

This and That from the Chair

by Tom Wheeler

This autumn we have several items on our schedule in addition to Outings. Traditionally, we had a November Potluck, but owing to COVID we were unable to have the event. This year we are reviving it, on Sunday, November 16, at the Presbyterian Church in Potsdam, beginning at 5 p.m. We plan to showcase the entries in the Photo Contest and award prizes. The location provides a much better opportunity to view the entries compared to the lodge at Higley Flow. This is a great opportunity to meet with old friends and be introduced to other members. Please bring a dish or dessert to pass. We will provide cider and hot beverages.

Of course we will still have the potluck, ski and snowshoe at Higley Flow State Park to celebrate the New Year. This will start in the early afternoon on January 1 and conclude with the potluck shortly after four o'clock.

Tom Van de Water and I are also starting a discussion group which will focus on the history and issues concerning the Adirondacks. We are planning to hold this on the second or third Wednesday of each month from 5 to 7 p.m. (We may change the hours as this progresses.) The first session, in October, will focus on the creation of the park, the second on wilderness and the pertinent writings of Bob Marshall. The third will discuss environmental issues and the writings of Bill McKibben, George Perkins Marsh, and others. While some of the materials for discussion are easily accessible, we will also provide others which are less accessible or even rare.

I anticipate thoughtful discussions and learning new perspectives on our unique Adirondack backyard. We still haven't settled on a location, so contact either of us, me at northflow@gmail.com or 315-244-9958, or Tom Van de Water at tblaisdellvandewater@gmail.com or 315-261-1723.



Chapter Chair report, continued

In all of these activities there will be the opportunity to interact with other members of the chapter, whether or not you are able to participate in our regular outings. I hope to see you at one of these events.

In 2003, my first year as president of the Adirondack Mountain Club, the club's Eleanor Brown Communication Award was presented to North Country Public Radio. I still have the picture taken at the President's Dinner with myself, Brian Mann, Martha Foley and Ellen Rocco.

This award was well merited. It recognized the extraordinary importance of NCPR to illuminating the economic, social and environmental issues that face our region, a region that's large and sparsely populated. It extends from the Canadian border (although NCPR's reach crosses that border) south through the Adirondack Park, west to the Tug Hill Plateau and east to Lake Champlain, which, again, NCPR broadcasts beyond. The station has established transmitters that provide coverage to many remote Adirondack communities. Over the years it has provided coverage of local disasters and local community concerns. It has covered the local impact of national and global issues. It has broadcast interviews with local farmers, small-business owners, community leaders, artists, musicians, ordinary citizens, and state and national figures.





Chapter Chair report, continued

NCPR has provided coverage that no commercial service is willing to provide. Moreover, most “local” radio stations have been acquired by outside corporations with little local content or staff. NCPR is a part of our community, part of the regional glue that binds citizens of the North Country, the Adirondacks and beyond.

It appears that there are those who wish to silence this voice for political reasons. Some cannot tolerate exposure to views contrary to their own. This intolerance is inimical to basic American values. It would be a great loss to the Adirondack region if they were successful.



Birders on the Munter Trail. (Photo by M. Hebert)



Random Gleanings of Interest from the Chapter's Executive Committee Meeting, Sept. 11, 2025

ADK is considering a new computer system, likely based on Salesforce.

Adirondac magazine will be reduced to one print issue per year, with frequent newsletters; more content may be put out more frequently, so total content could increase.

Complicated financial and maintenance difficulties have led ADK to close Cascade Center for this winter. Options include rehabilitating the building or selling the property.

The chapter seeks representatives for the Raquette River Advisory Committee (RAC) and the West Branch St. Regis RAC.

Fall Outing 2026 will be hosted by Northwoods Chapter and chaired by John Omohundro, who is also a Laurentian Chapter member. John has asked whether the chapter might help by leading trips, providing volunteer staff, etc.

A Trivial Concern

What is distinctive about Northville and Southville, NY?

