

**Adirondack Mountain Club Laurentian Chapter  
Executive Committee Meeting January 15, 2009  
Developed by John Barron**

Meeting was held at Clarkson Center for Advanced Materials Processing (CAMP) room 149, beginning at 7 PM.

Executive Committee Members Present: Tom Ortmeyer; Rose Rivezzi; John Barron; Ellie Menz; Hollis Easter

Appointed Officers Present: Betty Peckham

Others present: Ruth McWilliams (co-owner, Catamount Lodge); Bob Hostetter (Ruth McWilliams' brother-in-law)

**Agenda**

1. Approval of Minutes and Agenda
2. Announcements
3. Discussion of Cooperation with Catamount Lodge
4. Officer Reports
5. Budget

**Minutes and Agenda**

The minutes of the October 30 meeting were approved, subject to the following changes: Van de Water (spelling); clarification of the last sentence of the second paragraph concerning the Photo Contest.

The minutes of the November 2 Annual Meeting were approved, subject to inserting the location of the meeting (Canton Presbyterian Church).

The agenda was approved.

**Cooperation with Catamount Lodge**

Tom Ortmeyer introduced guest presenters Ruth McWilliams and her brother-in-law Bob Hostetter.

Ruth and her husband Joe McWilliams purchased Catamount Lodge from St. Lawrence University (SLU) in 2005. SLU set a number of conditions on the sale: for example, it wanted the forest maintained as a forest, and it wanted the trails maintained. The conditions were not a problem for the new owners – Ruth came from a forestry background, having been National Sustainability Coordinator for the U.S. Forest Service prior to retirement.

The property consists of 379 acres of forest in two tracts. It is used primarily for education – typical clients being foresters and students. Ruth and Joe did not want to operate a full-service bed-and-breakfast serving meals, but they welcome groups into the lodge, which has kitchen facilities for group use. The trails are in good condition, well signed and well maintained. This year, Catamount received a grant from the Raquette River Advisory Council (RRAC) to build canoe racks for an access trail off Route 56 for kayaking and canoeing.

This year will be the third season that Catamount will participate in Colton Winterfest. There will be recreational snowshoeing and skiing on Saturday and Sunday; snowshoes will be available on loan at the lodge, courtesy of Colton-Pierrepont Central School. The Laurentian Chapter will be providing instruction and beginner-level trip leadership in snowshoeing both days (Tom Ortmeyer is the organizer). There will be a quilting display at the lodge. Mike Prescott of RRAC (who has canoed the entire length of the Raquette) and Mary Jane Watson will make historic presentations about the River. About 200 guests are expected, including a group from Cerebral Palsy led by Joe Williams that is planning to try snowshoeing.

The Raquette River Corridor Project is developing the river as a “Blue Way Trail”. It will be more than a recreational water route (although it will be one): it is further hoped to incorporate it into the cultural fabric of this part of New York. Mike Prescott is assembling notes for a historic reader about the Raquette. TAUNY is interested in the tradition of boat-building in the region, and may stage an event this summer. TAUNY also has musical interests, and hopes to stage an Adirondack music event at the lodge this summer.

It is hoped to raise interest in bicycle touring in the vicinity of the lodge.

Catamount could benefit very much from volunteer trail maintenance Brookfield owns much of the shoreline and has been very supportive of longer-distance trails. At this point Tom Ortmeyer explained the Chapter’s involvement in trail maintenance, including the roles of John Omohundro at Red Sandstone, Mark Simon at Stone Valley and, potentially, Rob Badger at Postwood Park as trail coordinators as well as the possibility of raising work parties. The Catamount Lodge property has been used by ATV’s in the past, but the new owners are trying to discourage this.

The trails at Catamount are available for use by the public.

Ruth McWilliams and Hollis Easter agreed to maintain links to encourage use of Catamount as a resource of the Chapter. Ruth and Joe McWilliams may lead a trip. Kids’ trips are especially encouraged by Ruth and her husband. Ruth highly recommends a book – “Last Child in the Wilderness” by Richard Louv of San Diego – about reengaging children and their parents in the wilderness.

Tom Ortmeyer thanked Ruth and Bob for the presentation. Catamount maps, brochure, and mandate are attached to these minutes.

### **Announcements**

ADK Spring Outing will be held on Long Island.

High School Volunteer Trails will be held June 20 on Azure.

National Trails Day will be returning to Cranberry Lake on June 6. It will be organized, as in the past, by Clifton-Fine Economic Development Group as well as the DEC. Sherm Craig is lead organizer.

Tom Ortmeyer recommends trail maintenance as an enjoyable and fulfilling experience – he took part at Johns Brook Lodge last year.

### **Officer Reports**

#### **Treasurer** (Ellie Menz)

Ellie has taken possession of the books of the Chapter. Ellie now has signing authority. Arrangements will be made for Tom Ortmeyer to have alternate signing authority.

#### **Archivist** (Betty Peckham) – Nil

#### **Vice Chair, Outings** (Hollis Easter)

Hollis is soliciting ideas to try to improve the program.

There appear to be two schools of thought: one that the schedule should be “all things to all people” (as varied and comprehensive as possible), the other that the number of outings should be restricted – probably to one per weekend – in order to ensure a turnout and minimize the number of trips cancelled for lack of participants.

Hollis is planning outreach to try to attract new participants and members for the Chapter; St. Lawrence Outing Club is one possibility.

Leader training to make new leaders more comfortable is being considered.

SUNY Potsdam and St. Lawrence offer wilderness education programs. A possibility being considered is to elicit volunteers to teach a map and compass course, to begin to develop an interest in bushwhacking.

Joint trips with other Chapters – for example, Shatagee Woods – are a possibility being considered.

Coffee house meetings of the leadership community (in fact, the broader outing community) are being considered.

#### **Vice Chair, Education** (Rose Rivezzi)

The first Outdoors/Indoors was very well attended.

The Chapter will be sending two participants to Camp Colby; there are now three applicants.

The call for participants in this year's High School Volunteer Trails will be launched in late February or early March.

Madeline Ball, a junior at Potsdam High School, is working toward a Girl Scout award and is seeking a project she could do for the Chapter.

Ted Kaizer, a middle school teacher, will be holding an information evening entitled "Ecology of the Adirondacks" on January 29. Rose plans to set up a Chapter table during the event.

Secretary (John Barron) – nil

Publicity (John Barron)

Chapter press releases continue to have a very high rate of publication in the newspapers. There were only a couple of trip photos during the fall, probably because weather and ground conditions seemed to cause cancellation of a number of outings.

No progress yet on the photo contest proposed last meeting. A budget entry of \$100 for the photo contest was approved this meeting. John Barron and Dick Mooers will make arrangements to hold the contest.

Vice Chair, Conservation (Tom Ortmeyer presented on behalf of Peter O' Shea)

John Omohundro and Peter O'Shea attended a meeting of the Open Space Institute. There is concern because no state funds are identified for land acquisition.

Peter feels the Chapter should strongly lobby the state for support for land acquisition generally, and specifically for the purchase of Finch Pruyn lands.

There will be a public meeting on January 22 at the Dulles Office Building in Watertown about the tax cap on State Forest land. This would fix taxes paid by the State to municipalities at the level it was when the land is acquired. Peter recommends the Chapter oppose it.

### **Budget**

Following some minor fine-tuning, it was moved by Rose Rivezzi, seconded by John Barron, and carried unanimously to approve the 2009 budget, which is attached to these minutes.

**Next Meeting:** March 19