

The CATSKILL CANISTER

Volume 58 - Number 1
January - March 2025



View from Hunter Mountain Fire Tower. Photo courtesy of Zoe Mullen



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The Catskill Canister

Volume 58 - No. 1 | January-March 2025

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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 we wrap up 2024, I would like to express my gratitude to our many volunteers. Those include our Board Members, our Committee Chairs, Trailhead Stewards, Hike Leaders, Highway Cleanup Team, Trail Maintainers, Catskill Mountain Search and Rescue and YOU, our Membership.

As you read through Jack Walker's current issue you will see what our selfless volunteer team has accomplished. One of our new Board members brought a group of her scholars from the Isle of Manhattan to work with a crew of epic trail maintainers. I don't know if they were reciting any Lord Alfred Tennyson, but you can ask Julie when you see her skiing on the trails.

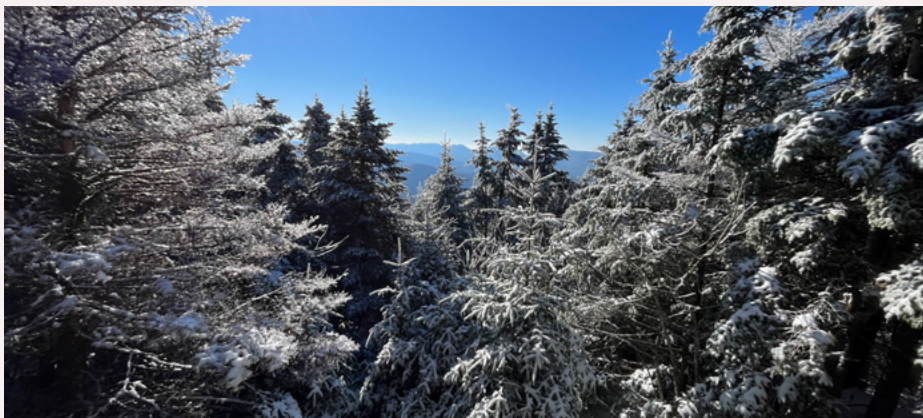
Next year please join Lourdes Sonera and Colleen Hardcastle and the 67 volunteers who provided information for hikers at the Slide and Woodland Valley trailheads.

Around 15 years ago I was on my first climb up Mt. Marcy. We were approaching the tree line and at a popular viewpoint my son Brad started talking with a group of hikers and asking them about their feet. I looked and noticed that they were hiking barefoot. They were from Ft. Drum. Well, please read the guest article written by another former Army Ranger, Ken Posner, the Chair of the NYNJ Trail Conference. You won't want to miss Ken's article about barefoot hiking in the mountains.

Our epic drought has ended and there is plenty of snow in the mountains.

Thanks to VP Lori Herpen our Giving Tuesday Campaign was a success. You will see that we now have exclusive club apparel available, and we are working tirelessly to update our website.

If you would like to volunteer, please get in touch with me and I'll see you at the Winter Weekend Gathering at Woodstock Brewing on Sat., Jan. 18, 2025.



On the cover: North Dome Cliffs. Photo courtesy of Siu Samantha Yuen #2894 W1311

Protect, Preserve & Inspire



Why Give to the Club?

Because Together, Our Impact & Efforts Make a Difference!

Leading Hikes and Welcoming All: Through our official club hikes, we strive to create an inclusive community where everyone is welcome. Whether you're a seasoned hiker or a first-time explorer, the Catskill 3500 Club maintains an active hike schedule that provides opportunities for all to explore, learn, and enjoy the beauty of the Catskills together.

Preservation and Conservation: This year, the Club funded two special projects; one supporting Bicknell's Thrush research and another supporting the Bramley Mountain Fire Tower restoration project. Your donations allow us to make impactful contributions to important projects that benefit the mountains.

Stewardship Programs: Thanks to your generosity and the graciousness of many volunteers, our Trailhead Steward Program has grown, educating hikers about Leave No Trace principles and protecting fragile ecosystems. With your help, we can continue to expand this program to be even more effective in the coming years.

Support Search and Rescue Efforts: The Catskill Mountain Search and Rescue Team, supported by the Club, plays a critical role in ensuring hiker safety. Your donation helps provide training, resources, and equipment so that our dedicated team of volunteers is fully prepared when called upon.

Connect and Inspire: From an upgraded newsletter, The Catskill Canister, to enhanced social media outreach, we are connecting with more members than ever, sharing the joy and responsibility of Catskill hiking. Your gift helps us tell the Catskill 3500 Club story far and wide.

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

ONLINE DONATION

Scan the QR code to make an online donation. Payments will be processed through Paypal.



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.

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.

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.

Welcome New Assistant for Canister Maintenance



Mike Siudy #1728 W695

The canisters on the summits of the trailless peaks in the Catskills are not just iconic markers for hikers; they also represent a collaborative effort between the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and the Catskill 3500 Club. While the canisters themselves are owned by the

NYSDEC, the Club has an agreement to maintain them, ensuring they are in good condition for hikers to sign the logbooks and enjoy the summit experience.

This important work is carried out by Club members who are appointed by the President and must sign a Volunteer Service Agreement (VSA) with the NYSDEC. The VSA is a formal document that ensures all volunteer activities align with state regulations and wilderness management guidelines. By signing this agreement, Club volunteers become official partners in preserving the wilderness experience while respecting the policies of the NYSDEC. This collaboration highlights the shared commitment between the Club and the DEC to protect and enhance the Catskills for future generations.

The Club's canister maintenance efforts, led by board member Jim Bouton, now have additional support with the appointment of a new assistant, member **Mike Siudy**, #1728 W695. Since Mike was first introduced to hiking and rock climbing while attending college, he has spent the past 25 years exploring the mountains throughout the northeastern US and beyond. Having settled in New Paltz, the Gunks and the Catskills have been home ever since. Long days spent linking multiple peaks by remote off trail routes is Mike's favorite way to experience the mountains. After years of hiking with his wife, Tara, lots of friends and dogs, he has completed two Catskill grids and many other peak bagging lists in the region, including the NE115. He has even connected all 35 Catskill peaks in one 140-mile-long hike/jog. Mike has served as a trail maintainer and a trail race director in the Catskills as well. Currently as a high school Earth Science teacher, he tries to share his experiences with his students and get them to understand the beauty of the mountains and the need for environmental awareness. Mike's longstanding commitment to wilderness ethics and conservation, exemplified by his dedication as a trail maintainer and race coordinator,

reflects his deep sense of giving back to the outdoor community. This dedication, along with the balance it provides to his impressive hiking accomplishments, made him the perfect choice for the job. Welcome Mike!



When visiting the trailless peaks, please practice proper canister etiquette to help preserve the wilderness experience. Ensure the canister lid is securely closed after signing the logbook to protect it from weather damage. Be respectful of the logbook by keeping entries brief and avoiding inappropriate language or drawings. Do not leave trash, items, or personal notes inside the canister, as these can disrupt the natural environment. Remember, the canisters are only there because of the NYSDEC's permission, so it's important to treat them—and the surrounding wilderness—with care and respect to ensure this privilege continues.

In Memorium

Peter Spielvogel, #1708

Peter Spielvogel #1708 was born in Danbury, Conn., on June 21, 1987 and died suddenly at home in Kingston, NY, on November 6, 2024. He traveled throughout the US and Canada and was passionate about spending time outdoors, hiking, and photography.

Trail Mix: News & Notes

From Peaks to Posts, Connect with Us on Social Media

The Catskills are calling—and you can answer anytime! The Catskill 3500 Club is expanding our social media presence, bringing the beauty, adventure, and spirit of the mountains straight to your screen.



Felicity Cashman #4495

We're thrilled to welcome **Felicity Cashman**, Member #4495 to the Social Media Committee as the Club's new Content Creator. With a passion for hiking, storytelling, and connecting communities, Felicity is bringing the beauty and spirit of the Catskills to life on our social media channels. Felicity has a diverse background, she holds a master's in music education and educational psychology from the former College of Saint Rose in Albany, New York. As a percussionist, she has performed with the Albany, Schenectady, and Susquehanna Symphony Orchestras. She taught music in public schools in Maryland and New York, and she has also worked as a lead flight attendant. Currently, Felicity is pursuing a dual environmental science/digital media arts degree. In her limited free time, she runs an art and digital media company that provides content to small local businesses and individuals. Felicity enjoys hiking with her dog, Chloe, in the Catskills, Vermont, and the Adirondacks whenever possible. She currently has one division left of the Long Trail of Vermont, completed three states of Appalachian trail, and is a 500 miler for the Ice Age trail in the Midwest. Welcome Felicity!

Catskill 3500 Club FB Page

Exciting News! Our official Facebook page has grown into a thriving community with over 8,300 followers, connecting hikers and nature enthusiasts from all over. Even more exciting, our newly launched Instagram account is gaining followers every day, bringing breathtaking Catskill views, trail updates, and hiker stories to a whole new platform. But that's not all! Check out our YouTube channel, where Board Member Chris Adams shares Hiker 101 videos packed with valuable tips for planning safe and enjoyable adventures in the Catskills. These videos

are perfect for both beginners and seasoned hikers looking to enhance their skills and knowledge.

Don't miss our photo of the month contest! Submit your favorite Catskills shots, vote for the best, and see the winning photo featured as our Facebook cover photo. Also, check out our Peak a Week feature. Every week, we spotlight a different Catskill peak, sharing its unique story, trail tips, and interesting facts. We encourage you to share your majestic photos, share your own stories and inspire others. Follow along and discover new facts and fun stories.

Most importantly, we strive to create a space where everyone feels welcome to share their experiences and engage with the community through thoughtful, positive and encouraging comments. By fostering an inclusive and supportive environment, we encourage meaningful conversations and connections that celebrate our shared love for the Catskills. If you haven't yet, follow us on all platforms and join the adventure!