(Answer elsewhere in this North Wind; no fair peeking.)

ADK Laurentian

Executive Committee

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Outings Schedule October – December 2025

*Dana Chudzinski
Vice Chair, Outings*

3	A+	Very Strenuous	4,000	10	10
3	A	Strenuous	3,000	5 to 10	8 to 10
2	B+	Moderately Strenuous	2,000	5 to 10	6 to 8
2	B	Moderate	1,000	5 to 10	5 to 7
1	C+	Fairly Easy	1,000	5 to 8	4 to 6
1	C	Easy	Under 1,000	< 5	< 5

*Check for last minute updates: www.adklaurentian.org

*Please contact the leader at least one day before trip.

*Car pooling makes sense—so does sharing the cost of gas.

Oct. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30: Weekly Walk, Bayside Cemetery, Potsdam: We will walk the paved and gravel roads for approximately 2 miles, 1-hour round trip. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the entrance to the cemetery (730 CR59/Back Hannawa Rd). Leaders for each week will vary. Level C (Easy). Contact Marianne Hebert, hebertm@potsdam.edu, 315-265-0756 for information.

Sat., Oct. 4: Fall Color Tour on St. Regis Mountain.

St. Regis is a nice hike that will provide great fall color views of the St Regis Canoe Area and beyond. 6.8 miles RT, 1,250 feet of net elevation gain. Moderately Strenuous, Level B. Trip leaders Tom Ortmeyer and Jane Khondker. Contact Tom Ortmeyer, tortmeyer@gmail.com or 315-244-3707.

Sat., Oct, 11: Robert Wehle State Park.

Near Sackets Harbor. Easy loop hike, 5 miles RT, half in the forest and half along a spectacular Lake Ontario shoreline. An exploratory trip at a new destination, it has not been scouted in advance. Slow pace, Level C. Contact John Barron, 613-828-2296 or johnbarron@sympatico.ca.

Outings Schedule

October – December 2025

Sat. Oct. 18: Birding on the Munter Trail. Join local birder Harold Ellingsen for a morning bird walk on the Munter Trail along the Raquette River. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot behind the Clarkson Walker Arena and Hantz Field off Clarkson Ave. (CR59/Back Hannawa Rd). We expect to see a few migrants and the usual waterfowl. Bring binoculars, and see “Backtracks,” Aug. 2, for an idea of what this outing is like. Less than 2 miles, easy terrain and pace. Level C (Easy). Contact Marianne Hebert, hebertm@potSDam.edu, 315-265-0756.

Nov. 6, 13, 20, 27: Weekly Walk, Munter Trail, Potsdam:

We will walk the trails for approximately 2 miles, 1-hour round trip. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot behind the Clarkson Walker Arena and Hantz Field off Clarkson Ave. (CR59/Back Hannawa Rd). Leaders for each week will vary. Level C (Easy). Contact Marianne Hebert, hebertm@potSDam.edu, 315-265-0756 for information.

Sat. Nov. 1: Buck Mt. Fire Tower.

This newer trail, opened in September of 2023, is about 1.2 miles one way. There is approximately 550 feet elevation gain, most of which occurs in the last 0.6 miles of the trail. The tower must be at least partially climbed for views at the top, but it's a nice trail either way. If you are interested in a trail that has ladders, this trail has at least seven. Easy, Level C, but second half is steep. Contact Jane Khondker, janekhond@gmail.com.

Sat., Nov. 15: Stone Valley Hike.

Join us for a Pride Outside hike along the Raquette River. We'll visit the foundations of the old tannery and see where Colton industries once flourished along the river. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the southwest trailhead parking lot on River St. in Colton. 2-3 miles, not much elevation gain, but some steep rocky sections. Level C+, Fairly Easy. Contact Marianne Hebert, hebertm@potSDam.edu or 315-265-0756 for information.

Outings Schedule

October – December 2025

Sun., Nov. 16: Fall Pot Luck. First Presbyterian Church, Potsdam.

