

The CATSKILL CANISTER

Volume 58 - Number 3
July - September 2025





View from Table Summit. Photo courtesy of Steve Aaron #3199

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The Catskill Canister

Volume 58 - No. 3 | July - September 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



This issue of Catskill Canister is... quite literally for the birds.

Back in 1961, the legendary Dan Smiley and Fred Hough created the list of 3,500' peaks—not just for the thrill of the climb, but to help identify possible habitat for the elusive Bicknell's Thrush. So when the Vermont Center for Ecostudies asked if we'd like to join their annual mountain bird survey, we chirped back an enthusiastic "heck yes!"

This year, an opening popped up on Plateau Mountain after a long-time monitor stepped down. We split Plateau into two squads: Team South (Margaret McGrath, Jim Bouton, Chris Hummel) and Team North (Karen Bloom, Ira Orenstein, Sherri Goffman). You'll find two great articles about their adventures inside.

Also in this issue: Danielle Takacs gives us an update on Bicknell's Buddies, a conservation program originally hatched (yes, pun intended) by our Club.

And we don't just love birds. Sarah Richardson takes us under logs and into the shadows with her article Creep, Rattle and Crawl—a look at the cold-blooded critters who call the Catskills home. Spoiler alert: there are snakes. Oh my!

We also marked a milestone this year—our first-ever press kickoff for the Trailhead Stewardship Program, now entering its fifth year. Thanks to the incredible work of our VP Lori Herpen, we landed a grant from Parks and Trails NY. Huge thanks as well to Co-Chairs Lourdes Sonera and Colleen Hardcastle for leading the charge. The Mountain Eagle gave us a wonderful write-up, and our guest speakers—Lourdes, Paul Steely White (Parks & Trails NY), and Pine Roehrs (NYS DEC)—helped make it memorable.

And speaking of events close to my heart—our Annual Dinner is coming up on Saturday, July 26, 2025, at the Ashokan Center. I really hope to see you there. It's our time to celebrate new members with the legendary David White, recognize volunteers, elect officers, and enjoy the company of fellow mountain lovers. If you see me, please say hello—I truly want to meet every one of you.

Remember: this Club runs on volunteers. If you have ideas, feedback, or just want to get involved—don't be shy. We're here for you.

With gratitude and birdsong,
Michael Bongar

On the cover: Diamond Notch Falls. 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: In 2024, 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.

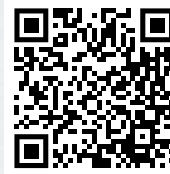
Connect and Inspire: From an upgraded newsletter, The Catskill Canister, to enhanced social media outreach, we are connecting with more members than ever, sharing the joy and responsibility of Catskill hiking. Your gift helps us tell the Catskill 3500 Club story far and wide.



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.

Trail Mix: News & Notes

Peekamoose Road Trailhead Permits



The Catskill 3500 Club wants to remind hikers that a permit is required to park at the Peekamoose-Table Trailhead near the Blue Hole, effective **May 15 through September 15**, seven days a week. The fee covers administrative costs, which is consistent with other DEC day-use areas. **Details: \$10 per permit** but six people are covered under one permit, though the permit is attached to a single car and must be displayed on that car. **How to obtain it:** via Reserve America or by calling 1-800-456-CAMP (1-800-456-2267). **Fine for no permit:** up to \$250. No permit is required for the Peekamoose-Table trailhead in Denning. For more information, check out the DEC's site on the topic.

Trail Race Alerts

12th Annual Manitou's Revenge

June 21 from 5 a.m. to 5 a.m. on June 22

Manitou's Revenge runs from Maplecrest to Phoenicia, and the runners will traverse some of the most difficult trail in the Catskills, which is why there is a 23 hour time limit. Starting on Big Hollow road (County Route 56) runners will go East on Big Hollow Road and will turn left on the Black Dome Trail. They will then go south on the Escarpment Trail to Harding Road. Once on Harding Road they will descend to Palenville, use Route 23A to connect to the old Malden Avenue and follow the Long Path to Platte Clove. Then they will continue on the Long Path over Indian Head, Twin, Sugarloaf and Plateau Mountains. Atop of Plateau they will turn south on the Warner Creek Trail (still the Long Path) and follow it all the way over Mount Tremper to Plank Road. The final 1+ miles is along Plank Road, with the course finishing at Parish Hall in Phoenicia.

For additional information, contact Charlie Gadol.

Trail Race Alerts - cont.

48th Annual Escarpment Trail Race

Sunday, July 27th, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m

The Escarpment Trail was the first technical trail race of its kind in the country. The annual trek began in 1977. Runners start at the Route 23 trailhead in Windham, NY in waves of 15 runners every 5 minutes. Contestants run the Escarpment Trail over the "Wall of Manitou" and finish in the North Lake picnic area in North-South Lake Campground.

For more information contact race founder/director Dick Vincent.

Climb It for Climate

August 10, 2025

Climb It For Climate is returning in 2025 as a stand alone event in the Catskill Mountains at Belleayre Resort! Sitting just under 3500ft, this formidable mountain offers epic views of the stunning Catskill High Peaks around every turn. Runners participating will have the option of a 25K or an 8K. Donations being collected through registration & raffle for The Catskill Center.



Wildflowers along North Dome. Photo courtesy of Siu Samantha Yuen #2894 W1311



59th Annual DINNER MEETING

Saturday, July 26, 2025



Special Musical Guest: Fred Gillen Jr.

Event Details

Access will be open from 12-8 pm. Your ticket includes entrance to all the trails at the Ashokan Center and a dinner buffet with vegetarian and gluten free options. Iced tea, soda and water will be provided, and a cash bar will be available with beer, hard cider and wine.

Ticket cost is \$55 per guest, and the tickets will be on sale on Eventbrite starting on June 10, 2025. Buy your ticket early because we expect a sold-out event.

Children under 12 are welcome at no charge. Unfortunately, canine hikers are not permitted at the Ashokan Center.

Please come early because we are jam packed with fun activities and you will find old and new friends to catch up with...

Special Features

- 🌲 A special pop-up store will be offered by **Camp Catskill**
- 🌲 **Carol and Dave White** will have a special table with books and club patches and stickers.
- 🌲 Visit **Colleen and Lourdes** and learn about and sign onto our Trailhead Stewardship program.
- 🌲 **David White** will be awarding our newest members their certificates and memberships.



Additionally, this meeting fulfills the requirements of our bylaws to gather membership for an annual meeting. At the meeting, members in good standing (i.e. any member up to date on their dues) will be asked to vote on the slate of Officers and Directors.

Event Times

- 12 p.m.:** Access to the Ashokan Center
- 1-3 p.m.:** Socializing with appetizers and a cash bar. Tables and Activities.
- 3-5 p.m.:** Annual business meeting & awarding of certificates
- 5 p.m.:** Dinner buffet
- 8 p.m.:** Departure

SCAN THE QR CODE
TO PURCHASE TICKETS



Or visit:
www.catskill3500club.org/annual-dinner



QUILT RAFFLE TO BENEFIT CATSKILL MOUNTAIN SEARCH AND RESCUE

Hiking on the Ashokan property and canoe rentals are available. Hiking includes many trails along the Esopus including the 1885 covered bridge, Winchell's Falls and Cathedral Gorge.

Lodging and camping options are available.

Ashokan Center
477 Beaverkill Rd Olivebridge, NY 12461

ANNUAL ELECTION OF OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

VOTE at the Annual Meeting, July 26, 2025 or by Absentee Ballot!

It's time for the annual election of Officers and Directors—a key opportunity for members to shape the future of the Club by selecting the leaders who will guide us through the coming year.

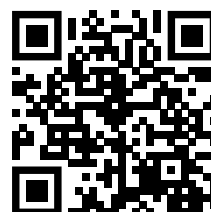
This year, the Board is expanding by two additional members, bringing the total to 16. This change is in line with our Bylaws, which allow for 12 to 18 Directors, including the four Officers. All candidates have been nominated by the Nominating Committee and approved by the Board of Directors in accordance with the procedures outlined in our Bylaws. Terms of service are for one year or until a successor is elected. All Directors are required to chair or serve on at least one committee, with committee assignments made by the President following the election.

The full list of candidates will be posted on the website.

If you plan to attend the annual meeting, you may vote in person.
If you are unable to attend, you may vote by absentee ballot.

Please visit:

www.catskill3500club.org/voting or scan the QR code



Scan the QR code
to view the ballot

Your vote participation is important to ensuring that our leadership reflects the diverse perspectives and needs of our Catskill 3500 Club community.

Thank you for your continued support of the Club.

New Candidate Bio's



David Oliver #2360 W1040 - Director

David Oliver began hiking in the Catskills in 2012 and went on to complete the 3-season Catskill 3500 peaks, followed by both his Winter 35s and a solo Winter round. After stepping away from the mountains for several years to care for his parents, he returned with a renewed focus on personal endurance challenges—completing both the Devil's Path and the Catskill Fire Tower Challenge in a single day.

Some of David's favorite peaks include Cornell, Wittenberg, and Kaaterskill High Peak, especially in winter. Winter is his favorite season to be in the mountains, where he finds the combination of solitude, intensity, and clarity especially rewarding.

David has completed Wilderness First Aid (WFA) training multiple times in the Catskills and brings a safety-focused, preparation-first mindset to every hike. In addition to the Catskills, he has hiked extensively throughout the Adirondacks, White Mountains, Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and other regions across the U.S.

He lives in Long Valley, New Jersey, and works in marketing. He enjoys picking up trash during his hikes and promoting respect for the mountains through action, not just words. David is passionate about encouraging newcomers to explore hiking year-round—especially in winter after proper training—and helping others view hiking as a sustainable, long-term approach to fitness, stress reduction, and personal growth.

New Candidate Bio's



Maria Orchard #4120 W1584 - Director

Maria is a native of North Jersey and currently lives and works in Bridgewater, NJ. She has spent the last 15 years working in the chemical industry. Maria was fortunate to spend her childhood visiting the Catskills, spending much of her time fishing and cooking outdoors with her family. These experiences instilled in her a deep passion for the outdoors.

