mountains. I have competed at all of those distances myself since I started this running thing back in 1972. Although I don't compete much these days, I am excited to be part of their "team" to get them to the finish as best they can. They have jobs, families, children, and I specialize in creating training programs that fit their lifestyle.

This fall will be an exciting season for my runners. A sample of the goals of some of my runners are:

- A woman who is competing for the USA at the Sky Running World Championships in Spain
- A woman who is running the 5th Avenue Mile
- A number of guys that are running trail 100-mile races.
- Numerous runners who are competing at different marathons
- A woman, who at 57 years of age, is competing in the Chicago Marathon as part of the Abbott World Masters Championships

www.worldmarathonmajors.com/rankings/world-championships





THE TRANS-CAT

A 14-DAY TREK ACROSS THE CATSKILL PARK

By Harold Oakhill #283 W1244



In the summer of 2021, I hiked nearly 160 miles in 14 consecutive days to walk across the entire Catskill Park. It was the culmination of four years of dreaming and planning to do a sort of “Catskill walkabout” and cross the entire park in one hike. I’m happy to share some thoughts about the inspiration, planning, and execution of this adventure in the hope that it might provide members and aspirants with some inspiration in planning their own backpacking adventure in the Catskills, or elsewhere.

OVERVIEW

Beginning at Russell Brook Falls at the far western end of the Catskill trail system, I hiked first north to the Campbell Mountain Trail, then east to the Eastern Devil’s Path, then north on the

Escarpment Trail to Rt 23 in Windham where I left the Catskill Park and continued on the Long Path for two days and finished west of Huntersfield Mountain. I hiked between 7.5 and 14 miles a day depending on the terrain. I camped and also stayed at inns and a B&B along the route. My trek included summiting 11 of the 3500 peaks and seven other peaks of the 102 Catskill highest. The total distance was 159.52 miles. The most astonishing statistic was the total elevation gain. In 14 days of hiking I climbed 36,050 ft! It still surprises me that in a 14-day walk across the Catskills you can rack up more elevation gain than the height of Mt. Everest (29,032 ft).

THE 14 DAY ITINERARY

→ Day 1 - Thursday, August 26

- 8:30am. Heavy equipment drop, Rt 20/Campbell Mountain Trail.
- 9:00am. EJO drops me off at Russell Brook Rd.
- Hike to vicinity of Split Rock Lookout. Camp.
- Via Trout Pond Trail and Campbell Mountain Trail.
- 14.04 miles / 3,250 ft of climbing

→ Day 2 - Friday, August 27

- Hike from Split Rock Lookout to Beaverkill Valley Inn, Beaver Kill Rd, Lew Beach. Meet EJO there. Spend the night. (Retrieve heavy equipment from Berry Brook Rd/Mary Smith Trail)
- Via Campbell Mountain Trail, Mary Smith Trail, Middle Mountain Trail, Touch-Me-Not Trail, Campground Trail, and Barnhart Rd.
- 11.92 miles / 2,000 of climbing

→ Day 3 - Saturday, August 28

- Hike From Beaverkill Valley Inn to Alder Lake with side trip to Barkaboom Mountain.
- EJO picks me up at Alder Lake and we spend the night at Beaverkill Valley Inn.
- Via Barnhart Rd and Little Pond Trail, Touch-Me-Not Trail, and Alder Lake Loop Trail, with a side trip to Barkaboom Mountain via Old Edwards Rd and bushwhack.
- Peaks: Barkaboom.
- 13.05 miles / 2,800 of climbing

→ Day 4 - Sunday, August 29

- EJO drops me off at Alder Lake.
- Hike to near Tunis Pond. Camp.
- Via Alder Lake Loop Trail, Mill Brook Ridge Trail, Balsam Lake Trail, Dry Brook Ridge Trail, and Neversink - Hardenburgh Trail.
- Peaks: Mill Brook Ridge and Balsam Lake.
- 11.2 miles / 3,000 ft of climbing

→ Day 5 - Monday, August 30 (See modification - P. 22)

- Hike from Tunis Pond to Biscuit Brook lean-to. Camp.
- Via bushwhack over South Doubletop and Pine Hill - West Branch Trail.
- Peaks: South Doubletop.
- 10.25 miles / 2,250 ft of climbing

→ Day 6 - Tuesday, August 31

- Hike from Biscuit Brook Lean-to to Terrace Mountain. Camp.
- Via Phoenicia - East Branch Trail, Rt 47, Wittenberg - Cornell - Slide Trail, and Terrace Mountain Trail.
- Peaks: Slide, Cornell, and The Wittenberg.
- 13.45 miles / 2,950 ft of climbing

→ Day 7 - Wednesday, September 1

- Hike to The Phoenicia Belle B&B, Phoenicia. Meet EJO there. Spend the night.
- Via Terrace Mountain Trail and Phoenicia - East Branch Trail.
- 10.75 miles / 950 ft of climbing

→ Day 8 - Thursday, September 2 (See modification - P. 22)

- Heavy equipment drop at Mink Hollow.
- Hike from Phoenicia Belle B&B to Mink Hollow (via Shuttle). Camp.
- Via Phoenicia Trail, Warner Creek Trail.
- Peaks: Tremper.
- 13.05 miles / 3,150 ft of climbing

→ Day 9 - Friday, September 3

- Hike from Mink Hollow to Plattekill Clove. Meet EJO, drive to The Woodbine Inn, Palenville. Spend the night.
- Via the Devil's Path, and Overlook Trail.
- Peaks: Sugarloaf, Twin, and Indian Head.
- 8.55 miles / 3,000 ft of climbing

→ Day 10 - Saturday, September 4

- EJO drops me off at Plattekill Clove.
- Hike to The Woodbine Inn, Palenville. Meet EJO at The Woodbine Inn, spend the night.
- Via The Long Path with side trip to Kaaterskill High Peak via the blazed trail on the north side.
- Peaks: Kaaterskill High Peak.
- 11.21 miles / 1,950 ft of climbing

→ Day 11 - Sunday, September 5

- Hike from The Woodbine Inn, Palenville to Dutcher Notch. Camp.
- Via the Harding Road Trail and Escarpment Trail.
- Peaks: Stoppel Point.
- 12.75 miles / 3,300 ft of climbing

→ Day 12 - Monday, September 6

- Hike from Dutcher Notch to Elm Ridge. Camp.
- Via the Escarpment Trail.
- Peaks: Blackhead, Acra Point, Burnt Knob, and Windham High Peak.
- 11.25 miles / 2,650 ft of climbing

→ Day 13 - Tuesday, September 7

- Hike from Elm Ridge to Richmond Mountain. Camp.
- Via the Escarpment Trail and the Long Path.
- Peaks: Richmond.
- 10.9 miles / 3,200 ft of climbing

→ Day 14 - Wednesday, September 8

- Hike from Richmond Mountain to Huntersfield Rd. Meet EJO.
- Via the Long Path and an unnamed, red marked trail.
- Peaks: Huntersfield.
- 7.15 miles / 1,600 ft of climbing

HOW THE HIKE WORKED

I hiked alone (except for a few miles on Day 9), but my wife, Emily (EJO in the itinerary), was my support team. I met her every few days at a couple of inns and a B&B. She restocked me with fresh provisions and clean clothes that I had carefully packed into numbered boxes and stored in the back of her car. At each rendezvous point I got a couple hot meals, a shower, and a chance to dry out my gear, and to sweeten the deal for her, she got a few nights out at some very nice places. In most cases I walked directly to the inn or B&B. There are a few instances where Emily picked me up at a trailhead and we drove to an accommodation. In those cases the next morning she dropped me off at exactly the same place she picked me up the day before, so there was no cheating on the mileage. I also used "slack packing" whenever possible, a trick commonly used by those who hike the Appalachian Trail and other long



Hammock tent and fly.

The most astonishing statistic was the total elevation gain. In 14 days of hiking I climbed 36,050 ft!

treks. Water, food, and heavy overnight gear was stashed at drop points where my route crossed public roads. I could drop or pick up heavy gear while hiking which was picked up or had been stashed with the use of Emily's car whenever we met. As a result, some days I hiked with a light pack, though there were segments where I carried a full pack for several days. The longest unsupported bits were two stretches of four days/three nights.

INSPIRATION

The inspiration for the hike came in 2017 when I downloaded the hiking app Avenza and purchased the digital version of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference map of the Catskills to go with the app. I was expecting a collection of six small maps each focused on a small section of the Catskills, just like the paper version. I was happily surprised when it opened into one large master map covering the entire region. I had never seen the entire Catskill trail network laid out in one continuous and highly detailed map. I was fascinated and spent some time studying the ways the trails interconnected. A thought quickly came to mind: is it possible to walk across the entire Catskill Park using just the DEC trails? In a few moments I had my answer: No. Not quite, anyway. There are two gaps that divide the trail network into three sections; east, central, and west. However, the three sections can be connected by bushwhacking over public land. (The Finger Lakes Trail does run east-west through the region, but it swings to the south and uses 12.5 miles of public highways to connect the eastern and western parts of the DEC trail network. The notion of

Stats	TOTAL MILEAGE: 159.52		
	TRAIL	BUSHWHACK	ROAD
	139.34	6.9	13.28
	TOTAL ELEVATION GAIN:		
	36,050 ft.		



Biscuit Brook Lean-to

hiking long segments on paved public roads did not appeal to me. I don't find it very interesting and it seems dangerous.)

After an hour of studying the mileages and contours I had worked up a rough itinerary. It looked like it might take about 10 to 12 days to hike from the west end of the trail network to the eastern end. My rough itinerary became the subject of much tweaking and daydreaming for the months to come and I soon had a workable plan that would not just take me across the park, but would also swing north and go through some parts of the northern Catskills. The more I studied the map the more I wanted to know what those trails looked like. I wanted to put visual images to those red lines on a green map.

