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The Catskill Canister  
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Early morning colors around Blackhead just before the storm. Photo by Kristen Taylor #3288 W1299

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Orchard Point views. Photo by Dick Vincent #3055

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### **13 Degree Declination**

*The President's Column by Michael Bongar*

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It's time to address the elephant in the room. There are certain rumors going around about me. And they are true! I am a graduate of Ringling Bros. Barnum and Bailey Clown College.

We've had a few illustrious graduates of RBBB Clown College. Some well-known actors, magicians, producers and even an Oscar winner. But as far as I know I am the first to ascend the Catskill 3500 peaks. And I'm the first to become Interim-President of the Catskill 3500 Club.

The Club is an all-volunteer organization. Please take a moment and look at the Club website and scroll through the names listed under officers, directors, committee chairs and non-voting board positions. These are the selfless volunteers who are doing service for our Club.

Our Membership Chair David White is keeping a list and the last I checked with David, we have 4,199 members and 1,595 of those are winter members. Aspirant Chair Chris Adams currently counts 269 aspirants in good standing.

Please feel free to reach out to me at any time and please be involved with our organization. And please come to our Annual Dinner on Sunday, July 23, 2023 at the Ashokan Center. The event will go live on Eventbrite on June 11th, 2023.

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Burroughs Range from a bushwhack to Panther. Photo by Rob Stewart #2186 W1036



### Trail Mix: News and Notes from the Club



#### 3500 Club's Fifty Seventh Annual Dinner Meeting



Mark your calendars for the 3500 Club's Fifty-Seventh Annual Dinner Meeting, scheduled for Sunday, July 23rd, 2023 at the Ashokan Center (477 Beaverkill Rd, Olivebridge, NY 12461).

Access will be open from 12-8 pm. A ticket fee of \$50 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.

As in the past, we will have Club-related merchandise available for purchase as well as Carol and Dave White with their books, Club patches and stickers. Our CMSAR Team and Trailhead Stewards will be represented. Expect some surprises. And, as a special announcement, a wonderful quilt of the Catskill mountains will be raffled to one very lucky person to benefit CMSAR. Inspired by a view of a hillside in the Beaverkill Valley last summer, the quilt uses batik fabrics to suggest the natural progression of colors from the ground cover, to light greens, to darker conifers against a summer sky.



Day schedule:

12 pm: access to the Ashokan Center

1-3 pm: socializing with appetizers and a cash bar

3-5 pm: annual business meeting and new member recognition

5 pm: dinner buffet

8 pm: departure

Dress code is relaxed. Additionally, you CANNOT bring your own alcohol to the event. Please bring water bottles that you will be able to fill at the Ashokan's water stations. All other beverages will be provided.

Parking for most people will be in the upper lot, which will require walking down two flights of stairs, but for anyone with mobility issues, there is direct access available. Please note that on the registration form.

To purchase the tickets, use this [link](#). The capacity is capped at 250, so make sure to get your tickets! The purchase page asks for your member number. If you do not know it, please refer to the Club's listing of members. If you are a member-to-be, check that box instead. Children under 12 are welcome at no charge. Unfortunately canine hikers are not permitted at the Ashokan Center.

Lodging and camping at the Ashokan Center are available for the weekend. Please contact Lisa Hurley by [email](#) or at 845-657-8333 ext. 10.

If you have any questions, please email [Michael Bongar](#) or call 914-734-1177.

*By: Mike Doehring, Annual Dinner Co-Chair and Michael Bongar, Interim President and Annual Dinner Co-Chair*



Members and aspirants who joined or renewed after 2022 will receive a reminder in the month when their dues are due. If you haven't renewed since 2021, you can pay your dues now and we'll remind you to re-up during the correct month next year. Life Members don't have to worry about renewing their dues and Life Membership is now tax deductible as a donation.

Contact [David White](#) or [Chris Adams](#) to confirm your status. Forms and rates are on the [membership page](#) of the Club website. You may use PayPal at the [Club site](#) or renew by mail and/or order additional member items using [this form](#). Please make checks payable to the Catskill 3500 Club.

As a reminder, good standing is required to maintain voting rights and privileges of membership (e.g., *The Canister* subscription, ability to buy patches). An active member is one who has completed their requirements for membership and who has paid the prescribed dues for the current year or who is a life member (life membership can be

obtained for a one-time fee of \$200). Please note that the initial fee only covers the registration and the first year of membership. Delinquent members may regain good standing by payment of one year's delinquent dues. By renewing your membership (or becoming a [life member](#) for a one-time fee of \$200), you help us support our mission of being the stewards of the Catskills and help us give back to the mountains. We appreciate your continued support!

*By: Dave White, Membership Chair and Chris Adams, Assistant to the Membership Chair and Aspirants Chair*

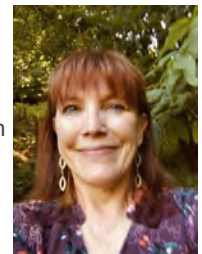
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## ! The Club Extends Appreciation to the Departing Board Members, Welcomes New Board Members !

Club President Lisa Gizzarelli-Drago stepped down from her role on May 1st. Lisa became President in July 2022, but personal and professional changes in her life have made managing this responsibility untenable. We thank her deeply for her contributions as President, previously as Vice President, and wish her all the best on the next chapter in her life. The Club is fortunate the current Vice President Michael Bongar is ready and able to step into the role as interim President until the next Officers and Directors ballot in July. The Club will be in good hands under his helm. Michael has a long history with the Club as a longtime hike leader and, more recently, as Vice President since July 2022.



Club Search and Rescue Chair Annmarie Spiciarich has resigned from the very busy position of SAR Chair. She will remain on the SAR team as a valuable asset to the team and the Club. Thank you, Annmarie for your leadership! Jake Haisley, current Aspirant Chair and longtime Search and Rescue team member is taking on the SAR Chair position. He brings his extensive experience on the SAR team, as a board member and as an avid hiker, to lead the team forward as they grow in activities and plans.



Our current Assistant Membership Chair Chris Adams is now the new Aspirant Chair and will continue as the Assistant Membership Chair. Chris loves to help new hikers learn valuable skills as they get to know the Catskill Mountains, also has an extensive hiking history, and will be a great fit for this role.



Club Member Sharon Klein (#3364, left photo) has volunteered as our new Winter Weekend Chair. Sharon will be assisted by Aspirant Colleen Furmanski (right photo). Sharon's extensive knowledge of events (as a musician) and the Catskills (as a Catskills real estate professional) will be an asset for exciting Winter Weekend plans.

Chris Hummel (#4097 W1559) joins the Board as the Assistant Treasurer. Chris has lived in various parts of Long Island, Queens, and the Bronx throughout his life, but now resides in Plainview, NY with his wife. As a child, Chris was always fascinated by math and numbers, and years later, started his career working in finance for a wealth management company. After a few years, he switched into the accounting field. He initially worked primarily in auditing while earning his CPA designation, but ultimately found tax preparation, financial statement preparation, and various other accounting services to be an ideal match. He now works for his own firm as well as another small accounting firm based in Long Island. Chris has enjoyed hiking throughout his adulthood, and first joined a Catskill 3500 Club hike in July 2015. He had a great time meeting leaders and other attendees and learning from their hiking knowledge and experience. He credits these interactions for giving him the courage to try winter hiking for the first time with the Club a few months later, something he had always been fearful of, but now understands that if done correctly, it can not only be safe, but very enjoyable. Over the years, he continues to enjoy hiking in the Catskills and loves his visits to the region. He is also supportive of the Club's goals



not only promote safe and responsible hiking, but also its initiatives to protect wildlife and preserve the health of the forest as a whole.



### Update from the Treasurer



2022 was a year of transition, when the Club formally became a 501c(3) (a nonprofit) after decades of being a 501c(7) (a social club). It was also the year we transitioned banks from Trustco Bank to Key Bank. Financially, 2022 was also a good year as the Club ended the year with a total net revenue gain of \$15,356.04, which is healthy as the Club continues to expand our reach through support and donations to organizations in and around the Catskills. The club recently went through another successful audit. Donations in 2022 remained steady:

Student Conservation Association: \$1,000  
Friends of Bramley Mountain: \$500  
Adirondack Mountain Club: \$3,500  
Friends of the Feathered and Furry Wildlife Center: \$1,000  
Mike Kudish Natural History Preserve: \$1,000  
Catskill Mountainkeeper: \$1,000  
Team Wilderness: \$2,500

total: \$10,500

We anticipate for the transition to fully ramp up in 2023 with expected changes to the Club's finances as we integrate QuickBooks to the club's finances. We also welcome Chris Hummel as assistant treasurer who will further help our transition to more formal accounting practices. But the mission remains the same, the stewardship and conservation of the Catskill lands and the animals that roam the mountains and watersheds around it. Stay tuned for more changes this year, but no change to our love of the Catskills.



### Parking Alert: Permits Required for Peekamoose Road Trailhead



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 15th through September 15th, 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](#).



### Bicknell's Thrush Bird Count



Many of our members are aware that the 3500 Club was originally a bird watching group in search of the Bicknell's Thrush, which is only found in the thicker, Spruce/Balsam boreal areas of the Catskills, Adirondacks, Green and White Mountains. In the Catskills, this zone is considered above 3500', but some argue it dips and dives with factors such as past glaciation, rainfall, orientation and wind causing the variation.

The Bicknell's winters in the Caribbean and migrates to the Catskills where it breeds and raises its young from June to mid-July. It's that time of the year. Little is known about what is happening with the Bicknell's thrush, if it is declining, and studies

are underway to determine what their status is. You can read more about this in the [State of the Mountain Bird Report](#).

For those interested in helping and having any experience in birding, you can submit data to [ebird.org](#), using the [Atlas portal](#) specifically.



It is important that you report when and exactly where you had the sighting. If there is enough interest, we could offer a short training video on how to enter data and report from one of the agencies involved. You can also find some good training materials for high-elevation birds on the Vermont Center for Ecostudies (VCE) [website](#). Note that for the purpose of this survey, you could enter any observations of Bicknell's into the Atlas. Learning the song is not difficult--no need to be an expert birder--and hearing the song is the primary method of detection. You can find multiple recordings on [ebird](#), as one of the resources. Merlin app is another option. Just hearing the song in appropriate habitat is considered as possible breeding under the Atlas criteria.

This scientific data will be used to help determine future usage and policy for the formerly trailless, but now mostly unmaintained trailed, canistered peaks, so it is important for our Club.

