

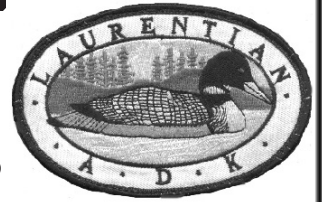


North Wind

The Laurentian Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club

St. Lawrence & Ottawa River Valley Region

April - June 2018



Laurentian Chapter Trail Maintenance Weekend 2017

A major contribution that the Laurentian Chapter makes to conservation and outdoor recreation in our region is trail maintenance. We regularly send delegations to Club level events including National Trails Day; we run special-occasion construction, clean-up, and repair events in places like Lampson Falls, several conservation easements, and other areas; and we are primary maintainers of Stone Valley and the Red Sandstone Trail. Every year in late October, Mark Simon, coordinator of Stone Valley, organizes students from the local colleges and schools for a maintenance blitz that covers Stone Valley and other areas needing attention. This year's event, with more than thirty students, faculty, and chapter members taking part, shows how much support has developed.

Mark Simon himself led a large crew from SUNY Canton in ongoing efforts to upgrade a reroute of Stone Valley's East River Trail below High Terrace. The most difficult work on this stretch involved constructing a retaining wall to prevent erosion from washing the trail down sideways into the Raquette River. This required transporting heavy rocks a long distance to use as materials. Skillful placement of the rocks followed by backfilling with gravel, sand, and earth produced secure level trail.

Not far downstream of Mark's party, a second crew of students from SUNY Potsdam and Herman DeKalb Central School led by Eli Smith was roughing in a new mountain bike trail. In one area a wooden frame had been constructed to stabilize and level a low area. Their segment is going to link up with Mark's reroute and provide safer passage than the steep route over High Terrace.

In South Colton a SUNY Potsdam Wilderness Education crew led by Mark's colleague Adam Wheeler continued a multi-year project to control erosion on an access trail to a popular rock climbing site.

Students dug a drainage ditch, placed rocks and gravel to provide structure, and levelled the trail adjacent. Other students defined their own project in consultation with the Friends of Azure Mountain. Led by crew leader Sean Kelly they cleared brush from the side of good trail, blocked off with brush some unwanted side paths that were developing, and installed signs to keep hikers on the correct route.

John Barron



South Colton Crew. L-R: Tom Macula, CL Adam Wheeler, Noah Primus, Molly McClenon-Grant, Miranda Bell, Rebecca Augustine, Nelson Torres. Photo: John Basrron



Trail Work Day. Photo Kathleen O'Rourke

Chair

John Barron

In February the chapter lost one of its founding members when Betty Peckham passed away. Betty was a member from the very start to the end of her life. Along the way she served in many capacities in the Laurentian Chapter, and also as President of the Adirondack Mountain Club. Those of us who had the pleasure to meet Betty will miss her and remember her with fondness. Donations to the ADK in her memory would be very welcome and something Betty would appreciate. They can be made by mail at Director of Development / Adirondack Mountain Club / 814 Goggins Road / Lake George, NY 12845, or on-line at the Club's web site, www.adk.org. Be sure to specify that a donation is in memory of Betty Peckham. The chapter itself has made such a donation.

An all-Club outing is taking place in our region this year. Tom Ortmeyer, with some assistance from me, is organizing the first annual ADK Cycle Outing, based on the model of the annual summer Paddle Outing. Cycle Outing, running from June 10-15, will be based out of Clarkson University, and will rely largely on the participants themselves to lead the trips. That said, we'd very much like to have a few local cycling enthusiasts who would like to lead one of the trips. If you might be interested, contact Tom or me.

The Laurentian Chapter played a major role in fundraising to produce the Jamieson Fund in memory of Paul Jamieson, well-known author and paddler who passed away in 2005. The Fund is managed by the ADK Main Club, in consultation with the chapter. It has been decided that now is an appropriate time to use the Fund in a way that would commemorate Paul and his interests in paddling and the outdoors. Some possibilities being considered involve trails and portages near Cranberry Lake and Wanakena, and also in the Grasse River Conservation Easements. The details are still being developed.

Our annual Spring Pot Luck is being held on Sunday, April 8, a week or two earlier than usual this year to enable Brian Hoody to be our guest speaker. Brian, who is President of the Adirondack 46ers, will describe how the 46ers are coping with the huge increase in hiking in the High Peaks.