CATSKILL WALKABOUT

About a year after dreaming up this hike I read *The Catskills*, published in 1918 by T. Morris Longstreth, a writer, outdoorsman, and sometime school teacher who had done exactly what I was contemplating; a Catskill walkabout. Longstreth loved nature, hiking, and fishing and had just published a book about the Adirondacks based on a six-month trek through those mountains. He was teaching school in Kingston, NY, in the spring of 1917 when, in an incident that seemed prophetic for our time, he was furloughed when an epidemic of measles swept the region. With nothing better to do he spent three months tramping about New York's other great state park, the Catskills.

Longstreth alternated between staying at hotels or boarding houses and sleeping outside under a tarp. He seemed to be pretty loose about his meal planning, relying on his fishing skills and local farms for his meals when he was camping. The region was still covered in farms, and it was a time when you

could walk up to any farmhouse at 7:00 in the morning, knock on the door and offer to pay for breakfast. Since farm families were always eager for a little cash, he would be welcomed in and for 15, 20, or 25 cents he would be given his fill of pancakes, maple syrup, bacon, and coffee. He was frequently also given a couple sausage links and some potatoes to cook for dinner. And he would be on his way. I was enchanted by the



Downpour!

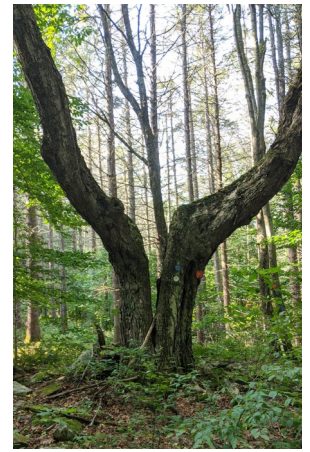
romantic notion of just tramping across the mountains, sleeping under a tent or under a roof as the circumstances allowed, and getting meals wherever I could.

Working farms no longer dominate the area, and these days I would not recommend knocking on the door of any random house at 7:00am and asking for breakfast. However, the region is now dotted with inns and B&Bs that have replaced the big hotels and boarding houses of Longstreth's time. I studied the trail maps and Google maps to see how I could include hostilities in my trek. In planning a long distance hike you need to find a route that includes going through a town every few days for resupply, washing clothes, and maybe sleeping in a real bed for a night. Unfortunately, the Catskill trail network doesn't offer many opportunities to do that. It only actually goes through two towns, Phoenicia and Palenville. There are tangents that will take you to places like Margaretville, Arkville, and Pine Hill. But then you have to turn around and hike many miles, and over many mountains, to get back into the network. I didn't want to do any backtracking; my goal was to get across the park. I finally settled on the Beaverkill Valley Inn in Lew Beach, the Belle B&B in Phoenicia, and the Woodbine Inn in Palenville as the three places where I would meet Emily for resupply and rejuvenation.

A basic plan for the hike was in place by 2018, but there were other considerations before I took off into the woods. Two weeks is a big chunk of vacation time and it wasn't just mine, it was Emily's vacation time, too. There were other trips that we wanted to take. In early 2020 we selected August 27 of that year as Day 1 for the big hike. However, by April it was clear that it wasn't going to happen. As the world slipped into lockdowns and quarantines with no idea as to how long they would last, making long range plans and reservations was impossible. A year later things were looking better and Day 1 was rescheduled for Thursday, August 26, 2021.

PLANNING

I hadn't done a long distance hike since I was in my teens. I knew I was up to it physically, but it had been decades since I had actually planned something like this. But once I commit to something it becomes an obsession, and I rarely do things by halves. That's just me. As I got down to the nitty-gritty of planning I made lists and spreadsheets, plotted daily mileage, daily elevation gain, and estimated hiking times for each day. I spent hours on the Internet reading equipment reviews, reading long distance hiking blogs, and watching videos. I badgered fellow hikers with questions. My corporate project planning skills kicked in and I focused on eliminating as many unknowns as possible, leaving nothing to chance. Reconnaissance trips were made to scout locations for stashes and equipment drops. You would have thought I was planning the invasion of Normandy. The only thing I wanted to be surprised about was what those trails actually looked like, those red lines on a green map.



Trail junction.

FOOD

I initially thought if I hiked in the summer I could just live on cold food and save the weight of a stove. I quickly ditched that plan. I didn't want this to be a death march. Hot food and drinks are nice, especially if the weather turns wet and cool, which it did! On the Internet I studied charts showing how many calories a day a hiker needs to go so many miles with so many feet of climbing while carrying so many pounds. My research indicated that I would need to eat 25 to 30 calories per pound of body weight per day. For me that was 4,250 - 5,100 calories a day. Next, I read food container labels and recorded the number of calories per serving for such things as beef jerky, granola bars, oatmeal, bananas, peanut butter, Raman soup, and chocolate. I used a food scale to determine the weight of each serving, balancing my calorie needs against weight in the pack. I came up with the following basic meal plan:

Breakfast

- Half a cup of Quick Oats oatmeal, with 2 tbs of brown sugar, 218 calories
- Two Drake's apple pies, 520 calories
- Fruit (banana, apple, and/or prunes) approx. 100 calories per serving
- Coffee

Lunch

- 4 tbs peanut butter, 380 calories
- Cliff bar, 250 calories
- Granola bar, 200 calories
- Fruit, approx. 100 calories

Dinner

- Beef Raman soup with 4 oz of chopped beef jerky mixed in, 744 calories
- Fruit, 100 calories per serving
- Two Drake's apple pies, 520 calories
- Hot tea

Constant snacking on trail mix, chocolate bars, granola bars, and Romney's Kendal Cake (a high energy mint candy) helped meet the daily calorie requirement. Three days' worth of this meal plan (not including snacks) weighed 7 lbs. I also factored in that I would get a couple of restaurant meals every two to four days. I used those meals to fill up on protein, carbohydrates, and green vegetables. I lost three pounds of body weight over the 14 days. Someone suggested that I planned the calorie intake pretty well as many people would have lost more weight than that.

I started each segment of the hike with 68 oz of water plus one 40 oz bottle of Gatorade (140 calories per bottle) for each day I would be hiking before resupply. I stopped at springs and fast flowing streams to filter water and replenish my supply as needed. I tried to use the filtered water for cooking (since it would be boiled) and washing up. I kept the fresh bottled water for drinking.



Breakfast table

DAILY MILEAGE

I used the TrailsNH Hiking Time Calculator for planning my daily mileage and where I would camp or stay each night. The calculator lets you adjust variables such as distance, vertical gain, intended pace, trail surface, and pack weight. You can find the calculator here: <https://trailsnh.com/tools/hiking-time-calculator.php> As for selecting camp sites, I took advantage of the liberal camping policy in the Catskill Park. You can camp anywhere on state land in the park **except**: within 150 feet of a trail, road, or water; anywhere over 3,500 ft in elevation outside of winter; and where specifically prohibited. That leaves plenty of acreage where you can pitch a tent!

For determining my maximum pack weight I used the general rule of thumb that the pack should not weigh more than about 20% of your body weight. For me that was 35 pounds. Keeping the pack weight within that limit was the biggest challenge in planning the hike. When fully loaded with four days of food and hydration the pack weighed as much as 42 pounds. That was manageable for a half a day or so until water consumption brought the weight down.

EQUIPMENT

Every new piece of gear that I acquired for the hike was field tested on day hikes and short backpacking trips in the Catskills. I did not want to be figuring anything out for the first time on the big hike. I selected a Lawson hammock tent for the trip. In the Catskills finding a flat spot for a ground tent free of rocks, roots, brush and puddles is challenging. With a hammock tent all you need is two sturdy trees about 15 feet apart. I slept a couple of nights in my backyard in my new hammock tent, and practiced setting it up and packing it before taking it and other new gear out for a few short trips. Lessons were learned and adjustments were made.

One of the biggest adjustments was in bear-proofing. I originally purchased a Backpacker's Cache bear can and tried it out on an overnight hike. The thing weighed 45 oz, (almost four pounds!) and took up a huge space in the pack. Even after filling it with items while it was in the pack it still took up too much room for my liking. I switched it out for an Ursack Major bear bag which weighed just 8 oz. The Ursack bag is made from Kevlar and the inner liner is 3 mil plastic with a double ziplock seal that prevents virtually any odors from escaping.



Fully loaded backpack.

On a big adventure like this when you are paring things down to the bare essentials it's always nice to make room for one indulgent luxury. Mine was coffee. I really need a good cup of coffee to start the day. I carried a single serve French press coffee maker (8 oz) and the appropriate amount of ground coffee in a Ziplock bag.

I carried the following pieces of capital equipment, all carefully chosen based on weight and quality.

EQUIPMENT LIST

- Osprey Atmos 65 liter backpack - 77 oz (4 lbs 13 oz)
- Lawson Blue Ridge Hammock Tent - 86.15 oz (5 lbs, 6 oz)
- Bear Butt Tree Straps (for the hammock tent) - 16.49 oz
- Hennessy Hex Fly and stakes (quick rain shelter and it goes over the hammock tent) - 26.46 oz
- Nemo Switchback foam pad - 15.57 oz
- REI Magma Trail Quilt, 30 degree - 20.15 oz
- Marchway air pillow (a pillow vastly improves sleep quality for me) - 3.74 oz
- MSR Reactor stove, cooking pot, and fuel tank - 18.43 oz
- Drinking cup - 5.48 oz
- French press coffee maker - 8 oz
- Leatherman multi tool - 11 oz
- Sawyer water filter system - 6.23 oz
- Ursack Major bear bag - 8 oz
- Anker battery for recharging smartphone and headlamp - 7.8 oz
- 50' of 9 mm rope - 16 oz

That was the heavy stuff. The total weight was filled out by dozens of smaller, lighter essentials such as a basic first aid kit, field repair kit, compass, maps, toilet paper, hand sanitizer, clothes, rain shell, headlamp, flashlight, log book, and smartphone.



GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

Did I have fun? Yes.

Would I do it again?

Absolutely, but I would include more down time with some shorter days, and maybe a zero-mileage day. Fourteen days of continuous hiking was a bit much.