We can also help between June and July by not taking off-leashed dogs to any of the high peaks, trailed or trailless. Wildlife is in a vulnerable period, and many birds nest at or just above ground level. It is breeding and fledging time and the woods are full of flightless young birds. We can also take fewer visits to the trailless high peaks this time. If you choose to go, stay on the major herd paths. It is also a good idea to camp below the spruce/balsam boreal zone, even where it dips below 3500'. And no fires. It is simply too dry and these areas are a tinderbox right now. Another concern is drone usage. It is prohibited in Wilderness areas, but there are narrow lanes to and around the fire towers that are classified as Wild Forest. It is suggested to refrain from using drones in this period as it is not known what affect drone usage is having on wildlife at this time. These are suggestions only, and not Club policy or DEC regulations.

Do what you can to help. Do what you feel is right.

Please contact [Jim Bouton](#) if you have any questions or wish to participate in the bird count.

*By: Jim Bouton, Canisters and Stewardship Chair*



### Official Catskill 3500 Club Community Facebook Group Update



Do you want the latest news regarding Club events and volunteer opportunities? Would you like to meet people who share your enthusiasm for hiking? Are you looking for partners on your excursions? Then please join our [Official Catskill 3500 Club Community](#) on Facebook!

We started this group to facilitate connections among our members, answer questions, and disseminate information. The group has grown to 1,900 members since its start in July 2022.

Learn about gear, Catskills history, and how to prepare for your hikes. All are welcome!

*By: Julie McGuire, Social Media Chair*



### New Merchandise Store Update



The merchandise committee is excited to announce that the back end of our online store is ready to go! We are sorting through some final business items before we launch online sales this summer. Additionally, we are getting ready for the Annual Dinner and rolling out a new approach to selling merchandise. The merchandise table will be open during the cocktail hour only, so that our dedicated volunteers can enjoy the event after wrapping up sales. At this year's Dinner, we will

continue selling off old merchandise at steeply discounted prices to reduce inventory. **At this year's banquet, all merchandise sales will be cash only.** We will also preview some of the new merch available on our website with very *limited* quantities available for purchase at the Dinner. Get there early to make a purchase - supplies will not last! We will have samples of apparel and other items available in the new store on display at the dinner, so that members can see what's available online and get a sense of the look and feel of the items. **Please note that we will not be selling apparel at the Dinner (other than discounted old stock).** In past years, in order to sell apparel at the Dinner, merchandise volunteers had to store unsold merchandise in their homes between events and transport everything back and forth numerous times, only to be left with multiple bins of unsold inventory. With the new catalog of merchandise available online that can be ordered quickly and easily on demand, there's no longer a reason to buy and store new merchandise for events. During cocktail hour, we'll be happy to help you order items online using your cell phones. We will post announcements on Facebook when merchandise goes up for sale on our website, and we look forward to showing off our new merch at the Dinner in July. See you there!

*By: Sara Chapman and Meg Lachmann, Merchandise Coordinators*



## Bicknell's Thrush Collaboration with West Kill Brewing



We would like to extend a huge thank you to our friends, West Kill Brewing, LLC, for hosting us on Saturday, March 25th, 2023 at the brewery as part of the Bicknell's Thrush American Pale Ale launch and for partnering with us in our conservation efforts to preserve Bicknell's Thrush's habitat. We especially want to thank Ashley Bohan, operations manager, for coordinating all the logistics, and of course, Mike and Colleen Barcone (the owners), for the support!

Despite less than optimal weather and dicey driving conditions, we had a great turnout and talked to many familiar and new faces - from far and wide! Thank you all so much for braving the elements and for coming out to support the Club! CMSAR was well represented too and had a display of their tools of the trade for a "show and tell." We all enjoyed meeting and chatting with friends of the Club, current and former board members, aspirants and members. It was very inspiring to see such support, and to meet members with many decades of history with the Club. A special shoutout goes to Warren Bloomfield (#149 W58), who was certainly the most tenured Club member at the event.



A portion of the proceeds from the beer sales was generously donated to the Club to support our conservation efforts. We are also extremely grateful to Mike and Ashley for allowing us to use the beautiful beer label image to print posters, which were a hit and their sales raised additional funds. We still have a limited quantity of the posters available, and you can find them at the merchandise shop at the brewery. Check out how great the posters look when framed! (Thank you Erica Pellegrino (#3463 W1390) and Steve Rombach (#2385 W995) for sharing these images with us).





It goes without saying that the beer of honor was delicious and sold out fast. Do not worry, it will be back in rotation, so be on the lookout!

By: Yana Levchinsky-Grimmond, Canister Editor

## Wilderness First Aid Course Recap

Over the weekend of April 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Catskill Mountain Search and Rescue held Basic Life Support CPR and Wilderness First Aid courses at the Pine Hill Fire Company.

These courses were geared toward training the Club's Hike Leaders, but were open to all Club Members as well. Thanks to the several CMSAR instructors who volunteered their time, we were able to accommodate all Club Members who applied for the training. In addition to the CMSAR Instructors, several other CMSAR members helped out as subjects for the class to practice various skills like patient assessment, wound care, splinting, and packaging.

It was a great group of folks that worked well together and had some fun. Big thank you to everyone who helped with this course, especially, instructors Anmarie Spiciarich, David DeForest, Ed Moran and Bill Winterbottom.



Look out for upcoming courses and events on our Facebook or the Catskill 3500 Club website. Interested in learning more? Email [catskillsar@gmail.com](mailto:catskillsar@gmail.com).

By: Marv Freedman, Outings Chair, CMSAR Lieutenant and CPR/WFA Course Organizer and Instructor

 **CMSAR Update** 

Catskill Mountain Search and Rescue has had a busy spring. In early April, DEC Rangers managing an ongoing search in Sullivan County reached out to CMSAR with a request for ground searchers. CMSAR was the first volunteer search and rescue team notified and the first to respond. Over the course of six days, 13 CMSAR volunteers spent 206 man-hours performing search tasks across rugged terrain featuring thick vegetation, unstable ground, and steep slopes. Unfortunately, on April 7th, the subject was located deceased by Forest Rangers in a previously unsearched area. CMSAR volunteers are recognized for their commitment, skill and professionalism in aiding the search.

*By: Jake Haisley, CMSAR Chair*

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**New York-New Jersey Trail Conference Update**



The Catskill 3500 Club was honored to receive the Major William A. Welch Award from the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference for being an outstanding partner. This award honors partners of the NY-NJ Trail Conference who have been strong advocates for providing significant assistance to Trail Conference Volunteers. Dick Vincent represented the Club at the Volunteer Appreciation Event on April 16th, where the certificate was presented.



*By: Dick Vincent, New-York-New Jersey Trail Conference Representative*

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 **Website Update** 

The new website is live in "soft launch" status at [www.catskill3500club.com](http://www.catskill3500club.com). Hike event registration is now done through the new site. The web team is continuing to test and troubleshoot issues as they arise to ensure the process is seamless for users. We recently reworked the site for accessibility compliance. We are still finalizing details regarding merchandise sales through the site. Barring any major obstacles, we are targeting a full launch for early July.

*By: Lynn Houston, Digital Content Chair and Webmaster*

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**Fire Tower Lighting Event 2023**



[New York State Chapter](#) of the [Forest Fire Lookout Association](#) (FFLA) is pleased to announce that the 2023 date for the

annual lighting event will be Saturday, September 2nd, with September 3rd being the rain date, if needed. August 23rd will be the deadline to register, so start your planning now. Stay tuned for more detailed information about the event to be posted on the NYS-FFLA [website](#).

Please contact [Laurie Rankin](#) (#1337 W531), director of the NYS chapter, if you would like to participate in the event.

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 **Gratitude Report 2022**

The Catskill 3500 Club would like to thank the following 2022 major donors, with a special recognition extended to the SanSaram hiking group for their continued support (2022 donations and dues totaled \$710). Your generosity helps fund the Club's conservation and stewardship work, Search and Rescue, and support of like-minded organizations working in the Catskill Mountains community. Thank you.

#415 Ira Orenstein & #1733 Karen Bloom	#3731 Tyler Murtha
#662 Renate Koblé	#3747 Jennifer Swantz
#844 Kenneth Morgan	#3759 Anthony Rera
#928 Donald Pagani	#3768 Kathy Marryat
#960 Kathy Mario & #1077 Peter Cowan (IMO #441 Arlene Scholer)	#3821 Melanie Bybee
#1029 Timothy Owney	#3824 Jessica Breslin
#1087 Charles Brock	#3826 Fangzhou Zhou
#1298 Alfred Seymour-Jones	#3832 Anne Rubin
#1399 Joseph Bogardus	#3841 Matthew McBride
#1453 Michael Dwyer	#3843 Thomas Fraser
#1486 Ken Marcinowski & #1487 Nilde Marcinowski	#3844 Gina Tintle
#1725 James Reggio	#3847 Philip Barone III
#1750 Mary Wellington	#3855 Raido Oja
#1751 Robert Pavelka	#3867 Zachary Stein
#1776 Keith Johnson	#3870 Glen Koste
#1788 George Baranauskas	#3881 Christopher Garibian
#1926 Valerie Wallace	#3896 Ryan Vance
#1940 Stephen Emmanuel	#3908 Timothy Burke
#2009 Margaret McGrath	#3909 Stacey Estrella
#2145 Jeffrey Levitt	#3916 Scott Chenevert
#2119 James Lamb	#3918 Robert Nuzzo
#2188 Yong Kong Ham	#3927 George Kushner
#2205 Sam (Dong Woo) Lee	#3933 Dayana Zeballos
#2206 David Ham	#3947 Victor 'Chip' Nippert
#2298 David Chun	#3954 Anagha Yerande
#2304 Robert Buckley	#3957 Christopher James Botham
#2428 Sharon Desrochers	#3973 Percy Bright
#2478 Steve Johnson & #2479 Linda Johnson	#3966 Mindy Oberoi
#2562 Jonathan Wright	#3985 Brittany Ferencik
#2601 Georg Budenbender & #2602 Katy Elwyn	#3988 Matthew Seiffert
#2702 Timothy Lawrence	#3999 Ashok Krish
#2735 Soon Lim	#4004 Christopher Zunner
#2775 Young Jung	#4010 Dan Broom
#2793 Me Young Lim	#4025 Rajshree Banerjee
#2814 Yana Levchinsky-Grimmond, with company match	#4032 Joanna Nadoolman
#2827 Stephen Walsh	#4027 Karen Van Wie
#2850 Elizabeth Levine	#4043 Tessa Husted
#2855 Alicia Vaccaro	#4060 Daniel Muenkel
#2864 Yong Ae Moehs	#4061 Robert Hastings
#2990 Colleen Hardcastle	#4062 Denise Grunder
#3040 Joseph Drago	#4069 Katherine Aubrey