To contact the social media committee, send an email to: socialmedia@catskill3500club.org.

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: **Tracy Rakin #3961**- Adopt-a-Trailhead service and **Matthew McBride #3841** for his service in Adopt-a-highway, Adopt-a-Trailhead and Wilderness First Aid programs.

Trail Mix: News & Notes

We Took a Hike on National Take-a-Hike Day — and It Was Epic!

In honor of National Take a Hike Day which took place on November 17, members of the Catskill 3500 Club gathered for a memorable trek up Overlook Mountain. The hike was led by Club President Michael Bongar, whose passion for the Catskills is as unwavering as the trail itself. Several members registered for the hike including board members, and some of our youngest members, embodying the spirit of community that makes our club so special. We had a full group, lovely weather and the kind of trail magic that only Overlook Mountain can provide!



From crispy autumn leaves that scattered the path to sweeping summit views that stretched for miles, every step was a celebration of nature's beauty. It was a perfect day to honor National Take a Hike Day – with sunshine, crisp mountain air and unforgettable views.



Skiing the Catskill High Peaks: A Record is Set by #3500!

On November 30, Board Member Julie McGuire #3500 became the first woman (and 3rd person) to ski all 33 Catskill high peaks, finishing on Kaaterskill High Peak. This major accomplishment is the culmination of a ski project that began in January 2021. Julie was accompanied by Jamie Kennard who was the first to ski all of the high peaks along with his brother Doug. Julie writes in her FB post about the journey, *"No matter how confident you think you are, there are situations that make you question yourself. When I climb and ski something challenging, I have indisputable proof of my worth. I think everybody should have access to the outdoors so that they can experience the state of consciousness natural beauty facilitates and test their mettle with challenges."* A short film is forthcoming, documenting this incredible accomplishment.



Congratulations Julie!

Our Condolences



Our hearts go out to the family of **Seuk Kim**, who tragically lost his life in the plane crash on Windham High Peak on November 24, 2024. Seuk was remembered fondly by his friends and family: [Seuk Kim's Obituary - Springfield, VA | Ever Loved](#) Our thoughts are with his loved ones during this difficult time.

Winter CATSKILL 3500 CLUB WEEKEND JANUARY 18-19, 2025

Mark your calendars for the **55th Annual Catskill 3500 Club Winter Weekend**, set for **January 18 and 19, 2025!** This annual event offers an exciting opportunity for members and friends to gather, explore the Catskills, and enjoy the winter season in good company.

The weekend will feature over a dozen hikes, including treks to the four required winter peaks, making it a great chance for those aiming to complete their winter 3500 challenge. Whether you're an experienced winter hiker or just starting out, there's something for everyone.

[Click here to check out the Winter Weekend hike schedule featuring 16 hikes as of the Winter Canister release.](#)



**WOODSTOCK
BREWING**
CATSKILL MTNS. USA

to connect with fellow hikers and share your experiences from the day's hikes.

David White, our Membership Chair, will be onsite with **patches, stickers, decals, pins**, and his renowned books, which make perfect gifts or additions to your collection. We will also have a table set up with a limited supply of club-branded apparel available (cash or check preferred). Additionally, **Camp Catskill** will have a pop-up table, and there may even be a few more surprises in store—be sure to stop by and see what's new!

So that we can take an accurate head count, please RSVP your attendance if you plan to come to Woodstock Brewing to: winterweekend@catskill3500club.org

On **Saturday evening**, we'll gather in a private room at **Woodstock Brewing at 4:30 p.m.** for a casual get-together. Feel free to drop in for a beer or stay for dinner. Everyone is responsible for their own food and beverage, so you can enjoy the evening at your own pace. This relaxed atmosphere is a perfect way

Winter Weekend History

The Beginnings: Ironically, the very first Winter Weekend also took place on January 18 and 19 in 1970. The Club gathered at the Mountain Gate in Oliverea, the 1969 Canister quotes in parenthesis "rea rhymes with sea". The Club had approximately 65 members at that time and the Reverend Ray L. Donahue was President.

Winter Weekend began as a way to bring together members who were passionate about winter hiking and the challenges of summiting the Catskill peaks in winter conditions. As winter hiking and peak-bagging in the Catskills grew in popularity, the Winter Weekend became a way to celebrate the season, encourage participation in winter hiking, and provide a social gathering for members. With just 70 members, it also provided a structured and communal way for members to tackle winter peaks, emphasizing the safety and skills needed to navigate the mountains in challenging conditions.

The celebration of Winter Weekend continues today as a highlight of the club's calendar, bringing together members of all levels and continuing the legacy of enjoying and preserving the Catskill Mountains. This is a wonderful opportunity to get involved, meet other members, and celebrate the Catskill Mountains we all cherish. Whether you're participating in the hikes or joining us for the evening social, we look forward to seeing you there!

Keep a lookout on social media and your inboxes for more details as we approach the weekend and get ready for a memorable time in the heart of the Catskills. We can't wait to celebrate the winter season with you!

Lodging Options for Winter Weekend

[Phoenicia Bell](#)

[Slide Mt Motel](#)

[Phoenicia Lodge](#)

[Catskill Rose Lodging & Dining](#)

[The Graham & Co](#)

[The Leeway](#)

[Catskills Seasons Inn](#)

[Hotel Dylan Woodstock](#)

[Shandaken Inn](#)

[The Perch Cottages](#)

[The Emerson](#)





*View from Jimmy Dolan Notch.
Photo courtesy of Siu Samantha Yuen, #2894 W1311*

Trailhead Steward Program 2024 Season Recap

By Bryan Burnham #3455, 1373W

In October, the 3500 Club's Trailhead Steward Program completed its fourth season welcoming visitors to the Catskills at the Slide Mountain and Woodland Valley trailheads. Sixty seven club members and aspirants served at least one trailhead day at one of the two locations (many at both locations!), which is consistent with 67 volunteers in 2023, and up from 20 volunteers in 2022. During the 2024 season, which ran from Memorial Day weekend through Indigenous People's Day weekend, the dedicated stewards contributed over 1,450 service hours, engaging with 3,922 visitors, 306 dogs, and a few mountain cats. Stewards spent beautiful weekend days promoting Leave No Trace principles, answering hiker questions about the trails, weather, and backcountry conditions, offering water to hikers on hot days, encouraging hikers to stay safe and know their limits, and ensuring that visitors had positive experiences.

The 3,922 hikers and backpackers counted was less than the 4,150 visitors we interacted with during the 2023 season, but this is certainly an undercount due to our being able to cover only 73% of volunteer days. Indeed, the Trailhead Steward program will be looking for new volunteers to promote safe and responsible hiking, while meeting other members and enjoying the outdoors. Volunteering counts toward the 3500 Club Service Award, allows stewards time to hike after their shift (8:00AM - 3:00PM), and at Woodland Valley we have several weekends set aside where volunteers can make use of one of the campsites.

The hikers and visitors, NYS Rangers, Woodland Valley staff, and members of the nearby Winnisook Club greatly appreciate our presence at the trailheads due to the valuable information and service we provide to the Catskills. The program is open to all 3500 Club Members and Aspirants, with training and information provided by our dedicated steering committee members; please reach out if you are interested in joining the Trailhead Steward program in 2025:

trailstewards@catskill3500club.org



2024 STATISTICS	TOTAL	SLIDE MOUNTAIN	WOODLAND VALLEY
VOLUNTEERS	67	45	42
VOLUNTEER HOURS	1,457.50	706.75	750.75
HIKERS COUNTED	3,922	2,248	1,674
DOGS	306	189	117
DAYS COVERED	73%	67%	78%



THE HIKE LEADER PATCH GETS A FRESH DESIGN!



The Outings Committee is thrilled to unveil our newly designed Hike Leader Patch, a special recognition for hike leaders who go above and beyond in service to the Club and its mission. The award has long been a part of the Club's outings program, but we felt it was time to give the hike leader patch an updated look.

This patch is more than just a symbol—it's a testament to the dedication, skill, and generosity of our hike leaders who guide members, aspirants and fellow adventurers in exploring the beauty and challenges of the Catskills.

To earn this prestigious patch, hike leaders must be members in good standing (current on dues) and meet the following criteria:

Lead Six Scheduled Hikes

Eligible leaders must lead at least six scheduled Club hikes within a 12 month period. These hikes can be any combination of outings but must include:

- **One winter hike**
(conducted between December 21 and March 21).
- **One bushwhack**

Trail Maintenance Participation

Leaders must participate in one Club-sponsored trail maintenance outing, contributing to the care and preservation of the trails we all enjoy.

By completing these requirements, leaders demonstrate their commitment to the Catskill 3500 Club's goals of fostering safe and enjoyable hiking while preserving the region's natural beauty.

Hike leaders are the heart of our Club's outings program, and this patch is our way of saying thank you for the time, energy, and expertise they dedicate to making every hike a memorable experience. From navigating challenging terrain to sharing their knowledge, leaders help strengthen our community and ensure the Club's continued success.

If you are a hike leader and have already completed the requirements, please complete and submit the application on our website at: [Hike Leader Certificate Form | Catskill 3500 Club](#)

Not a leader but would like to take the next step? This is a great opportunity to join the ranks of our fantastic team of volunteers. Training and mentorship are available. If you are interested in becoming a hike leader, please send an email to us at: outings@catskill3500club.org

The Outings Committee,

Yanny Hecht, Chair; Chrisina DePinto, Roger Green,
Sharon Klein, and Maria Orchard

Board Member Spotlight: A Q&A with Maria Bedo-Calhoun #1851 W760

By Julie McGuire #3500

In this issue, we feature Board Member Maria Bedo-Calhoun, who shares her inspiring journey from Club Member to former Club President and continues to be a dedicated member of our Board.