Buttermilk Falls

LIVING THE DREAM

The highlights of the trip were those moments when the experience matched the expectations and daydreams that had been simmering for four years. I knew this was going to be an awesome experience by the end of Day 2. I had spent the day hiking 10 miles on the Campbell Mountain, Mary Smith, Middle Mountain, and Touch-Me-Not Trails and had finished 2,000 ft of climbing when I came down off of Touch-Me-Not Mountain, walked through the state campground at Little Pond and bushwhacked across state land to a boundary with some private property. I hiked along the boundary, staying on the public side of the line, bushwhacking through forests and waist high beds of ferns, first going southeast, then turning the corner of the boundary and proceeding southwest for half

I encountered relatively few hikers. There were three occasions when I went for 24 hours without seeing another human.

a mile until hitting the end of Barnhart Rd right where it ends at a farm gate. I walked down the dirt road for .7 miles to the Beaverkill Valley Inn and there was Emily, sitting on the porch sipping an ice tea. It was perfect! Just the way I had imagined it. Longstreth himself could not have pulled it off any better. The next morning, refreshed and resupplied, I disappeared back into the trail network. I was living the dream!

I give the overall trail conditions at that time an A. About 99% of the trails I was on were well marked and showed signs of regular maintenance and regular use. There was the occasional blowdown, but I saw virtually no litter.

I was struck by how much of the trail system is on old roads, especially in the western and northern Catskills. Old farm roads, logging roads, quarry roads, fire tower roads, estate roads, and roads through mountain passes that were once part of the area's highway system. More than half of my mileage was on a route that I could have driven on a hundred years ago.

I encountered relatively few hikers. Most were near trailheads or campgrounds and were clearly just doing a mile or two, or were walking the dog. Only on Days 10, 11, and 12 (Labor Day weekend) did I encounter several "serious backpackers." There were three occasions when I went for 24 hours without seeing another human. I don't mind solitude, it's one of the reasons I am drawn to the outdoors. But good company is nice too! A couple of weeks before the hike I shared my itinerary with friends and fellow hikers and invited them to rendezvous with me at any point and join me for a few miles, or a few days. Only Dave and Kristin DeForest (#2442 and #2441) took me up on the offer and joined me for the climb over Sugarloaf Mountain on Day 9. I appreciated the company!

WEATHER

The overall weather for my 14 day trek was gray, wet, and cool. There was never a day when the landscape really dried out. Rocks were wet or damp, which meant they were slippery, and flat areas were muddy or had standing water. I didn't see the sun very much. Some overnight temps were in the 40s. Streams were flush and springs were gushing, so I never had to worry about water. I spent Day 7 with Hurricane Ida, hiking from Terrace Mountain lean-to down the Phoenicia - East Branch Trail to Phoenicia in



Blackhead Range from Richmond Mountain

an all day rain that left me sodden. Fortunately I spent that night at The Belle B&B in Phoenicia

WILDLIFE

Not much. I saw a total of three deer. Two of them, a doe and fawn, were bedded down in tall grass beside the Campbell Mountain Trail. They stood up and ran off as I passed. I could have reached out and touched the fawn if I had not been so startled. Chipmunks, two squirrels and a shrew were the only other mammals I saw. I saw plenty of bear scat,

especially in the northern Catskills, but no other signs of bears, not even prints in the mud. I hung all my smellables in a bear bag every night and every morning I found the bag unmolested. I saw a lot of red efts. There was one on the trail with every other step in the western Catskills. I really had to pay attention to avoid stepping on them. I heard owls most nights. And then there were the spiders. Cobwebs, cobwebs, cobwebs was a constant theme when it wasn't raining.

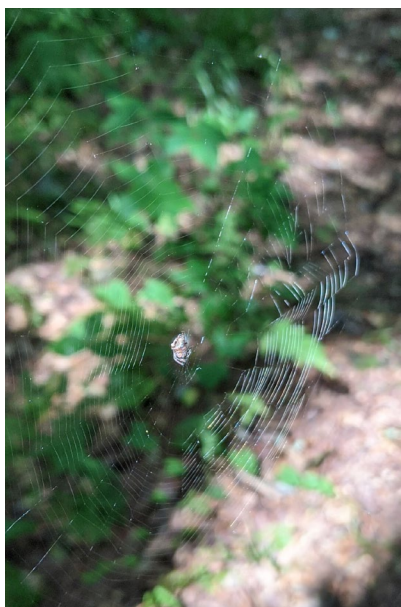
SUPPORT TEAM

I could not have done this without the full support and encouragement of Emily, my wife. She logged 838 miles driving to support my hike! She dropped me off on Day 1, met me three times for resupply rendezvous, and picked me up at the end. Of the 14 days I was hiking there were only five days that she was not driving for me. She referred to herself alternatively as "the sherpa" and "the chase car driver." Emily and our daughter Sarah (see "Day 8 Modification" below) made this adventure possible. I owe the success of the hike to them.

FINAL THOUGHTS

CAMPFIRES, TIME MANAGEMENT, AND THE SOLO BACKPACKER

After the trek a friend shared that they were thinking of me as I was hiking crossing the Catskills, "sitting by a fire every night." "A fire?!" I blurted. "Why on earth would I build a fire?!" Honestly, throughout all the planning and the 14 days of hiking the thought of building a campfire had never occurred to me. I didn't need it for cooking as I had a very light and compact stove. It was summer, so I didn't need it for warmth. (Some nights were cool, but not that cool.) Additionally, the forest was perpetually wet during my two-week trek. Finding dry firewood would have been challenging. But the biggest reason for not building a fire was time. Since I was hiking alone there was no division of labor when it came to setting



Cobwebs, cobwebs, cobwebs.



Dutcher Notch

up camp and preparing meals. *Nothing* happened unless I did it, and I could only do one thing at a time. Consider this: having reached the location for camp at the end of a long day of hiking and climbing, usually around 5:00, I would do the following; locate a suitable place for the hammock tent, set up the tent and the fly that goes over it, find a place away from the tent to prepare dinner, then prepare dinner, eat dinner, clean up after dinner, fill the bear bag, hang the bear bag away from camp, brush teeth and dress for bed. That's two hours. Now it's getting dark, I'm tired and I have another big day tomorrow. No, gathering firewood, building a fire, coaxing it to life and keeping it fed would have been a completely unnecessary chore. Finally, an important part of building a fire is having a way to put it out. I wasn't going to lug water around to put out a fire that I didn't need in the first place!

The following modifications to the original itinerary were made on the fly.

DAY 5 - MODIFICATION

The original plan after crossing South Doubletop was to continue bushwhacking over Big Indian, Fir, and Spruce, to Hemlock Mountain and camp near the Slide Mountain trailhead to avoid 3.3 miles of road walking on Rt 47. It had rained the night before and after bushwhacking 3.5 miles over South Doubletop with a full pack I was soaked from brushing against wet leaves. I had enough of that by the time I reached the Pine Hill - West Branch Trail and thought I would hike down the trail to Rt 47 and camp at one of the primitive camp sites along the West Branch of the Neversink rather than bushwhack through another four miles of wet



View from the Escarpment Trail

leaves. But a mile before reaching the road the skies opened up and I was caught in a torrential downpour. I kept slogging through the rain for a while, but it only got heavier and the ground was getting saturated. I didn't want to set up camp in that mess, so I turned around and hiked 1.5 miles back to the Biscuit Brook lean-to and spent the night there. The rain had stopped by the time I reached the lean-to, of course, but at least I had someplace to hang things up to dry. That put me 5.5 miles out of position for the start of Day 6 and the climb over the Burroughs Range, but I made up the time and was back on schedule when I reached the Terrace Mountain lean-to at the end of the day.

DAY 8 - MODIFICATION

This was to be my longest day, 16.05 miles from Pheonicia to Mink Hollow between Plateau and Sugarloaf. I had a car available since I had spent the night with Emily at the B&B in Phoenicia, so I made an early morning "heavy equipment drop" on the north side of Mink Hollow. I stuffed everything I would not need during the day into a camouflaged dry bag and hid it in the woods near the PA. I drove back to Phoenicia and began the hike. Halfway up the Warner Creek Trail it crosses Warner Creek. It was the day after Hurricane Ida had passed through and the creek was running high, fast, and cold. I could not find a safe way to cross. I had no change of clothes with me (all that was stashed at Mink Hollow) and the weather was cool and windy. If the water knocked me down and I got soaked I was setting myself up for hypothermia. So I turned around. I went back up to the top of the ridge to the junction with the Willow Trail, (where there is remarkably good cell service!), and called my daughter, Sarah (#3795), in Kingston. She met me at the Willow Post Office, about a mile from the Willow Trail trailhead, and drove me around to Mink Hollow. I got there in time to get my camp set up before dark. So there is a 7.85

mile gap in my original itinerary and I missed Plateau and Edgewood Mountains.

DAY 13, ROCK BOTTOM, AND HIKING AS A METAPHOR FOR LIFE

I spent the night on Day 12 near the Elm Ridge lean-to as planned. There was a guy already in the lean-to when I got there and I could have talked him into sharing it. But behind

the lean-to there is a lovely lawn of natural grasses punctuated by mature trees. I was happy to set up my hammock tent there, and I'm glad I did. The tall pine trees that surround the lean-to were dropping their cones and all night at odd intervals a large pine cone would fall and bounce off the roof with a loud bang. I can't imagine the guy who was in there got much sleep!

I slept well enough, but the morning found me with a headache and that nasty feeling in the mouth and sinuses that immediately precedes a cold. In addition to being worn out from 12 days of hiking and climbing, now I felt just plain sick. I was happy that the next segment was all downhill for a mile and a half to Rt 23. I stopped at the footbridge where the trail crosses the Windham Kill right by the highway, filtered water, filled my bottles, and brushed my teeth. With some effort I pulled on my pack. With the water supply replenished it felt heavier than ever. I stood on the bridge for a moment, watching the cars and trucks rushing past. I felt awful. "How badly do I really want to finish this?," I thought.