#3052 Sarah Bacon  
#3089 Richard Bergsma  
#3107 Thomas First  
#3173 Marcus Harazin  
#3174 Maria Alvarez  
#3175 Marc Arnold  
#3274 Alexander Chicoine  
#3328 Todd Palmer  
#3392 Amanda Kaplon  
#3415 Ja Hee Heo  
#3440 Samantha Cash  
#3453 Erica Webber Pellegrino  
#3462 Donna Monroe  
#3501 Paul Gebhard  
#3525 Amy Kruse  
#3530 Evan Taylor  
#3538 Ginger Rouse & #3539 Charles Rouse  
#3543 Chris Condon  
#3578 Lynn Houston  
#3641 Kyo Seok Koo  
#3646 Matthew Fecica  
#3676 Jeff Huth  
#3685 Sharon Burns-Leader  
#3718 Tammy Brown

#4079 Kathy Navy & #4080 Ric Navy  
#4134 Mikey Siatkowski  
#4140 Brian Polkowski  
#4150 Frank Rees  
#4168 Janet Laytham  
Aspirant Katya Blitsman  
Aspirant Markley Boyer  
Aspirants Bill and Serena Brochu  
Aspirant Phil Daian  
Aspirant Mila Fernandez  
Aspirant Cynthia Garvey  
Aspirant Sean Gelston  
Aspirant José Haro  
Aspirant Sean Hawk  
Aspirant Nick Hepler  
Aspirant Jacob Mnookin  
Aspirant Janice Pickering  
Aspirant Julie Rodriguez  
Aspirant John Shea  
Aspirant Karina Sivokas  
Aspirant Roz Stengle  
Aspirant Miroslawa (Mira) Surowiec  
Aspirant William Synan

The Club also wishes to acknowledge those who donated goods or services:

Emily Oakhill, who donated a quilt for the CMSAR raffle,  
Pine Hill Fire Company, for providing meeting space,  
Mountain Top Arboretum, for providing meeting space.

As of the date the Club became a 501c3 (July 26, 2022), donations are tax-deductible.

Additionally, we thank the numerous tireless volunteers, including board and committee members, hike leaders, SAR team members, canister maintainer, trailhead stewards, trail maintainers, and highway pickup team members. You turn our plans into actions! Without you, our Club would not function.

*By: Colleen Hardcastle, Fundraising Committee Co-Chair*



### **Update from the Trailhead Stewarding Committee**



A huge shoutout to our incredible volunteers for an AMAZING opening weekend - the third year of the Catskill 3500 Club's Adopt-a-Trailhead Program!

The expansion of the Club's Steward program to a second trailhead at Woodland Valley Campground is a great addition to the program, and is already enhancing the Catskill hikers' experience.

Huge thanks to Ryan Raaum (#3819), Linda Betancourt, Karen Bischoff, Natalia Zotova, Colleen Hardcastle (#2990 W1416) and Jeffrey Schoenfeld for volunteering at Woodland Valley, plus to Mark Evans (#4101 W1555), Bryan Burnham (#3455 W1373), Milagros Inciarte, Eric Rosario (#4229), Christopher Leon Garibian (#3881 W1474) and Beth Tomlinson for volunteering at Slide over the Memorial Day weekend. THANK YOU!



**Seven hundred** hikers interacted with our volunteers over the Memorial Day weekend. The Club Stewards encourage visitors to embrace Leave No Trace principles, which creates a ripple effect as those who meet our Club volunteers, in turn, influence other hikers.

Co-chairs Lourdes Sonera and Colleen Hardcastle, and Steward Committee member Vicki Ferreira, thank you for your passion and dedication.

If you're interested, please sign up on the new website: <https://www.catskill3500club.com/adopt-a-trailhead>.

Trailhead Steward Co-Chairs Lourdes Sonera and Colleen Hardcastle were guests of Club member and former Board member Stash Rusin (#2829) on the May 29th episode of "Inside the Line: The Catskill Mountains Podcast." You can listen to Lourdes and Colleen talk about the Trailhead Steward program and more in Episode 77 by playing the audio via your smart speaker, through the app you use for podcasts, or via the podcast website of [Inside The Line: The Catskill Mountains Podcast](#).



On Friday, June 2nd, Director Colleen Hardcastle was a panelist at [Vision Hudson Valley's](#) Placemaking Conference: Trails: Nature's Pathway to Healthy, Sustainable Communities" at the invitation of Bill Dauster (#3393). Bill, a board member of Vision Hudson Valley, moderated a panel "Health and Wellness Benefits of Trails." As a participant in the first panel, Colleen addressed organizing and engaging volunteers, and coordinating ongoing trail maintenance.



This summer there will be three trail races going on in the Catskills. Spectating along the race routes can be a lot of fun and certainly the runners will appreciate your cheering along the way. However, if you are looking for a day of solitude in the forest preserve, it might be a good idea to plan a hike that isn't going to include trails used by the runners on the day of the event. Volunteers are always appreciated so if getting involved is your cup of tea, contact information for the event director is provided.

[10<sup>th</sup> Annual Manitou's Revenge, June 24<sup>th</sup> from 5 a.m. to 5 a.m. on June 25<sup>th</sup>](#)

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 the Black Dome Trail. They will then go south on the Escarpment Trail following 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. Although runners have 23 hours to finish the race, last year's men's race winner Steve Lange finished in 11 hours 3 minutes 8 seconds in his first attempt. Women's race winner, Kehr Davis, won her fourth title finishing in 15 hours 8 minutes.

For additional information, contact [Charlie Gadol](#).

#### [Climb It for Climate, Phase 2: The Catskills, June 29<sup>th</sup>](#)

This is a new event from the Belleayre Ski area. More information will be provided on the event's webpage as it comes in. Majority of the course will be run around the Belleayre trails but the course is also expected to go around Balsam over the Ryder Hollow loop.

#### [46<sup>th</sup> Annual Escarpment Trail Race July 30<sup>th</sup>, 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. Lee Berube won his fourth title in 2022, finishing in 2:46:06 (his course record is 2:42:09). Michelle Merlis won her 3<sup>rd</sup> title finish in the fastest women's time in 20 years, breaking the tape in 3:26:44. Both are returning in 2023.

For more information contact race founder/director [Dick Vincent](#).



Jimmy Dolan Notch. Photo by Siu Samantha Yuen #2894 W1311



## Canister Report for 2022



Text by: Jim Bouton, Canisters and Stewardship Chair

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2023 marks the 24<sup>th</sup> consecutive year the 3500 Club has tallied and submitted a yearly report to the NYSDEC. The total for 2022 was 14,980 hikers, runners and competitive users. 2021 saw 16,504 visits. Both are down from the record 2020 tally of 17,349 during the first year of COVID19. When I first started this labor of love in 2008, there were about 2,100 sign-ins, and herd paths had not yet begun to appear except for a few faint traces near some of the summits. Unfortunately, there are no records to be found prior to when I filed my first report in 2009 for the 2008 year.

This year, canisters were again replaced, repainted, refurbished, and cleaned. Books were changed three times. Fire rings were dismantled, garbage picked up. The “job” also used to include brushing over of herd paths and dismantling of cairns. Now the Club recommends using the main herd path, when possible, to reduce new path formation and consolidate any existing tracks. This was also the first year I followed highly visible herd paths to all of the peaks. This marked the end of the bushwhack era.

May 2022, with 1,538 sign ins, was once again the most popular month for hiking the canistered peaks, with April running close behind. Previously September and October had been the busiest time of the year for the canistered peaks. This is disturbing because of the trend to hike during the sensitive spring months when the mountains are the most fragile. December was the quietest, with 785 visits. Overall, Southwest Hunter was the most popular, with 1,326 users, while Rocky, once again the quietest, had 950 people.

It was too much work to decipher how many individuals are signing. I did estimate from sign-ins for one peak, that about 50 people accounted for 25% of usage to that peak. This was anywhere from four, six, eight, ten, twelve visits by similar names to that specific peak, sometimes three or four times in a single month. This amount could be as high as 40%. I would estimate the total number of individuals for all the canisters to be less than 500.

In 1999, the Catskill 3500 Club signed an agreement to maintain the canisters on the once trail less peaks over 3500' in the Catskill Mountains. At that time, they were called Adopt A Natural Resource Agreements (AANRs); now they are called Volunteer Stewardship Agreements (VSAs). It should be noted at that time the canisters were removed from the Adirondack Mountains, but we were allowed to keep ours under agreement with several stipulations, one being the Club tallied and submitted a yearly report. It is interesting that at that time, the 46'ers numbered a little over 4,000 finishers, and the 3500 Club is at that number now. It makes one wonder if herd path establishment and degradation of the two mountain ranges was similar, and what the future holds for the Catskills.

The NYSDEC uses this data to determine future use. A study is now underway to formulate how these peaks will be used in years to come. Some may become trailed, others with maintained herd paths similar to the Adirondack “trail less” peaks. Others may remain the same. Please respect and enjoy these peaks when using them.



Buttermilk Falls in the Peekamoose Valley. Photo by Yana Levchinsky-Grimmond #2814 W1222



Text by: Maria Bedo-Calhoun, Conservation Chair

You might have recently seen notices on social media asking for public input to the Department of Environmental Conservation on the Sundown Wild Forest Unit Management plan. If you were like me when I first started hiking in the Catskills and heard the acronym UMP, you might not have understood what it meant. It may have sounded very formal and a bit overwhelming – which, in all honesty - some of the language can still be at times to those of us who are lovers of the mountains, but are not studied in environmental conservation or the sciences.

In short UMPs (Unit Management Plans), per the DEC website, “assess the natural and physical resources present within a unit of state-owned land. They also identify opportunities for public use and recreation that are consistent with the classifications of these lands, and consider the ability of the resources and ecosystems to accommodate such use.” It is a formal way to present ideas, issues and changes within the DEC structure and to the public and allow individuals to offer suggestions and opinions on the contents.