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

Maria Bedo-Calhoun: I grew up in Vermont and played in the woods for as long as I can remember. Usually, it was just exploring the forest behind our house, but occasionally we would go on more organized hikes on the trails nearby – Mt. Mansfield or Camel's Hump. I didn't realize at the time how lucky I was, but it made me very comfortable in the woods. It was a place I could find peace and solace when needed and explore when feeling adventurous. We did a lot of xc skiing in the winter too – now it is called back-country - but we would just go on trails or into the woods with no trails, and if it got too steep, we would side step up or down and figure it out as we went. No skins, basic skis without metal edges – just a puzzle and a way to be in the woods. I actually didn't start snowshoeing until I was working on my winter 35!

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

MBC: I finished on Blackhead March 7, 2010. It was the spring that we had a huge snowfall as you can see by the photo below of my sign in at Big Hollow. My pathway to the 35 was rather organic. I had been living in New York City, then Westchester and had not stayed in touch much



with my VT outdoor roots as I was focused on a singing career during that time. I realized at a certain point in those years that I missed my time in the woods in a deep way, which first brought me to Westchester where I had more access to walking and hiking. I explored all the trails in Harriman State Park and then met fellow hikers who headed up to the Catskills regularly. My first hike was Plateau and I was hooked. They were all 35ers, many are names known to us all like Jim Bouton, and from then on, I tried to get north whenever I could. Eventually, I left Westchester and moved to Woodstock, NY to be closer to the mountains.

Describe your journey from being a Club member to joining the board to eventually becoming president. What made you want to take on this responsibility?

MBC: My friends had roles on the board, and I already had made a transition from a singing career to arts administration and was the executive director of a small music foundation in NYC. When I was asked to join as the Winter Weekend Chair, it made sense. I also wanted to give back to the Club, since it had given me so much – both adventures and friendships. Finding my way back to the outdoors, which had brought such peace and joy to me when young, was important for me to feel whole. While I was also hiking in the Adirondacks and am a 46er, the gentler mountains of the Catskills reminded me of Vermont.

After several years as WW Chair, I was approached to become vice president, with the path towards President. In those days, before we redid our bylaws and became as 501c3, the commitment was 2 years as 2nd VP, 2 years as 1st VP and then 2 years as President. So, a big commitment! I was single then and thought, why not! Little did I know what I had signed up for...LOL. But, in all seriousness, my experience at that point in non-profits made me feel that I had something to offer. The Club was changing already, and we needed to mature and keep up with all that was happening. I felt that I could help in that transition.

What challenges did you face during your term as president of the Club? How did you address those challenges?

MBC: One of my main goals in becoming president was to move us from a 501c7 status (defined as a social club) to a 501c3. Most members thought we were a c3 already, but that was not the case. Without being a c3, we could



(Pictured L-R) 2nd Vice President Stash Rusin, President Maria Bedo-Calhoun, 1st Vice President Charlie Lutomski. Photo by Jim Bouton, Canisters Chair. (From the Canister Archives - July-Sep 2019)

not look for grants, allow for tax deductions for donations and it really did not match what we were doing already. We had grown from offering hikes to adding stewardship and conservation work. It really was an evolution of the Club. I felt, and I believe other board members do too, that our patch was/is bringing more and more people to the Catskills, creating greater impact. If we were not to offer the patch, which had been suggested, someone else would take over and offer their own variation. The best way to balance things, so to speak, was to continue and increase our stewardship efforts and to educate new hikers on how to be kind to the mountains as they spend their time there. That transition took much longer than I ever expected and was definitely a challenge and a learning experience. I owe a great debt to the board during that transition for their help and advice and I am grateful that our leadership team in the past year and half – Michael Bongar and Lori Herpen – are so qualified to finish the work that was begun.

Two other events really took over so much of the oxygen of my term, which ended up being over three years because of it. Covid hit us about 8 months into my term. Decisions had to be made in a variety of ways, hiking and what to tell our members about what was safe, how not to tax first responders in those early days as it hit so hard that first March/April, which is shoulder season and when the danger in the mountains can be the highest. When there is no snow or ice down low, but tough conditions, up higher and accidents can happen. Then, once the worst was over, how to transition back to events, back up plans, etc. It was a challenge for the Club, as it was for the world.

The other event that was unique to our mountains and a tough one – when we lost Doubletop and Graham. The owners met with the relevant parties, and we tried our best to offer solutions to not lose those mountains (limited guided hikes, only allow winter access when

there would be less damage to the fragile mountaintop ecosystem), but the owners had hiked the peaks and felt the impact was too great. They wanted those mountains, which were on their private land, to go back to nature and decided to close access permanently. It hurt, but I do understand the decision.

What are your proudest accomplishments as President? Why?

MBC: I think the 501c3 process is what I am most proud of, messy as it was at times. It has set us on a path that will allow us to do more good work in the Catskills and I don't think we would have survived as just a social club. Times have changed, as has the Club. It has also brought in some great new board members who see the potential to do good work because we are now taken more seriously and have the structure to do it both financially and legally.

How have you continued to serve the Club since your term as president ended?

MBC: I now serve as a director on the board, but I am also the Conservation Committee Chair and the Website Committee Chair. The Conservation Committee will and has been involved in the Trailless Peaks report that will soon be coming out from the DEC. This will have a lot of relevance for the Club and our members as there will be guidance about the issue of impact on the trailless peaks. With Covid and the increase of hikers on those, and all mountains, the peaks are changing. That is a much bigger discussion, but one we all need to have and are going to continue to have. That walk between enjoying the mountains and all that they offer us without impacting them and the flora and fauna that live there too much.



A Day in the Catskills: Life Lessons Shared by Kids & Adults

Story & Photos by Julie McGuire #3500

Last May, Charlie Gadol and I arranged for my students from Longwood Prep Academy (a public high school in the South Bronx) to do some trail maintenance on Slide Mountain. That trip was a tremendous success in that not only did they clear 25 water bars, but their appreciation for every living thing on the trail (from caterpillars to salamanders) absolutely astounded me. I saw a totally different side to my students, including some who had been in a continuous conflict with me that year.

Galvanized by that experience, Charlie and I hiked together this summer and came up with more ideas for fall maintenance. On a hike from West Kill to the terminus of the Devil's Path, Charlie mentioned clearing water bars on the Phoenicia East Branch from Denning. At that moment, I had a sense the universe was facilitating something I had wanted since the trip in May, to get the 3500 Club involved with my students. The Club maintains the adjacent Table-Peekamoose trail so two groups could work concurrently.

At the Club Dinner, I broached the subject with Lourdes Sonera and the Rippers and got them on board. I also got the Club President, Michael Bongar, and Vice President, Lori Herpen, to sign off on this event. Then, I worked on coordinating everyone involved.

I had an unusual confidence that things would turn out well



Maintenance on the Table-Peekamoose Trail

that day. It was cold when we arrived, but the sun was shining, and the foliage was just past peak so everything was colorful and vibrant. This was exactly what I wanted my students to experience. We divided ourselves into two teams and I was shocked at how many students wanted to be with me, even though I would be leading the more challenging Table-Peekamoose team.

However, just a few minutes into the walk on the Phoenicia East Branch, my students were already tired and complaining. It was at that moment that I thought maybe lightning couldn't strike twice. We eventually parted ways with the other group and headed up the Table-Peekamoose trail to look for blowdowns. We walked, and walked, and walked with no blowdown in sight. I felt like I was disappointing the students because they were so tired and there was no real maintenance to do, but in that



exhaustion, they were cracking jokes and laughing. Lourdes did an amazing job of motivating them when they got tired and I appreciated that she was there because many of my students are Latinx, so they had another hiker they could identify with.

At one point, I looked back, and the students were carrying walking sticks. They were figuring things out on their own! Another thing I learned was that they are hysterical. Most of the time in class, I'm trying to get them to focus on content and limiting their conversations to what's relevant academically. We teachers, think we know our students because we see them every day, but we don't. We know them in one specific setting and that setting isn't conducive to revealing all aspects of their personalities. However, seeing them figure out how to find their way by following blazes, finding walking sticks to make the terrain less challenging, and leading their own way on the hike down showed that they have more motivation and critical thinking skills than I thought. They are also far more clever, witty, and compassionate than I thought as well. The way they supported each other when someone felt they couldn't go on was the most heartwarming thing to witness, and my respect and love for them grew three sizes like the Grinch's heart.



Board Members Lourdes Sonera & Julie McGuire (Author)



Ms. Pena - trip chaperone

At the end of the hike, one of the Club volunteers with Lourdes (Mikey) approached me and said, "You know I've never really been around teenagers before and I didn't know what to expect, but they were so funny, and I had such a great time." I could actually see on his face that he was processing the experience and I thought to myself, "He gets it. He sees what I see when I'm out here with the kids." Mikey appreciates solitude so I think he assumed the experience would be energy draining, but he seemed to actually be replenished and that might have even taught him something about himself.

I was going to take the kids down the road to Red Hill, but I sensed that they were exhausted. Ms. Pena, the counselor who chaperoned said, "McGuire, come here. The kids are too tired to go on the hike, but they're afraid of disappointing you. They were saying maybe some of us can go; she seems so excited to take us. It was so cute, McGuire." I had no idea my students cared about me and that feeling is priceless. Even the ones that were in the other group told me they wished they got to spend more

time with me and were so excited to tell me about their day.

There is something magical about nature that allows people to be their highest selves and open up to each other. In the city, people think openness, empathy, and vulnerability are off-putting and they're suspicious of it, but when I'm hiking, it's appreciated and reciprocated. Maybe that's why I wanted my students to get out there so much. It's because I want them to be in an environment where it's okay to let these traits shine and they can feel how close to heaven humanity gets when we can share in that state of being together.