I looked at my phone and saw that I had service. If I really wanted to bail out, now was the time, while I had service. All I had to do was to call Emily. She could be there in 90 minutes and it would all be over. No more lugging 35 pounds up and down rocky trails. I could sleep in my own bed tonight.

I looked at the trees across the highway. The northern boundary of the Catskill Park lay just the other side of the road in those trees. I had achieved my original goal of walking across the entire park. The next two days/16.6 miles/4,800 ft of climbing on the Long Path was just going to be icing on the cake, some bonus points for knocking off a couple of Catskill Hundred Highest peaks. I could end it here and still say I had met my goal.

But, I had told everyone who was interested that I would be hiking for 14 days. One hundred sixty miles in 14 days, that was the plan. That was the dream. That's what I had promised myself. I would feel awful tomorrow if I quit now.

"But I feel awful RIGHT NOW!"

And thus raged the debate inside my throbbing head with an angel on one side quietly telling me to be easy on myself and a drill sergeant screaming "suck it up, you wimp" on the other.

I opened the contacts app on my phone. There was Emily's number. One more touch of the screen and I could end it all. I looked across the road. I looked at my phone. I looked across the road. I put the phone away. "One more mile," I thought. "Let's see how I feel after one more mile." And mile by mile I coaxed myself through the rest of the day.

Backpacking is a bit like life. I've learned that no matter how drained, beaten, or discouraged I feel, I can always dig a little deeper and find something more. One more mile, one more minute, one more step. It works for hiking, and for life in general.

All photos courtesy of Harold Oakhill #283 W1244

Harold Oakhill, #283 W1244, has been hiking in the Catskills since a Boy Scout backpacking trip to Echo Lake in 1968. He is a member of the 3500 Club's Catskill Mountain Search and Rescue team. He recently retired after a 40 year career with the Rockefeller family as a records manager, researcher, writer, and archivist. He and Emily have been married for 38 years.

ATTENTION SHOPPERS!!!

\$10 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

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There's a special item offered in Aisle Three. That is, the membership page on the Catskill 3500 Club website.

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Oh yes, and if you are feeling your immortality or if you are just a big shot and a swell person, you can get a lifetime membership too....

Visit: catskill3500club.org/dues

or scan the QR code



THE LOSTKILLS

THOSE OTHER PEAKS

By Alan Via #429 W174

As a bushwacker from the map and compass era, I've always preferred off trail exploring instead of established trails. Using a long-baseplate compass in conjunction with original USGS maps, I'd draw a route with penciled arrows and bearings and carry a copy in the field. Above tree line in the ADKs or New England, the bearings were taped to the back of my compass. With good mapping programs like Cal Topo or Gaia (definitely not All Trails), smart phones and handheld GPS units have relegated my mapping routes to backup status.

I was first introduced to hiking in the Adirondack High Peaks when their herd paths weren't well established and they all but disappeared in winter. It wasn't long before my friends and I planned bushwhacks from different directions, our favored way to hike. Discovering the Catskills was an awakening. The subtle herd paths were easily followed but the comparison to Adirondack forests was startling. Wide-open deciduous forest, fern glades, woods roads and comparatively scant blowdown opened wonderful bushwhack opportunities. What a treat after thrashing through Adirondack blowdown fields. In the Catskills it was look at a map, plan a route, and anything that looked feasible on the map 'worked' in the field.

Social media, internet hiking forums and a flood of new hikers have the overly-loved Catskill High Peaks feeling the impact from thousands of hiking boots. Hiking the Catskill 100s and 200s provided another perspective on the little peaks. So, it seemed timely to share another aspect of hiking that's not on High Peak trails or herd paths.

The name 'Lostkills' was first suggested by hiking buddy, Jim Hopson. I was looking for a title for a presentation featuring the small, obscure hikes and bushwhacks we both enjoy. Jim came to the rescue, suggesting a perfect name for these off-the-beaten-path peaks. We both share what he's described as a fascination that's "less to do with seeing what's out there, than finding what else is out there".

SO WHERE ARE THEY?

Some Lostkills are in Schoharie County, many are in Delaware and there's a boatload in Ulster and Greene. Begin looking on public land for peaks or isolated ridges away from trails. A good starting point are destinations you don't see on social media. Many Lostkills don't have a typical summit. A climb up an old road bordered by hemlocks, hardwoods and stone walls may lead to a high meadow, open ledge or small peak, some with views that rival their often-climbed brethren.

We can thank 19th century farming, quarrying, bark peeling and agriculture for excellent routes or great head starts. Don't discount the challenges some of these diminutive peaks present simply because of their short stature or because they're called hills not mountains. Some of these pipsqueak peaks are challenging, have interesting approaches and many are best done in certain times of the year due to weather or restrictive land features that hamper enjoyment or assure success.

**MANY LOSTKILLS DON'T HAVE
A TYPICAL SUMMIT. A CLIMB
UP AN OLD ROAD BORDERED BY
HEMLOCKS, HARDWOODS AND
STONE WALLS THAT MAY LEAD
TO A HIGH MEADOW, OPEN LEDGE
OR SMALL PEAK, SOME WITH
VIEWS THAT RIVAL THEIR OFTEN-
CLIMBED BRETHERN.**

The very best source of information is DEP's online resource: [NYC DEP Watershed Recreation Areas](https://arcgis.com) (arcgis.com), a scrollable map of the Catskills showing all of DEP properties. The map options include topographic, street view, National Geographic, Open Street, Terrain with Labels and others. At the bottom is an alpha list of every DEP land parcel. Each parcel contains county, acreage, allowable types of outdoor recreation and whether it's a hunting-fishing only parcel. You're able to zoom in to see where the parcel is located relative to its surroundings. Clicking on the parcel at the bottom of the page brings up a color .pdf topo map that shows surrounding roads and starred access points.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN, YOU NEED A PERMIT.



Off-trail hikes on DEP land require a free permit. DEP police patrol their properties checking that their water supply properties are being used responsibly. If you want to hike, apply online for the DEP permit and hangtag download: <https://a826-web01.nyc.gov/recpermitapp/>. It's a quick, free application process and the permits are valid for five years. Carry the permit with you when you hike and put the hangtag

on your mirror. I've seen DEP check my car and have run into them on DEP land.

I'm not a fan of "cellphone navigation" if you don't carry a map and compass and know how to use them. Downloading the NYNJ Trail Conference map and running Cal Topo or Gaia on your phone keeps you on DEP/DEC property when off trail.

Following is a list of bushwhacks, a small Lostkills sampler. Explorers could dedicate years to discovering 'what's out there'. There are enough details to provide a head start for the curious.

ACORN HILL – YANKEETOWN POND

Yankeetown Pond sits in the middle of a DEP parcel that's inaccessible other than a narrow public land entry corridor. Remain inside of DEP blazes and pay attention to where you park as there's only a short section of shoulder to get all four wheels off the pavement.

Although the photo shows Ticeteneyck Mt beyond the pond and part of the Burroughs Range in the distance, Acorn Hill itself is outside the frame. Go in springtime for a symphony of birdcalls and waterfowl. The shoreline has mountain laurel but beavers and other critters have created paths through the vegetation. I'm waiting to return for what should be spectacular autumn foliage. The pond sits at the foot of Acorn Hill, a short but interesting bushwhack. Another DEP pipsqueak, Acorn has no trail but features a short, fun cliff band and a section of spectacular open woods midway to the top. There isn't a view from the indistinguishable summit but it's the beautiful forest and Yankeetown's views that make up for it. Locate a DEP maintained woods road along the top and allow it lead you down past interesting quarries on the way back.



*View from Yankeetown Pond
on the way to Acorn Hill.*



ARMLIN HILL

Armlin is one of the 'Scary 19', a group of the 19 Schoharie County public land high points put together by 3500 Club member, Jason Pelton. Tag them all and get a finisher's patch. Located in the Armlin Hill State Forest, its most interesting and accessible entry point is a woods road through a gate on a NYS ROW through private property. The road is rough, crowned, crowded by vegetation and provides no place to turn around if you get stuck. It's best accessed by parking far down the public road and hiking up through the ROW. The effort is really worth it. The reward is hiking through a seldom-visited location. Along the way, explore a pair of beautiful ponds, enjoy a long-distance peak view and interesting woods roads. You'll be challenged by the thickish but soft conifers bushwhack to the 'your guess is a good as mine' high point. On your way out you'll definitely want to catch the sedgy and conifer plantation, Field Wall Knob.



Bushwhackers come in all sizes. The perambulating Pelton sisters and Toby.



CHRISTMAS TREE PEAK

Also known as NW Hunter, save this spectacular bushwhack for an early spring day. It has one good sized ledge band and is a continual uphill ridge walk through mostly deciduous forest. Pick the seasonal sweet spot for your hike, when trees haven't fledged and the forest floor is littered with Ramps, Trout Lilys, Spring Beauties and Trillium. Climbing along the south edge of the western ridge, you're treated to screened peak views through the leafless trees. Your guess will be as good as mine as to where the peak's name came from. At the beginning of the 'whack, you'll likely think the small, spaced conifers in the first quarter mile are just the beginning and the peak will live up to its name. They all but disappear which leads you to wonder if the two alpha conifers on the summit plateau are responsible for the name. After a break on the 3255ft summit 'posing rock' you can reverse your route back to the trail. Instead, find the best less-cliffy descent toward the Hunter Mt col. From there, it's one more steep pitch and an open forest downhill stroll until a short section of scratchy forest just before reaching civilization and the gorgeous Diamond Notch Falls.



Christmas Tree Peak ledge band.

HIGH KNOB

Toby enjoying Norway Spruce shade and soft sedge below the summit.



Why visit an obscure and seldom-climbed small peak? That's what you do if you like to see what's out there. There are a pair of grown over woods roads, one passing on either side that get you close. Then it's a short but steep 'whack to the summit. My favorite route passes through an old Norway Spruce plantation that's paved with a sedge-y understory. Our doghiker, Toby likes to loll there. There are peek-a-boo screened views of the Huntersfield Range from the ridge. While looking for the indistinguishable high point, see if you can find the elusive North viewpoint. Look in the right direction and there's an above the treeline view created by NYS clearcutting on one of the peak's skirts.