Great Camp Santanoni. At the main lodge. L-R: Jeff Miller, Joan Trivilino, Jeanna Matthews, Selma Mededovic, A/TL John Barron. Photo by an unknown skier.

Executive Committee

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Some of you may not know that, as part of the public licensing of an electric company to construct dams and produce electricity on our rivers, there is a public advisory committee formed for each affected watershed. Currently our chapter has representation on two such advisory committees – one for the Racquette river and one for the West Branch of the St. Regis river. Each advisory committee meets twice annually to hear about any concerns with the watershed and to administer a small fund provided by the electric company (Brookfield) for conservation projects.

For the last few years, I have been serving on the advisory committee for the West Branch of the St. Regis River. Recently there have not been any proposals for the use of the available funds so the small fund is growing modestly. Recently, I proposed that we try to improve access to the base of the waterfalls at the Allen's Falls site. Although there was no formal proposal for this project, Brookfield spent some time investigating the idea and decided they are not in support of the concept. It would increase access to the river bed downstream from the falls, an area where people could be injured by sudden changes in water levels due to dam activity. Also the land at the base of the falls is not owned by Brookfield so any such project would require the cooperation of the landowner.

John Omohundro had been representing our club on the much larger and more active Racquette River advisory committee. John has stepped down from this position and I will be taking his place on the committee. This leaves a vacancy on the West Branch of the St. Regis River advisory committee. Members who may be interested in serving in this capacity are encouraged to speak to me.

Anyone with concerns or ideas about the West Branch of the St. Regis River watershed or the St. Regis River watershed is welcome to contact the corresponding advisory committee with project ideas or other comments. ADK members can direct their comments through me if they wish.

Blair Madore madorebf@potsteam.edu or 315 261 0751

Appointed Positions

Chapter Archivist: Carolyn Kaczka
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Who are our members?

Have you ever wondered where your fellow Laurentian Chapter members live or how many of your neighbors are members? I got interested in these questions a few months ago, and to satisfy my curiosity, I looked at the zip codes of the 277 households that were members at the end of last year. Here's what I found:

Three-quarters (207) of us live in St Lawrence County. Half of these are in Potsdam and Canton, with 74 and 46 respectively, and Ogdensburg comes in third with 18 members. Massena (10) and Colton (9) are also well-represented. But can you guess which community comes in fourth, with 11 members? Hint: it's the capital of a foreign country.

Of the 47 zip codes in St Lawrence County, 29 are home to chapter members. Elsewhere in New York State, our members hail from as near as Jefferson and Franklin counties and as far as Long Island. We also live in sixteen other states from Vermont to Florida to Washington. And while the Adirondack Mountains may not extend into Canada, the Laurentian Chapter does, with members in Ontario and Quebec.

While we all have ties here, we are a far-flung group of people.

David Katz

OUTINGS

April - June 2018

Marianne Hebert

Sun. Apr 8: Spring Pot Luck. Bring a dish to share and your own tableware. First Presbyterian Church, Potsdam. Arrive at 5 PM for supper at 5:30 PM. Guest speaker Brian Hoody, president of the Adirondack 46ers, will give us insight into what the 46ers are doing to help manage the rapidly growing demand for hiking in the High Peaks. Contact John Barron, (613) 828-2296 or johnbarron@sympatico.ca.

Sat. Apr 21: Landon Bay. Easy hike in Canada's Thousand Islands National Park. Features wetland views, historic features, and a high viewpoint overlooking the Thousand Islands. Optional early supper at the Stonewater Brew Pub in Gananoque. Joint trip with Black River Chapter. 5 miles, Level 2. Contact John Barron, (613) 828-2296 or johnbarron@sympatico.ca.

Sun. Apr 22: Climb and cleanup of Pinnacle on Earth Day. Celebrate the 48th Earth Day by climbing this little mountain and sharing some poem, prose excerpt, art, or other nature-related or conservation-related item with the group during lunch. The walk is five miles round trip and the elevation gain is about 700 feet. Bring a kitchen-sized garbage bag and gloves for handling litter. Contact: Leaders: John and Susan Omohundro, adknwoutings@gmail.com

Sat. Apr 28: Everton Falls Clean-up. Meet at 28 Port Kent Road, Nicholville at 10:00am or at the canoe launch parking on the Red Tavern Road at 10:30am. We will check the hardwood and softwood trails for blow-down and pick up any trash along the roadside. Picnic lunch beside the river. Canoeing if water levels are safe. We will provide trash bags. Level 1. Contact Duncan Cutter 315-328-4675, or cut57@twcny.rr.com.