The DEC details their UMP planning process on their website with the following steps:

- Conduct resource inventory of the unit area.
- Solicit written and verbal input from the public through press releases and meetings.
- Address State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) requirements.
- Prepare a draft plan for public review and comment.
- Address public comments, revise the plan as necessary.
- Coordinate review and compliance with other state agencies.
- Adoption of the final plan.

The public comment period for the Sundown UMP ended on April 21<sup>st</sup>, but here are some of the major proposed items in the draft UMP that you may see implemented in the next few years if the plan is adopted.

### **General Access and Trail Improvements**



- Construction of an 80-car parking lot in the footprint of the Peekamoose Trailer Field to consolidate the parking to a single location;
- Closure of eight parking areas throughout the corridor with the use of boulders, barriers, and gates;
- Construction of an approximately 0.6-mile connector trail from the 80-car parking area to the Peekamoose Blue Hole;
- Construction of a 60-foot bridge across Bear Hole Brook; and
- Construction of a foot bridge/retaining wall near the wooded pathway entrance to the Blue Hole between the banks of the Rondout Creek and Peekamoose Road.

### **Natural Resource Protection**

- Closure of 25 designated campsites throughout the western portion of the corridor due to extreme site degradation and natural resource concerns.

### **Accessible Projects**

- Construction of two new accessible campsites in locations that minimize natural resource impacts;
- Construction of an accessible path from the accessible parking area to the entrance of the Blue Hole to accommodate people with mobility impairments; and
- Developing an accessible photo point for people on the accessible portion of the Blue Hole trail.

### **Multi-Use Trail Proposal and Changes to the 2019 Long Path Trail Proposals**

- Remove the use of snowmobiling on the proposed trail segment; and
- Design a trail segment to accommodate recreational opportunities such as hiking, biking, snowshoeing, and skiing as originally identified in the 2019 UMP.

These reviews are an opportunity for 3500 Club members to offer opinions and thoughts to the DEC and the Club Board will do our best to alert members when an opportunity for input arises. Do know that your voices matter and these UMPs do not come up often for review, so giving feedback is something we can all do as stewards of these mountains. We will do our best to publicize input sessions and get information out to Club members through our social media platforms and in *The Canister* so that you will be informed of any upcoming opportunities to offer feedback.



Near the summit of Big Indian. Photo by Steve Aaron #3199

## FIRST GROWTH FOREST ALONG THE PINE HILL – WEST BRANCH TRAIL

Text and map by: Mike Kudish #147

In the spring 2023 issue of *The Catskill Canister*, we hiked the Devil's Path and noted where it passed in and out of first growth forest. The total trail length in the four first growth tracts was 13.85 miles, 56.8% of the full length of the trail, 24.40 miles. The longest uninterrupted stretch was from Indian Head to Sugarloaf Mountains at 5.75 miles.



In this and the next few issues, we will continue to hike the longest Catskills trails, noting what percent of them and for how many miles they are in original (not logged, not farmed, not barked, not quarried, not burned by people) forest. I have used a combination of the NY-NJ Trails Conference maps and the USGS topographic quadrangles as the basis for the mileage.

The Pine Hill – West Branch (Neversink) Trail is the record-breaker. This trail passes through the longest stretch of first growth of all Catskills trails: 10.40 miles out of the full length of 14.10 miles, or 73.8 percent.

Let's begin our hike at the end of Woodchuck Hollow Road in Pine Hill, at mile zero. From here up to 1.50 miles, the forest has been heavily and repeatedly disturbed.

First came the Empire Tannery (my tannery catalog #T47) located in Guigou Hollow just to the east; it ran from 1831 to 1858. Augustus Guigou barked the hollow and surrounding area for hemlock. Giggie Hollow is a corruption of Guigou.

Second came the charcoal makers during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. I have found eight kiln sites in the area around the junction of the Pine Hill – West Branch and Lost Clove trails at 1.25 miles. The charcoal was hauled down the Lost Clove trail to the Ulster & Delaware Railroad at Big Indian where it was shipped to the Millerton Iron Works in Dutchess County.

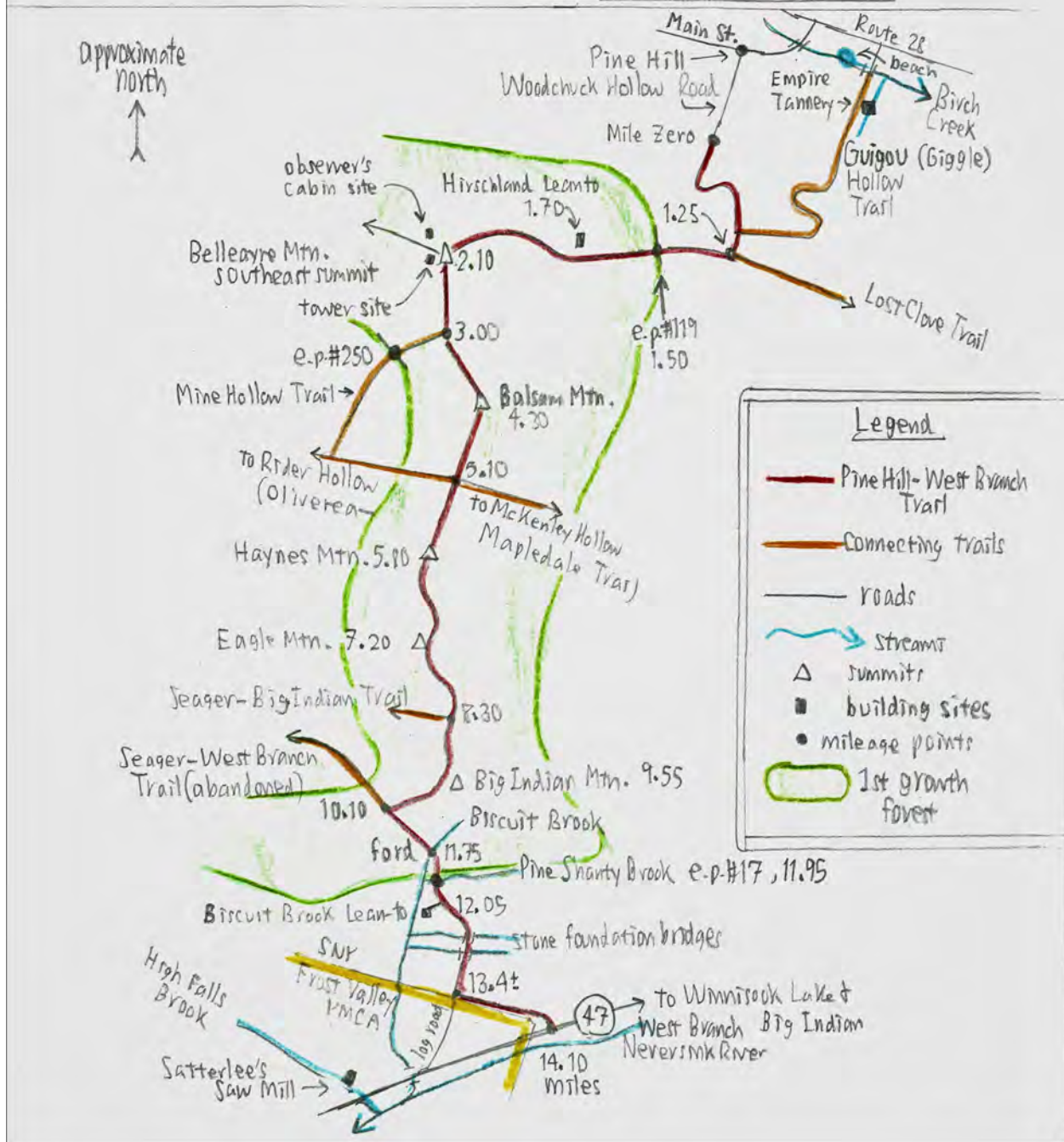
Third, the area around this trail junction was logged again in the 1980s by Crossroads Ventures and then sold to New York State on December 6, 2011. White ash and northern red oak that had sprung up after the charcoal making had reached maturity and were harvested.

About half-way between the Lost Clove Trail junction (1.25 miles) and the Hirschland Lean-to at 1.70 miles (built 1936-1937 and assigned its current name in the early 1970s), we pass out of second and subsequent growth forest and enter first growth. This is entry point #119 in my catalog, at elevation 2920 and 1.5 miles. The oak and the ash stop abruptly here; the forest becomes pure northern hardwoods: sugar maple-beech-yellow birch-black cherry-red maple. Soon, as the soils become thinner and stonier, the moisture-demanding sugar maple drops out, and we are left with ridge hardwoods on the southeast summit of Belleayre, elevation 3378, mile 2.10. Red spruce and balsam fir are absent on this summit as they are on many western Catskills peaks, never having migrated through this area postglacially in the first place.

On this Belleayre summit, we enter a small clearing where Crosby's observation tower once stood, replaced later by the fire tower (1909, rebuilt 1930) and observer's cabin until 1985. Crosby had built the road up to his tower for his hotel guests hiking from Pine Hill shortly before 1896. This is the only interruption of first growth along the Pine Hill-West Branch trail, but the forest was not removed commercially; we need to decide whether we can include the clearing as part of the first growth or not.

# FIRST GROWTH FOREST ALONG THE PINE HILL-WEST BRANCH TRAIL

DIAGRAMMATIC - NOT EXACTLY TO SCALE BUT MILEAGE IS SHOWN. MICHAEL KUDISH #147, 5/11/23 FOR SUMMER 2023 ISSUE OF THE CATSKILL CANISTER



We turn south and descend, soon coming to the junction with the Mine Hollow Trail at 3.00 miles in the col between Belleayre and Balsam Mountains. If we drop down to the west off the ridge onto this connecting trail, we soon enter lands logged by the Belleayre Conservation Company between 1914 and 1917, and sold to the state in 1918. Here is entry point #250 at elevation 2620. But we will stay up on the ridge and continue hiking south on the trail towards the West Branch Neversink.

We cross the summit of Balsam Mountain at 4.30 miles, where we have just entered the Catskills post-glacial eastern migration route of balsam fir. We will be seeing this conifer on and off all the way to Big Indian Mountain.

At 5.10 miles we pass the col between Balsam and Haynes Mountains. The Rider and McKenley Hollow Trails intersect here in this high-elevation (3000 feet) grove of huge 1<sup>st</sup> growth old sugar maples. This is a wet col with springs on either side of the Delaware and Hudson Divide. As a result, we have northern hardwoods forest: a brief interruption of the ridge hardwoods.