Arrive around 5 p.m., supper to start at 5:30. Bring a dish to share and your own tableware. Presentation of photo contest awards, perhaps a speaker. See Chapter chair Tom Wheeler's report on page 1 for details. Contact Tom Wheeler, adk3356@gmail.com, (315) 386-2482 or (315) 244-9958 for more information.

Sat., Nov. 22: Huckleberry Lake.

This 3.6-mile RT hike over mostly rolling terrain will yield a rock outcrop with great views of the lake. This lake is nestled in the Wolf Lake State Forest located near Talcville. Contact Dana Chudzinski, chudski63@yahoo.com or 315-244-5315.

Dec. 4, 11, 18, 25: Weekly Walk, Red Sandstone Access Roads.

We will walk the dirt access roads for approximately 2 miles, 1-hour round trip. If the roads are icy, traction devices such as micro spikes are recommended. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Red Sandstone trailhead, north entrance parking lot off Back Hannawa Road (CR59) between Potsdam and Hannawa Falls. From Potsdam, at the intersection of Rt. 11 and Clarkson Ave (CR59), drive south for 2.5 miles. The access road is on the left just past Sweeney Road. A brown "trail parking" sign marks the entrance. Leaders for each week will vary; Dec. 25 is leader-dependent. Contact Marianne Hebert, hebertm@potsdam.edu, 315-265-0756. Level C.

Sat., Dec. 13: Higley Flow State Park.

We'll hike or snowshoe about 2-3 miles as conditions permit and have a fire and cookout at the lean-to. Bring your kids, their grandparents, and your leashed dogs for an all-ages fun event. Rated C (Easy). Contact Blair Madore at 315-261-0751 or madorebf@potsdam.edu.

Outings Schedule

October – December 2025

Not Exactly an Outing:

Adirondack Discussion Group, Oct. 15, Nov. 12, Dec. 10. See Chapter chair Tom Wheeler's column on page 1 for details.

Save the Date: New Year's Day at Higley Flow: January 1, 2026, 1-4 p.m.

Ski, snowshoe or hike (1:00-3:00 p.m.) to kick off the new year in nature. At 3:00 we'll gather at the lodge for a potluck finger-food social. Bring a snack to share. The lodge will be open; weather permitting, we will have a bonfire. More to come in the Winter 2026 North Wind.





Backtracks July–Sept 2025

June 28, Ampersand Mountain Hike

There was rain in the forecast and rain on the morning drive, but it was gone before we set out to climb. We quickly got past the first flat section of trail and started to climb. We all admired the steps as we struggled up them, with frequent rest stops. We scrambled over bedrock at the last steep section, and then enjoyed seeing the varied rock formations on our walk along the ridge toward the summit. Clouds rolled in as we clambered up the final stretch. We emerged on the summit to find ourselves immersed in a cloud with a stiff wind. We enjoyed both, and then retreated from the summit for our lunch. Fortunately, the clouds cleared, and we were treated to great views of the Saranac Lakes before heading down. Participants: Tom Ortmeyer (TL), Jane Khondker, Greg Smith, David Craft, Tom Lawrence.



Saranacs with Lunchers (Photo by Tom Ortmeyer)

Backtracks July-Sept 2025



Cedar waxwing babies being fed by their parents. Photo by Lis Eno).

August 2, Birding on the Munter Trail

Five of us joined trip leader Harold Ellingsen for a morning stroll on the Munter Trail to see what bird species we might find. We were not disappointed. It was a cool, sunny morning, with lots of activity on the trail (birds, humans and a few dogs). We identified 35 different species. Highlights of the day included two young cedar waxwings being fed by their parents, an oven bird skittering along the creek and two great blue herons perching on the shore. We also identified an Eastern king bird, a yellow warbler, a chestnut sided warbler and a yellow-bellied sapsucker. All in all, we identified 90 individuals.