Despite Phoenicia being her "home away from home," Maria's hiking adventures began outside of the Catskills. She has traveled to Mt. Fuji, Nepal, the Rocky Mountains, and completed the Camino de Santiago in Spain. It wasn't until 2020 that she decided to hike the Catskill high peaks. Her first hike with the 3500 Club

took place in 2022 at Kaaterskill High Peak, and she became a member of the club that same year. She obtained her Winter patch shortly after.

In the summer of 2023, Maria joined the Outings Committee for the 3500 Club, which has provided her with valuable learning experiences and deepened her interest in hiking and promoting the outdoors. She enjoys participating in trail maintenance events and has recently started volunteering with the NY-NJ Trail Conference to help maintain a section of the Warner Creek Trail. Maria has also begun leading hikes for the 3500 Club and looks forward to helping others achieve their hiking goals. Her next personal goal is to complete the NEU8 in 2025. Maria has a genuine appreciation for the outdoors and is committed to supporting and educating others on their hiking journeys. She looks forward to giving her time and support back to the Catskills we all love.

Outgoing Officer



Colin DeVries #3382 W1589 - Secretary

Although our current Secretary, Colin DeVries is stepping off the Board, we're glad he's not going far. The Club extends its sincere appreciation to Colin DeVries (Member #3382, W1589), outgoing Secretary, for his two years of dedicated service as an Officer. We look forward to his continued involvement as a hike leader and trailhead steward, where his experience and enthusiasm will remain a valued asset to our community.



Slide Mountain. Photo courtesy of Steve Aaron #3199

TRAILHEAD STEWARD KICK-OFF: A BRISK AND INSPIRING START TO THE SEASON

On a chilly May day—Friday, May 23, 2025—dedicated members of the Catskill 3500 Club reached into their closets to dust off winter hiking gear for a very special occasion: the **Fifth Annual Trailhead Steward Program Kick-Off**.

Despite the brisk temperatures, the atmosphere was full of warmth and camaraderie as members gathered to celebrate a program that embodies the spirit of volunteerism and stewardship. The success of this initiative is due in large part to the selfless and tireless efforts of **Colleen Hardcastle** and **Lourdes Sonera**, whose leadership and dedication continue to inspire us all. We extend our deepest gratitude for all they have done to make the Trailhead Steward Program a meaningful part of our Club's work.



This year's event was made even more significant with the announcement of a grant receive from **Parks and Trails New York**—the first since the Club officially became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit two years ago. This exciting milestone was achieved under the guidance of our Vice President, **Lori Herpen**, whose steadfast leadership and passion are vital to the growth and sustainability of our mission.



Club President **Michael Bongar** welcomed attendees and introduced **Lourdes Sonera**, who offered thoughtful remarks. Lourdes was followed by **Paul Steely White**, Executive Director of Parks and

Trails New York, who spoke encouragingly about the alignment between our mission and that of PTNY.

The keynote address was delivered by **Pine Roehrs**, Senior Natural Resource Planner for the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Pine highlighted the ongoing and productive synergy between the DEC and the 3500 Club, reinforcing the importance of partnerships in protecting and preserving the Catskills.



Also in attendance were reporters from the *Mountain Eagle* and the *Observer*, and we look forward to seeing some fun and insightful articles about the event in those publications soon.

A heartfelt thank you to the members who came out to support the event, including:

Mikey Siatkowski
Jeff Schoenfeld
Chris Adams
Christopher Garibian

Karen Bischoff
Sherri Goffman
Cheryl Potter
Suzanne Kanabe

Together, your presence and passion help to carry forward the mission of the 3500 Club, making a lasting impact on the trails—and the people—of the Catskills.

2024 CANISTER REPORT

by Jim Bouton - Canister Chair

Some highlights from this year's canister tally.

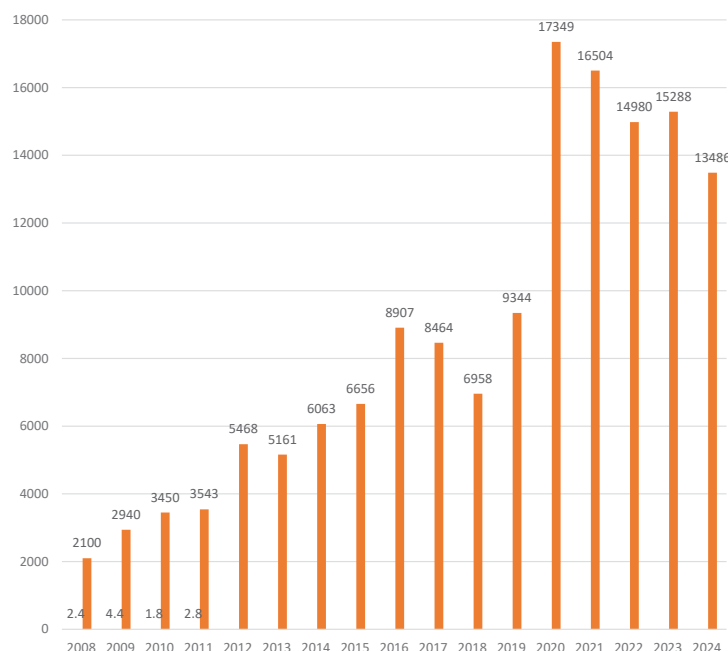
2024 saw 13486 signing visitors, down 11.75% from 2023. October replaced May as the busiest month with 1333 signing visitors. KHP saw the most usage with 1176 visiting, North Dome had the fewest, with only 826. Nettles probably play a large part in this. It is estimated 30-40% of signers are repeaters, many signing 4-12 + times each year.

Once again, books were changed 3 times or more if needed. Minor repairs, painting and one was replaced for refurbishing. All names were tallied and submitted as per our VSA with the DEC (see the Catskill Canister, June 2024 for details). There has been camping and fires at some summits and one unfortunate major cutting at Friday's summit clearing. But all in all, the summits appear clean and respected.

I would like to again welcome Mike Siudy to the team. He is doing a great job.



TRAILESS PEAK USAGE | 2008-2024



Earlier this spring, I received word that the canister tree on Big Indian had fallen over. I saw this on Facebook. Please, if there is a problem with any canister, notify Mike or myself. We will take care of it.

When a canister needs to be changed to a different tree or location, we do not quickly nail it up to another tree. As per our VSA to keep the canisters in the Catskills, the DEC forester from the appropriate region is notified, as well as the Club President. We have discovered that Yellow Birch are the most durable. Beech trees are already stressed with 2 Beech diseases; these are not a good choice. Balsam and Spruce stress easier from traffic and usage. If we can suggest another suitable tree or area and if the forester is good with that, we will rehang it there. If not, they will do an inspection to determine the best spot. Many are where they have been for nearly 60 years, and some of the trees now being used are stressed or dead. They will be moved as needed; we will not move to another spot and stress another area until necessary.

Canisters need to be high enough off the ground for several reasons, one being snowfall, another being it needs to be above a bear's field of vision. To a bear, it's a possible birdfeeder and source of food. We try and keep the new tree in the summit clearing and not create another. We also think that using a type of fastener with a coating hopefully prevents the tree from being poisoned by contamination from zinc or copper used in galvanized materials.

The recent replacement followed all our protocols; the DEC notified, we told them our plans and ideas and they gave us the go ahead. We had a period of heavy rains and minor flooding, but Mike was able to get there, choose a suitable spot already along the beaten path and rehang.

NEW MEMBERS: CLASS OF 2025

By Chris Adams - Aspirants Chair

As was the case in the past couple of years, the Catskill 3500 Club’s “Class of 2025” has fewer new members than the previous year’s class. However, regular finisher numbers are still considerably higher than pre-pandemic numbers. The Class of 2025 had 232 new regular members as well as 61 new winter members compared with 245 and 72, respectively, for the Class of 2024. For comparison, the Class of 2019 (the last class before the pandemic) had 164 regular and 64 winter finishers. While not tracked in annual “classes,” Life Memberships in calendar year 2024 included 56 members and 13 aspirants, in addition to four former life aspirants earning their membership. Of special note from the Class of 2025, Steven Smith, #4660, set a new record for longest time between first peak and last peak. His first peak, Wittenberg, was climbed on June 24, 1966, and his final peak, Slide, was climbed on March 19, 2025.

Slide Mountain is a perennial favorite first climb and the Class of 2025 started there 36 times. Hunter (33) and Panther (20) are next with Indian Head and Windham High Peak tied for fourth with 18 members each. Cornell, Lone, Friday, Eagle, Vly, and Rocky Mountains were each climbed by one new member as their first peak. All but seven mountains from the tally—Big Indian, Rusk, Fir, Balsam Cap, North Dome, Sherrill, and Halcott—were climbed as first peaks.

The four winter climbs necessary for membership lead the list of top mountains on which the Class of 2025 finished their membership tallies—Panther (24), Slide (18), Balsam (16), and Blackhead (14). Two other peaks, Balsam Lake and Windham High Peak, also saw 14 finishers. For those who earned their winter membership, Eagle was the most popular finishing peak with six people earning their winter patch on the mountain, followed by Peekamoose, which had five.

Certificates were mailed out with the patch and letter. Pre-pandemic, members who finished by the time of the annual dinner (usually mid-April) were considered to be in that year’s class. However, Life Memberships are tracked on a calendar-year basis.



NEW MEMBERS

Class of 2025	Class of 2024
232 REGULAR	245 REGULAR
61 WINTER	72 WINTER

CLASS OF 2025 FAVORITE FIRST CLIMB - TOP 5

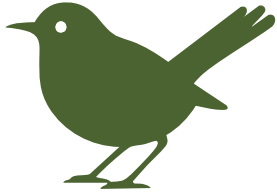
Slide	36
Hunter	33
Panther	20
Indian Head	18
Windham HP	18

CLASS OF 2025 FINISHING CLIMBS - TOP 6

Panther	24
Slide	18
Balsam	16
Blackhead	14
Balsam Lake	14
Windham HP	14



Sugarloaf after the rain. Photo courtesy of Hilary Cunningham #4658



MOUNTAIN BIRD WATCH

The Early Bird Catches...

by Ira Orenstein #415 W777 & Karen Bloom #1733 W776

Note: The activity described here will have occurred by the time of this publication.