Students taking a break from trail maintenance

A DAY ON HAWKITT (HALCOTT MOUNTAIN)

Story & Photos by Josyf Hayda #4525

Tell me the truth:

Say a stranger hands you an index card with "Halcott Mountain" on it and asks, "What's it say?" What would you say? Hal-cott, like me? Or Hawkitt, like the locals and veteran hikers? The first time someone corrected my pronunciation, I misheard the "hawk" part, which sounded to my ear like an impolite way of saying, "I don't care," which I found rude indeed.

It's pronounced Hawkitt. I still don't know why. But it's Hawkitt.

Early in January, I set out for Hawkitt Mountain. As I got closer, the snow on the mountains was breathtaking. The cold air was invigorating, and the white blanket that covered the hills was like a carnival barker, inviting me to step right up.

The herd path is accessible by climbing a 20-foot waterfall off the trailhead. Large icicle daggers hung off its face. I climbed up the side path carefully. I promptly lost the herd path and started crabbing my way diagonally up the side of the mountain. I found it later up the hill, where more snow was on the ground.

You can easily navigate these trailless peaks after a snowfall because someone has invariably blazed an obvious trail. I'm obsessed with the herd path. I get uptight when I lose it, which is easy. Some stand out more than others. It goes against the spirit of bushwhacking, I know. It's free-style hiking. I'm adapting, but I prefer riding the rails of a marked trail.

About halfway up, I put on my micro spikes against the slippery terrain. The higher I went, the more snow hung on the trees. The bright background sun lit this scene like a fancy photo in a glossy outdoors magazine. It was enchanting. I was floating through a dreamscape.



Near the summit there are several final hills, so it's a progressive ascent. Once you get to the top, there's still a way to go to the canister, but at least there's no more serious uphill. It's a pleasant stroll among the noiseless trees, leaning over with snow.

I signed the log at the canister, dropped my pack, and got comfortable. Reading the past several entries in the log is one of the fun things about these "bushwhacks." The guy who signed before me wrote that this was his 33/33 peak and bragged that he was the first person on here in 2024.



It was still and silent. I unsheathed my victory PBJ and started in on it. I'm chomping away, lost in thought, under the canopy of snow-capped trees when two hikers appear out of nowhere. Like they weren't subject to the same physical laws as the rest of us. It was the can man himself, Jim Bouton, the keeper of the canisters, and his companion Margaret. The summit felt like a train station waiting room; we were gabbing like we were passing the time waiting for the next train. Jim replaced the log book with a brand new one and honored me with the first entry. We then headed back down to the trailhead together.

Margaret and Jim took turns telling how they met. (they were hiking). As we skirted a dense hemlock stand, Jim pointed out the claw marks on the trunk of one of the trees. It's a sure sign of bears in the area. It's something I look for now when I'm hiking. I look over my shoulder when I see them as if some bear is watching me. He told me this is one of the last places you'll see hemlocks like that because there are few left in the Catskills. Tanneries were profitable and abundant in the Catskills in the mid-1800s. They figured out that the bark of the Eastern Hemlock, when boiled down, made the perfect



liquor to preserve leather hides. Zadock Pratt (who founded nearby Prattsville) opened and operated the biggest one in the area. Still, tanning was so profitable then that many others chased the opportunity. There's another nearby town named Tannersville, to give you an idea. The Catskills saw a rapid and devastating loss of hemlocks. A few remain. But they are now threatened by the invasive hemlock woolly adelgid, a pest from Asia that drains the vitality from these magnificent trees. It's a mighty, solid tree stretched so high that looking up into the top canopy made me dizzy.

Later that day I took a ride into Prattsville. There's a public trail up "Pratts' Rock." After a short climb, you will come face to face with old Zadock's image and scenes from his life engraved right into the side of the mountain! That sure beats a statue or a plaque.

Further down, they told me of stone structures that some believe were created by the Native American inhabitants of the place. Jim said if you look carefully, you can see rock structures that resemble a turtle or a snake. The snake was a long rock wall. It didn't mark a border for farmland or other property. What else could it be? Purportedly they all face east to align with the rising sun. Stonehenge in the Catskills. Or it could be a stone replica of some constellation that was important to the inhabitants. I couldn't discern any celestial snakes or turtles, but it was just as well.

This website, <https://overlookmountain.org>, discusses these sacred sites. The study is called Archeoastronomy.

I came to write my name in a logbook on top of a mountain and scratch number 25 from the list. Instead, I learned some things from two illustrious Catskill Hikers and enjoyed their friendly and genuine fellowship. Perhaps we'll never know if mysterious ancient settlers created stone formations facing the sunrise or mirroring celestial constellations. Likely, I'll never experience the majesty of a thick, healthy hemlock forest. But at least I know that Halcott is pronounced Hawkitt.

Hike/Haiku

By Henry Dircks

I
Blackhead Mountain casts
its shadow Big Hollow's length —
the range awaits dawn

II
large-timbered lean-to:
push broom propped in the corner
supports a cobweb

III
rock scramble, high up:
stone upon stone upon stone,
clutched at by spruce roots

IV
atop the summit,
foliage obscures all views...
though, not the blackbird's

V
across Lockwood Gap,
Black Dome Mountain's high peak looms —
recalculating

VI
switchbacks meander
through the forested descent;
moss drapes rock ledges

VII
last night's storm waters
rush through Batavia Kill...
in time, The Narrows





1000 BAREFOOT PEAKS

By Ken Posner #2573 W1108



The 19th-century English art critic John Ruskin saw in mountains a story of endurance and decay. All we can know about a peak is that “it was once greater than it is now, and it only gathers vastness, and still gathers, as it fades into the abyss of the unknown.”

And so it is with people – we endure as long as we can, hoping to leave something behind.

Last December, on a bleak dank evening, I was sitting by the fireplace, gazing at the dying embers, contemplating my future. Hungering for something meaningful. Something big. I opened my training log, which resides in an excel spreadsheet with sixteen tabs stored in the cloud, and did some figuring. Found that since I'd picked up the barefoot practice ten years ago, I'd climbed 395 mountains without shoes. Most of these were Catskills peaks bagged during summer months when I was working on the Grid, but the tally also included the high peaks in the Daks, New Hampshire, and Maine, and also Mt. Whitney, which I'd climbed barefoot from Guitar Lake while thru-hiking the John Muir Trail.

From somewhere deep in the abyss, an idea bubbled up into my mind – to set a lifetime goal of 1,000 barefoot peaks. The rationale being that if I completed this project, it might convince people that barefoot hiking is accessible to them, too, and maybe a few more would give it a try.

No sooner had I made the commitment, the new project took over my life, and with New York winters not conducive to my practice, I decided to visit Phoenix for the holidays. There I climbed Camelback Mountain, Piestewa Peak, and South Mountain without mishap. Spent New Years' even running in a 24-hour race and achieved my mileage goal, although the back of my left knee felt a little tight afterward and there was a faint ache along the knee's inner edge, which I attributed to a stair master session back in December.

After taking a few days off to recover from the race, I headed out to Superstition Peak 5057, where I patiently followed a steep and rocky trail as it weaved between saguaro and cholla cacti and through groves of yucca with weird 20-foot flower stalks. Small cacti lined the trail, and once I stepped on one,



*Loosing your balance is not a good idea when barefooting on pointy rocks – oops.
Author stumbling about on Piestewa Peak, Phoenix, AZ*

got a hairlike spine in my heel, which was irritating, until it worked its way out a few steps later. On this terrain it took all day to reach the summit, so I put on shoes to make the descent a little faster, and that's when I slipped on a patch of gravel and jammed the sore knee.

The descent turned into an ordeal. It took all afternoon, and still I wasn't back when the sun began to set. Was **1,000** mountains a realistic goal for someone of my age? The year before I'd made **36** barefoot ascents. At this rate, the project would take me until I was **80** years old.

I made it half-way down the mountain, saw a family standing on the trail who asked me to take their picture. Through the aperture I noticed an orange glow spreading across the western sky behind them.

I limped along through piles of chunky gravel. The light faded. The cloudy sky turned brilliant orange and then darkened into vermilion flames, which cooled to shades of chartreuse and



As I limped down from the summit of Superstition Peak 5057 outside Phoenix, AZ, knee throbbing in the first of my 2024 meniscus injuries, the sunset sky convinced me to keep on moving and not stop climbing, and not to give up hope.

cherry, while strings of diamonds glistened on the black velvet valley floor.

When I finally made it home, my sports doctor explained the meniscus in my left knee was "irritated." He handed me a prescription for a week's worth of Voltaren, a potent anti-inflammatory.

"Do I really need to take these?" Since the pandemic, I've become hesitant about modern interventions.

"I would," he replied, pointing to the X-ray, "there's some edema on the bone."

He told me to come back and see him in a month, but I didn't – because the knee was already feeling better. After spending January doing nothing more than 1-mile walks, in February I returned to running cautiously, and in April I was back up in the mountains. My friend Steve Aaron's daughter Alison, and her hiking partner Alice, were climbing their final peak to qualify for the Catskill 3500 Club, which I wouldn't have missed for anything. We popped out of the boreal thickets, and with each step towards Wittenberg's summit ledge, the southern views unfolded with astonishing grandeur under a watery blue sky laced with milky streamers.

With the knee back in shape, I had a busy summer, exploring



View of Van Wyck Mountain from a vantage point on Table – Steve Aaron Photography

more peaks in the Catskills, including a long bushwhack up Van Wyck Mountain with Steve, as well as visiting Vermont and the Southern Taconics, and even bagging a couple of 14ers in Colorado.

On October 1, 2024, I was pulling on a pair of boots, which I wear when splitting firewood, when I felt a sharp tearing sensation on the inner side of the knee. It was the meniscus again. But this time the pain was searing. If previously the cartilage was "irritated," this time it was *enraged*.

It hurt so bad I couldn't sleep.