Sun. Apr 29: Tooley Pond Road Waterfalls. Visit multiple waterfalls during spring runoff for astounding views and photos. A total 2-3 miles of walking split over several trails. Level 1. Contact Blair Madore 315 261 0751 or madorebf@potsdam.edu for details.

Sat. May 5: Bicycle Trip Canton to Upper and Lower Lakes Bird Conservation Area. This is a 20 mile ride, with multiple stops to view the Grass River, Indian Creek Nature Center, and the conservation area

Foot travel

Difficulty Level	Feet of ascent	miles
5. Very strenuous	over 1500	10+
4. Strenuous	1000-1500	8-10
3. Moderate	500-1000	5-8
2. Fairly easy	to 499	3-5
1. Easy	level mostly	1-3

Cycling

Leaders should specify mileage, elevation, and surface.

Check for additions, deletions and changes on our chapter website, www.adklaurentian.org

Please contact the leaders at least a day before the trip.

Car pooling makes sense, as does sharing the cost of gas.

to look for birds, wildflowers, etc. Contact Tom Ortmeier, 315-244-3707, tortmeyer@gmail.com.

Sat. May 19: Cycling in Ottawa. The Tulip Festival will be in progress. Very slow speed with many scenic stops along the Ottawa River, the Rideau Canal, and Dow's Lake. 25 miles, Level 3. Contact John Barron. (613) 828-2296 or johnbarron@sympatico.ca.

Sat. May 26: Haystack of Ray Brook. One of the Saranac 6. Good views of the High Peaks. Pace slow. 6.6 miles, 1200 feet of gain, Level 3 plus. Contact John Barron, (613) 828-2296 or johnbarron@sympatico.ca,

Sat. Jun. 2 Hike around Massawepie Lake. Approximately 6 miles with a few short climbs and descents but no significant elevation gain. We will traverse dramatic eskers, visit the source of the Grass River. We will have lunch on one of the peninsulas, and hopefully we will see lots of birds and wildflowers along the way. Level 3, moderate. Contact Marianne Hebert at (315) 265-0756 or hebertm@potsdam.edu.

Sat. Jun. 2. National Trails Day. Local trailwork opportunity on the Red Sandstone Trail in honor of National Trails Day. Please contact Blair Madore (madorebf@potsdam.edu) or 315 261 0751 for start time and place. We will divide up into groups and tackle projects from as simple as brush clearing and trimming to as complicated as bridge and stair repair. Level 2.

Jun 10-15. ADK Cycle Outing. The first ADK Cycle Outing will be held in Potsdam June 10-15. This year's trip is full, but you can call to get on the waiting list. Also, we are looking for a few local leaders to lead a cycle trip on a route they know. Contact Tom Ortmeier, 315-244-3707, tortmeyer@gmail.com for details.

Sat. Jun 23: Paddle/Sail Carry Falls Reservoir (Canoes only) We'll paddle from Jamestown falls north to the Carry Falls Dam (about 5 miles). We'll bring tarps/ropes and poles to rig temporary sails if wind conditions permit. Direction of travel may also reverse depending on wind. Expect a great day of play and exploration on this large body of water. Level 3. Contact Blair Madore 315-261-0751 or madorebf@potsdam.edu for details.

Sun. Jun 24: OK Slip Falls. OK Slip Falls is one of the highest waterfalls in the Adirondacks, located a bit beyond Indian Lake. The trail features good views of the falls and the surrounding mountains. The trail is 6.8 miles round trip. An additional 1.6 miles rt will take you to a gorge on the Hudson River. Level 3. Contact Tom Ortmeyer, 315-244-3707, tortmeyer@gmail.com for details.