What might motivate eight sleep deprived Catskill 3500 Club members to head off from their trailhead parking area at 2 am for a pre-dawn hike up Plateau Mountain, donning binoculars and a check-off list? It all began, as these things often do, with a phone call from Club President Michael Bongar. He was excited to share news of a unique invitation from the **Vermont Center for Ecostudies** for the club to participate in an “early bird special event” called **Mountain Birdwatch**.

The plan is for two teams of four hikers to make our way into the boreal zone (upper mountain reaches where coniferous trees dominate) of Plateau Mountain, arriving for a pre-dawn, 4:40 am, start of a bird count. The focus will be on ten target species that includes the Bicknell’s Thrush (more on that bird shortly). For the past 25 years, Mountain Birdwatch has been tracking multiple routes throughout Eastern New York and New England, eight of which are in the Catskills. Valuable data from the bird count will be forwarded to the Vermont Center for Ecostudies to contribute to their extensive database that is used to identify trends that are essential to our understanding of environmental impacts to boreal ecosystems.

We let Michael know we were down for this bird count (pun intended) and have targeted a date in late June for our adventure. Reconnaissance hikes will take place ahead of event day so that each group is familiar with the twelve specific sites on the mountain selected for the study (each group of four will be responsible for six of the sites). Mountain Birdwatch provides the GPS coordinates for the sites and includes photos.

You might be curious about the connection between the Catskill 3500 Club and birding. Bicknell’s Thrush was first discovered by Eugene Bicknell in 1881 atop Slide Mountain. In 1961, Dan Smiley had been studying the Bicknell’s Thrush, whose habitat is the boreal zone which, in the Catskills, is the dominant ecosystem above 3500 feet elevation. While doing so, he and Fred Hough compiled a list of Catskill peaks above 3500 feet elevation and thus helped lay the groundwork for what in 1962

became the Catskill 3500 Club. So, if the New York State bird is the Eastern Bluebird, then one can create a strong case to honor the Bicknell’s Thrush as the Catskill 3500 Club mascot! We may even suggest this idea be brought up for a vote at the next club board meeting.

This project is very important. With global warming, the boreal ecosystem in the Catskills is gradually moving upslope and thereby squeezing out the total habitat area that suits the needs of the Bicknell’s Thrush. In Autumn, this species migrates to Hispaniola where deforestation has created additional adverse impacts. In eastern North America, Bicknell’s Thrush is found as far south as the Catskills and extends to southern Quebec and Nova Scotia. It is no longer seen in Massachusetts, where the last sighting was atop Mount Greylock. This species is usually heard at dawn; hence the alpine start.

As noted earlier, Bicknell’s Thrush is just one of ten target species we will be counting in the boreal ecosystem, plus one mammalian, the Red Squirrel, which is known to raid bird nests. Each of these birds has its own story. The eight participants, divided into two teams of four, will start at the trailhead on Rt. 214. Team B will count birds for twenty minutes at each of six stations along the Devil’s Path on the north side of Plateau Mountain beginning near Orchard Overlook, while Team A will continue in a southerly direction to six stations up and over the true summit of Plateau Mountain. It is our hope that the content that we contribute to the Vermont Center for Ecostudies database will help provide information that will prove beneficial to preserving this place we love. And, maybe if we are lucky, our alpine start will reward us with the rarely heard song of the Bicknell’s Thrush. It would be a real *tweet*!

Mountain Bird Watch: Catskill Routes

Plateau (2 routes) - adopted by the Catskill 3500 Club

Big Indian | Black Dome | Hunter (3 routes) | Slide

Mountain Bird Watch: 3500 Club Participants

Team A - Plateau South (includes six counting stations)

**Jim Bouton
Lori Herpen**

**Christopher Hummel
Margaret McGrath**

Team B - Plateau North (includes six counting stations)

**Karen Bloom
Michael Bongar**

**Sheryl Goffman
Ira Orenstein**

Mountain Bird Watch: Target Bird Species (Plus one mammalian)



**Bicknell's
Thrush**



**Swainson's
Thrush**



**Hermit
Thrush**



**White-throated
Sparrow**



**Fox
Sparrow**



**Winter
Wren**



**Blackpoll
Warbler**



**Black-capped
Chickadee**



**Boreal
Chickadee**



**Yellow-bellied
Flycatcher**



**Red
Squirrel**

Photo credits: Bicknell's Thrush @Jeff Nadler, Swainson's Thrush @Terrence Zahner, Hermit Thrush @August Davidson-Onsgard, White-throated Sparrow @Steve Faccio, Fox Sparrow @Evan Lipton, Winter Wren @Scott Martin, Blackpoll Warbler @Rick Nirschl, Black-capped Chickadee @Scott Martin, Boreal Chickadee @Iris Kilpatrick, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher @Sue Barth, Red Squirrel @DaPuglet

Above 3,500 Feet: Being Good Stewards of the Catskills

Protecting the environmentally sensitive area above 3500 feet in the Catskills is a priority of the Catskill 3500 Club. As such, leaders educate hike participants to DEC regulations requiring that except in an emergency or between December 21st and March 21st, camping is prohibited above 3,500 feet in the Catskills. At all times, only emergency fires are permitted in the Catskills at that elevation. Last year, the club instituted a policy that limits hiking group size during the spring fledgling season (June 1 - July 15) to eight participants to minimize human impact on the habitat of the Bicknell's Thrush and other birds that nest close to or on the ground in the boreal forest, on the following bushwhack peaks:

Friday, Balsam Cap, Lone, Rocky and over to Table and any bushwhacks from these to Witenberg or Cornell. Also, on Mount Sherrill, North Dome and Rusk.

The Catskill 3500 Club believes: By changing our hiking practices for six weeks, we are demonstrating our concern for a vulnerable species that rely on the boreal forest to survive. We are practicing our mission to be stewards of the Catskills

CREEP RATTLE & CRAWL

THE HIDDEN LIVES OF HERPS



by Sarah Richardson #3804 W1628

An unusual shape on the trail in front of me, and its pattern of light and dark brown, caused me to instinctually stop in my tracks and take a step backwards. One breath later, I realized I wasn't in imminent danger, but I had to tread carefully - a Timber Rattlesnake was curled up in front of a log that had fallen across the trail about 15 feet ahead of me. I took a moment to admire its camouflage, then warned my fellow hikers who were following close behind, and we gave the rattlesnake a wide berth as we continued onward. This run-in was in Northeastern Pennsylvania, and while it taught me to always be alert on the trail, I still can't help but hope to cross paths with other locals while hiking in the Catskills- a Yellow-rumped Warbler, a Red Eft, a Fisher - maybe even a Black Bear (from a safe distance). There's a hidden world around us as we hike, and we are just clumsy-footed visitors.

Many of the mountains' inhabitants are expert at remaining hidden, especially the herps - short for herpetofauna, or reptiles and amphibians. The "herp" prefix is derived from the Greek term herpetón, meaning "creeping animal," and these mysterious residents of the mountains and valleys of the Catskills certainly make their homes crawling and slinking among the variety of habitats found here. Some of these herps, like the Timber Rattlesnake, we hope to never see. But some others, like the wood turtle, would be a delight to see.

In search of more insight into the hidden lives of herps, I contacted Dr. Elizabeth Bastiaans of SUNY Oneonta, who has conducted research on reptiles and amphibians in the Catskills for 10 years. Our conversation is condensed below.

Through our discussion, I learned that the Catskills is part of the Northeastern U.S.'s biodiversity hotspot - especially for salamanders. In fact, we have more kinds of salamanders in



Dr. Elizabeth Bastiaans holding a Wood Frog

eastern North America than you would find in the Amazon Rainforest! One of the most common sights on spring and summer trails is the Red Eft, a subadult form of the Eastern Newt. This species is unusual in that it has three life stages rather than the two life stages common in many amphibians. Most amphibians have aquatic eggs and the adults tend to live on land. The Red Efts we see on the trail are the second life phase of

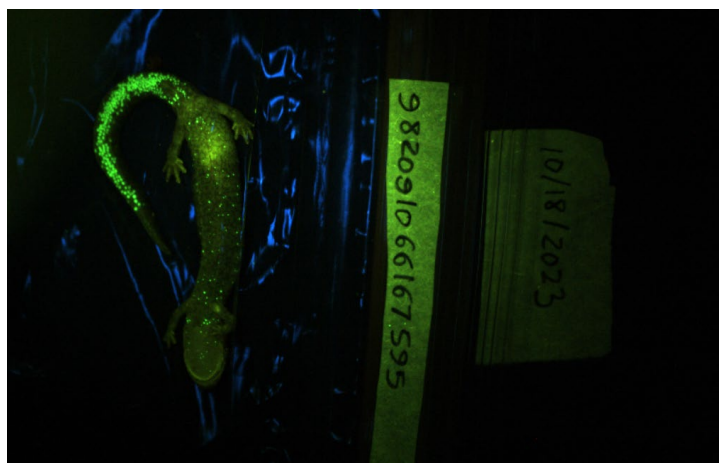
this Newt, before it metamorphoses again to become an aquatic adult. Most people may not realize they're the same species since they look so different and live in different habitats.

If you were doing trail maintenance and happened to flip over a log or rocks, you'd be very likely to find Red-Backed Salamanders, which are the main species Dr. Bastiaans and her students study. If you do flip over a rock or log, it's very important to put it back exactly as you found it. Rocks



Red Eft

and logs provide important microhabitats for many animals, and moving them disturbs that habitat. For example, the Red-Backed Salamander lives on land but doesn't have lungs, so they need to remain under cover objects to keep their skin moist enough to absorb oxygen. Fascinatingly, one of Dr. Bastiaan's students, Rachael Wolf, is studying the salamander's biofluorescence, which means they emit a lower-energy wavelength of light if you shine a higher-energy wavelength of light on them. Dr. Bastiaans and her students are hoping to follow individual



Studying the biofluorescence of the Red-Backed Salamander

salamanders over time to see how their fluorescence changes between seasons or as they grow.