Participants: Standing: Harold Ellingsen, Bob Crandall. Seated: Eileen Wheeler, Kathleen Fitzgerald, Lis Eno. Photo by Marianne Hebert.



Wood Duck. Photo by Bob Crandall

Backtracks July–Sept 2025

Sept. 18, Hurricane Hike

It was a perfect fall day to hike Hurricane: Almost cloudless with an intense blue sky and temperatures in the high 60s. The elevation gain began right as we went into the forest and continued for a quarter mile, then moderated somewhat. Within a mile we had crossed a beaver pond and encountered the first outlook, which gave a hint of the view to come. Then more uphill followed by a second outlook that gave us more of an idea of what we were about to see. As we emerged from the treeline, we followed yellow blazes past boulders to the summit and fire tower, and admired the well-built navigational cairns with a sign explaining why they exist and why they should not be altered, as the amazing display of the High Peaks came into view. We identified Marcy, Algonquin, and Giant, among many others. We had good views of the Champlain Valley and Vermont, noting that the foliage had barely started to turn. We tried signaling chapter member Neal Burdick in Shelburne, VT, with mirrors, but had no success, owing possibly to distance and/or valley haze. Coming down we enjoyed seeing various mushrooms, and appreciated the late summer breeze in the green leaf canopy.



Photo caption:
Greg Smith,
Tom Ortmeyer (TL),
Jane Khondker (TL),
Brenda Curley and
Stacie Davis at the base
of the Hurricane Mt. Fire
Tower

Backtracks July-Sept 2025

Sept. 20, Hiking at Massawepie Lake

A cool morning evolved into a warm sunny afternoon. Massawepie trails never cease to amaze us. We started out from the wrong parking lot, which extended our hike, but the easy road walk atop a steep esker only added a pleasant mile. The hike along the lake led past some big white pines then across an expanse of board walks to the edge of the Massawepie Mire. We stopped often to enjoy the flora: club mosses, sheep laurel, bunch berries, winterberry, wood sorrel and lots of mushrooms. We crossed the bridge over the Grass River, and enjoyed a lunch at the lean-to at Four Points. The highlight of the day was our encounter with two curious gray jays looking for a handout, or something.



Participants at Four Points, L-R: Gary Parker, Jane Khondker, Tom Lawrence, Gina Hazen (Photo by M. Hebert, TL),

Backtracks July-Sept 2025

Sept. 20, Hiking at Massawepie Lake



Grey Jay on the bridge at the source of the Grasse River.



White Trail along Pine Pond



Massawepie Lake from Four Points



A Trivial Concern Answer

(do not read until you've read the question, elsewhere in this North Wind).

Southville is in the northern Adirondacks, whereas Northville is in the southern Adirondacks. Go figure. Actually, Southville is outside the park, and it's now but an offset intersection on Route 11B. Northville, inside the park and an actual place, is the southern (of course) terminus of the Northville-Placid Trail. It's all a matter of perspective –in bygone days, North Country folk knew the Adirondacks as the Great South Woods, whereas in the Mohawk Valley to the south, they were the Great North Woods. But no matter what direction you come from, they're still pretty great. - Neal Burdick





In Memory: Joan Kepes

Joan Spence Kepes, of Canton, died on August 20, 2025, at the age of 93. She was a long-time active member of the Laurentian Chapter, and with her husband, Dick, among the founders of the chapter in the 1970s. For many years she led the annual ADK clean-up at Lampson Falls, with volunteers invited to her home for a meal afterward. She also served as the secretary for the main club, repeatedly making the long trip to Glens Falls with her fellow Laurentian, *Adirondac* editor Neal Burdick. After she retired from SUNY Canton, where she taught English, she had more time to walk on the trails at her farmland home near the Grasse River. Joan loved birds and waterfalls, wildflowers and tall trees. Her four children and seven grandchildren all inherited her love of the outdoors and a passion for protecting wild places. Her three great-grandchildren are learning those lessons now. -Betsy Kepes