Peavine Swamp. L-R: Carol Edmonds, Gretchen Gedroiz, Bill LaRocque, Elisabeth Craven, Tom Ortmeyer. Photo TL John Barron

Winter at Higley

The Laurentian Chapter has supported the work of the Friends of Higley Flow State Park for many years. In that time the use of the park in the winter has grown. A lodge was built several years ago, and ski equipment, free to children under 12 and at a nominal rental rate to adults, is now also available. There is a growing slate of activities that include ski and snowshoe races, a lesson series for adult skiers, and classes for local school groups. Both Clarkson and St. Lawrence University ski teams train on the trails, that are groomed and tracked by volunteers from the Friends (thanks Ed and Judy Fuhr!) and by SLU. Night skiing (bring your own headlamp) has been available on Tuesdays and Thursdays when conditions permit. More information is at higleyfriends.org.

The Friends group at the Nicandri Nature Center in Massena and the one at Higley are great examples of volunteers making the winter a fun season in the North Country. Support them; get out and have some fun.

David Trithart

Director

Tom Ortmeyer

Adirondack Rail Trails

I recently was on John Barron's snowshoe trip into the Peavine Swamp. This was a joint trip with the North Woods Chapter, conditions were good, and we had a great time. Afterwards, some of us stopped at the Pinecone Restaurant for a snack, and had a chance to talk with some of the snowmobilers that were also out enjoying the winter weather. We talked to one group who had tried the rail line south of Tupper Lake—and their report of snowmobiling on the rails was not good, even though there was a good amount of snow on the ground. In their view, snowmobiling on rails just didn't work.

The question of rail trails in the Adirondacks is once again in the news. Study after study has shown that rail trails would be widely used, and would quickly become a major park asset. On the other hand, leaving the rails in place for excursion trains will require significant investment, and will always require annual subsidies to keep the trains operating. There is strong evidence supporting these conclusions.

There are at least two excellent opportunities for rail trails in the Adirondacks. One is on the Utica-Lake Placid rail line. New York State did an extensive study on this, and proposed a compromise that would replace the tracks from Tupper Lake to Lake Placid with a rail trail, and leave the tracks in from Tupper Lake to Old Forge and then on to Utica. The rail trail plan met with wide public approval, but the Adirondack Railway Preservation Society sued to block the plan. The Adirondack Park Agency has just proposed an amendment to the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan, proposing to include rail trails to the definition of travel corridors. The draft amendment can be downloaded from the APA website. The APA will hold hearings in April in Ray Brook, Old Forge and Albany. Comments can be sent to Kathy Regan, Deputy Director for Planning, NYS Adirondack Park Agency, P.O. Box 99, Ray Brook, NY 12977 or email to SLMP_Comments@apa.ny.gov. I encourage you to comment on this amendment.

Another potential rail trail is on the Saratoga North Creek Rail line. This line has seen significant controversy recently, concerning the storage of oil tank cars on the line. The southern part of this line has had an excursion train, but ridership has not met expectations, and the number of trips per week has been reduced. Regardless if the excursion train continues, there is significant potential for a rail trail on this line. There recently has been a groundswell of support for the conversion of part or all of this rail line to a rail trail.

The evidence is strong that rail trails in the Adirondacks would attract significant year round usage, require fewer subsidies, and provide more spending than would excursion rail lines. Expanding the season of usage alone is a strong argument in favor of creating these rail trails. Imagine having a new attraction in Tupper Lake, Saranac Lake, North Creek and elsewhere that brings visitors for 3.5 seasons a year. And imagine a new trail that will compete with the High Peaks for attracting those interested in actively enjoying the Adirondacks. Please contact the APA with your comments on this entire topic.



January - March 2018

Monday January 1 - New Year's Day at Clarkson. It was a very cold afternoon, but less so than the frigid days before and after. A smaller than average turnout enjoyed hot soup and cold hors d'oeuvres at the Adirondack Lodge. A handful or two even skied or snowshoed around the trails, some wearing face masks and ski goggles against the cold. A very enjoyable start for 2018.

Sat. Jan. 6: Robert Moses State Park. The trip to Robert Moses was cancelled due to extreme cold and wind chill. Warnings remained up until 10:00 AM today. It's now -5 F, wind chill of -18 F. Eight people indicated interest. Under extreme cold and wind chill warnings for Saturday the trip was rescheduled to Sunday. Four couldn't accommodate the new date. The other four watched the weather. About 11 AM on Saturday the trip was declared to be going ahead, although with a caution about the cold. About an hour later the NWS extended the wind chill warning to 10 AM Sunday, and the trip was declared cancelled.