In addition to having interesting and very discrete life stages, herps also display complex social behavior. Although we hope to never come across a Rattlesnake on the trail, it is fascinating to note that female Rattlesnakes, for example, exhibit maternal care for their young, such as protection against enemies. Wood frogs often lay their eggs in clusters where other frogs have laid theirs, a social behavior. There is so much more scientists hope to learn about herp behavior, and for those interested in this topic, Dr. Bastiaans recommends the book, “The Secret Social Lives of Reptiles.”



Timber Rattlesnake. Photo credit: Amy McGinnis

Wondering what other herps you are most likely to see on the trail? In May and June, you may find painted turtles basking on logs near ponds. It would be unusual to see a Timber Rattlesnake or Copperhead in the middle of the trail, but, “if you see a Copperhead or Rattlesnake basking on a rock or log off the trail while you’re passing, consider yourself lucky and snap a photo from a safe distance!” If you’re hiking close to a pond in the summer, you’re more likely to find green frogs, bullfrogs, leopard frogs, or pickerel frogs. Green frogs are probably the most common of those, and “have a call that sounds like a guitar string being plucked.” We often associate spring and summer with the calls of various frog species. However, climate change may lead to changes in herp behavior, and their health and longevity, since herps are so sensitive to temperature and can’t travel far relative to other species.



Wood Turtle. Photo courtesy of Steve Aaron Photography

Box turtles and wood turtles are both noted to be declining species that need conservation help. Wood turtles use both streams and upland forest, so they need both those habitats to be healthy and connected to each other to thrive. Unfortunately, humans have been destroying and fragmenting their habitat. Wood turtles can live for several decades, but they don’t

become reproductively mature until their late teens, and their eggs and offspring are vulnerable to predators. Both those factors mean it takes their populations a long time to recover if they’re disturbed. Wood turtles are also frequently hit by cars when crossing roads or killed by lawnmowers or agricultural machinery when they’re looking for food in grassy areas or fields. Dr. Bastiaans adds, “Wood turtles are just so beautiful that some people can’t resist the temptation to take them home as pets. Removing even a few reproductive adults from a population can be the difference between the population remaining stable and declining, though, so it’s always best to leave wood turtles in their natural habitat.”

Dr. Bastiaans stresses that it’s important not to handle an amphibian if you have lotion, sunscreen, or bug spray on your hands, because they can absorb those substances. “I try to rub my hands in wet leaves or rinse them in a pond or stream before handling amphibians. If you pick up a red eft or even an adult Eastern Newt, please also make sure you wash your hands before eating, because that species is poisonous. That’s why the red efts are so brightly colored!”

Given that she spends so much time in the area, I had to know more about Dr. Bastiaan’s hiking bonafides. As I suspected, she loves hiking and especially enjoys visiting Gilbert Lake State Park near Oneonta with her son, which is closer to where they live.

You may also run into Dr. Bastiaans at a community science event. If you’re interested in helping reptile and amphibian conservation, there are a few ways to get involved. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYDEC) runs a community science program where you can sign up to be trained to monitor roads for migrating amphibians during the spring, when many frogs and salamanders travel to vernal pools to breed. Of this program, Dr. Bastiaans says, “Often in conservation, the benefits of our work are abstract or far in the future. But if I move a spotted salamander off the road, and then two minutes later a car drives by where it was, I know I helped that animal!” She also says it’s great to document animals you see while hiking on platforms like iNaturalist, which is an app you can load on your phone. Conservation biologists use data from iNaturalist to plan sampling locations and learn about changes in a species’ ranges over time. “Science is just the process of learning how nature works, so you don’t have to have a science degree to make a real contribution!” Continuing to hike and advocate for protected public lands also defends the herps’ native habitat and will help to ensure their continued success in the Catskills.





Bicknell's Buddies Take to the Trails!

Three Additional Seasons of Funding Progress Montane Bird Research in the Catskill High Peaks

by Danielle Takacs

If you've hiked the Catskill High Peaks, chances are you've heard a whispery, haunting song dancing through the trees. The Bicknell's Thrush, one of North America's most rare and vulnerable songbirds, is the owner of that song, and the High Peaks are part of its breeding grounds. As many of you may know, the Catskill 3500 Club was originally created in the 1960s when naturalists Dan Smiley and Fred Hough compiled a list of peaks over 3,500 feet in order to identify possible Bicknell's Thrush habitat. This iconic bird has since become the poster child for montane bird research in the Catskills region. The Bicknell's Thrush, as well as other montane bird species, face ongoing threats as a result of climate change, which is why it is imperative that we monitor their populations.

Several studies have shown that bird populations are susceptible to human disturbance caused by hikers using established trail networks. This disturbance is thought to be a greater concern during the breeding season, which occurs in the Catskills from late May through mid July. Montane birds have a more narrow elevational range and more specialized habitat compared to their lower-land counterparts, and have proven to be more sensitive to human activity.

Recreational activity on trails can lead to intrusion-induced behaviors, such as nest abandonment or increased alertness, which can reduce foraging efficiency and attentiveness

to young. This is particularly relevant for montane species that nest on or near the ground.

While we are aware of the impact of established trail networks and human disturbance on sensitive montane bird populations, there is significantly less data that shows the influence of off-trail hiking. Off trail hiking, or "bushwacking" has long been a popular recreational activity in the Catskill Mountains, as several high peaks are not formally trailed. However, following the COVID-19 pandemic, informal hiking trails are proliferating at an unprecedented rate. Apps such as AllTrails, Gaia, and Strava allow users to plan their routes and track their progress. These apps also provide detailed information about trails; including terrain, elevation, estimated completion time, scenic view spots, and more. As a result, off-trail hiking is more accessible than ever before. The rise in popularity of the Catskill High Peaks, paired with the increase in 3500 club members, and the ease of off-trail hiking, is cause for concern for our sensitive montane bird species.



Hermit Thrush nest on the ground, Gary Peeples, fws.gov



Photo from the 2023 Annual Catskills 3500 Club Dinner

The rise in hiking, when done responsibly, can be viewed very positively for people and wildlife alike. Hiking can improve your mental and physical health, and increase your environmental awareness and appreciation. On the other hand, land resource managers must maintain the balance between providing access to public lands and protecting the health of the wildlife and plants. In order to address this, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) has been collecting several years of baseline data to inform potential future management strategies. As part of an ongoing process of developing a Visitor Use Management (VUM) Plan for the formerly trail-less Catskill peaks, the NYSDEC, the New York

Natural Heritage Program (NYNHP), and the Vermont Center for Ecostudies (VCE) have been collaborating with students, alumni, and faculty of the State University of New York at New Paltz (SUNY NP).

This project was coordinated by the Catskill Science Collaborate (CSC) through Cary Institute for Ecosystem studies in 2023. Supported by grants from NYSDEC, the Catskills 3500 Club, and SUNY New Paltz, this team has completed 2 years of data collection so far. We have found some evidence that suggests hiking trails appear to adversely affect all birds and montane birds alike. We presented this project at the Catskills 3500 Club annual dinner in 2023, and some initial findings with a bird ID workshop in 2024 (maybe you saw us!) However, it is important to note that bird counts are conducted using their singing behaviors, which can be highly variable. For accurate statistical analysis, it is vital to have several years of sampling. Fortunately, due to the hard work of Pine Rhoers (NYSDEC), we were able to obtain an additional 3 years of funding through the NYS Environmental Protection Fund. Five summers of data collection, in combination with data from Mountain Birdwatch through the VCE will provide the NYSDEC with the tools to create solutions that address impacts to natural resources caused by the proliferation of informal trails. Some of the goals of this planning process include identifying problematic informal trails for potential remediation and replacing informal trails with new formal trails designed to avoid sensitive areas and provide hikers sustainable and safe hiking.



The 2025 Bicknell's Buddies (from left to right): Becky Montoya (student trainee), Pia Kinsella (student trainee), Dr. Kara Belinsky (ornithologist, project coordinator), Danielle Takacs (lead technician), Samuel Mateo Jr. (lead technician)

Our 2025 research team, informally called the Bicknell's Buddies, consists of myself (Danielle Takacs), my fellow lead technician Samuel Mateo Jr. (both SUNY NP alumni), as well as two current SUNY student trainees, Becky Montoya and Pia Kinsella. All of us work under the supervision of the SUNY NP Ornithology professor Dr. Kara Belinsky. We will be sampling throughout the high peaks in June and July. If you see us on the trails- please say hello and ask us any questions you have! We were able to get this far in part due to contributions from members of the 3500 Club, and would love to talk about our work.

Going into our third year of data collection, us lead technicians are most excited to meet our montane bird friends once more. Throughout the year, we keep our bird identification skills sharp by studying their pictures and vocalizations through online resources. When field season comes around, it's like meeting your favorite celebrities in person. Birds that breed in the Catskill High Peaks have some of the most unique songs, most of which we can only hear for a very short period of time throughout the year. These tiny songbirds fly thousands of miles from the tropics each year to nest in our beloved mountaintops. If you plan to hike in the Catskills this summer, we highly recommend downloading the Merlin App. This app allows you to identify birds in a multitude of ways- one of which is recording audio of them vocalizing. Instead of hiking and just hearing "birds singing", you can begin to experience the world in a new perspective. You may hear the insect-like trill of our friend the Blackpoll Warbler, or perhaps the Black-throated Blue Warbler's buzzy "zoom zee zee!", or even the thin, high pitched song of the Blackburnian Warbler! If you're extra lucky, you might even hear that beautifully haunting radio echo of the Bicknell's Thrush; one that our team has labeled the "nokia phone" song. We share the Catskill High Peaks with so many amazing wonders, and it is a privilege to take part in protecting them.



Photos taken by lead technician Samuel Mateo Jr. on Rusk Mountain: Blackpoll Warbler (top left), Black-throated Blue Warbler (top right), and Blackburnian Warbler (bottom right)



HAMMOCK CAMPING

by Moe Lemire #2921 W1667
New York Volunteer LNT State Advocate

A good campsite is found and not made. This analogy has always stuck out from my Leave No Trace Master Educator Course training. It was most noticeable along my thru hike of the Appalachian Trail in 2016. So many campsites created by hikers were in the most sensitive habitats along the trail. Impacts can often occur quite quickly after just a few nights of camping in the same spot by multiple hikers. It was here along the Appalachian Trail where I was fully exposed to hammock camping, and I was curious!