We hike over Haynes Mountain at 5.80 miles and Eagle Mountain at 7.20 miles. Both have some balsam fir. In the col between Eagle and Big Indian Mountains, at 8.30 miles, we pass through a high-elevation (3100 feet) grove of huge old first growth hemlocks – really straining up here. I've been watching this grove decline for over 50 years. The Seager-Big Indian Trail joins here.

The construction history of the Pine Hill – West Branch Trail gets a little complex in this area. Most of the trail was built on old roads, or brushed out new, in 1931, but the segment from the Eagle - Big Indian col to a point (at 10.10 miles) on the southwest shoulder of Big Indian Mountain was not built until 1953, along with the abandonment of a segment of the Seager-West Branch Trail. In other words, no trail went near the summit of Big Indian until the 1950s.

At 9.55 miles we pass over the west shoulder of Big Indian Mountain and start heading down into the valley of Biscuit Brook.

At 11.75 miles, we ford Biscuit Brook and soon, at 11.95 miles, cross its tributary from the east, Pine Shanty Brook. Here we leave the first growth, at entry point #17, elevation 2350. We are only 0.1 mile short of the spur trail leading to the Biscuit Brook Lean, built in 1965, at 12.05 miles.

The portion of the Pine Hill-West Branch Trail between the Biscuit Brook Lean-to and the Frost Valley YMCA line (at about 13.4 miles) is most probably an old logging road built by William Satterlee in the 1860s and early 1870s, with lands sold to the state between 1877 and 1885. Here we are in second growth forest all the way to the trailhead on Ulster County Route 47 (14.10 miles). The abundance of old red maples from the lean-to area to the Frost Valley line, plus the stonework under two small present log bridges, is evidence of this old log road. The old road continues south-southwest across Frost Valley lands, approaching the West Branch Neversink near its confluence with Biscuit Brook; Satterlee's sawmill was on High Falls Brook just above the Neversink, near the southwest end of Frost Valley lands. But we turn off the old log road at the Frost Valley line, turn abruptly southeast, and stay on the trail to Route 47 at 14.10 miles.

Statistics summary:

First growth occurs from 1.50 miles to 11.95 miles, a distance 10.45 miles. Subtract the tiny interruption at the Belleayre fire tower site and we get at least 10.40 miles in first growth. With the total trail length of 14.10 miles, we have 73.8 percent of it in first growth.

In the next issue or two of *The Catskill Canister*, we will continue hiking the longest trails in the Catskills, but none with the extent of uninterrupted first growth of the Pine Hill-West Branch Trail. In no particular order, we have the Burroughs, Dry Brook Ridge, Mill Brook Ridge, and Beaverkill Range trails.

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Michael Kudish's Ph.D. thesis was on the vegetational history of the Catskill High Peaks (SUNY E.S.F. 1971). This thesis initiated a life-long study on the forests from the end of the Ice Age to the present. He became member #147 on Panther Mountain on March 12, 1973 (with Ed West #45), and around that time wrote several articles for *The Catskill Canister*. Professor Mike taught in the Forestry Division of Paul Smith's College in the Adirondacks for 34 years, retiring in 2005, and moved to the Catskills to continue studying the forest full time. Mike can be reached by [email](#).

Mike's photo is by Dave Turan.

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Balsam Cap summit ridge. Photo by Matty Lonergan

## What Am I Looking For?

Text and photos by: Ryan Vance #3896 W1489

What am I looking for? In 1948 Earl Shaffer took to the Appalachian Trail “to walk the war out of my system.” He had been in the Pacific. He had been a forward observer – the man who goes ahead with the infantry and radios back to tell the mortars and artillery where to fire. There is no safe job on the front line of a battlefield, but being the guy with binoculars and a big antenna tends to draw a lot of attention.

I had first started reading about the Catskills while in Somalia, in the summer of 2019. When we talked of what we would do, where we would go, how we would spend our money once we came home from deployment – my thoughts would always drift to the mountains. I had just started getting into rock climbing before joining the military and I was always an avid hiker. Then, more than ever, I felt a need for altitude and cold air. Somalia, for the most part, is a hot desert. Then, you add body armor and a Kevlar helmet. One day while counting empty water bottles, we determined we were averaging over two gallons of water a day – and that was a low activity day. What am I looking for? I guess a sense of relativity, or scale.



A deployment can be different amounts of time depending on the mission. For me, I left home on February 4<sup>th</sup> of 2019 and returned to my home of record 306 days later. The average dog’s life is 11 years, or around 4,000 days. When you add up the deployment with my initial entry training, I missed around a 10<sup>th</sup> of Ranger’s life. What am I looking for? I guess I wanted him to forgive me – he seems to have done so. I thought maybe I could make up that time to him.

So, “what on earth am I looking for?” I ask myself as I make the summit of Eagle Mountain, one of my first ascents. Ranger smiles up at me and looks around to see where we will go next. I have no idea what a canister is, but there’s an odd little orange PVC contraption attached to a fir not far from where I stand. “Must be something to do with hunters,” I shrug. “Come on, Ranger,” we turn and make our way back down the trail – he pulls hard the whole way down, wanting to do everything at maximum speed. A fellow climber once told me the ascent is cardio, the descent is leg day. When hiking with Ranger, that is definitely true.

“What the hell am I looking for?” As I fell and injured my arm on an icy ascent of Hunter. I asked myself the same question while descending my first bushwhack of Rusk. I had followed the herd path up and then thought I might simply walk off the side of the summit in the most direct route possible to the parking area. The descent was absolutely abhorrent. Ranger continually tried to ride the back of my snow shoes, anxious for his lack of traction at the steep angle and deep snow. I asked myself the same question when I forgot my snow shoes and attempted to post hole my way up Fir. When I took a nasty fall down Blackhead, having brought microspikes when I should have brought crampons – a very real take on bringing



a knife to a gun fight. I was never a regular 3500 Club member; I started with winter hikes and did every single mountain in winter before ever seeing it in summer. Most of the 35 summits I still have not seen outside of the winter season. It was a learning experience to say the least.

I have a theory that I believe partially explains why we – the avid winter hikers – do what we do and why it seems to give us something that everyone else seems to get from sitting inside with hot coffee and watching the snow fall outside their living room window. My theory is that anxiety is like an out of shape ghost. It will follow you and whisper terrible things to you and fill you with a sense of dread and doubt – but it is very out of shape. Go for a run? You feel better because the out of shape ghost can't keep up. Climb a mountain? The out of shape ghost can't breath up there. Ride a motorcycle? The out of shape ghost can't get on the back with you. Somebody always says "well people have anxiety attacks on airplanes!" Of course! The ghost can just walk on the plane behind you – it's a ghost, nobody sees it get on.

All kidding aside, I found a peace at altitude. Something magical happens when you ascend to a point at which rain turns to snow and the ice wraps tree limbs like a coat of armor. When I am giving more heat to the atmosphere than it is putting into me, I feel connected to the mountain. Normally, the power is outside of me and it presses down upon me. Up here, on the summit of Slide, when a snow squall derails my hike plan, I am the power. I am the heat. I am the energy. There is no anxiety up here – no social awkwardness, no guilt, no fear, no doubt, no nonsense of any kind. I am connected to my environment and it – the winter weather – is as ephemeral as I am. This storm will pass. The ice will melt. I will grow old and die. Then, others will come after me. The seasons will change. The ice will regrow. Phoenix will rise from the ashes.

But what on earth am I looking for? I look into Ranger's shockingly human eyes as we make our final ascent of Panther – we both earn our 3500 member patches and winter finisher patches on this day. We've been working on this for three winters now – it should have been two but life has a funny way of getting all out of sorts. Ranger doesn't seem to have any strong feelings one way or another. He doesn't think about the past or the future. He lives in the moment. He loves the mountain, whether its Balsam Lake or Balsam Cap – it doesn't matter to him. He's just here to love every second of it.

I should be more like him. I should be at peace, undisturbed by anxieties and distractions and immaterial fears. I should live in the moment. I should strive to make every day feel as I feel on the summits; quiet, peaceful, safe. I guess that's what I'm looking for, for the time being; my next summit.

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Ryan started his Catskill 3500 adventure with his then three year old dog Ranger in December of 2019 after coming home from deployment. For his regular round, Ryan hiked all the mountains in winter only and still haven't seen many outside of winter. This is partly because Ranger doesn't like the heat and partly because Ryan just prefers winter hiking. Ryan and Ranger finished their Winter 35 in 2022 and they are now working on the hundred highest. Anyone is welcome to follow along our journey @RangerHikes on Instagram. Ryan can also be reached by [email](#).

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North Dome viewpoint. Photo by Stash Rusin #2829

## Are the Catskills Truly Mountains?

Text and photo by: Dany Davis #2000 W904

I recently read in a very informative book on the geology of the Hudson Valley that geologists don't consider the Catskills to be true mountains. The author, an expert in the region, designates them as a dissected plateau. I have seen this same distinction written elsewhere, promoted in social media memes, and heard it in conversations with other Catskill hikers. Are the two mutually exclusive? Can the Catskill high peaks region be both part of a dissected plateau **and** mountains? As a geologist working in the Catskill high peaks for nearly 25 years and as a Catskill hiker, I feel compelled to consider this question.



If we step back and set aside the science of what defines a mountain or a mountain range and start with an ontological perspective, we can ask the foundational question *do mountains exist?* Ontology is a discipline in philosophy that examines the nature of being. Two SUNY Buffalo researchers asked this very question in their paper "Do Mountains Exist? Towards an Ontology of Landforms." The scholastic manuscript explores how we can combine philosophy and geography to explain geographic features like mountains. I will attempt to distill its main argument and proposed answer for you: mountain existence is kind of fuzzy, but mountains do indeed exist.

We can't define mountains as discrete objects with clear enclosing boundaries, like a rock, which is completely defined by physical boundaries and its composition. For example, you can hold an entire rock in your hand, but not everything that is shaped like a rock is a rock. Rocks, therefore, are a *kind of object*. Mountains are a special category of existence that can perhaps be best described as a *field*. Fields can be defined by similarities in features across a spatial range. Earth's magnetic field is a well-known *kind of field*. Geographic features defined by ranges in topographic position and value represent expressions of another kind of field. The fields of "high" topography we may call mountains, and the "low" topographic fields we may call valleys. We know them when we see them, but their boundaries are not so well-defined as a

separate entity like a rock. Thus, in this way mountains do exist, but we may not always agree on the boundaries that define a mountain.