PARADISE POINT

Paradise Point view.



I came across this bushwhack on a hand drawn map of Platte Clove rendered by a third-generation Clove resident. It depicted an old quarry road that leads along cliff tops all the way to Huckleberry Point. Along the way there's a shaded ledge with bluestone lawn chairs from the nearby quarry. I nicknamed it 'Lawn chair Ledge'. Little did I know, locals long ago called it Paradise Point. Imagine the great view from Huckleberry Point, then throw in some 19th century quarries, a path through laurel and a series of ledge top views on the way to the Point. On that map, locals called Hell's Hole Brook, Muddy Brook. The map also points to a number of future Lostkill explorations: Old Quarry Rim Rd, Black Chasm Canyon, Cross Clove Creek and the huge Linsley Quarry that I've visited twice.



SOUTH MT

Ralph and doghiker Toby along the ledges.



Located in the Sundown Wild Forest, South Mt's 2205ft summit punches far above its weight class for interest and views. Of course I didn't listen closely enough to forest sage, Ralph Ryndak this day when he suggested we traverse the bottom of the ridge a little farther before climbing to avoid much of why he calls it 'laurel ridge'. So of course we paid a larger

bushwhacking entry fee, wading through extra mountain laurel. However you explore this combination of DEP and DEC gem, the views from the ledges below the summit are spectacular. Wait for low water times to avoid wet boots to get on the mountain.

TORREN'S HOOK

Reservoir view from near Dancing Rock.



Originally called Toran Hoeck by Dutch settlers, what little is known about this small peak is limited to Dancing Rock, a large, nearly level ledge of rock near the top. It's been described as where Native Peoples held tribal ceremonies and dances and may contain remnants of their past lives. Completely landlocked except for a skinny DEC right of way 'granted as a public easement for pedestrian travel', it's marked by faint DEC blazes and a surveyor's marker. Carefully following the blazed corridor is the entry to Hook's upper mountain and summit ridge. A bushwhack best done when trees are leafless, you'll see views of Ticeteneck Mt (proper spelling intended) over your shoulder as you climb. The summit ridge features a wide open, oak-dominated forest with views of High Point, Samuels Point, Little Sam, Wittenberg, Cornell, Friday and Balsam Cap across the Ashokan Reservoir. Much of this will be hidden when trees have leaves.



Legend says Winnisook was named after a seven-foot Native American who lived in the valley. This bushwhack features a large fern glade and first growth beech, birch, black cherries scattered among large erratics. West Winnisook is the sub-summit of its higher neighbor and best hiked out of the Slide Mt trailhead. Walk the road and enter the forest, staying outside of the Winnisook Lake Club's property line. The slope is littered with boulders and rocks, 'lumpy' as described by a friend. The combination of steep terrain and moss-covered rocks lends itself to some tricky footing. The space between the rocks can turn into 'femur-eaters' when duff and dirt fill gaps camouflaged by fallen leaves. Just over 3200ft, enter one of the Catskills' most interesting off trail locations. A huge glade is populated with hay-scented and woodferns around the feet of short black cherry and yellow birches. Scattered throughout are glacial erratics, some very large. In Winter, before the ferns regrow, the glade is a Catskills version of Stonehenge, the erratics deposited by the retreating Wisconsin Ice Sheet. On the glade's other side, the ridge rises slightly toward West Winnisook Mt's 3216ft summit, a letdown after its introduction. With bare trees the view-conscious might be able to spot Fir, Balsam, Panther, Slide, Lone, Table, and East Wildcat. Thanks to botanist Mike Kudish for answering questions about the flora and field of erratics.



WEST WINNISOOK LAKE MT

West Winnisook fern glade and dolmen.

All photos courtesy of Alan Via #429 W174

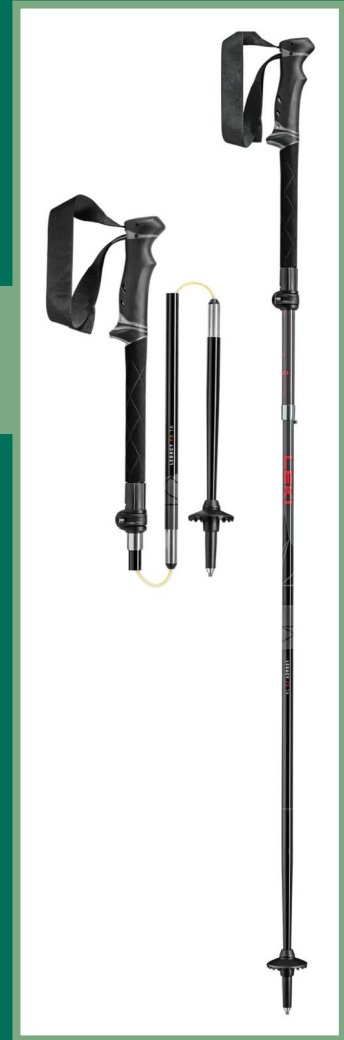
Alan has previously written ***The Catskill 67 – A Hiker's Guide to the Catskill 100 Highest Peaks under 3500'***. ***Doghiker – Great Hikes with Dogs from the Adirondacks through the Catskills***. Next year, *The State University of New York Press* will be publishing ***The Lostkills – Bushwhacking and Hiking the Lesser Known Catskill Peaks***.

THE CATSKILL 3500 CLUB GEAR REVIEW VIDEO: TREKKING POLES

*This month features Moe Lemire from
Camp Catskill in Tannersville*



Enhance your hiking experience with the **Leki Legacy FX TA Trekking Pole**, reviewed by Camp Catskill's in-house hiking guide Moe Lemire. Discover what features Moe loves about the Legacy FX TA for its exceptional stability, comfort, and durability on the diverse trails of the Catskills and beyond. Whether you're navigating through slippery leaves on rugged terrain or getting ready to tackle your winters, these poles are the perfect companion for every adventure. Pick up your pair today at Camp Catskill in Tannersville or at CampCatskill.co.



**CLICK HERE
TO WATCH THE
GEAR REVIEW**

All Catskill 3500 Club members in good standing will receive a 10% discount.



At Camp Catskill, we've got your back, whether you're strolling through easy trails or tackling the challenging Devil's Path. Our collection of hiking gear is tailored to meet your needs, ensuring you're equipped for any adventure. From comfortable essentials for a leisurely hike to rugged gear for the most demanding trails, find everything you need to make your outdoor experience in the Catskill Mountains unforgettable. Camp Catskill: Your reliable partner for every step of the journey, no matter the path you choose.



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PLAYING SECOND FIDDLE

By Neal Burdick

I'll admit it right up front – for most of my life I thought the Catskills played second fiddle to the Adirondacks. Who could blame me? During my formative years in the Plattsburgh area, with views of Whiteface and even the Great Range constantly at hand, with the High Peaks only a 45-minute drive away, I conditioned myself to look down – almost literally – on the Catskills. After all, they had only two peaks over 4,000 feet, an elevation I somehow came to believe distinguished worthy mountains from pretenders to the throne. Their park was about a sixth the size of the Adirondacks', and six times more developed. There was no expanse of "wilderness." They were the home of snobbish resorts. And their proximity to New York City caused them to be packed to the gills every weekend.

Had I ever been to the Catskills, to see for myself? Of course not. I was guilty of accepting what other people, a few maps and some reading were telling me. Call it parochial arrogance. Editing the Adirondack Mountain Club's Catskills Guide Book a few years ago, though, caused me to consider whether I was giving the region a bum rap. I determined to investigate.

My opportunity came one spring day, when I had a couple of hours to kill on a business trip. I swung off the Thruway, drove up through Palenville, parked at the Kaaterskill Falls trailhead, and donned trail shoes. Then, after surviving the scariest road walk of my life, complete with 18-wheelers, school buses and assorted other vehicles threatening either to plaster me against

a rock wall or hurtle me into oblivion, I headed up the path to the falls. I made a more leisurely return visit with my wife this past summer on a day when the hurtling traffic came more in the form of pedestrians on the trail than of drivers on the road.

Each visit was a revelation. The Catskills, I realized, are not inferior to the Adirondacks or any other place. They're just different. There's nothing to be gained from judging them against anywhere else. They are what they are, unique unto themselves, and deserve to be accepted as such.

And how are they different? Not that two visits, both to the same place, qualify me as an expert, but here are a couple of impressions.

For one thing, they're a lot more compact. Distances are less. Each time I left the Thruway, I was astonished at how quickly I arrived at my chosen trailhead. In the Adirondacks, one can spend a lot of time on the road, staring at the backsides of log trucks and Winnebagos, in search of intimacy with nature, wonderful as that state is once it's achieved.

For another, the Catskills look different, both above eye level and below. The horizon is more smooth in comparison to the Adirondacks', the rock underfoot more ragged. This, if I understand my geology correctly, is because the Adirondacks are a glaciated granitic dome, whereas the Catskills are a much younger, eroded sedimentary Appalachian-style plateau. In going from one to the other, the observant hiker can see radically different natural histories a relatively

few miles apart. Kaaterskill Falls reminds me of places I've seen in the southern Appalachians, and even the hill country of Ohio; the Adirondacks resonate with the auras of the north.

Even the water looks different, at least that in Kaaterskill Creek. It's clear, running over magenta rock; much Adirondack water is the color of tea, thanks to tannin in its content, and there's little, if any, hint of red in the streambeds under it.

But the differences aren't really important. What's important is being able to experience the outdoors wherever it happens to be and gain from that experience. We can see as much in one square foot in the Catskills, or anywhere, as we can in millions of acres, if we but look for it, if we truly scrutinize the soil, the water, the vegetation, the signs of animal life.

The transcendentalists, philosophical ancestors of today's environmentalists, argued 150 years ago that one does not need space to appreciate and gain from nature; one needs only sharp eyes, ears and focus. I'll keep that in mind the next time I visit the Catskills. Perhaps climb one of those 4,000 footers, open up my senses and really see the region.