As a tenter for years, carrying your house gave me the freedom of making home wherever I pitched my tent for the night. However, sleeping on the ground was always awful for me. I never felt comfortable on a mattress of any kind. I got up every morning with pain all over. I thru hiked the entire Appalachian Trail (six months), camping in a tent, and after returning home to the Catskills, I decided I needed to give this whole hammock thing a spin.

In 2019 I ran a hike-a-thon fundraiser for the Pine Hill Community Center and thru hiked the Long Path in fourteen

days. I wanted to go light and decided I would do it with a hammock, sleeping bag and rain tarp. In my mind, I told myself that I'll figure it out as I go.

Well after two weeks of hiking and camping along the 358 miles of the Long Path, I was hooked so much I even debated hanging a hammock in my house! Compared to sleeping in a tent, I slept so much better in a hammock. I would wake up pain free and ready for the day. An added bonus for hammock camping is that you have a much easier time setting up, especially in our rocky Catskills terrain. Even better, hammock camping is less impactful to the environment from a Leave No Trace perspective.

Hammock Camping: The Leave No Trace Champion of the Catskill Backcountry

In recent years, hammock camping has grown in popularity among outdoor backpackers seeking a lightweight, minimalist, and comfortable way to sleep under the stars. Beyond its appeal as a practical alternative to traditional tent camping, hammock camping also aligns closely with the principles of Leave No Trace (LNT) — a set of ethical guidelines aimed at preserving the natural world for future generations. Among the various camping styles, hammock camping stands out as one of the least impactful when done responsibly and correctly.

What is Leave No Trace?

Before diving into the specifics of hammock camping, it's important to understand the seven principles of Leave No Trace. Developed by the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics in Boulder Colorado through research and science, and now used worldwide, these seven principles serve as a framework for reducing human impact in nature:

1. Plan ahead and prepare
2. Use the durable surface
3. Dispose of waste properly
4. Leave what you find
5. Minimize campfire impacts
6. Respect wildlife
7. Be considerate of other visitors

Hammock camping, when practiced responsibly, supports many of these principles, particularly those involving using the durable surface, minimizing campfire and shelter impacts, and preserving vegetation.

How Hammock Camping Reduces Impact

1. Minimal Ground Disturbance

One of the most biggest advantages of hammock camping is that it requires no clearing of ground vegetation. Unlike tents, which often necessitate leveling the ground or clearing rocks and debris, hammocks are suspended above the forest floor, allowing the terrain below to remain undisturbed. This protects delicate ecosystems, such as moss beds, wildflowers, and young tree saplings, which can be crushed or damaged by tent setups.

In heavily trafficked areas, the soil in campsites can become compacted and barren over time due to repeated tent use.

Hammock campers, however, can avoid overused sites and set up in less sensitive areas without further harming the environment.



2. Avoiding Root and Soil Damage

Soil compaction is a real concern, as it inhibits water absorption, damages plant roots, and contributes to erosion. Because hammocks don't rely on stakes driven into the soil, repeated foot traffic around the setup area, or the weight of the tent and camper on the soil, they naturally reduce the risk of compacting sensitive root systems or disrupting soil structure.

Additionally, since hammock campers are not confined to flat or cleared tent sites, they have the flexibility to choose more resilient, less vulnerable locations — such as beneath mature trees with ample canopy cover and little understory, or even rocky locations.

3. Reduced Campfire Dependence

Many hammock campers rely on lightweight backpacking stoves rather than traditional campfires. Because a hammock setup often lacks the ground space for a fire ring or a safe fire pit, campers are more inclined to cook with a stove, minimizing the risk of wildfire, scarring the earth, or gathering excess wood from the environment.

4. No Permanent Shelter Footprint

Hammocks are temporary, non-invasive shelters. Unlike structures built from natural materials or makeshift lean-tos, hammocks leave no permanent mark on the landscape. When properly hung with tree-friendly straps — wide webbing straps that don't cut into bark — the trees used for support remain unharmed. Responsible hammock campers ensure that their shelter leaves no visible trace once they pack up and depart.

5. Avoiding Disruption to Wildlife

Because hammock campers can set up off-trail and in more discreet locations, they are less likely to contribute to habitat degradation or disturb wildlife. Ground nests, burrows, and insect colonies are easily overlooked when pitching

tents, potentially harming the creatures that rely on these environments. Hammocks bypass this issue altogether by occupying vertical space rather than horizontal habitat.

Best Practices for Low-Impact Hammock Camping

While hammock camping has the potential to be exceptionally low-impact, it must be done responsibly. Here are some tips to help ensure your hammock setup best aligns with Leave No Trace ethics:

Choose Suitable Trees

Always use healthy, live trees at least 6 inches in diameter to support your hammock. Look up for “Widow” makers and avoid setting up with dead trees or tree branches overhead. Avoid fragile or young saplings, which can be damaged or killed by the strain. Steer clear of trees with loose bark, signs of disease, or visible nests.

Use Tree-Friendly Straps

Never use rope or cord directly on tree trunks, as it can strip bark and restrict nutrient flow. Instead, use wide, flat straps (at least 1 inch) designed to distribute weight evenly and protect bark. Some straps are even made from recycled materials, adding an extra layer of environmental responsibility.

Camp Away from Water Sources

Remember the 150 foot rule! Just like tent campers, hammock campers should set up at least 150 feet away from lakes, rivers, streams, the trail, and roads/parking lots unless a yellow “Camp Here” disc is present. This helps protect sensitive areas and minimize pollution or erosion, as well as respecting other visitors.

Keep a Clean Camp

Follow LNT guidelines for waste disposal by packing out all trash, using properly dug catholes for human waste, and storing food securely to avoid attracting wildlife. Hanging a bear bag from a tree is a common practice, but ensure it's done in a way that doesn't harm the tree. Bear canisters are another easy option and work very well to thwart our curious mice, chipmunks, and squirrels here in the Catskills.

Avoid Overused Sites

One of the greatest advantages of hammock camping is mobility. Take advantage of this by avoiding crowded, overused campsites. Seek out less trafficked areas where your presence will cause minimal disruption.

Leave No Trace of Your Setup

After breaking camp, check your site thoroughly. Make sure no bark is damaged, straps haven't scarred trees, and no litter or gear has been left behind. A good rule of thumb: if someone can tell you camped there, you've left a trace. “Fluff The Duff” take your trekking poles or a stick and fluff any areas that may have been compacted to help the area look like nothing occurred there.



The Versatility of Hammock Camping

Beyond its low environmental impact, hammock camping offers several practical advantages. It's lightweight and compact, ideal for backpackers who want to ensure a low base weight. It works well in areas with uneven, rocky or sloped ground, which is most of the Catskills. Hammocks provide comfort where tents cannot. And with a properly outfitted hammock (including a bug net, tarp, and underquilt), you can sleep comfortably in a wide range of weather conditions. Even in the dead of Winter.

Moreover, hammock camping fosters a deeper connection with nature. Being elevated and open to your surroundings allows you to hear the rustle of leaves, feel the breeze, and gaze at the stars — all while leaving the earth beneath untouched.

Conclusion

In an era where our public lands are under increasing pressure from recreational use, the importance of low-impact camping practices cannot be overstated. Hammock camping, when done responsibly, offers a compelling solution: a way to enjoy nature without altering it. By reducing soil compaction, preserving vegetation, and eliminating the need for ground disturbance, hammocks embody the spirit of Leave No Trace in both philosophy and practice for camping.

So next time you head into the woods, consider leaving the tent behind. Your back — and the forest floor — will thank you. If you have never camped in a hammock before, I highly recommend picking up a hammock set. Come see me at Camp Catskill and I can help you do just that.

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Board Member Spotlight: A Q&A with Chris Hummel #4097 W1559

by Julie McGuire #3500

In this latest Spotlight, we feature Board Member Chris Hummel who shares his journey from Catskills hiker to serving on the Board.

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

Chris Hummel: I was in my early 20s when I first really discovered that hiking is something I enjoy. I was not exposed to it as a child. I grew up in a part of Long Island just outside of Queens where a trip to the village park was as much nature as I would get. I was never brought on any hiking or camping trips. At 10 years old, I had my earliest mountain experience on a vacation with my parents to New Hampshire. They decided one day we would drive up the Mt. Washington Auto Road. The whole experience was terrifying to me (and my younger sister). I was scared of the heights, lack of guardrails, small width of the road, and the steep drop offs on the side of the road - so much that I lied down on the floor of the car, preventing myself from being able to see anything. In the immediate aftermath, I probably never wanted to visit a mountain again, especially Mt. Washington. But, in the long run, my feelings were anything but that. I reached a point where something was drawing me back, and I felt I absolutely needed to return. I wanted to "do better" with the whole experience and appreciate the mountains. While in college in upstate NY, I went on what I consider to be my first few real hikes and very much enjoyed the adventure aspect of it, as well as the rewarding views. The month I graduated college, I returned to Mt. Washington, this time to hike it. I failed. It was Memorial Day weekend, and a snowstorm had just dumped 3 feet of snow on the higher elevations. I was not prepared for that. I hiked up to the snow and turned around. The very next year, I inevitably returned again, this time in July, and successfully hiked to the summit. I enjoyed every minute of it very much and Mt. Washington had then become a special place for me. But furthermore, from that point on, I was completely hooked on hiking in general and eager to explore more mountains. Nearly 20 years later, this is still very true.

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

CH: I became a 3500 Club member on New Years Eve, 2022 on a Club hike to Balsam and Eagle, led by Russell Ley. I actually became a winter member as well, not long after. I was inspired to hike the 3500 Club peaks as a way to visit mountains in the Catskills that I otherwise would have likely missed, and to also learn more in general about the region and wilderness there as a whole. I was an aspirant of the Club for over 7 years before becoming a member. I had joined many hikes with the 3500 Club during that time, and also did some hiking in the Catskills on my own or with friends. Finally, I reached a point where I really wanted to finish the list and join the Club, so I began to make sure I was reaching a new peak each time I would hike in the Catskills.