In geography we can ask a related question: what are mountains? Geographers may define a mountain as being a high point or area that rises prominently as an entity defined by topographic relief above the surrounding terrain. The distinction between a hill and a mountain, which both satisfy this geographic criterion, really comes down to what size scale we are considering and what reference frame we use. Mountains are bigger and *maybe* steeper and more rugged, while hills are smaller and *maybe* more rounded. We might not all agree on what counts as bigger, smaller, steeper, rounder, but we do tend to know a mountain when we see one.

We are left with this ontological and geographical answer to the question of whether the Catskills (especially the high peak region) are mountains: they certainly look like mountains. They have the right positions in the topographic fields, suitable shapes, and amount of relief. If we cannot agree on how I have defined a mountain so far and how the Catskill high peaks fit that definition, I respect that. This matter is open to interpretation. If we agree mountains do exist, and that we can define them geographically based on their shape and prominence in the terrain, then let's consider whether it matters how a feature we might call a mountain is made. When we think of mountains, we often think of the forces that must have raised those mountains.

The primary driver of mountain making on Earth is plate tectonics – the shifting plates of rock crust (the lithosphere) that form a dynamic shell around a mantle of semi-fluid rock. Orogeny is a word in the discipline of geology for the mountain building process that occurs where the earth's tectonic plates converge or collide, essentially scrunching the earth's continental crust up into a long range of mountains that loosely define the margin of tectonic convergence. The role of plate tectonics, and the earth's surface response to the forces that compress and raise the deformed lithosphere into mountains, can help explain the Appalachians, the Alps, and the Himalayas.

Volcanic mountains are built from the episodic extrusion of melted rock to the surface along convergent tectonic plate margins (think Cascades) or crustal plates passing over mantle hotspots (think Mauna Loa). Volcanic mountains also form at divergent plate boundaries like the ocean covered mountains of the mid-Atlantic ridge that emerges as volcanic mountainous Iceland. Mountains can also be made by an abrupt lowering of part of the earth's surface when the strain in the moving crust is stretching rather than compressing. The Basin and Range mountains of western North America are largely the consequence of this intra-plate crustal divergence.

Some less common mountain ranges form in large, uplifted continental regions beyond the convergence zones compressed into faulted and contorted folds of continental crust. Their artifice is largely through another process of mountain building: climate driven erosion. The Catskill Mountains are an example of this mountain making mode.

The earth's surface is uplifted in different ways beyond the examples I give above, but in all cases the transfer of energy through water, wind, and heat in a region's climate will work to lower the uplifted terrain. Plate tectonics can build mountains up, while climate and gravity carve mountains out of the raised rock. Often, the relief or relative prominence of the mountain can largely be due to the efficiency of the carving climate and the ability for flowing water (liquid or ice) to remove the carved debris. Ultimately this process would lower the mountains to hills and then plains if the upward force stopped.

The Catskill region is a part of the earth's crust that has a long engagement with depositional uplifting, erosional processes. Back in the late Devonian (say 375 million years ago), this section of earth was part of a large continent geologists call Laurentia. Back then the "Catskills" were not mountains, but rather a vast terrain of many large forest-bounded meandering rivers carrying the detritus from large compressional mountains rising in the east. This was during the Acadian Orogeny that built some of the original Appalachian region mountains. This is a story we read in the rocks. The repeating sequences of sandstone, mudstone, and conglomerate layers of bedrock we see in the Catskill Mountains, record the many millions of years of these rivers doing the work of redistributing the ancient Acadian Mountain remains across the land bordering a shallow but expansive sea covering the Laurentian continent to the west. If you examine the pebbles, gravel and cobble in the conglomerate rocks, you will see a sampling of the contents of those ancestral Appalachian highlands.

Between the Devonian era of rivers hauling Acadian Mountain sediment to the sea and the present-day features of the Catskill landscape, most of the intervening geologic time is absent in the Catskill Mountains. During over 350 million years of that missing geologic history, plate tectonic shifting yielded other orogenies and configurations of continents that added more deposits to the top of the sedimentary pile. As the recurrent phases of Appalachian Mountain belts were built up and



eroded away and all that mass was removed, the earth's buoyant crust rebounded as a broad uplifted terrain. Cycles of uplift and erosion of this terrain across an immense span of geologic time removed possibly up to three miles of rock that existed above the many thousands of feet of buried Devonian river deposits we now see as the bedrock that forms the Catskill peaks.

This uplifted terrain, referred to as the Allegheny Plateau, has been undergoing the climatic phase of mountain carving for tens to hundreds of millions of years. Most of that mountain artisanal work has been done by the delivery of precipitation and the stream channel networks that form to haul the runoff of that precipitation away. The runoff and channeled flow have the power to erode the landscape, generating sediment that must be removed, adding to the stream's scope of work in creating a mountainous landscape. This process of stream erosion into the uplifted Allegheny Plateau of largely undeformed rocks is the dissection referred to in the opening of this article.

Streams are not the only mountain sculpting artists fueled by the climate. Past climatic conditions that led to extensive expansion of arctic ice sheets have created the most recent dramatic flourishes to the landscape we call the Catskill Mountains. In just the last one to two million years there have been repeat advances and retreats of continental scale ice sheets (and possibly alpine and valley glaciers) that have flowed over, through and around the peaks and valleys sculpted by the geologic eras of stream work. The impact of these glacial periods steepened the peaks, helped sculpt some of the notches, and partially filled the valleys with glacial legacy sediment.

After the last glacial ice departed the scene around 15,000 years or so ago, the warmer and wetter climate returned to resume the work of shaping the landscape through stream erosion and sediment transport, mechanical weathering like the seasonal freeze-thaw process that breaks apart the exposed rock, and the torrential rains that can cause landslides. The climate continuously applies its forces to the creation of the Catskills.

From this complicated and fluctuating process, we get the characterization of the Catskills as a dissected plateau, as opposed to a mountain range. I wholeheartedly agree with the interpretation of the process that formed the landscape. I have spent most of my career studying the role of streams in shaping the modern Catskill landscape and can see that process at work across the span of deep time. Further complicating this mountain "existential" dilemma, on the western margins of the Catskills the landscape is no longer mountainous. We are back to the disciplines of ontology and geography to define what may be considered mountains. Given this uncertain aspect in my line of reasoning, I want to insert another reference frame for approaching the question of whether the Catskills are true mountains: our relationship to the landscape.

My first view of the Catskill high peaks region was in early summer 1987 when my family and I were driving north on the Thruway from Ridgewood, New Jersey. We arrived in New Jersey in late May of that year after leaving our cabin in the boreal forest outside of Fairbanks, Alaska. I was 24 and helping to raise a family of four children with a partner whose parents lived in Ridgewood and offered her a job in a family business. Prior to moving to the lower 48, I was a geology student at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks. I had also developed a relationship with Alaska mountains and glaciers in the Alaska Range and Kenai Peninsula. Mountains and glaciers are what pulled me to study geology.

When we left Alaska, we knew we had about a 100-mile radius around Ridgewood where we could find a university, wildlands, and an affordable place to live. My partner's brother climbed in the Gunks and he felt we would find what we were looking for there. On our first trip north into New York to check out New Paltz, I saw the Catskills, and realized it was going to be okay. There were mountains, wild forests and streams, all near a small college town. With mountains nearby, we could make this work. We moved to Kerhonkson near Minnewaska State Park that summer and I have lived along the northern slopes of the Shawangunk Ridge in three different places ever since, always with a view of the Catskill Mountains just a short walk away.

That summer in 1987 I made my first visit into the Catskills to hike and camp along the Burroughs Range. My first dinner in the Catskills included a climb up Cornell Mountain where I found a high ledge with a view looking back to Slide, and over to Panther. I fell in love with these peaks and that spot as the sun set. Since then, I have hiked and explored the high peaks frequently over the decades. I have been fortunate to have spent most of my career as a geologist studying Catskill Mountain streams – the preeminent sculptors of this landscape. Given this personal and professional history, I have a hard time not challenging the notion that started this article – that the Catskills are not true mountains. I have a relationship with them as mountains.

Given my take on the ontology, geography, geology, and my connection with these mountainous features we call the Catskill

Mountains, I propose a variation of the original question. *If the Catskills are not mountains, then do mountains really exist, since the Catskills seem to fulfill nearly every criterion to be called mountains?*

After decades of being in their presence, I find that I don't need to try to answer this question or argue the points I have raised to call the Catskills mountains. These days, I believe mountains not only come into being as formed and sculpted by the forces of plate tectonics, climate and energy gradients; they also come into being as we behold them. When I look at these peaks, just as I look at the peaks when I am back home in Alaska, I behold mountains. The Catskills are mountains by the very nature of their forms and formation, and for me, by the relationship I have with them. In their presence, I feel connected with this landscape and move with the awareness of one who beholds mountains.

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Dany Davis is a geologist that loves exploring the Catskills and lives in Rosendale NY and Seward AK. Dany thanks Dr. Chuck Ver Straeten and Dr. Buddy North for their review of this article. Dany can be reached by [email](#) and on Instagram [@mountain.wae](#).

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Late afternoon sun peaking through the hemlocks. Photo by Yana Levchinsky-Grimmond #2814 W1222

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## IN MEMORIAM

**George Daxis, #1085**, passed away in February at the age of 69. He was a longtime volunteer for the New York-New Jersey Trail conference. He served as project manager for five editions of the NYNJTC *Catskill Trails* map sets, including the most recent edition that was published in February.

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View from Utsayantha. Photo by Margaret McGrath #2009 W939

## Rambles and Brambles [Hike Schedule](#) July - September 2023

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 and 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:** 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.

**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. 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.

**Parking Alert:** As reported in the Trail Mix, a permit to park at the Peekamoose Rd trailhead is required between May 15th and September 15th. Woodland Valley parking fee is in effect between May 19th and October 9th.

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A carpet of bunchberries on Panther. Photo by Elise Gold #3600

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The calendar of the current hike schedule can also be found on the [Club site](#).

Club hiking schedule is subject to change.

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**Sat. July 1 - BLACKHEAD, BLACK DOME & THOMAS COLE**

Distance: 7.3 mi. Ascent: 2650', Elevs: 3940', 3994', 3953'

Moderate pace trail hike with challenging climbs and great views. Shuttle required.