The next day I tried walking one mile at a slow pace and could barely finish it.

Two days later, I was searching around for a different form of exercise, when I remembered the wood which still needed to be split. I grabbed the maul and started tapping gingerly on a wedge, careful not to jar the knee. After a minute or two,



Can you climb Mt. Elbert (14,440 feet), the tallest peak in Colorado without shoes? To my surprise, I met another barefoot hiker on the mountain – so I guess the answer is “yes.”

something didn't feel right with my lower back. I staggered inside. Lowered myself onto the carpet and stretched. Rose shakily to my feet. Sunk into my favorite recliner. Struggled to get back up. Forget 1-mile walks, now I could barely make it to the kitchen.

Mercifully, the back recovered in a couple of days.

Reasoning that everything heals faster when in motion, I resumed the 1-mile walks. Typically, the knee would feel OK for the first ¼ mile, but by the half-way point it was stinging, and after ¾'s of a mile, I was limping along with fists clenched. During the night, the angry meniscus continued to disturb my rest, unhappy with whichever position I was lying in.

October was a grim month – no running, no races, no hiking, no mountains. Just slow painful 1-mile walks. I called my doctor's office, but they told me he was booked until mid-November. I've been through injury cycles before, so now I steeled myself against the twin perils of optimism and despair. At night I lay in bed and focused my breathing on the meniscus, trying to stimulate the healing process (a Karate practice I'd learned nearly 50 years ago). Visualized the piece of cartilage sandwiched between two bones. The pain radiated across the knee's inner edge, but the injury itself was inside the joint – a scratch on the cartilage's outer surface? A tear in the center?

I mentioned the sore knee to a young barista at a favorite coffee joint -- she'd had meniscus surgery in both knees. A friend of mine had the surgery at age 60 (I recall him trundling around in boot and scooter). His wife had opted for an injection – but not cortisone, she'd gotten a “biologic” from a specialist in rheumatoid arthritis, which helped. But she doesn't do mountains. She sticks to walking on flat surfaces.

On October 24, I was down in Dallas for business. Went for a slow barefoot walk on the smooth paved trails of a local park. It was a lovely afternoon and such a delight to feel the sun-warmed pavement underfoot. I reached 1 mile, without the

knee feeling like it was on fire, and kept going for another 1/4.

Flew to Denver for a business conference. At one point I was working feverishly on my laptop, hunched over in an unfamiliar chair, and when I stood I found I'd strained my back again. Went limping off to a meeting. Told my colleagues I was ready for the scrapheap, to which a friend replied that I could have a tablet of Naproxen from the jar he carries with him everywhere (his calf goes out like clockwork every 3 months). Another colleague told the story of her Achilles tendon injury – it was 8 weeks in the boot – she'd strained it while hiking then jumped into a lake and ruptured it. Our CEO skipped a meeting – rumor was he'd hurt himself on his morning run, flown back to Texas, and was now himself in the boot.

Once again, my back recovered quickly, and meanwhile I gradually extended the distance of my walks. On November 1, I was back in Dallas, padding along on the smooth sun-warmed trails. I walked **3 miles** in the morning and **3 miles** in the evening.

What a joy to be moving again!

I was already planning as I packed for the return flight to New York. The Catskills would have to wait, however, as the next morning I headed south for the modest mountains of Ringwood, New Jersey. For extra support, I brought trekking poles, which I rarely use, but these helped as the trails were shrouded in fallen oak leaves, which are slippery in bare feet.

After the long drought of October, the Ringwood hike was empowering. To feel the sun on my cheek on an unseasonably warm fall day – to find a weird pink forest full of burning bush



A US flag stands on the summit of Ringwood's 1,024-foot peak, Windbeam Mountain, and you can see it flapping from the road below

– to stand on Board Mountain and survey the sparkling blue waters of the Wanaque Reservoir and through a gap in the hills glimpse NYC's alien insectoid towers – to pass across the top of Bear Mountain through a grove of white pine and tread upon their needles long as fingers – to stand at the summit of Windbeam Mountain beneath a US flag on a pole and later to

see that flag flapping cheerfully from the road below – to pad along back to my car on smooth black asphalt, such a joyful feeling underfoot after contending for hours with slippery leaves and hidden rocks.

The next weekend I spent all day in Harriman State Park, covering 12 miles and bagging 7 more humble peaks, barely 1,000 feet tall. Nonetheless, for me all mountains are sacred -- they count towards my quest, which is both a burden and source of wild energy and exhilaration.



Gentle summit of Hogencamp Mountain (1,335 feet) in Harriman State Park on a cool quiet fall day.

John Ruskin believed that true art expresses sympathy, and even his landscape descriptions seem sensitive. For example, he wrote of one mountain – possibly a favorite in the Alps – that it was “shedding its flakes of granite, on all sides of it, as a fading rose lets fall its leaves.” Clearly, the peak once stood much taller – indeed, its distinctive shape reflects the gaps left by rock-fall, the cutting power of streams, “the subtle wedges of frost.” Like people, mountains are “destructible and frail.” They “wither.” They show “the untraceable decay in their own substance.”

Left knee notwithstanding, during 2024, I climbed **73** peaks without shoes, bringing the count to **464**, leaving **536** still to do. Once again I'm sitting by the fireplace on a dank winter evening, planning more routes, wishing the flames would cast more heat, while the spreadsheet rows multiply as if by their own accord.

Photos courtesy of Ken Posner #2573 W1108. Van Wyck photo courtesy of Steve Aaron #3199

ATTENTION SHOPPERS!!!

\$10 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

\$10 ASPIRANT MEMBERSHIP

\$200 LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

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

You can purchase your annual memberships and your aspirant memberships. You can purchase them for a yearly renewal or you can purchase them with automatic renewal.

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





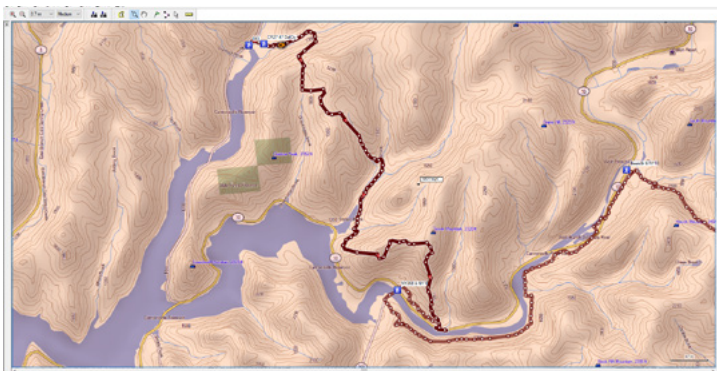
West to East & North to South

Story & Photos by
Kevin Armstrong
Aspirant

I was hiking the Crystal Hills Trail, a Finger Lakes Branch Trail (FLT), near Corning New York with my friends Bruce and Donna Coon one hot day in 2015. As we climbed a long steep grade south of Corning Donna mentioned that Bruce had just finished his "Catskill 3500". Hmm? I knew there were some great hikes in the Catskills but I had never heard of the "Catskill 3500". Tell me more? That was my introduction to the 3500 Club. After the hike I went home and googled the club. I tucked the idea of hiking the peaks in the back of my mind as an aspiration.

Since beginning my Catskill 3500 hikes I've met several club members and aspirants who have asked about the FLT. I'm and "End to Ender" on both the Main Trail (#504) and the six Branch Trails (#97).

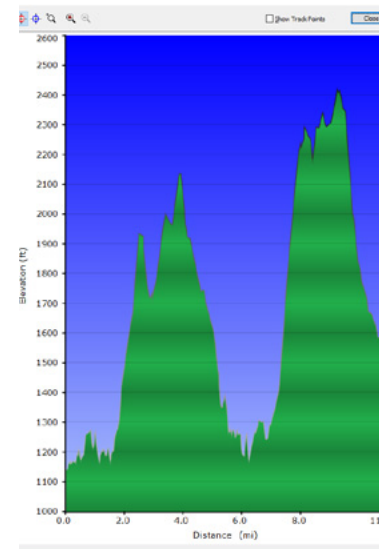
The Finger Lakes Trail, when I hiked it was 965 miles which includes both the main west to east trail and the six branch trails. I say "when I hiked it" because the Finger Lakes Trail



Conference is constantly updating and improving the trail, gaining access to more and more land and improving the trail. The FLT Conference offers excellent interactive on-line and waterproof paper maps for every mile of trail. They are on top of the changes and keep their maps up to date. The Main Trail maps are oriented west to east and the branch trail maps are oriented north to south. The western terminus is actually about a mile into Pennsylvania south of Allegheny State Park. The eastern terminus is the peak of Slide Mountain. The Main Trail also includes Balsam Lake peak. The main trail winds through beautiful southern New York, through the Alleghenies across the southern ends of the Finger Lakes, through central New York counties, and on into the Catskills. The branch trails, from west to east include the 178-mile-long Conservation Trail from the US and Canadian border to the western Main Trail terminus in Pennsylvania. The Letchworth Trail branch is



25.6 miles along the eastern side of the Genessee River from Mount Morris to Portageville through Letchworth State Park. The Bristol Hills branch (my favorite) starts in the Ontario County Park at the peak of Gannett Hill in South Bristol and runs some 54.2 miles to a point near Hammondsport, NY. The Crystal Hills branch begins in the South Bradford State Forest and runs south some 49.1 miles ending near the Pennsylvania state line below Painted Post, NY. The Interlocken Trail begins south of Lodi, NY and runs for about 12 miles through the Finger Lakes National Forest where it intersects the Main Trail between Burdett and Mecklenburg, NY. The Onondaga Trail is 41 miles long. It starts at Irish Hill in New Woodstock and intersects the main Trail near Chippewa Falls. The



total milage of the branch trails are nearly equal the main trail. All branch trails intersect with the main trail. Parts of the FLT are shared with the North Country Trail, the long Trail and the Great Eastern Trail. For thru-hikers there are plenty of nicely maintained lean-tos and bivouac areas. The trail weaves through enough towns that a thru-hiker need not go too long without a restaurant meal and/or overnight motel stay every couple of days. With a little planning a series of B&B's could be reserved ahead of time.