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

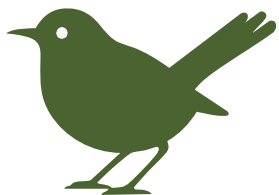
I did a lot of hiking in the Catskills through my years as an aspirant and as a member of the Club. It was my most common place to go hiking, by far. I considered the Catskills to be my "home mountains" for a few reasons. They were the closest mountains of their size to where I lived, geographically. I gained a familiarity with the region - it's towns, roads, trails, mountains, and a trip to the Catskills never ended with regret. And, most importantly, through the 3500 Club, I met a lot of great people by participating in Club hikes and events. I'm extremely grateful for that, and for the hike leaders who I learned so much from over time. So many Club related, and Catskill related positive experiences made me very happy to become involved with the Board as a way to volunteer and give back. When the opportunity was there, it felt like an easy decision, I knew I definitely wanted to help, and I want nothing other than what is best for the Club. My current role on the Board is Treasurer.

What accomplishment are you most proud of since joining the board?

CH: I am still relatively new to the Board, but I am happy that my experience in tax and accounting has been helpful in allowing the Club evolve and progress towards its financial reporting goals.

How do you see yourself using your accounting background to facilitate the Club's growth?

CH: As different needs arise, I am happy to assist the Club meet its requirements. Whether it would be specific reports needed for budgeting, information filings needed for federal or NY State compliance, or keeping books and financial statements accurate under GAAP, I am glad to help. As the Club grows, the needs related to the topics I described may change or become more complex, and I believe, with my background and experience, that I can help the Club navigate through potential new obligations or reporting requirements.



MOUNTAIN BIRD WATCH

Team South Report

by Jim Bouton
Stewardship & Conservation Co-Chair

The Catskill 3500 Club was first started by a group of birders searching for the Bicknell's Thrush, which is only found in the spruce/fir forests of the northeast above 3500'. It migrates to these areas in May and stays to July, courting, breeding, nesting, raising their young (referred to as Fledgling Season) and then disappearing until they reappear in the Caribbean to winter. These birders decided it made sense to form a hiking club for the Catskills and what a better name than the 3500 Club.

As the "Stewards of the Catskills", we, as a club, have a long history and obligation of protecting and respecting not only the mountains, but the species of plants and animals that call the Catskills home, and depend on the mountains for their survival.

Last year the Club had the opportunity to give back and help fund a long overdue study of the montane birds (birds that inhabit the spruce/fir boreal forest) specific to the Catskills. This study was conducted by Dr. Kara Belinsky of SUNY New Paltz. The data was collected by the "Bicknell's Buddies", student researchers under Dr Belinsky, over several field trips to the

It was known, through the Mountain Birdwatch Study, that most species were down over 40% in the past 14 years, and the Bicknell's down over 50%.

Boreal Catskill Forests above 3500', trailed and untrailed. Dr. Belinsky's studies focused on 12 species of montane birds found in the Catskills: Black-capped Chickadees, Golden-crowned Kinglets, White-throated Sparrows, Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, Winter Wrens, Blackpoll, Black-throated Blue and Magnolia Warblers, Dark eyed Junco, Swainson, Hermit and Bicknell Thrush were the focus species. These species are all considered climate indicators, and little was known about the impact climate change and hiker usage was having on them. It was known, through the Mountain Birdwatch Study, that

most species were down over 40% in the past 14 years, and the Bicknell's down over 50%. As canister maintainer for this period and for several years before, I will add that this period corresponds to the increased usage and herdpath/unmaintained trail formation since 2010. Dr Belinsky gave a presentation of her findings at our annual dinner last year. This information was also shared with other researchers, including the New York State Department of Conservation scientists who used this information as part of their trail-less peak study that will soon be released. This study and the following report will help determine future usage and better management practices for these areas of our mountains being affected by climate change, which makes them more susceptible to fire, disease and human usage.

Because of our commitment to the mountains, the Club was asked earlier this spring by the Vermont Center for Ecostudies to participate in the Mountain Birdwatch Study which has been using private citizens and organizations such as Mountain



From L to R: Chris Hummel, Jim Bouton and Margaret McGrath

Birdwatch Community Scientists for 14 years to collect data at over 800 points in the 4 northeast states that contain spruce/fir forests over 3500'. Data is collected in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York during the month of June when the montane birds have returned. The Catskills have the southernmost areas of the northern boreal forests, which is why information is so important from the Catskills. What's happening now in the Catskills could soon be happening in the other regions, including the Adirondacks.

President Michael Bongar was asked by the VCE if the Club would be interested in adopting a section a trail that had recently become available. President Bongar then asked several club members if they would be interested and two teams were formed; the Team North, led by Ira Orenstein and Karen Bloom and Team South led by Margaret McGrath. The teams would be surveying a portion of the Devil's Path across the top of Plateau Mountain at multiple, predetermined sites above 3500'. The data would be collected starting at dawn, when many of these birds are most active. The team members would have to learn and memorize the sounds and calls of the 10 birds used in this northeast study: Black-capped and Boreal Chickadees, Winter Wrens, Fox and White-throated Sparrows, Blackpoll Warblers, Hermit, Swainson's, Bicknell's Thrushes and the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. Also included was the red squirrel, which is a known predator of nesting birds.



Team South, consisting of leader Margaret McGrath, Club Treasurer Chris Hummel, and Stewardship Chair Jim Bouton, conducted their survey on June 4th, meeting at the Mink Hollow access point at 3:00 AM, arriving at the first data collection point before dawn, just before the smoke filtered sun made its appearance. The wind had increased to a level where the birds were not moving a great deal but were singing and calling.

Because we had all learned the calls and songs, we were able to identify the birds by ear. Merlin bird identification app was also used but was not picking up the birds well because of the wind, but when it did, it confirmed our findings. By the time we finished, we had identified 16 species, of which 6 were target species! Black-capped Chickadees, Blackpoll Warblers, Winter Wrens, and all three thrushes. It should be noted that Boreal Chickadees and Fox Sparrows do not nest in the Catskills. We did not hear nor find any sign of red squirrels. A good thing. On our way down, below 3500' but in a pocket of spruce/fir, we did hear the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher calling many times, which was confirmed by Merlin. I consider this a great find, as I have heard and seen the other species many times, but this bird only once before in the Catskills.

Team North will be heading out soon. Hopefully they will have as much success and fun as we did.

It's a great way to give back to the mountains, helping the scientific community gather data which can help determine the future course of action to protect the mountains.

Fledgling and birthing season is now underway in the Catskills. Of special interest/concern are montane birds that typically live in the spruce/fir forests that are only found on the summits and ridges of a few Catskill peaks. These zones are dwindling.

Many of these birds nest in these thickets, no more than four feet off the ground, if not on the ground itself. As hikers, we hike, but we can minimize our impact. Do fewer hikes to these areas between May 15th and July 15th, which is considered prime breeding and fledgling season. If you go, reduce the size of your group to a minimum. Stay on the trails and major herd paths. Go slow and watch where you step and avoid low, thick balsam and spruce branches. Most importantly, leash your dog.

The Runt

by Henry Dircks

*"Because it's there" was never said
Of Terrace Mountain up ahead.
Looked down upon from Cornell, Slide;
In Wittenberg's shadow, it's forced to hide.*

*Whoever's heard of climbing down
While hiking to a mountain's crown?
Good luck in finding its true summit;
A mound off which no chance to plummet.*

*Its yellow trail is long neglected.
Peakbaggers rue what they've selected.
Mere offshoot of the Burroughs Range;
Just turn right at trail's interchange.*

Stop!

*This mountaintop deserves no bully,
To recognize its virtues fully:
Despite its lack of elevation,
It stands in lovely isolation.*

*A rocky outcrop near the "top"
Provides a tranquil place to stop—
A lounge, a terrace, that one seeks,
While others scramble nearby peaks.*

*The lonely lean-to with no views,
(A recent build by Conference crews)
Awaits to offer a mind's increase
Of solitude and, simply, peace.*



12th ANNUAL FIRE TOWER LIGHTING

Saturday, August 30 at 8:30-9:30 pm

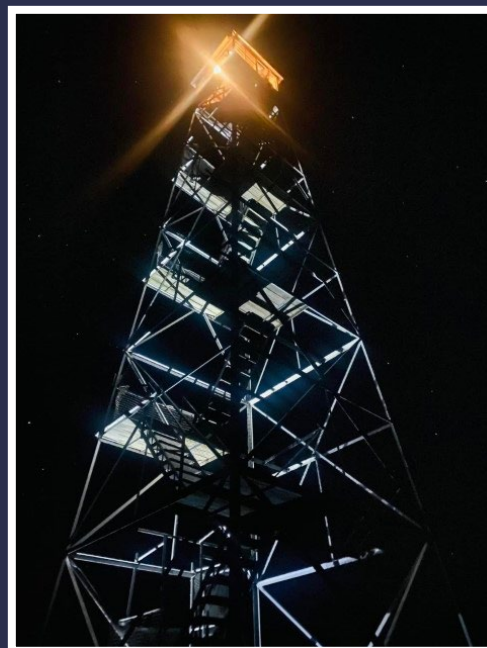
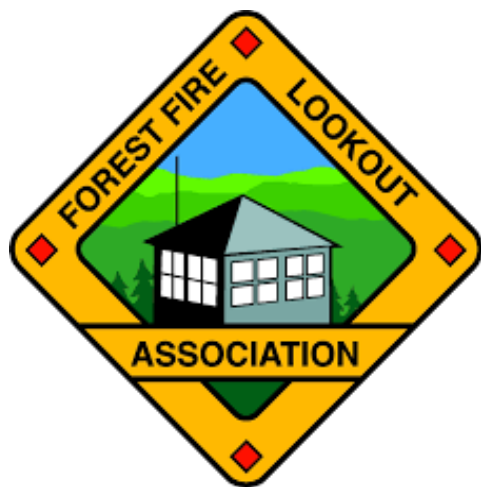
The NYS Chapter of the Forest Fire Lookout Association is pleased to announce the 11th Annual Lighting of the Fire Tower Event! Saturday, August 30 at 8:30 - 9:30PM we hope to have a light begin to shine in the cab of many towers across NYS!