Registration Period: Open

Leader: Marv Freedman #2242 W951

[marvfreedman@gmail.com](mailto:marvfreedman@gmail.com)

**Sat. July 1 - INDIAN HEAD & TWIN**

Distance: 8.5 mi. Ascent: 2368', Elevs: 3573', 3650'

Moderate to quick pace.

Registration Period: Open

Leader: Mark Evans #4101 W1555

[mark.evans2112@gmail.com](mailto:mark.evans2112@gmail.com)

**Sun. July 2 - SLIDE, CORNELL & WITTENBERG**

Distance: 9+ mi. Ascent: 2500', Elevs: 4184', 3857', 3782'

Quick pace. Shuttle required.

Registration Period: Open

Leader: Erica Pellegrino #3463 W1390

[ericapellegrino71@gmail.com](mailto:ericapellegrino71@gmail.com)

**Sat. July 8 - BALSAM & EAGLE**

Distance: 9.5 mi. Ascent: 2700', Elevs: 3607', 3583'

Relaxed pace. Beginners welcome.

Registration Period: Open

Leaders: Joe Felter #3560 W1479 & Marcy Felter #3492 W1480

[felter\\_joe@yahoo.com](mailto:felter_joe@yahoo.com)

**Sat. July 8 - BALSAM LAKE & MILL BROOK RIDGE**

Distance: 8.5 mi, Ascent: 2800', Elevs: 3729', 3465'

Easy trail to Balsam Lake and Mill Brook Ridge, then a short bushwhack down to Kelly Hollow at a moderate pace. Shuttle required.

Registration Period: Open

Leaders: Peggy Wissler #1499 W612 & Yanny Hecht #1868 W751

[YannyHecht@gmail.com](mailto:YannyHecht@gmail.com)

**Sun. July 9 - PANTHER**

Distance: 6.6 mi, Ascent 1900', Elev: 3724'

Relaxed to moderate pace. Rain and inclement weather will cancel. Beginners welcome.

Registration Period: July 2 - 6

Leader: Suzanne Knabe #1326 W498

[suzkna@msn.com](mailto:suzkna@msn.com) 917-679-5547

**Sun. July 9 - SLIDE, CORNELL & WITTENBERG**

Distance: 10 mi. Ascent: 2500', Elevs: 4184', 3857', 3782'

Relaxed to moderate pace with challenging scrambles. Shuttle required.

Registration Period: Open

Leader: Tonda Highley #1944 W857

[Thighley1944@gmail.com](mailto:Thighley1944@gmail.com)

**Tue. July 11 - FRIDAY, BALSAM CAP, ROCKY, LONE, TABLE & PEEKAMOOSSE**

Distance: 12 mi. Ascent: 5000', Elevs: 3692', 3608', 3487', 3700', 3825', 3819'

Long, challenging bushwhack and trail hike at a quick pace. Shuttle required.

Registration Period: Open

Leader: Erica Pellegrino #3463 W1390

[ericapellegrino71@gmail.com](mailto:ericapellegrino71@gmail.com)

**Sat. July 15 - HALCOTT**

Distance: 3.2 mi. Ascent 1573', Elev: 3509

Relaxed pace bushwhack.

Registration Period: Open

Leaders: Shari Aber #2224 W944 [shnaber@yahoo.com](mailto:shnaber@yahoo.com)  
Joseph Ferri #2223 W945 [newpaltz33@yahoo.com](mailto:newpaltz33@yahoo.com)

**Sun. July 16 - NORTH DOME & SHERRILL**

Distance: 8 mi. Ascent: 3100', Elevs: 3605', 3588'  
Slow pace bushwhack.  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Michael Bongar #2173 W994  
[michael@bongarbiz.com](mailto:michael@bongarbiz.com)

**Sun. July 16 - INDIAN HEAD, TWIN, SUGARLOAF & PLATEAU**

Distance: 13 mi. Ascent: 4700', Elevs: 3573', 3650', 3783', 3835'  
Long, challenging Eastern Devil's Path traverse at a quick pace. Shuttle required.  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Erica Pellegrino #3463 W1390  
[ericapellegrino71@gmail.com](mailto:ericapellegrino71@gmail.com)

**Mon. July 17 - HUNTER & SW HUNTER**

Distance 9.9 mi. Ascent: 3012', Elevs: 4030', 3753'  
Moderate pace via Becker Hollow and Devil's Path. Short shuttle required.  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Sue Hall #2460 W1091  
[shall@catskill.net](mailto:shall@catskill.net) 607-353-9469

**Tue. July 18 - KAATERSKILL**

Distance: 7 mi. Ascent 1900', Elev: 3652'  
Moderate pace bushwhack and trail hike. Fun scrambles and great views. Beginners welcome.  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Erica Pellegrino #3463 W1390  
[ericapellegrino71@gmail.com](mailto:ericapellegrino71@gmail.com)

**Thu. July 20 - WITTENBERG & CORNELL**

Distance 9.4 mi. Ascent: 3104', Elevs: 3782', 3857'  
Moderate pace in and out from Woodland Valley Campground  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Sue Hall #2460 W1091  
[shall@catskill.net](mailto:shall@catskill.net) 607-353-9469

**Sat. July 22 - TWIN & INDIAN HEAD**

Distance 6.9 mi. Ascent 2150', Elevs: 3650', 3573'  
Relaxed to moderate pace.  
Registration period: July 13 - 20  
Leader: Lyn W. #2865 W1312  
[catskill35r@gmail.com](mailto:catskill35r@gmail.com)

**Tue. July 25 - DRY BROOK RIDGE**

Distance 4.4 mi. Ascent: 1194', Elev: 3465'  
Moderate pace via Ploutz Rd.  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Sue Hall #2460 W1091  
[shall@catskill.net](mailto:shall@catskill.net) 607-353-9469

**Thu. July 27 - TABLE & PEEKAMOOSSE**

Distance 9.5 mi. Ascent: 2539', Elevs: 3825', 3819'  
Moderate pace in and out from Denning trailhead.  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Sue Hall #2460 W1091  
[shall@catskill.net](mailto:shall@catskill.net) 607-353-9469

**Sat. July 29 - KAATERSKILL**

Distance 7.8 mi. Ascent: 1939', Elev: 3652'  
Moderate pace in and out.  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Sue Hall #2460 W1091  
[shall@catskill.net](mailto:shall@catskill.net) 607-353-9469

**Sat. July 29 - EAST RUSK & RUSK**

Distance: 5.4 mi. Ascent: 1715', Elevs: 3628', 3686'  
Bushwhack and trail hike. Moderate pace. Beginners welcome  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Mark Evans #4101 W1555  
[mark.evans2112@gmail.com](mailto:mark.evans2112@gmail.com)

**Sun. July 30 - FIR, BIG INDIAN, EAGLE, BALSAM & BELLEAYRE**

Distance: 18.5 mi. Ascent: 4700', Elevs: 3629', 3699', 3583', 3607', 3424'  
Long, challenging bushwhack and trail traverse from Biscuit Brook to Lost Clove at a quick pace. Shuttle required.  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Erica Pellegrino #3463 W1390  
[ericapellegrino71@gmail.com](mailto:ericapellegrino71@gmail.com)

**Sun. July 30 - FRIDAY & BALSAM CAP**

Distance: 7.5+ mi. Ascent: 3000', Elevs: 3692', 3608'  
Challenging bushwhack at moderate pace, including visit to B25 crash.  
Registration Period: July 24 - 28  
Leader: Jake Haisley #2488 W1065  
[jacobhaisley@gmail.com](mailto:jacobhaisley@gmail.com) 207-624-1643

**Tue. Aug. 1 - HALCOTT**

Distance: 3.5 mi. Ascent: 1700', Elev: 3509'  
Moderate paced bushwhack. Beginners welcome.  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Erica Pellegrino #3463 W1390  
[ericapellegrino71@gmail.com](mailto:ericapellegrino71@gmail.com)

**Tue. Aug. 1 - WEST KILL**

Distance 6.8 mi. Ascent: 3146', Elev: 3898'  
Moderate pace in and out via Diamond Notch Falls  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Sue Hall #2460 W1091  
[shall@catskill.net](mailto:shall@catskill.net) 607-353-9469

**Thu. Aug. 3 - MILL BROOK RIDGE & BALSAM LAKE MOUNTAIN from Alder Lake**

Distance 8.6 mi. Ascent: 1850', Elevs: 3465', 3729'  
Moderate pace, shuttle required  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Sue Hall #2460 W1091  
[shall@catskill.net](mailto:shall@catskill.net) 607-353-9469

**Fri. Aug. 4 - BLACKHEAD, BLACK DOME & THOMAS COLE**

Distance: 8 mi. Ascent: 3153', Elevs: 3940', 3994', 3953'  
Slow pace. Shuttle required.  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Michael Bongar #2173 W994  
[michael@bongarbiz.com](mailto:michael@bongarbiz.com)

**Sat. Aug. 5 - DRY BROOK RIDGE**

Distance 4.4 mi. Ascent: 1194', Elev: 3465'  
Moderate pace via Ploutz Rd.  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Sue Hall #2460 W1091  
[shall@catskill.net](mailto:shall@catskill.net) 607-353-9469

**Sat. Aug. 5 - INDIAN HEAD, TWIN, SUGARLOAF & PLATEAU**

Distance 13 mi. Ascent: 5000', Elevs: 3573', 3650', 3783', 3835'  
Long, challenging trail hike at a moderate, steady pace. Eastern Devil's Path traverse. Shuttle required.  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Marv Freedman #2242 W951  
[marvfreedman@gmail.com](mailto:marvfreedman@gmail.com)

**Sun. Aug. 6 - BALSAM & EAGLE**

Distance: 8.8 mi. Ascent: 2400', Elevs: 3607', 3583'  
Moderately pace.  
Registration Period: Open

Leaders: Peggy Wissler #1499 W612 & Yanny Hecht #1868 W751  
[YannyHecht@gmail.com](mailto:YannyHecht@gmail.com)

**Sun. Aug. 6 - BEARPEN & VLY**

Distance: 6.5 mi. Ascent 1978', Elevs: 3587', 3541'

Relaxed paced bushwhack and trails.