January 19-21 - ADK Winter Outing. Tom Ortmeyer and John Barron went to the all-Club seasonal outing on the Tug Hill Plateau. We enjoyed the region's deep cold powder snow during a short snowshoe circuit on Friday evening; then warm temperatures led to dense wet snow. Weather warm and sunny. Saturday we skied at Winona SF in the morning and Chateaugay SF in the afternoon. Sunday featured adventurous snowshoeing and sightseeing at Salmon River Falls.

Sat. Jan. 27: Snowshoe Wellesley Island State Park. The weather outlook was iffy, but we soldiered on hoping for a better outcome. The late morning start was gray and dreary, but the skies cleared by the afternoon. Warm weather made for very icy trails, but micro-spikes saved the day. We enjoyed a warm lunch inside the newly renovated Nature Center, while we watched a herd of white tail deer stroll by. Kathleen Fitzgerald, Ashley Oxenford, Marianne Hebert (TL).

Sun. Feb. 11: Great Camp Santanoni/Higley Alternate. Freezing rain in the Newcomb area prevented us from attempting a ski to Great Camp Santanoni. As a local alternative that could be completed before the worst of the weather a group convened at Higley Flow State Park for a "Ski and Soup". We divided into two groups based upon experience and skied for a few miles. We followed up with a great soup lunch in the lodge (prepared by Margaret Madore) but did not venture out to ski again after lunch due to rain. Blair Madore (TL), Joan Trivilino, Joel Foisy, Margaret Madore, Gretchen Koehler, Nancy Foisy, Marianne Hebert, Jeffrey

Compiled by Marianne Hebert

Miller, and Tom Ortmeyer.

Sat. Feb. 17: Skiing on the Peavine Swamp trail. We had ideal and pleasant winter weather for our planned ski trip; but the weather sequence in the days leading up had produced an icy crust with a thin dusting of fresh powder snow. Fortunately, we realized this was a possibility, and so had brought snowshoes and microspikes as well as skis. We left the skis in the cars at the Wanakena trailhead, set out on microspikes, and at about 1/2 mile changed to snowshoes. We saw few recent human tracks (but plenty of animal tracks) and enjoyed the surroundings very much as we made a circuit of "Loop 3" at the Wanakena end of the Peavine trail system. We stopped for lunch at the lean-to, where we were surprised to encounter a friend from the Black River Chapter, pausing from a solo trip on a much longer route than ours. The route out from the lean-to was much shorter than the route in, taking us back to the cars in good time. Carol Edmonds, Gretchen Gedroiz, Bill LaRocque, Elisabeth Craven, Tom Ortmeyer, TL John Barron.

Sun. Feb 25: Snowshoe Hike to Harper Falls. The morning's icy rains turned to sunshine for our afternoon hike to Harper Falls. We walked in the Donnerville Road to the trail head, and then through the forest down to the falls. Harper Falls was roaring with the rain and melting snow-- well worth the effort. We followed the trail downstream, hopped over some ice, and went a ways on some of the mountain bike trails in the Donnerville State Forest, before turning around and heading back to the cars. John Barron, Jean Giblin, Marianne Hebert, Tom Ortmeyer (TL)

Sat. Mar.3: High Rock ski. Cancelled.

Sat. Mar. 10: Bear Mountain Snowshoe. Four of us set out a grey day after a recent snow. The first two miles along the road were fairly easy, with just 5 inches of snow. As we started the climb the snow was 8 inches deep and we broke trail the whole way (taking turns, of course). The steep and grueling climb was rewarded with nice views and clearing skies from the top of the ledge, where we enjoyed lunch. We expected the ridge traverse and descent to be easier, but we were met with increasingly deeper snow making for slow progress. The highlight of the day was when we startled two very large birds, who grouched about being disturbed from their nap under a spruce tree. Marianne Hebert (TL), Kate Schlitz, Ashley Oxenford, Rod Woodin.

Sun. Mar 11: Great Camp Santanoni. Blair Madore planned this trip for February 11 and had to postpone on account of rain (although despite the rain an alternative outing took place that day in Higley). Unfortunately last-minute work obligations meant Blair couldn't participate on the new date, but with excellent weather and snow conditions beckoning we regrouped and went ahead without him. We enjoyed seeing the impressive and widespread estate including

the gatehouse and farm complexes and the main lodge itself. In one of the smaller cabins volunteers welcomed us with a wood stove and hot chocolate. John Barron (A/TL), Jeff Miller, Joan Trivilino, Jeanna Matthews, Selma Mededovic.