The event is done to honor the men and women who worked in these historic towers; protecting homes, businesses, communities and surrounding forests. The plan is to place a light in fire towers around the state from 8:30 - 9:30PM. We invite people to go to locations around the community (listed on our website) where they can look up, see the light on the horizon and remember that there was a fire tower there watching over them. Thank you to Doug Hamilton for this wonderful idea to honor the past!

All Illuminators also read aloud the names of those who served in the towers as they turn on the light and that they include these names in local advertisements for the event.

If you have any questions, please reach out to lauriejrankin@gmail.com and she will get you all the information you will need. We will begin registration for the event on July 21 for veteran illuminators (one week period) and July 28 for others. Registration closes on August 18. Rain date is August 31. Additional information can be found at the website:

www.nysffla.org



Overlook Fire Tower. Photo by Beth McDonald



Utsayantha. Photo by Brandy Reed

THE CATSKILL 3500 CLUB GEAR REVIEW **VIDEO:** HAMMOCK & NET

This month features Moe Lemire from Camp Catskill in Tannersville



Thank you to Moe Lemire and Jeff Senterman for the video!

**CLICK HERE
TO WATCH THE
GEAR REVIEW**



Unwind in the woods with the ENO DoubleNest Hammock and Guardian Bug Net, tested and approved by Camp Catskill's in-house hiking guide Moe Lemire. Moe swears by this lightweight combo for quick setup, breathable comfort, and total bug protection. It's ideal for lazy afternoons by the lake or overnights under the stars. Whether you're lounging after a long hike or turning your favorite off-trail spot into a campsite, this setup delivers reliable relaxation in the Catskills and beyond. Snag yours now at Camp Catskill in Tannersville or at CampCatskill.co.

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



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



Scan the
QR Code
to visit
Camp Catskill
online

CATSKILL 3500 CLUB MEMBERS - 2025 / 2Q

NUMBER	NAME	DATE	LAST PEAK
4638	Hunter Lapp	03/09/2025	Wittenberg
4639	Shravan Sriram	01/18/2025	Balsam
4640	Regan Perri	03/11/2025	Sugarloaf
4641	Aaron Munzer	03/09/2025	Slide
4642	Dinesh Nandanwar	03/09/2025	SW Hunter
4643	Ryan Potter	02/15/2025	Panther
4644	Scott Wegeman	03/01/2025	Balsam
4645	Sebastian Seebacher	01/25/2025	Slide
4646	Marie Bingham	03/15/2025	Blackhead
4647	Aaron Floyd	03/15/2025	Slide
4648	Penelope Scott	03/18/2025	Slide
4649	Jon Vincze	03/19/2025	Balsam
4650	Giji Philip	03/19/2025	Twin
4651	Harry Young	03/20/2025	Balsam
4652	Nicole Albanese	03/19/2025	Slide
4653	Seth Wolfeld	03/19/2025	Slide
4654	Craig Johnson	10/28/2024	Kaaterskill
4655	Farooq Pervez	03/22/2025	Panther
4656	Gani Metaj	02/26/2025	Hunter
4657	Andrea Robinson	03/09/2025	Balsam
4658	Hilary Cunningham	01/01/2025	Balsam
4659	Paula Brown	03/02/2025	Lone
4660	Steven Smith	03/19/2025	Slide
4661	Gregory Miller	03/15/2025	Balsam Lake
4662	Zoe Mullen	03/23/2025	Table

NUMBER	NAME	DATE	LAST PEAK
4663	Lindsay Hittner	03/24/2025	Panther
4664	Karen Stein	04/01/2025	Windham
4665	Patrick Kelly Jr	02/08/2025	Slide
4666	Robert Jankowski	04/04/2025	Balsam Lake
4667	Ryan Driscoll	04/05/2025	Balsam Lake
4668	Casey Hintz	03/29/2025	Balsam
4669	Jonah Millett	10/12/2024	Lone
4670	Karolyn Eberhardt	04/14/2025	Big Indian
4671	Benjamin Knight	03/21/2025	Slide
4672	Michael Drillinger	04/24/2025	Lone
4673	Jennifer Garten	04/28/2025	North Dome
4674	Caitlin Bitzegaio	11/17/2024	Balsam Lake
4675	Eric Bitzegaio	11/17/2024	Balsam Lake
4676	Melinda Houvig	03/21/2025	Blackhead
4677	Benny Chavez	04/22/2025	Panther
4678	Michael Zorn	05/17/2025	Windham
4679	Andrew Kennedy	02/08/2025	Slide
4680	Andy Brenner	05/19/2025	Cornell
4681	Paul Gregory	05/23/2025	Slide
4682	Jenna Robinson	05/25/2025	North Dome
4683	Thomas Brodin	05/04/2025	West Kill
4684	David Gagnon	02/08/2025	Slide
4685	Joffrey Turret	05/04/2025	West Kill
4686	Frank Iannone	05/28/2025	Panther

LIFE MEMBERS

2798	Thomas DeSimone
3369	Ralph Wagner
3934	Erica Miranda

4423	Robert Visker
4638	Hunter Lapp
4640	Regan Perri

4644	Scott Wegeman
4650	Giji Philip
4680	Andy Brenner

4681	Paul Gregory
4686	Frank Iannone



NEW WINTER MEMBERS

NUMBER	NAME	REGULAR #	DATE	LAST PEAK
1688	Dan Vanderkam	4216	03/09/2025	Wittenberg
1689	Carlos Vasquez	4393	03/08/2025	Hunter
1690	Raj Banerjee	4025	03/11/2025	Cornell
1691	Kent Everding	4369	02/22/2025	Lone
1692	Anuj Sharma	4432	03/08/2025	Southwest Hunter
1693	Stefanie Dellatorri	4313	03/08/2025	Hunter
1694	Neil Zaffos	4066	03/09/2025	Friday
1695	Scott Wegeman	4644	03/14/2025	Peekamoose
1696	Ashwin Zachariah	4273	03/15/2025	Cornell
1697	Gala Delmont-Benatar	4595	03/16/2025	Windham
1698	Alivia DeLane	4264	03/15/2025	Balsam Lake
1699	Enya Pelton	4380	03/15/2025	Balsam Lake
1709	Stephanie Spiegler	4594	03/17/2025	Windham
1710	Regan Perri	4640	03/19/2025	Twin
1711	Giji Philip	4650	03/19/2025	Twin
1712	Shawn Connolly	3633	03/11/2025	Rocky
1713	Laurel A Rodriguez	4491	03/14/2025	Peekamoose
1714	Betsy Anderson	4586	03/19/2025	Plateau
1715	Rita Siu	4622	03/20/2025	Eagle
1716	Paul Darian	4613	03/20/2025	Eagle
1717	Matthew Starr	4518	03/02/2025	Cornell
1718	Sarah Lamond	3032	03/02/2025	Kaaterskill
1719	Michelle Gottfried	4403	03/12/2025	Kaaterskill
1720	Sebastian Seebacher	4645	03/18/2025	Twin
1721	Kathy Marryat	3768	03/20/2025	West Kill
1722	Alicia Keen	4590	03/21/2025	Halcott
1723	Sunyang Shin	4240	03/15/2025	Windham
1724	David Lisowski	2925	03/18/2025	Sugarloaf
1725	Anthony Scotto	4158	02/10/2025	Kaaterskill
1726	Jonah Millett	4669	03/19/2025	Wittenberg
1727	Benjamin Knight	4671	03/21/2025	Slide
1728	Melinda Houvig	4676	03/21/2025	Blackhead
1729	Nancy Kaetz-Blatt	4465	03/08/2025	Sugarloaf

Members #4670 and above are considered to be the Class of 2026. However, they and those between #4445 and #4669 will be celebrated at the upcoming annual dinner. Winter members 1670W through 1729W will also be acknowledged.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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!

HIKE SCHEDULE - JULY 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.

Sat. July 5 - TWIN & INDIAN HEAD

Distance: 7.5 mi. Ascent: 2320, Elevs: 3650', 3573'
Relaxed to Moderate paced trail hike with great views.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Roger Green #2627 W1813
roggr5959@gmail.com

Sat. July 5 - ALDER LAKE TO BALSAM LAKE MOUNTAIN

Distance: 9.5 mi. Ascent: 2208', Elev: 3727'
Long but beautiful way up Balsam Lake Mountain.
Moderate pace.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Matthew McBride #3841 W1574
matthew.mcbride@trailsandmountains.com

Sat. July 5 - WINDHAM HIGH PEAK

Distance: 3.4 mi. Ascent: 1574', Elev: 3525'
Easy bushwhack and trail hike at a moderate pace with map and compass training. Beginners welcome.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Harold Oakhill #283 W1244
hoakhill@gmail.com

Sun. July 6 - HUNTER & SOUTHWEST HUNTER

Distance: 10 mi. Ascent: 2300', Elev: 3753', 4030'
Mostly trail hike, Pace relaxed to moderate. Beginners welcome.
Registration Period: Open.
Leader: Tonda Highley #1944 W857
Thighley1944@gmail.com

Sun. July 6 - TABLE & PEEKAMOOSE

Distance 9.6 mi. Ascent 2300', Elevs: 3825', 3819'
Relaxed-moderate pace hike
Registration Period- Jun. 27 - Jul. 5
Leader: Lyn W. #2865 W1312
catskill35r@gmail.com

Tue. July 8 - PANTHER

Distance: 9.8 mi. Ascent: 2956', Elev: 3724'
Slow paced hike.
Registration Period: Open
Leaders: Moe Lemire #2921 W1667 and Vicki Ferreira #4014
Moejlemire@gmail.com

Wed. July 9 - BLACKHEAD, BLACK DOME, THOMAS COLE

Distance: 8 mi. Ascent: 2800', Elevs: 3940', 3994', 3953'
Moderately paced trail hike. No car shuttle.
Registration Period: by July 7
Leader: Ed Moran #2007 W950
edmoran@gmail.com

Sat. July 12 - BALSAM LAKE

Distance: 6 mi. Ascent: 1150', Elev: 3729'
Relaxed pace. Beginners welcome.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Sean Boyle #4481
smelectric72@yahoo.com

Sun. July 13 - WITTENBERG, CORNELL & SLIDE

Distance: 10 mi. Ascent: 3600', Elevs: 3782', 3857', 4184'
Challenging hike with fantastic adventures and scrambles.
Slow paced hike. Shuttle required.
Best suited for experienced hikers.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Christopher Leon Garibian #3881 W1474
christophergaribian@gmail.com