The author is editor of Adirondac, the Adirondack Mountain Club magazine, and of ADK's eight-volume trail guide series. His "day job" is publications editor at St. Lawrence University.

WET & WILD

Water Filtration & Disinfection

By
Ira Orenstein
#417W776

My high school buddy and I discovered hiking when we were teenagers and were immediately drawn to the trails of the Catskills and Adirondacks. As newbies and with no internet as guidance, everything from clothing to equipment became a guessing game. One steamy hot summer day in the Santanoni Range of the Adirondacks, we ran out of water. I remember watching my buddy try skimming droplets off of moss-covered rocks. Finally we made it to the most welcome site of the cascading water of Santanoni Brook where we cooled off and hydrated. In those days we would get our water straight from a stream and untreated despite our murky awareness of the associated risks of acquiring any of a number of water-borne diseases that we somehow dodged. Following is information that I have since acquired about water treatment.

STAY HYDRATED!

We all know that proper hydration is a fundamental human physiological need. Hiking in the mountains requires a heightened level of diligence due to the intensity of the activity. While this is obvious on hot summer days, water replacement is important throughout the year, including in winter. Perspiration can be classified as sensible from sweat glands (sweating) and insensible (not perceivable as sweat), coming from the epidermis through diffusion and evaporation, and from the respiratory lining. Winter's cold drier air also increases fluid needs as water is lost from the respiratory tract lining, particularly during exertion when the lungs are working even harder. Higher elevations, with associated thin, dry air, accelerates fluid loss even further.

WATER IS HEAVY

Many of us try to keep our daypacks as light as possible while carrying all our essentials. When it comes to hiking equipment, manufacturers know this and typically include a product's weight in the technical specifications. With that said, there is no getting around the fact that water is usually the densest item we carry in our pack. Just one liter of water weighs 2.2 pounds (not including the receptacle it is kept in),



and oftentimes we need to consume far more than that amount on a hike. A general recommendation is to drink $\frac{1}{2}$ liter of water per hour. Of course, this will vary depending on conditions and terrain. One way to gauge whether you are drinking enough water during a hike is to check the color of your urine which should be light yellow, and the frequency of urination which should be approximately every 3 hours. So, if you are planning a hike of Panther Mountain and anticipate a 5-hour round-trip time, you would need to carry 2.5 liters of water, which weighs 5.5 pounds and is probably

more than the entire combined weight of the rest of your pack other than in winter. And that's just one peak! An ambitious 10-hour journey would require 5 liters of water weighing in at a whopping 11 pounds!

WATER TREATMENT OPTIONS

Fortunately, most hikes (but not all) in the Catskills have natural water sources along the way that we can use to lighten our load. Springs that are adjacent to trails are noted on the New York-/New Jersey Trail Conference maps. The Catskills are braided with streams that when running can provide access to water. But wait! Are these water sources safe? A general rule is that water from streams in the Catskills should be filtered and/or purified. Here is a link to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) that provides information on water contamination (germs and chemicals, and their associated diseases) [Water Contamination and Diseases | Drinking Water | Healthy Water | CDC](#) and a link to the CDC site that addresses water treatment options [Water Treatment Options When Hiking, Camping or Traveling | Drinking Water | Healthy Water | CDC](#). When considering a water treatment device, check packaging and treatment product information for compliance with EPA standards. Note that the treatment modalities listed below will not remove chemical contaminants such as pesticides.

Boiling: This is the gold standard for deactivation of pathogens in water. The CDC recommends that water should be brought to a rolling boil for 1 minute (if you are at an altitude above 6,500 feet you should boil the water for 3 minutes, since the boiling point of water decreases with higher elevation). Interestingly,

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation recommends that water be boiled for 5 minutes [State Land Camping Rules - NYSDEC](#). Boiling water, however, is usually not a convenient means of pathogen deactivation for the day hiker.

Filtering: This process is exactly how it sounds. Water is run through



a filter that has a particular pore size that will stop anything larger than the pore diameter from getting through. Protozoa like giardia average 10-14 microns in size while cryptosporidium oocysts are 4-6 microns in size (both are derived from fecal matter). Their large size makes them readily removed from water by properly using a good water filter like the Sawyer Squeeze (and there are plenty of other capable filtering devices) that is said to filter 99.9999% of protozoa, bacteria and particulates with its 0.1-micron pore size. The CDC notes that most portable filters will not remove viruses or all bacteria. Viruses are smaller than bacteria, with an average size of 0.005 – 0.3 microns, and are therefore not effectively filtered. Water-borne disease transmission by viruses is typically less of a concern in the United States but is still possible. Norovirus,

for example, can sometimes make its way into the water, as for example, by someone who is unknowingly infected and is swimming in a lake. Hence, filters will not remove all pathogens. Water filters should never be exposed to below freezing temperatures that may damage the filter. If you are camping or hiking with a filter and you expect the temperature to drop below freezing, it is best to keep the filter protected against your body.

Chemical disinfection: Fortunately, water can be disinfected by various means that renders pathogens harmless. There are several chemical water treatment options available. Aquatabs have a chlorine based active ingredient, sodium dichloroisocyanurate which disables viruses, bacteria and Giardia, but the company warns that it has not been shown to be effective against cryptosporidium. The company states that treated water is ready to drink in 30 minutes. Chlorine dioxide-based products like Pota Aqua ClO₂, Katadyn Micropur Tablets, and Aquamira Liquid can disable viruses, bacteria, and





giardia, but according to the CDC have low to moderate effectiveness against cryptosporidium. The downside to using chlorine dioxide-based products is the longer treatment time recommended (4 hours, to maximize disinfection of the cryptosporidium oocyst with its outer shell that makes it more stubborn to treat). Again, the CDC only claims low to moderate effectiveness against cryptosporidium. The CDC notes that iodine-based products should not be used by pregnant women, people with thyroid conditions, and people with known hypersensitivity to iodine, and should not be used for more than a few weeks. Iodine based products discolor the water and render an astringent taste. According to the CDC, iodine and chlorine (not the same as chlorine dioxide or sodium dichloroisocyanurate) have low to moderate effectiveness effective against giardia and no effectiveness against

cryptosporidium. One advantage of iodine tablets is the long shelf life. Generally, for chemical purification to work, the water should not be turbid. Cloudy water can be filtered through a bandana, shirt, coffee filter, or of course, a water filter.

Ultraviolet light: Exposure of water to U.V. light provides rapid water purification, or more accurately stated, deactivation (it does not kill the pathogen; rather, it prevents it from replicating, thus rendering it harmless). U.V. Filtration has its downsides, including product fragility and dependence on battery power. As with chemical disinfection, for UV light to work, the water must be clear and therefore filtration may be needed prior to purification.



WATER SOURCES

What about springs? Is spring water safe to drink without pathogen deactivation? Springs

start underground and the water is naturally filtered by the soil that the rain permeates through. While this may be true, the soil through which the water is passing can still harbor pathogens, as can the exit source of the water which may be exposed to animal contact. **Hence, the safest bet is to always treat your drinking water.** At the other extreme, stagnant ponds, particularly those actively created by residing beavers, probably create higher risk than a spring. If a choice exists, it is generally safest to obtain water from a source that is least likely to be contaminated by animal or human activity.

Trip reports and information centers are useful means of researching whether water sources along your intended route are flowing. Late summer and autumn are times when water sources tend to be less reliable, so it is important to do your research before heading out.

WINTER

Winter presents its own set of challenges, and water filtration is usually not practical. Many winter

hikers keep their water carrier upside down so that if it starts to freeze, the ice will float to the side opposite the spout. Starting the day with your water pre-warmed will delay the freezing process. I like to also carry a 20 ounce thermally insulated bottle that I pour boiling water into. And of course, a stove, fire starter and a light pot are appropriate as a last resort on longer hikes.

LEAVE NO TRACE

We are all stewards of the Catskills and should therefore do our best to keep the water supply pristine. The NYS DEC prohibits camping within 150 feet of ponds, streams, or any other water source (as well as trails and roads) unless there is a designated “camp here” disc (see earlier DEC link). Keep pets away from drinking water sources. Use privies when available. Otherwise, dig a hole 6-8 inches deep, at least 150 feet from water or campsites, and cover human waste with soil and leaves. The same

Trip reports and information centers are useful means of researching whether water sources along your intended route are flowing.

principles apply to burying pet waste. Don't wash yourself, clothing, and dishes with soap within 150 feet of water.

I suspect that the most common method of water treatment in the Catskills among hikers is filtration, which takes care of the larger sized pathogens. Pairing this with an additional step to include some form of chemical or U.V disinfection to also addresses the smaller pathogens (as this combination is recommended by the CDC) adds an even higher level of safety when we drink up. After all, you are a responsible hiker that “leaves no trace” in the mountains, and you deserve that the water consumed “leaves no trace” in you.

The Plane at Stoppel Point

by Henry Dircks



Most hikers are astonished at the sight:
A Piper Cherokee just off the trail;
Four decades, now, since it was lost in flight,
Wings crushed, but cabin intact, nose to tail.

It's said the pilot waved off all alarm
Of worsening conditions in his path,
Believing he would not encounter harm;
Until amidst a winter's stormy wrath.

His body was recovered at the scene;
The plane remains still lodged among the trees.
Now hikers wrestle thoughts of what they've seen,
This wayward person felled by mere degrees.

Some joke at pilot's capability,
While others pause at life's fragility.