You're Invited Happy 100th Birthday, Azure Mt. Fire Tower!

The Azure Mountain fire tower, a favorite Laurentian Chapter destination and an aspect of the Chapter's history, observes its 100th birthday on Sunday, July 29. On that date in 1918, the tower was opened and staffed, remaining so for 60 years. In 1978, the state, more interested in aerial surveillance, closed it. It came within two days of being demolished in 2001, when ADKers, including several Laurentian Chapter members, and others persuaded the state to let it be. Two years later, Azure Mountain Friends (AMF), a 501(c)3 that also involves Chapter members, re-opened the tower, and it has been maintained and staffed on weekends and holidays from Memorial Day to mid-October by volunteers, again including some Chapter members, ever since.

Centennial observances on July 29 will take place at the tower and later that day at a site to be determined in St. Regis Falls. The public is welcome; come on out (or up)! Details will be posted on AMF's website, www.azuremountain.org, as soon as they are known.

Interested in being an Azure volunteer summit steward / host? It's fun – I speak from long experience. Contact Joe Berner, azurehiker@yahoo.com.

Know a college-bound high school student or a student already in college who could use a \$750 scholarship in exchange for five days as a steward /host? Tell Neal Burdick, nealburdick@gmail.com.

--Neal Burdick, AMF Board vice-chair

Conservation

David Katz

Governor Cuomo's proposed New York State budget contains a seemingly innocuous provision that, if enacted, may seriously hamper conservation efforts in both the Adirondacks and the Catskills.

Currently, New York State pays local taxes on Forest Preserve lands in both parks. Under this system, the local assessor determines the taxable value of state-owned land (subject to judicial review), and the tax rate is determined by the local budget. Since state-owned lands are assessed and taxed by the same methods as privately-owned lands, the state's contribution to each locality's budget is calculated in the same way as every other landowner's.

Under the changes proposed in the state budget, New York State would stop paying taxes and would instead make Payments In Lieu Of Taxes, also called PILOT payments.

This creates two potential problems: First, the size of PILOT payments won't necessarily increase if the value of forest land increases, so private forest-owners may see tax increases while the state's PILOT payments don't change. Second, the state would determine whether there would be annual increases in the payments, and the proposal caps annual increases at slightly over one percent. So while local taxpayers frequently see tax increases of 2% or more, the state's increase might be less than half as much.

These changes don't seem like a big deal, but over time, local taxpayers would have to shoulder more and more of the burden of keeping their towns functioning. This would be a problem, particularly in towns where the state owns much of the land. Local citizens and local governments grasp this, and understandably might not want the state to acquire any more land in their jurisdictions. Local opposition would make it harder to add new lands to the Forest Preserve in either the Adirondacks or the Catskills, no matter how important the lands are or how much the state wants to pay for them.

Done correctly, moving from property taxes to PILOT payments might work, but the new system must insure fairness to property owners and local governments. The current proposal does not do this. The state needs to examine the effects of such a change and should not rush into it as part of the budget process. Please contact your state senator (nysenate.gov), assemblyperson (nyassembly.gov), and Governor Cuomo (governor.ny.gov) to voice your opinion about this proposed change.



*Harper Falls:
L-R: John Barron, Jean Giblin,
Marianne Herbert. Photo: TL
Tom Ortmeyer*

Membership

Randy Saumier

New Members - Welcome.

- Jess Tyre, Potsdam, NY
- David Pechey, Hammond, NY
- Eric Mayer, Canton, NY
- Sarah Learmonth, Brockville, Ont.
- Elizabeth Hunt, Bloomingdales, NY
- Robert Bickford and Lauren Becker, Potsdam, NY
- Lilly Bianchi, Canton, NY
- Joey and Melissa Gault, Cornwall, Ont.
- Cara and Steven Coffin, Canton, NY



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The Newsletter of the Laurentian Chapter
of Adirondack Mountain Club
7 Barclay St. Potsdam, NY 13676

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VISIT the chapter website, ably
maintained by David Katz, for color
photos, trail maps, updated officer
reports, and outings:

www.adklaurentian.org

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Marianne Hebert:

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Black Swallowtail Butterfly. Photo by Bob Platte