There are not many loops so day hikers can arrange car drops with hiker friends, bike drops at finish points, car spotters (FLT Conference can provide a list) or double your milage with in-out hikes. When I hiked the branches, I would load my pack and my dog and drive to a start point. Estimating drive time, I would call my late wife Kathy and give her the GPS location and ETA where I would be coming off the trail. God bless her

she would be there to drive me back to where I had parked my truck in the morning.

The FLT Conference has some excellent annual hiking events in addition to a very popular “Cross Country Series”. I hiked most of the Main Trail as a day hiker participating in the “Cross Country Series” where a county is crossed every year between April and October. For a small fee (\$50-\$100.) to cover transportation and insurance volunteers arrange a 9- to 12-mile-long hike to take place on the 3rd Saturday of every month. Hikers meet at a prearranged safe parking area where they self-select their hiking speed and group with other hikers of that speed. Each group has an experienced hike leader and sweep. Speeds range from trail runners to 1 mph “Nature Appreciative” hikers and even “half hikers” who break the hike into 2 days. Hikers log their mileage on-line or on paper. At completion of each county there is a patch for completion. There is also a patch for completion of the Main Trail and another for Branch Trails. The Wegman’s family hiking program awards 3 patches and other rewards for completion of the eastern, central, and western sections of the trail when you provide a minimum number of ‘rubs’ from plaques placed on 4 x 4 posts along the trail. The accomplishments are recorded much like the 3500 Club records.

If you are looking for a new hiking experience and want to really know NYS up close and personal. Check out the Finger Lakes Trail Conference at <http://fingerlakestrail.org>

Take a hike!



The author and his BFF Popeye at the geographic center of the Finger Lakes trail near Ithaca NY.



FLT CC Bucktooth to Rock City

The Catskill 3500 Club Gear Review Video: Traction Devices

Winter hiking is a great way to stay active in the colder months but you don't want to get caught in icy or snowy conditions without proper traction! In this video, Greg from Rock and Snow explains some winter footwear traction devices that will help you reach your summits! Check out Rock and Snow in New Paltz, NY for all your winter hiking needs and knowledgeable staff that can help you figure out how to gear up and get out!



All Catskill 3500 Club members in good standing will receive a 10% discount at Rock & Snow.

Click the above image to watch the gear review

At Rock & Snow, our mission is to get you out there. For over 50 years, Rock & Snow has been home to the newest and most innovative gear and clothing for climbing and outdoor recreation. Whether you're looking for



your first pair of climbing shoes or your twentieth, a full rack of gear or just a carabiner, we're here to use our experience and knowledge to find the right gear for you. We're all climbers, hikers, and runners who live in the area, and we pride ourselves on our local knowledge as well. We love to

answer your questions! Curious about camping? Need a recommendation for a day hike? Heard about a new piece of climbing gear? Want route beta? We're here with the experience and information you need. We think the Gunks are home to some of the finest climbing in the world, and we want to help you experience it. In keeping with that mission, we also donate a portion of our sales to local preservation efforts, ensuring health and vitality of the Gunks for generations to come.



CANISTER ← BACKTRACK →

Reprinted from the
Vol. 13 No. 2 - Spring 1980
issue of the Catskill Canister

My First Hike in the Catskills

By Walter Gregory

It was Decoration Day, 1961, and it started fair and warm, with no alarming predictions. Weather forecasting in these days was somewhat different from the present day method of 20 percent this or 50 percent that. The result, though, was much the same, leaving one uncertain about just what to expect. With plans all arranged for a great day in the CATSKILLS, and an early start to allow time for placing the cars for a shuttle, off we went, Harry Ackerly, Mac Monroe, and I. The goal was to hike over Wittenberg, Cornell, and Slide, in that order, leaving one car at the foot of Slide Mountain and the other in Woodland Valley. This would also be excellent training for my up-coming trip with the Boy Scouts that summer to Philmont Scout Ranch in the mountains of New Mexico. If I was to be a leader of boys in an area like that, where there is much rugged hiking in mountainous terrain, I had better be able to hike and keep up.

Our start soon turned to confusion, however, as Mac, who was in front, took off in so much of a hurry that he ran a red light and was immediately stopped by the State Police. What a beginning! We lost him completely, as we could not tell where they took him. What to do? Well, Harry and I decided to go ahead alone. On our way we made adjustments to the original plans and decided to enjoy the climbs despite Mac's disappearance. "Wait! Who's that? Why it's Mac!" He had been released and had caught up while we were on the Thruway. He surely must have traveled. That was in the days prior to the maximum 55-mile speed limit. Well, things looked better again, and we hoped all would now go as planned. It took over an hour to spot one car at the Slide trailhead, but we finally were on our way up Terrace Mountain.

On top of Wittenberg it was cold and overcast. But, this was almost summer, and cold weather just did not belong. By all standards and reasoning, it had to improve. Little did we know. As there was still a long way to go, and it was not too comfortable, we did not stay, but continued on. Before we reached Cornell, it started to snow slightly.

What with the wind and the cold I began to feel a little uneasy. We kept on, however, and arrived at the top of Cornell, where there was four inches of snow, and it was coming down harder. This was my chilly introduction to hiking in the mountains, and I soon learned that chinos and a thin wind breaker were not quite proper for comfort in these conditions. We found, though, that if we kept moving we could stay almost warm.

Nearer to Slide Mountain the snow was over our shoe tops. We had now passed the half-way point and felt we should go on. The precipitation had changed to snow and sleet, and with the wind it seemed like a horizontal storm. The trees looked like gaunt figures from dreamland. All the leading edges of the branches into the storm had collected four or five inches of frozen rooster tails, looking for all the world like white fronds or setter tails waving stiffly in the cold wind. It was beautiful and different, but with that weather, surely no place to stop and gaze at the scenery.

The steep side of Slide, almost did us in. Harry, with a sort of untiring energy, kept climbing ahead to return with favorable reports of "almost there," and other words of encouragement. This proved to be our one ray of hope for continuing. I always had admired him, five years my senior, one of those thin, wiry, ageless people who could go up and down and all over the trails with ease. Boy! Were we bushed when we finally reached the summit and the limited shelter of the lean-to. It still stormed and the wind seemed much stronger up there. The thermometer registered 20 degrees F. "Wow!" and "Brrr!" I was cold now, and starting to shiver. The others were all for building a fire (can't imagine with what), but I said, "No way! Just half a sandwich and I'm getting out of here. Off this mountain as soon as possible; let's just get pointed in the right direction and go!" So, off we went, through the snow, which was now a depth of eight inches and getting deeper. On our way down we met a small group going in the opposite direction. Their goal was the summit and lean-to. Scouts with two leaders who had

come up from Baltimore to enjoy a nice warm camping weekend in the CATSKILLS. And where did they go but to the highest mountain? Ugh! What a surprise they had!

It seemed to take forever, but we eventually reached my car. It was raining there, and my car was completely covered with snow. I was soaked, so off with the wet shoes, shirt, and windshell, and on with dry ones. Thank goodness for the foresight to bring extras. We stopped in one of the stores at Phoenicia to get a new (dry) pair of pants for me. There were no lights because of power failure, but with the aid of my flashlight and much fumbling around in the semi-dark, I found my size and hurriedly changed to get rid of the wet ones. We went for Mac's car in Woodland Valley and it looked odd, his with no snow and mine with four inches on top. Then back to Phoenicia for a hot meal and coffee, and all things seemed good once again.

That was quite an introduction to the CATSKILLS, and as I write this, the urge to shiver seems near. Since that Memorial Day, I have climbed these mountains many times, both winter and summer, and from every direction, but never have I had such varying weather as on that day. Also, my gear and clothing is now correct, and I know when to turn back because of unsafe conditions. This I have done on several occasions, both in the CATSKILLS and in the Adirondacks. The predictions may, at times, be similar, but I now feel ready for whatever turn the weather may take.



CATSKILL 3500 CLUB MEMBERS - 2024 / 4Q

NUMBER	NAME	DATE	LAST PEAK
4540	James Wilson	08/27/24	Eagle
4541	Robert Tompkins	09/14/2024	Halcott
4542	Erik Frick	09/15/2024	Slide
4543	Adam Ginsburg	09/07/2024	Big Indian
4544	Kate Taylor	09/15/2024	Sugarloaf
4545	Timothy Azzarella	09/15/2024	Sugarloaf
4546	Analisa Allen	06/02/2024	Kaaterskill
4547	Emily Woerthman	08/04/2024	Rocky
4548	Phillip Schank	09/14/2024	Panther
4550	Conor Ward	09/28/2024	Lone
4551	Joseph Biscardi	09/27/2024	Blackhead
4552	Stephen Tannberg	09/28/2024	Windham
4553	Spencer Monk	09/29/2024	Cornell
4554	Rafael Jaeger	10/03/2024	Panther
4555	Hannah Lowin	10/01/2024	Halcott
4556	Sara Thibeault	10/20/2024	Cornell
4557	Jennifer Stock	09/20/2024	Sherrill
4558	Alan Benson	09/15/2024	Friday
4559	Kirsten Benson	09/15/2024	Friday
4560	Robert Ellis	10/12/2024	Fir