CATSKILL 3500 CLUB MEMBERS - 2024 / 3Q

NUMBER	NAME	DATE	LAST PEAK
4489	Andrew Brawner	04/21/24	Rocky
4490	Alison Hope Mesick	07/25/23	North Dome
4491	Laurel Rodriguez	06/09/24	Panther
4492	Aleksandra Ryan	06/08/24	Balsam Lake
4493	Simon Mayo	06/08/24	Balsam Lake
4494	Charles Huberty	05/02/24	Fir
4495	Felicity A Cashman	05/27/24	Hunter
4496	Nathan Richardson	03/13/24	Eagle
4497	Gregg Preuss	06/08/24	Wittenberg
4498	Jodi Preuss	06/08/24	Wittenberg
4499	Kyle Bartosik	06/01/24	Sherrill
4500	Christopher Campbell	06/01/24	Sherrill
4501	Lisa Mackey	05/31/24	Cornell
4502	Mitchell Kolker	06/17/24	Blackhead
4503	Joe Cascio	06/12/24	West Kill
4504	Peter Flockhart	06/11/24	Windham
4505	Noam Yaffe	12/29/23	Slide
4506	Chang Sik Kim	06/23/24	Vly
4507	Diane Liporace	06/23/24	Balsam Lake
4508	Erin Hayner	06/29/24	Friday
4509	Pano Koukopoulos	07/03/24	Friday
4510	Matthew Crossman	06/01/24	Vly
4511	Chris Jager	07/03/24	SW Hunter
4512	Tom Kucinski	07/04/24	Panther
4513	Jessica Kuonen	07/07/24	Blackhead
4514	Jhared Madrid	03/13/24	Balsam

NUMBER	NAME	DATE	LAST PEAK
4515	Angel Ansina	01/01/23	West Kill
4516	Victoria Anderson	07/20/24	Plateau
4517	Pamela Chiani	07/20/24	Plateau
4518	Matthew Starr	07/20/24	Windham
4519	James L Brinkley	10/28/24	Rusk
4520	Heidi Simpkins	07/21/24	Big Indian
4521	Philip Ballbach	07/11/24	Halcott
4522	Gavin Flavell	07/27/24	North Dome
4523	Bob Butscher	07/27/24	Panther
4524	Diana Niland	07/29/24	Cornell
4525	Josyf Hayda	08/02/24	Rocky
4526	Christy Greening	08/12/24	Rocky
4527	Paul Danner	06/12/24	West Kill
4528	Travis Sefzik	08/16/24	Kaaterskill
4529	Steven Politi	08/18/24	Kaaterskill
4530	Laura Wong-Pan	08/17/24	Sugarloaf
4531	Raymond Wong-Pan	08/11/24	Rocky
4532	Brittany Bausch	05/25/24	Vly
4533	Paul Whitten	08/25/24	Balsam Lake
4534	Loren Bennett	08/31/24	Friday
4535	Lauren Bancroft	09/02/24	West Kill
4536	Peter Kinney	09/03/24	Kaaterskill
4537	Christopher Collins	08/06/24	Slide
4538	Rita Murtaugh	09/05/24	Slide
4539	William Wallace	09/05/24	Windham

LIFE MEMBERS

1192	Liz Lesar	4258	Brent Pierce	4511	Chris Jager	4536	Peter Kinney
1815	William R McFarlane	4275	Tom Gabrielline	4520	Heidi Simpkins	ASP	Alisa Harrison
4234	Brett Brandt	4494	Charles Huberty	4535	Lauren Bancroft		

NEW WINTER MEMBERS

NUMBER	NAME	REGULAR #	DATE	LAST PEAK
1667	Moe Lemire	2918	03/12/24	Kaaterskill
1668	Nathan Richardson	4496	03/13/24	Eagle
1669	James Grady	3886	01/06/24	Balsam Lake



THE CATSKILL 3500 CLUB GROUP HIKES: PRINCIPLES & GUIDANCE



Familiarize yourself with the seven Leave No Trace Principles for all your hikes.

- 1** Plan Ahead and Prepare
- 2** Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
- 3** Dispose of Waste Properly
- 4** Leave What You Find
- 5** Minimize Campfire Impacts
- 6** Respect Wildlife
- 7** Be Considerate of Other Visitors



THE CATSKILL 3500 CLUB'S HIKING CREDO INCLUDES THREE BASIC PRINCIPLES:

- 1** Follow the Rules
- 2** Use your Map & Compass
- 3** Know your Limitations

THE CLUB ALSO PROMOTES THE ADHERENCE TO THE HIKESAFE HIKER RESPONSIBILITY CODE.

hikeSafe encourages hikers to be prepared:



- ✓ with knowledge and gear
- ✓ to leave your plans
- ✓ to stay together
- ✓ to turn back for emergencies
- ✓ to share the hiker responsibility code with others

Assumed Risk

Cool Weather & Summer

Hiking involves certain inherent risks and persons participating do so at their own risk. In cool weather, hike participants should avoid cotton clothing, as it retains dampness and the resulting chill can result in hypothermia, which can lead to death. In summer participants should have available in their pack garments of wool or fleece and a headlamp, should one have to unexpectedly spend the night in the mountains. Anyone not properly equipped may be refused permission to participate, at the leader's absolute discretion.

Hike Pace

Pace is indicated as one (or a range) of the following, based on the intended moving pace. It should be understood that for any particular hike, actual pace is usually slower in steep/icy/difficult terrain or while bushwhacking.

- Relaxed (1 mph or less)**
- Moderate (about 1.5 mph)**
- Quick (about 2 mph)**
- Fast (faster than 2 mph)**

Rating System

Please be advised that the hikes listed herein would most likely be rated more difficult by clubs who hike in non-mountainous terrains. Club hikes may be canceled at the hike leader's discretion if dangerous weather conditions exist. When in doubt (heavy rain, high winds, or other serious weather conditions), please contact your hike leader.

Private Property

All Catskill 3500 Club hikes respect "No Trespassing" signs and the owners' wishes in such regards; leaders shall obtain permission to cross private property when so required. Identify private property via the NYNJTC Catskill Trail maps (2023 13th edition), and determine property ownership via online county tax maps.

Cold Weather & Winter

Hiking involves certain inherent risks and persons participating do so at their own risk. In cold weather, hike participants should avoid cotton clothing, as it retains dampness and the resulting chill can result in hypothermia, which can lead to death. Instead, wear (and have available in your pack) garments of wool or fleece. Silk or polypropylene make the best base layers, as they tend to wick moisture away from the body. Hats, gloves and a headlamp must be part of the standard fall kit. Ice and snow can come early and unexpectedly to these peaks; if there is any doubt about the conditions that may be encountered, each hiker is strongly advised to bring traction aids to the trailhead; the leader may advise that these do not have to be taken on the hike, but be aware that while there may be bare ground at the trailhead, there is often very significant ice and snow as the elevation increases, which could result in those improperly prepared being sent back. The hike leader may specify required clothing or gear for a hike. Anyone not properly equipped may be refused permission to participate, at the leader's absolute discretion. Fall in the Catskills is not to be treated lightly.

Group Size

Maximum group size is limited to **12 persons** including hikers and leaders, but a leader may specify a smaller groups size. During fledgling season (June 1-July 15), hikes on trailless peaks will be limited to **8 hikers. The minimum group size is 3.** The hikes listed here and on the online events calendar are official Catskill 3500 Club hikes. Any other advertised hikes to the 3500 peaks are private hikes and, while they can count for membership to the Club, the Club is not affiliated with those hikes.

Blaze Orange Alert

Please refer to this DEC link (<https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/65231.html>) for the summary of hunting seasons. Wear orange, avoid white and remember the same for your four-legged hiking companions!

CLUB HIKE SCHEDULE - OCTOBER 2024

Sat. Oct. 5 - BALSAM & EAGLE

Distance: 9 mi. Ascent: 2900', Elevs: 3600', 3600'
Slow Pace Trail Hike.
Registration Period: Sept 23 - Oct 3
Leader: Michael Bongar #2173 W994
michael@bongarbiz.com

Sat. Oct. 5 - FRIDAY, BALSAM CAP, ROCKY, LONE, TABLE & PEEKAMOOSSE

Distance: 12 mi. Ascent: 5000', Elevs: 3692', 3608', 3487', 3700', 3825', 3819'
Long, challenging bushwhack and trail hike at a slower pace.
Challenging hike with fantastic adventures and scrambles. Hike experience required. Car shuttle required.
Leader: Christopher Leon Garibian #3881 W1474
christophergaribian@gmail.com

Sun. Oct. 6 - WITTENBERG & CORNELL

Distance: 9.4 mi. Ascent: 3104', Elevs: 3782', 3857'
Moderately challenging hike with some scrambles and great views.
Relaxed Pace. Target between 1 to 1.2 mph including breaks.
Leader: Roger Green #2627 W1383
roggr5959@gmail.com

Tue. Oct. 8 - PLATEAU, SUGARLOAF, TWIN, INDIAN HEAD

Distance: 9.5 mi. Ascent: 4300', Elevs: 3835', 3783', 3650', 3573'
Trailed hike of 4 peaks of the Devil's path at a moderate to quick pace. Shuttle required.
Leader: Maple D'Angelo #2910 W1168
nmdange@live.com

Tue. Oct. 8 - SLIDE

Distance: 6.3 mi. Ascent: 1794', Elev: 4184'
A diversity saunter in the woods of biology, geology, history, Leave No Trace and People. Pace will be determined by the group.
Approximate time: 6 hours.
Registration Period: Sept 20 - Oct 1
Leaders: Moe Lemire #2921 and Vicki Ferreira #4014
Moejlemire@gmail.com

Sat. Oct. 19 - WINDHAM HIGH PEAK

Distance: 6.2 mi. Ascent: 1575', Elev: 3525'
Relaxed pace, beginners welcome.
Leaders: Ira Orenstein #415 W777; Karen Bloom #1733 W776
ksbiho@aol.com

Sat. Oct. 19 - VLY & BEARPEN

Distance: 6.5 mi. Ascent: 2100', Elevs: 3530', 3603'
Moderate paced trail/bushwhack.
Leader: Sue Hall #2460 W1091
shall@catskill.net

Sat. Oct 19 - ROCKY & LONE

Distance: 9.8 mi. Ascent: 2040', Elevs: 3700', 3487'
Bushwhack at a moderate pace
Registration Period: Oct 11 - Oct 17
Leader: Jake Haisley #2488 1065W
jacobhaisley@gmail.com