Sat. July 19 - KAATERSKILL HIGH PEAK

Distance: 7 mi. Ascent: 1905', Elev: 3655'
Relaxed pace trail hike with bushwhack.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Michael Bongar #2173, W994
michael@bongarbiz.com

Sun. July 20 - RUSK

Distance: 3.9 mi. Ascent: 1612', Elev: 3686'
Short, steep bushwhack at a relaxed pace. Beginners welcome.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Roger Green #2627, W1383
roggr5959@gmail.com

Sun. July 27 - BLACKHEAD, BLACK DOME & THOMAS COLE

Distance: 7.5 Mi. Ascent: 2700', Elevs: 3940', 3994', 3953'
Challenging and difficult hike.
Slow paced hike. Shuttle required.
Best suited for experienced hikers.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Christopher Leon Garibian #3881 W1474
christophergaribian@gmail.com

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



*After the rain from Warner Creek Trail.
Photo Courtesy of Siu Samantha Yuen, #2894 W1311*

HIKE SCHEDULE - AUGUST 2025

Sat. Aug. 2 - BLACKHEAD, BLACK DOME & THOMAS COLE

Distance: 7.5 mi. Ascent: 2661', Elevs: 3964', 4007', 3979'
Will approach from the scramble up the East side.
Moderate pace.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Matthew McBride #3841 W1574
matthew.mcbride@trailsandmountains.com

Sat. Aug. 2 - RUSK

Distance: 3 mi. Ascent: 1584', Elev: 3678'
Relaxed pace. Beginners welcome
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Sean Boyle #4481
smbelectric72@yahoo.com

Sun. Aug. 3 VLY & BEARPEN

Distance: 6.5 mi. Ascent: 2000', Elevs: 3541', 3587'
Relaxed-moderate pace.
Registration Period: Jul. 26- Aug. 2
Leader: Lyn W. #2865 W1312
catskill35r@gmail.com

Sun. Aug. 3 - WINDHAM

Distance: 6.2 mi. Ascent: 1575', Elev: 3525'
Relaxed to moderate pace, beginners welcome.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Roger Green #2627 W1813
roggr5959@gmail.com

Sun. Aug. 3 - HALCOTT

Distance: 4 mi. Ascent: 1800', Elevs: 3509'
Beginner bushwhack, very steep, but short fantastic hike.
Slow paced hike. Beginners welcome.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Christopher Leon Garibian #3881 W1474
christophergaribian@gmail.com

Wed. Aug. 6 - KAATERSKILL HIGH PEAK

Distance: 6.5 mi. Ascent: 1950', Elev: 3652'
Moderately paced trail hike and bushwhack.
Registration Period: by August 4
Leader: Ed Moran #2007 W950
edmoran@gmail.com

Sat. Aug. 9 - PEEKAMOOSE & TABLE

Distance: 9.5 mi. Ascent: 2795', Elevs: 3843', 3847'
Relaxed pace trail hike.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Michael Bongar #2173, W994
michael@bongarbiz.com

Sat. Aug. 9 - KAATERSKILL HIGH PEAK

Distance: 7 mi. Ascent: 1594', Elev: 3652'
Moderate pace trail and bushwhack
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Sean Boyle #4481
smbelectric72@yahoo.com

Sat. Aug. 9 - FRIDAY & BALSAM CAP

Distance: 7.5+ mi. Ascent: 3000', Elevs: 3692', 3608'
Challenging bushwhack at moderate pace, including visit to B25 crash.
Registration Period: August 3 - 7
Leader: Jake Haisley #2488 W1065
jacobhaisley@gmail.com

Sun. Aug. 10 - PANTHER

Distance: 6.6 mi. Ascent: 1900' Elev: 3724'
Relaxed Pace, Beginners welcome.
Registration Period: Open.
Leader: Tonda Highley #1944 W857
Thighley1944@gmail.com

Sun. Aug. 10 - BALSAM & EAGLE

Distance: 9.2 mi. Ascent: 2300', Elevs: 3607', 3583'
Relaxed to Moderate pace.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Roger Green #2627 W1813
roggr5959@gmail.com

Tue. Aug. 12 - TABLE & PEEKAMOOSE

Distance: 9.6 mi. Ascent: 2858', Elevs: 3825', 3819'
Slow paced hike.
Registration Period: Open
Leaders: Moe Lemire #2921 W1667 and Vicki Ferreira #4014
MoeJLemire@gmail.com

Sat. Aug. 16 - EAGLE

Distance: 8.0 miles, Ascent: 2100', Elev: 3583'
Moderately challenging trail hike at a moderate pace.
Beginners welcome.
Shuttle required (Rider Hollow to Seager).
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Stephen Tsang #4420 W1634
smtsang15@gmail.com

Sat. Aug. 16 - ROCKY & SLIDE

Distance: approx. 13 mi. Ascent: 2921', Elevs: 3487', 4184'
Long, challenging bushwhack and trail hike at a moderate pace to connect the lowest and highest of the Catskill 3500 peaks.
Best suited for experienced hikers.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Harold Oakhill #283 W1244
hoakhill@gmail.com

Sat. Aug. 23 - HUNTER & SW HUNTER

Distance: 10 mi. Ascent: 2300', Elevs: 3753', 4030'
Mostly trail hike with short bushwhack to SW Hunter canister.
Relaxed to moderate pace.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Roger Green #2627 W1383
roggr5959@gmail.com 914-388-2444

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

HIKE SCHEDULE - AUGUST 2025

Sat. Aug. 23 - WINDHAM HIGH PEAK

Distance: 6.8 mi. Ascent: 1751', Elev: 3525'
Relaxed pace. Beginners welcome
Registration Period: Open
Leaders: Sean Boyle #4481
smbelectric72@yahoo.com

Sat. Aug. 23 - INDIAN HEAD, TWIN, SUGARLOAF & PLATEAU

Distance: 13 mi. Ascent: 4700', Elevs: 3573', 3650', 3783', 3853'
Challenging and difficult hike.
Slow paced hike. Shuttle required.
Best suited for experienced hikers.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Christopher Leon Garibian #3881 W1474
christophergaribian@gmail.com

Sun. Aug. 31 - WINDHAM HIGH PEAK

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

HIKE SCHEDULE - SEPTEMBER 2025

Sat. Sept. 6 - SOUTH VLY, SLEEPING LION, & HALCOTT

Distance: approx. 8 mi. Ascent: 2456', Elevs: 3356', 3391', 3509'
Bushwhack hike at a moderate pace.
Opportunity to practice wilderness navigation.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Harold Oakhill #283 W1244
hoakhill@gmail.com

Tue. Sept. 9 - ROCKY & LONE

Distance: 13.72 mi. Ascent: 2195', Elevs: 3487', 3700'
A long bushwhack with many water crossings.
Slow paced hike.
Registration Period: Aug 19 - Sept 3
Leaders: Moe Lemire #2921 W1667 and Vicki Ferreira #4014
Moejlemire@gmail.com

Wed. Sept. 10 - NORTH DOME & SHERRILL

Distance: 9 mi. Ascent: 3300', Elevs: 3605', 3558'
Challenging trail hike and bushwhack.
Registration Period: by Sept 8
Leader: Ed Moran #2007 W950
edmoran@gmail.com

Sat. Sept. 13 - BALSAM & EAGLE

Distance: 9.5 mi, Ascent: 2700', Elevs: 3607', 3583'
Long, challenging trail hike at a moderate pace.
Beginners welcome.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Stephen Tsang #4420 W1634
smtsang15@gmail.com

Sat. Sept. 13 - WESTKILL, SW HUNTER AND HUNTER

Distance: 15 mi. Ascent: 3996', Elevs: 3898', 3753', 4030'
Moderate pace. Best suited for experienced hikers.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Sean Boyle #4481
smbelectric72@yahoo.com

Sun. Sept. 14 - PLATEAU & SUGARLOAF

Distance: 5 mi.. Ascent: 2828', Elevs: 3845' 3806'
Relaxed Pace, mostly trail hike.
Registration Period: Open.
Leader: Tonda Highley #1944 W857
Thighley1944@gmail.com

Sat. Sept. 20 - WITTENBERG & CORNELL & SLIDE (BURROUGHS RANGE)

Distance: 10.2 mi. Ascent: 3800', Elevs: 3780', 3860', 4180'
Relaxed paced shuttle trail hike.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Michael Bongar #2173, W994
michael@bongarbiz.com

Sun. Sept. 21 - INDIAN HEAD & TWIN

Distance 6.9 mi. Ascent 2150', Elevs: 3573', 3650'
Relaxed-moderate pace.
Registration Period: Sep. 13-20
Leader: Lyn W. #2865 W1312
catskill35r@gmail.com

Sat. Sept. 27 - RUSK, HUNTER, & SW HUNTER

Distance: 12.5 mi, Ascent: 3200', Elevs: 3680', 4040', 3753'
Strenuous, challenging bushwhack and trail hike to fire tower at a moderate to quick pace. Best suited for experienced hikers.
Registration Period: Open
Leader: Stephen Tsang #4420 W1634
smtsang15@gmail.com

HIKE SCHEDULE - SEPTEMBER 2025

Sat. Sept. 27 - WITTENBERG AND CORNELL

Distance: 9.4 mi. Ascent: 3104', Elevs: 3782', 3857'

Trail hike at a moderate pace.

Registration Period: Open

Leader: Sean Boyle #4481

smbelectric72@yahoo.com

Sat. Sep. 27 - FIR, BIG INDIAN, EAGLE & BALSAM

Distance: 13.5 mi. Ascent: 3510', Elevs: 3629', 3681', 3603', 3603'

Traverse from Biscuit Brook to McKinley Hollow.

Shuttle Required. Moderate pace.

Registration Period: Open

Leader: Matthew McBride #3841 W1574

matthew.mcbride@trailsandmountains.com

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Sign up for a 3500 Club hike: catskill3500club.org/hike-schedule

Or scan the QR code:



Ashokan High Point from Wittenberg. Photo Courtesy of Steve Aaron, #3199



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