NUMBER	NAME	DATE	LAST PEAK
4561	Christine Manalo	10/12/2024	Balsam Lake
4562	Richard Baumer	10/12/2024	Balsam Lake
4563	Dana Inero	10/19/2024	West Kill
4564	Anita Bigby	10/19/2024	West Kill
4565	John R DeBouter	10/26/2024	Friday
4566	Maxim Mallick	10/26/2024	Slide
4567	Yurii Chinenov	10/13/2024	Balsam Lake
4568	David Kimball	10/12/2024	Cornell
4569	Mary Burdick	10/18/2024	Sugarloaf
4570	Jeff Paul	10/05/2024	West Kill
4571	Paul Buzinski	10/05/2024	West Kill
4572	Barry O'Connor	11/09/2024	Fir
4573	Lindsay O'Connor	11/09/2024	Fir
4574	Josepf Giovanniello	11/09/2024	West Kill
4575	Nicole Thomas	10/27/2024	Kaaterskill
4576	Julie K Martin	11/09/2024	Cornell
4577	Scott Morgan	11/09/2024	Cornell
4578	Florian Krammer	10/27/2024	Friday
4579	Christine Marizzi	10/27/2024	Friday

LIFE MEMBERS

0398	Ira Sasowsky
0399	Mark Wilson
1216	Roman Benke
4369	Kent Everding

4541	Robert Tompkins
4542	Erick Frick
4572	Barry O'Connor

4573	Lindsay O'Connor
ASP	Darcy Dyer
ASP	Katie Rogers

ASP	Joel Cadbury
ASP	Chris Hovey
ASP	Douglas Olsen



Sunset on Twin Mountain's North Summit. Photo courtesy of James Grady #3886 W1669

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 - JANUARY 2025

The Catskill 3500 Club hike schedule is developed and printed three months in advance. While we strive to provide accurate and up-to-date information, please be aware that hikes may be subject to change. Always check the Catskill 3500 Club website for the latest updates, including any additions, changes, or cancellations. Thank you for your understanding and flexibility.

Wed. Jan. 1 - OVERLOOK FIRE TOWER

Distance: 7.3 mi. Ascent: 1700'; Elev: 3140'
Beginners Welcome. Relaxed to moderate paced trail hike.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Roger Green #2627 W1813
roggr679@gmail.com

Wed. Jan. 1 - WINDHAM

Distance: 7.5 mi. Ascent: 1800'; Elev: 3525'
Easy-moderate trail hike at a moderate pace.
Out and back. Beginners welcome.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Stephen Tsang #4420 W1634
smtsang15@gmail.com

Sat. Jan. 4 - PLATEAU, SUGARLOAF, TWIN, & INDIAN HEAD

Distance: 9.5 mi. Ascent: 4200'; Elevs: 3835', 3783', 3650', 3573'
Long, challenging trail hike at a relaxed pace.
Shuttle required. Best suited for experienced hikers.
Registration Period: Open
Leaders: Stephen Tsang #4420 W1634 & Harold Oakhill #283 W1244
smtsang15@gmail.com

Sun. Jan. 5 - BLACK DOME & THOMAS COLE

Distance: 6.2 mi. Ascent: 2255'; Elevs: 3994', 3953'
Relaxed to Moderate paced trail hike.
Target is 1 to 1.2 mph overall (1.2 to 1.5 moving speed)
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Roger Green #2627 W1813
roggr679@gmail.com

Fri. Jan. 10 - BALSAM

Distance: 5.2 mi. Ascent: 1607'; Elev: 3607'
Out and back loop. Beginners welcome
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Bob Nuzzo #3918, W1541
rmnuzz@gmail.com

Sat. Jan. 11 - PANTHER

Distance: 7.0 mi. Ascent: 2000'; Elev: 3724'
Required winter peak. Moderately challenging trail hike at a moderate pace.
Out and back. Best suited for experienced hikers.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Stephen Tsang #4420 W1634
smtsang15@gmail.com

Sat. Jan. 11 - WEST KILL

Distance: 8 mi. Ascent: 2271'; Elev: 3898'
Relaxed to Moderate Pace. Short Shuttle Required.
Registration Period: Dec 9 - Jan 9
Leader: Christina DePinto #3951 W1536
cdepinto3951@gmail.com

Sat. Jan. 18 - NORTH DOME & SHERRILL (WW)

Distance: 6.75 mi. Ascent: 2500'; Elevs: 3606', 3558'
Challenging trail hike and bushwhack at a moderate to quick pace.
Shuttle required. Best suited for experienced hikers.
Registration Period: Open
Leaders: Stephen Tsang #4420 W1634 & Maple D'Angelo #2910 W1168
smtsang15@gmail.com

Sat. Jan. 18 - PANTHER (WW)

Distance: 6.5 mi. Ascent: 1995'; Elev: 3724'
Moderate Pace Trail Hike. Beginners Welcome.
Required Winter Peak.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Matthew McBride #3841 W1574
Matthew.mcbride@trailsandmountains.com

Sat. Jan. 18 - VLY & BEARPEN (WW)

Distance: 6.8 mi. Ascent: 2100'; Elevs: 3587', 3541'
Relaxed pace hike with bushwhack & trail hike.
Beginners welcome.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Tonda Highley #1944 W857
Thighley1944@gmail.com

Sat. Jan. 18 - BALSAM (WW)

Distance: 7 mi. Ascent: 2207'; Elev: 3607'
Relaxed-Moderate Pace. Shuttle required.
Required winter peak.
Registration Period: Dec 15 - Jan 15
Leader: Christina DePinto #3951 W1536
cdepinto3951@gmail.com

Sat. Jan. 18 - HUNTER (WW)

Distance: 8.2 mi. Ascent: 1898'; Elev: 4030'
Relaxed to moderate pace loop.
Registration Period: Open
Leaders: Ira Orenstein #415 W777 and Karen Bloom #1733 W776
ksbiho@aol.com 914- 262-5816

Sat. Jan. 18 - BLACKHEAD (WW)

Distance: 5.2 mi. Ascent: 1740'; Elev: 3940'
Required winter peak.
Moderate pace trail hike.
Registration Period: Jan 11 - 17
Leader: Harold Oakhill #283/1244
hoakhill@gmail.com

Sat. Jan. 18 - KAATERSKILL HIGH PEAK (WW)

Distance: 7 mi. Ascent: 1900'; Elev: 3652'
Challenging trail hike at a slower pace.
Not for beginners.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Christopher Leon Garibian #3881 W1474
christophergaribian@gmail.com

CLUB HIKE SCHEDULE - JANUARY 2025

Sat. Jan. 18- PLATEAU & SUGARLOAF (WW)

Distance: 5.6 mi. Ascent: 1600', Elev: 3840' and 3800'

Relaxed pace trail hike.

Registration Period: Jan. 7 - Jan 16

Leader: Michael Bongar #2173, W994

michael@bongarbiz.com

Sun. Jan. 19 - KAATERSKILL HIGH PEAK (WW)

Distance: 8.3 mi. Ascent: 1990' Elev: 3652'

Pace will be determined by the group.

Registration Period: Jan 3 - Jan 15

Leader: Moe Lemire #2921

Moejlemire@gmail.com

Sun. Jan 19 - HALCOTT (WW)

Distance: 3.2 mi. Ascent: 1737', Elev: 3537'

Moderate Pace Bushwhack Hike. Beginners welcome.

Registration Period: Jan 12 - 18

Leader: Harold Oakhill #283/1244

hoakhill@gmail.com

Sun. Jan. 19 - FRIDAY, BALSAM CAP, ROCKY, LONE, TABLE, & PEEKAMOOS (WW)

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.

Registration Period: Open

Leader: Maple D'Angelo #2910 W1168

nmdange@live.com

Sun. Jan. 19 - BALSAM LAKE (WW)

Distance: 6.25 mi. Ascent: 1200', Elev: 3729'

Easy trail hike to fire tower at a moderate pace.

Out and back. Beginners welcome.

Registration Period: Open

Leader: Stephen Tsang #4420 W1634

smtsang15@gmail.com

Sun, Jan. 19 - WINDHAM (WW)

Distance: 6.2 mi. Ascent: 1412', Elev: 3525'

Beginners welcome. Relaxed pace.

Target is 1 to 1.2 mph overall (1.2 to 1.3 moving speed).

Registration Period: Open

Leader: Roger Green #2627 W1813

roggr679@gmail.com

Sun. Jan. 19 - BALSAM (WW)

Distance: 5.2 mi. Ascent: 1600', Elev: 3607'

Moderate slow pace. Beginners welcome.

Registration Period: Open

Leader: Christopher Leon Garibian #3881 W1474

christophergaribian@gmail.com

Sun. Jan. 19 - BLACKHEAD (WW)

Distance: 5 mi. Ascent: 1742', Elev: 3964'

Moderate Pace Trail Hike. Beginners Welcome.

Required Winter Peak.

Registration Period: Open

Leader: Matthew McBride #3841 W1574

Matthew.mcbride@trailsandmountains.com

Sun. Jan. 19 - PANTHER (WW)

Distance: 6.3 mi. Ascent: 1981', Elev: 3724'

Moderate Pace Trail Hike. Beginners Welcome

Required Winter Peak.

Registration Period: Open

Leader: Sue Hall #2460 W1091

shall@catskill.net

Sat. Jan. 25 - FIR & BIG INDIAN

Distance: 10.0 mi. Ascent: 2400', Elevs: 3629', 3699'

Long, challenging bushwhack and trail hike at a moderate pace.

Best suited for experienced hikers.

Registration Period: Open

Leaders: Stephen Tsang #4420 W1634 &

Harold Oakhill #283 W1244

smtsang15@gmail.com

Sun. Jan. 26 - BALSAM

Distance: 4.9 mi. Ascent: 1732', Elev: 3603'

Moderate Pace Trail Hike. Beginners Welcome

Required Winter Peak.

Registration Period: Open

Leader: Sue Hall #2460 W1091

shall@catskill.net

Sun. Jan. 26- HUNTER

Distance: 10 mi. Ascent: 2100', Elevs: 3753', 4030'

Southwest Hunter added if requested.