Sun. Oct. 20 - HUNTER & SW HUNTER

Distance: 10 mi. Ascent: 2300', Elevs: 3753', 4030'
Mostly trail hike with bushwhack. Relaxed Pace. Target between 1 to 1.2 mph including breaks.
Leader: Roger Green #2627 W1383
roggr5959@gmail.com

Sun. Oct. 20 - BALSAM & EAGLE

Distance: 9.35 mi. Ascent: 2180', Elevs: 3607', 3583'
Moderate slow pace from Rider Hollow, beginners welcome.
Leader: Christopher Leon Garibian #3881 W1474
christophergaribian@gmail.com

Tue Oct. 22 - HALCOTT, VLY & BEARPEN

Distance: 3.5 mi. Ascent: 1700', Elev: 3509' (Halcott)
Distance: 6.5 mi. Ascent: 2100', Elevs: 3541', 3587' (Vly & Bearpen)
Short Steep Bushwhack followed by Moderate Bushwhack/Trailed Hike. Hike one or both.
Leader: Maple D'Angelo #2910 W1168
nmdange@live.com

Sat. Oct. 26 - EAST WILDCAT & WILDCAT

Distance: 10 mi. Ascent: 2149', Elevs: 3340', 3163'
Moderately challenging bushwhack at a brisk pace.
This adventure will take you to the summits of two rarely visited Catskill 67 peaks, providing an authentic Catskill experience.
**Peaks are not required for membership*
Leader: Matthew McBride #3841 W1574
matthew.mcbride@trailsandmountains.com

Sat. Oct. 26 - FIR, BIG INDIAN, EAGLE, BALSAM

Distance: 14 mi, Ascent: 3700', Elevs: 3629', 3699', 3583', 3607'
Long, challenging bushwhack and trail hike from Biscuit Brook to McKenley Hollow at a moderate to quick pace. Shuttle required.
Leader: Maple D'Angelo #2910 W1168
nmdange@live.com

Sun. Oct. 27 - NAVIGATION: MAP & COMPASS

Bluestone Wild Forest (Kingston, NY)
Distance: 3-5 mi. Ascent: 500', Elev: 625'
Registration Period: Oct 18 - 25
E-mail leader for details and advance task (1-hour on own time)
Leader: Lyn W. #2865 W1312
catskill35r@gmail.com

Wed. Oct. 30 - PANTHER

Distance: 6.6 mi. Ascent: 1800', Elev: 3724'
Moderate relaxed pace hike in & out from Giant Ledges parking lot.
Registration Period: Oct 19 - Oct 26
Leader: Tonda Highley #1944 W857
thighley1944@gmail.com

Register for a 3500 Club hike:

catskill3500club.org/hike-schedule

Or scan the QR code:



CLUB HIKE SCHEDULE - NOVEMBER 2024

Sat. Nov. 2 - WITTENBERG, CORNELL & SLIDE

Distance: 10 mi. Ascent: 3600', Elevs: 3782', 3857', 4184'
Challenging hike with fantastic adventures and scrambles. Hike experience required.
Slow paced hike. Car shuttle required.
Leader: Christopher Leon Garibian #3881 W1474
christophergaribian@gmail.com

Sat. Nov. 2 - RUSK

Distance: 3 mi. Ascent: 1587', Elev: 3680'
Slow Pace Bushwhack, out and back.
Registration Period: Oct 22 - Oct 31
Leader: Michael Bongar #2173, W994
michael@bongarbiz.com



Fall views from the Escarpment Trail.
Photo courtesy of Felicity Cashman #4495

Sat. Nov. 9 - TABLE, PEEKAMOOSE, LONE, ROCKY, BALSAM CAP, FRIDAY

Distance: 12 mi. Ascent: 4129', Elevs: 3849', 3845', 3721', 3494', 3622', 3691'
Prepare for a strenuous hike that includes both on-trail and off-trail segments across rugged terrain, covering six of the Catskill 3500 peaks. The pace will be moderate to fast, so come ready for a demanding adventure. Car shuttle required.
Leader: Matthew McBride #3841 W1574
matthew.mcbride@trailsandmountains.com

Wed. Nov. 13 - BLACKHEAD, BLACK DOME & THOMAS COLE

Distance: 7.5 mi. Ascent: 2700', Elevs: 3940', 3994', 3953'
Challenging and difficult hike. Hike experience required.
Slow paced hike. Car shuttle required.
Leader: Christopher Leon Garibian #3881 W1474
christophergaribian@gmail.com

Tue. Nov. 19 - KAATERSKILL HIGH PEAK

Distance: 8.3 mi. Ascent: 1990', Elev: 3652'
A diversity saunter in the woods of biology, geology, history, Leave No Trace and People. Pace will be determined by the group.
Approximate time: 8 hours.
Registration Period: Oct 20 - Nov 10
Leaders: Moe Lemire #2921 and Vicki Ferreira #4014
Moejlemire@gmail.com

Sat. Nov. 23 - PANTHER & GIANT LEDGE

Distance: 8.3 mi. Ascent: 2920', Elevs: 3724'
Moderate paced trail hike from Fox Hollow. Shuttle required
Leader: Sue Hall #2460, W1091
shall@catskill.net

Sat. Nov. 23 - BLACKHEAD, BLACK DOME & THOMAS COLE

Distance: 7.3 mi. Ascent: 2650', Elevs: 3940', 3994', 3953'
Relaxed moderate paced hike with challenging climbs & beautiful views.
Shuttle required.
Registration Period: Nov 6 - Nov 13
Leader: Tonda Highley #1944 W857
thighley1944@gmail.com

Sun. Nov. 24 - SLIDE, CORNELL, & WITTENBERG

Distance: 9.56 mi. Ascent: 2743', Elevs: 4154', 3852', 3783'
Moderate paced trail hike. Shuttle required.
Leader: Sue Hall #2460 W1091
shall@catskill.net

CLUB HIKE SCHEDULE - DECEMBER 2024

Wed. Dec. 4 - INDIAN HEAD, TWIN, SUGARLOAF & PLATEAU

Distance: 13 mi. Ascent: 4700', Elevs: 3573', 3650', 3783', 3853'
Eastern Devil's Path is a challenging and difficult hike. This is not a beginner hike; you will need to have the required hiking experience to enjoy this adventure. Will traverse at a slower pace and a shuttle is required.

Leader: Christopher Leon Garibian #3881 W1474
christophergaribian@gmail.com

Sat. Dec. 7 - BALSAM LAKE VIA ALDER LAKE

Distance: 9 mi. Ascent: 2297', Elev: 3727'
Experience a stunning hike that showcases the best of the western Catskills. This journey will feature a variety of terrains and proceed at a moderate to fast pace, offering a diverse and rewarding adventure. Please note that a car shuttle will be required for this adventure.

Leader: Matthew McBride #3841 W1574
matthew.mcbride@trailsandmountains.com

Sat. Dec. 7 - SW HUNTER, HUNTER, RUSK

Distance: 12 mi. Ascent: 3200', Elevs: 3753', 4030', 3686'
Bushwhack and trail hike at a moderate pace
Leader: Maple D'Angelo #2910 W1168
nmdange@live.com

Sat. Dec. 7 - PEEKAMOOSE & TABLE

Distance 10.1 mi. Ascent: 2689', Elevs: 3845', 3849'
Moderate paced trail hike from Peekamoose Road.
Leader: Sue Hall #2460 W1091
shall@catskill.net

Sun. Dec 8 - BALSAM

Distance: 5.2 mi. Ascent: 1607', Elev: 3607'
Relaxed Pace. Beginners welcome. Target between 1 to 1.2 mph including breaks.
Leader: Roger Green #2627 W1383
roggr5959@gmail.com

Sun. Dec 8 - HALCOTT

Distance: 4 mi. Ascent: 1800', Elevs: 3509'
Beginner bushwhack, very steep, but short fantastic hike. The pace will be slow and all beginners are welcome.
Leader: Christopher Leon Garibian #3881 W1474
christophergaribian@gmail.com

Sat. Dec. 14 - WEST KILL

Distance 6.8 mi. Ascent: 1900', Elevs: 3891'
Moderate paced trail hike via Diamond Notch Falls
Leader: Sue Hall #2460 W1091
shall@catskill.net

Tue. Dec. 17 - WEST KILL

Distance: 7 mi. Ascent: 1960', Elev: 3898'
A diversity saunter in the woods of biology, geology, history, Leave No Trace and People. Pace will be determined by the group.
Approximate time: 6 hours
Registration Period: Nov 20 - Dec 10
Leader: Moe Lemire #2921 and Vicki Ferreira #4014
Moejlemire@gmail.com

Sat. Dec. 21 - NORTH DOME & SHERRILL

Distance: 8 mi. Ascent: 3100', Elevs: 3692', 3608'
Slow Pace Bushwhack.
Shuttle required.
Registration Period: Dec 10 - Dec 19
Leader: Michael Bongar #2173 W994
michael@bongarbiz.com

Sat. Dec. 21 - WITTENBERG, CORNELL, SLIDE

Distance: 10 mi. Ascent: 3600', Elevs: 3782', 3857', 4184'
Trailed hike with some challenging scrambles at a moderate to quick pace. Shuttle required.
Required winter peak.
Leader: Maple D'Angelo #2910 W1168
nmdange@live.com

Sun. Dec. 22 - BLACKHEAD

Distance: 5.2 mi. Ascent: 1772', Elev: 3940'
Required winter peak. Pace will be relaxed, but not too relaxed.
Target between 1 to 1.2 mph including breaks.
Leader: Roger Green #2627 W1383
roggr5959@gmail.com

Thu. Dec. 26 - FRIDAY, BALSAM CAP, ROCKY, LONE, TABLE, & PEEKAMOOSE

Distance: 12 mi. Ascent: 5000', Elevs: 3692', 3608', 3487', 3700', 3825', 3819'
Long, challenging bushwhack and trail hike at a moderate to quick pace. Shuttle required.
Leader: Maple D'Angelo #2910 W1168
nmdange@live.com



Windham, just beginning to show its true color.
Photo courtesy of Rebecca Quackenbush #4402