Relaxed pace.

Registration Period: Open

Leader: Tonda Highley #1944 W857

Thighley1944@gmail.com

Tue. Jan. 28 - PANTHER

Distance 6.6 mi. Ascent: 2030', Elev: 3724'

Pace will be determined by the group.

Registration Period: Jan 3 - Jan 20

Leaders: Moe Lemire #2921 & Vicki Ferreira #4014

Moejlemire@gmail.com

Register for a 3500 Club hike:

catskill3500club.org/hike-schedule

Or scan the QR code:



CLUB HIKE SCHEDULE - FEBRUARY 2025



Sat. Feb. 1 - THOMAS COLE

Thomas Cole Only - Distance: 5.2 mi. Ascent: 2230', Elev: 3940'
Out & back from Barnum Road.
Black Dome option if requested.
With Black Dome - Distance: 6.92 mi. Ascent: 2720', Elev: 3980'
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Tonda Highley #1944 W857
Thighley1944@gmail.com

Sat. Feb. 1 - SUGARLOAF

Distance: 7 mi. Ascent: 1800', Elev: 3783'
Slow paced hike. Shuttle is required.
Not for beginners.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Christopher Leon Garibian #3881 W1474
christophergaribian@gmail.com

Sat. Feb. 1 - BALSAM & EAGLE

Distance: 9.5 mi, Ascent: 2700', Elevs: 3607', 3583'
Includes required winter peak (Balsam).
Long, challenging trail hike at a moderate pace.
Clockwise loop. Best suited for experienced hikers.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Stephen Tsang #4420 W1634
smtsang15@gmail.com

Sat. Feb. 1 - SLIDE

Distance: 5.5 mi. Ascent: 1781', Elev: 4154'
Moderate Pace Trail Hike. Beginners Welcome.
Required Winter Peak.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Matthew McBride #3841 W1574
Matthew.mcbride@trailsandmountains.com

Sun, Feb. 2 - WEST KILL

Distance: 7 mi. Ascent: 1900', Elev: 3898'
Relaxed to Moderate paced trail hike.
Target 1 to 1.2 mph overall (1.2 to 1.3 moving speed).
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Roger Green #2627 W1813
roggr679@gmail.com

Thu. Feb. 6 - PEEKAMOOSE AND TABLE

Distance 9.1 mi. Ascent: 2978', Elevs: 3845', 3849'
Moderate paced trail hike.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Bob Nuzzo #3918, W1541
rmnuzz@gmail.com

Sat. Feb. 8 - VLY & BEARPEN

Distance: 7.0 mi. Ascent: 2100', Elevs: 3541', 3587'
Moderately challenging bushwhack and informal trail hike at a moderate pace.
Out and back. Beginners welcomed.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Stephen Tsang #4420 W1634
smtsang15@gmail.com

Sat. Feb. 8 - BALSAM & EAGLE

Distance: 8.8 mi. Ascent: 2400', Elevs: 3607', 3583'
Slow paced, challenging hike.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Christopher Leon Garibian #3881 W1474
christophergaribian@gmail.com

Sun. Feb. 9 - INDIAN HEAD & TWIN

Distance: 7.5 mi. Ascent: 2320', Elevs: 3650', 3573'
Relaxed to Moderate paced trail hike.
Target is 1 to 1.2 mph overall (1.2 to 1.5 moving speed)
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Roger Green #2627 W1813
roggr679@gmail.com

Fri. Feb. 14 (AM) - HALCOTT

Distance: 3.5 mi. Ascent: 1800', Elev: 3509'
Short but steep, difficult bushwhack at a moderate pace.
Out and back. Best suited for experienced hikers.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Stephen Tsang #4420 W1634
smtsang15@gmail.com

Fri. Feb. 14 (PM) - RUSK

Distance: 3.6 mi. Ascent: 1600', Elev: 3686'
Short but steep, difficult bushwhack at a moderate pace.
Out and back. Best suited for experienced hikers.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Stephen Tsang #4420 W1634
smtsang15@gmail.com

All Official Catskill 3500 Club hikes may not be republished without written consent from the Board of Directors

CLUB HIKE SCHEDULE - FEBRUARY 2025

Sat. Feb. 15 - BLACKHEAD

Distance: 5.2 mi. Ascent: 1745', Elev: 3940'
Moderate pace trail hike. Beginners welcome.
Required Winter Peak.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Sue Hall #2460 W1091
shall@catskill.net

Sun. Feb. 16 - EAGLE

Distance: 8.2 mi. Ascent: 1600', Elev: 3600'
Relaxed pace trail hike.
Registration Period: Feb. 4 - 14
Leader: Michael Bongar #2173, W994
michael@bongarbiz.com

Sun. Feb. 16 - BLACKHEAD, BLACK DOME, & THOMAS COLE

Distance: 8.0 mi. Ascent: 2700', Elevs: 3940', 3994', 3953'
Includes required winter peak (Blackhead).
Challenging trail hike at a moderate pace.
Out and back. Best suited for experienced hikers.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Stephen Tsang #4420 W1634
smtsang15@gmail.com

Tue. Feb. 18 - RUSK & EAST RUSK

Distance: 5.1 mi. Ascent: 1690', Elevs: 3686' 3628'
Pace will be determined by the group.
Registration Period: Feb. 1 - Feb 14
Leaders: Moe Lemire #2921 & Vicki Ferreira #4014
Moejlemire@gmail.com

Sat. Feb. 22 - FRIDAY, BALSAM CAP, ROCKY, LONE, TABLE, & PEEKAMOOSE

Distance: 12.0 mi, Ascent: 4200', Elevs: 3692', 3608', 3487', 3700', 3825', 3819'
Long, very challenging bushwhack and trail hike at a moderate pace.
Shuttle required. Best suited for experienced hikers.
Registration Period: Jan 20 - Feb 20
Leader: Stephen Tsang #4420 W1634
smtsang15@gmail.com

Sat. Feb. 22 - HUNTER & SW HUNTER

Distance: 9.5 mi. Ascent: 2030', Elevs: 4030', 3753'
Moderate-to-quick pace trail hike and bushwhack.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Colin DeVries #3382 W1589
colinmdevries@gmail.com

Sat. Feb. 22 - SLIDE

Distance: 6.3 mi. Ascent: 1794', Elev: 4154'
Moderate Pace Trail Hike. Beginners Welcome
Required winter peak.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Sue Hall #2460 W1091
shall@catskill.net



Hunter Mountain Summit. Photo courtesy of Zoe Mullen.

CLUB HIKE SCHEDULE - MARCH 2025

Sat. Mar. 1 - BALSAM

Distance: 5.3 mi. Ascent: 1736'; Elev: 3603'
Moderate pace trail hike. Beginners welcome.
Required winter peak.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Matthew McBride #3841 W1574
Matthew.mcbride@trailsandmountains.com

Sun. Mar. 1 - BEARPEN & VLY

Distance: 6.4 mi. Ascent: 1800'; Elev: 3529', 3600'
Relaxed pace trail hike.
Registration Period: Feb. 17 - 28
Leader: Michael Bongar #2173, W994
michael@bongarbiz.com

Sun. Mar. 2 - WITTENBERG & CORNELL

Distance: 9.4 mi. Ascent: 2357', Elevs: 3782', 3857'
Slow paced, challenging hike.
Best suited for experienced hikers.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Christopher Leon Garibian #3881 W1474
christophergaribian@gmail.com

Sat. Mar. 8 - SW HUNTER & HUNTER

Distance: 10.6 mi. Ascent: 2300'; Elevs: 3753', 4030'
Long, moderately challenging trail hike to fire tower with an easy bushwhack at a moderate pace. Best suited for experienced hikers.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Stephen Tsang #4420 W1634
smtsang15@gmail.com

Fri. Mar. 14 - PANTHER via GIANT LEDGE

Distance 6.8 mi. Ascent: 1620'; Elev: 3891'
Moderate paced out and back trail hike.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Bob Nuzzo #3918, W1541
rmnuzz@gmail.com

Sat. Mar. 15 - WITTENBERG, CORNELL, & SLIDE

Distance: 10.0 mi. Ascent: 3800'; Elevs: 3782', 3857', 4184'
Includes required winter peak (Slide).
Long, challenging trail hike at a moderate pace.
Shuttle required. Best suited for experienced hikers.
Registration Period: Open
Leaders: Stephen Tsang #4420 W1634 &
Harold Oakhill #283 W1244
smtsang15@gmail.com

Sun. Mar. 16 - WITTENBERG, CORNELL & SLIDE

Distance: 10 mi. Ascent: 3600'; Elevs: 3782', 3857', 4184'
Slow paced, challenging hike.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Christopher Leon Garibian #3881 W1474
christophergaribian@gmail.com

Sun. Mar. 16 - SLIDE

Distance: 6.4 mi. Ascent: 1584'; Elev: 4184'
Required winter peak. Relaxed-moderate pace. Beginners welcome.
Registration Period: Feb 12 - March 12
Leader: Christina DePinto #3951 W1536
cdepinto3951@gmail.com

Sun. Mar. 16 - FRIDAY & BALSAM CAP

Distance: 7.7 mi. Ascent: 3100'; Elevs: 3692', 3608'
Moderate-to-quick bushwack.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Colin DeVries #3382 W1589
colinmdevries@gmail.com

Tue. Mar. 25 - SUGARLOAF

Distance: 7 mi. Ascent: 2010'; Elev: 3783'
Pace will be determined by the group.
Registration Period: Mar. 1 - Mar. 20
Leader: Moe Lemire #2921 & Vicki Ferreira #4014
Moejlemire@gmail.com



View from Rocky. Photo courtesy of Siu Samantha Yuen #2894 W1311



P.O. Box 294
West Hurley, NY 12491

www.catskill3500club.org