Registration Period: Open

Leaders: Shari Aber #2224 W944 [shnaber@yahoo.com](mailto:shnaber@yahoo.com)

Joseph Ferri #2223 W945 [newpaltz33@yahoo.com](mailto:newpaltz33@yahoo.com)

**Sun. Aug. 6 - TABLE, PEEKAMOOSE, LONE, ROCKY, BALSAM CAP, FRIDAY, CORNELL, WITTENBERG & SLIDE**

Distance: 22+ mi. Ascent: 5500', Elevs: 3825', 3819', 3700', 3487', 3608', 3692', 3857', 3782, 4184'

Very long and challenging trail/bushwhack loop of the Neversink 9 from Denning at a quick pace. Registrants must have previously hiked with Erica.

Registration Period: Open

Leader: Erica Pellegrino #3463 W1390

[ericapellegrino71@gmail.com](mailto:ericapellegrino71@gmail.com)

**Tue. Aug. 8 - BEARPEN & VLY**

Distance: 6.5 mi. Ascent 2100', Elevs: 3587', 3541'

Moderate pace bushwhack and trail hike. Beginners welcome.

Registration Period: Open

Leader: Erica Pellegrino #3463 W1390

[ericapellegrino71@gmail.com](mailto:ericapellegrino71@gmail.com)

**Wed. Aug. 17 - PANTHER**

Distance 6.6 mi. Ascent: 1800', Elevs: 3724'

Moderate pace in and out from Giant Ledge parking area.

Registration Period: Open

Leader: Sue Hall #2460 W1091

[shall@catskill.net](mailto:shall@catskill.net) 607-353-9469

**Fri. Aug. 11 - KAATERSKILL**

Distance 7.8 mi. Ascent: 1939', Elev: 3652'

Moderate pace in and out.

Registration Period: Open

Leader: Sue Hall #2460 W1091

[shall@catskill.net](mailto:shall@catskill.net) 607-353-9469

**Sat. Aug. 12 - WEST KILL & ST. ANNE'S**

Distance: 8 mi. Ascent: 2500', Elevs: 3898', 3423'

Moderate pace. Beginners welcome. Shuttle required.

Registration Period: Aug. 6 - 10

Leader: Jake Haisley #2488 W1065

[jacobhaisley@gmail.com](mailto:jacobhaisley@gmail.com) 207-624-1643

**Sun. Aug. 13 - BALSAM & EAGLE**

Distance 9.4 mi. Ascent: 2350', Elevs: 3607', 3583'

Moderate pace in and out from Rider Hollow.

Registration Period: Open

Leader: Sue Hall #2460 W1091

[shall@catskill.net](mailto:shall@catskill.net) 607-353-9469

**Tue. Aug. 15 - TABLE & PEEKAMOOSE**

Distance 9.5 mi. Ascent: 2539', Elevs: 3825', 3819'

Moderate pace from Denning trailhead.

Registration Period: Open

Leader: Sue Hall #2460 W1091

[shall@catskill.net](mailto:shall@catskill.net) 607-353-9469

**Tue. Aug 15 - WINDHAM & BLACKHEAD VIA THE ENTIRE ESCARPMENT TRAIL**

Distance: 23 mi, Ascent: 4700', Elevs: 3525', 3940'

Long challenging trail hike at a quick pace. Registrants must have previously hiked with Erica. Shuttle required.

Registration: Open

Leader: Erica Pellegrino #3463 W1390

[ericapellegrino71@gmail.com](mailto:ericapellegrino71@gmail.com)



**Thu. Aug. 17 - PANTHER**

Distance 6.6 mi. Ascent: 1800', Elevs: 3724'  
Moderate pace in and out from Giant Ledge parking area.  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Sue Hall #2460 W1091  
[shall@catskill.net](mailto:shall@catskill.net) 607-353-9469

**Sun. Aug. 20 - BALSAM**

Distance 5.2 mi. Ascent: 1607', Elev: 3607'  
Relaxed to moderate pace. Beginners welcome.  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Sharon Klein #3364  
[CatsNGunks@gmail.com](mailto:CatsNGunks@gmail.com)

**Sun. Aug. 20 - SHERRILL, NORTH DOME, WEST KILL, SW HUNTER, HUNTER, EAST RUSK & RUSK**

Distance: 24 mi. Ascent: 7475', Elevs: 3558', 3605' 3898', 3753', 4030' 3628', 3686'  
Long challenging bushwhack and trail hike at a quick pace. Registrants must have previously hiked with Erica. Shuttle required.  
Registration: Open  
Leader: Erica Pellegrino #3463 W1390  
[ericapellegrino71@gmail.com](mailto:ericapellegrino71@gmail.com)

**Tue. Aug. 22 - PANTHER**

Distance: 6.6 mi, Ascent: 1800', Elev: 3724'  
Moderate pace. Beginners welcome.  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Erica Pellegrino #3463 W1390  
[ericapellegrino71@gmail.com](mailto:ericapellegrino71@gmail.com)

**Sat. Aug. 26 - KAATERSKILL**

Distance: 7 mi. Ascent: 1900', Elev: 3652'  
Relaxed moderate pace bushwhack and trail hike.  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Tonda Highley #1944 W857  
[Thighley1944@gmail.com](mailto:Thighley1944@gmail.com)

**Sun. Aug. 27 - INDIAN HEAD & TWIN**

Distance 6 mi. Ascent: 1750', Elevs: 3573', 3650'  
Moderate pace. Beginners welcome.  
Registration Period: August 21 - 25  
Leader: Jake Haisley #2488 W1065  
[jacobhaisley@gmail.com](mailto:jacobhaisley@gmail.com) 207-624-1643

**Sun. Aug 27 - SUGARLOAF**

Distance 7.1 mi. Ascent 2070', Elev: 3783'  
Relaxed-moderate pace.  
Registration Period: Aug 18 - 25  
Leader: Lyn W. #2865 W1312  
[catskill35r@gmail.com](mailto:catskill35r@gmail.com)

**Sun. Aug. 27 - WINDHAM, BLACKHEAD, BLACK DOME & THOMAS COLE**

Distance: 14.5 mi. Ascent: 4700', Elevs: 3525', 3940', 3994', 3953'  
Long trail hike from Peck Road to Barnum Road at a quick pace. Shuttle required.  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Erica Pellegrino #3463 W1390  
[ericapellegrino71@gmail.com](mailto:ericapellegrino71@gmail.com)

**Tue. Aug. 29 - WEST KILL**

Distance: 6.8 mi. Ascent: 1798', Elev: 3898'  
Moderate pace trail hike. Beginners welcome.  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Erica Pellegrino #3463 W1390  
[ericapellegrino71@gmail.com](mailto:ericapellegrino71@gmail.com)

**Sat. Sep. 2 - TABLE & PEEKAMOOSE**

Distance: 9.5 mi. Ascent: 2539', Elevs: 3825', 3819'  
Moderate pace out and back from Denning trailhead.

Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Peggy Wissler #1499 W612 & Yanny Hecht #1868 W751  
[YannyHecht@gmail.com](mailto:YannyHecht@gmail.com)

**Sat. Sep. 2 - WINDHAM HIGH PEAK, BLACKHEAD, BLACK DOME & THOMAS COLE**

Distance: 13 mi. Ascent: 4300', Elevs: 3525', 3940', 3994', 3953'  
Challenging bushwhack & trail loop from Big Hollow Rd. Moderate Pace.  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Marv Freedman #2242 W951  
[marvfreedman@gmail.com](mailto:marvfreedman@gmail.com)

**Sun. Sep. 3 - INDIAN HEAD, TWIN, SUGARLOAF, PLATEAU & WEST KILL (DEVIL'S PATH)**

Distance: 23.6 mi. Ascent: 7740', Elevs: 3573', 3650', 3783', 3835', 3898'  
Long challenging trail hike at a quick pace with great views and fun scrambles. Registrants must have previously hiked with Erica. Shuttle required.  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Erica Pellegrino #3463 W1390  
[ericapellegrino71@gmail.com](mailto:ericapellegrino71@gmail.com)

**Tue. Sept. 5 - KAATERSKILL**

Distance: 7 mi. Ascent: 1900', Elev: 3652'  
Quick pace bushwhack and trail hike. Fun scrambles & great views.  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Erica Pellegrino #3463 W1390  
[ericapellegrino71@gmail.com](mailto:ericapellegrino71@gmail.com)

**Fri. Sept. 8 - WINDHAM**

Distance: 6.3 mi. Ascent: 1325', Elev: 3525'  
Relaxed-moderate pace, beginners welcome.  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Sharon Klein  
[CatsNGunks@gmail.com](mailto:CatsNGunks@gmail.com)

**Sat. Sep. 9 - PEEKAMOOSE, TABLE, LONE & ROCKY**

Distance: 12 mi. Ascent 2550', Elevs: 3819', 3825', 3700', 3487'  
Moderate paced bushwhack and trail hike.  
Registration Period: Open  
Leaders: Shari Aber #2224 W944 [shnaber@yahoo.com](mailto:shnaber@yahoo.com)  
Joseph Ferri #2223 W945 [newpaltz33@yahoo.com](mailto:newpaltz33@yahoo.com)

**Sun. Sep. 10 - BALSAM LAKE**

Distance: 3.5 mi. Ascent 1225', Elev: 3729'  
Relaxed pace from the Balsam Lake parking area at the end of Beaver Kill Rd. Rain, inclement weather will cancel.  
Beginners welcome.  
Registration period: Sept. 3 - 7  
Leader: Suzanne Knabe #1326 W498  
[suzkna@msn.com](mailto:suzkna@msn.com) 917-679-5547

**Sun. Sep. 10 - HALCOTT**

Distance: 4 mi. Ascent: 1800', Elev: 3509'  
Bushwhack at moderate pace.  
Registration period: Sept. 4 - 8  
Leader: Jake Haisley #2488 W1065  
[jacobhaisley@gmail.com](mailto:jacobhaisley@gmail.com) 207-624-1643

**Sun. Sept. 12 - PANTHER, SLIDE, CORNELL & WITTENBERG**

Distance: 19 mi. Ascent 5300', Elevs: 3724', 4184', 3857', 3782'  
Long, challenging bushwhack and trail hike at a quick pace.  
Registration Period: Open  
Leader: Erica Pellegrino #3463 W1390  
[ericapellegrino71@gmail.com](mailto:ericapellegrino71@gmail.com)

**Sat. Sep. 16 - BALSAM & EAGLE**

Distance: 7.5 mi. Ascent: 2580', Elevs: 3607', 3583'  
Relaxed to moderate pace. Beginners welcome.  
Registration period: Open  
Leader: Tonda Highley #1944 W857

[Thighley1944@gmail.com](mailto:Thighley1944@gmail.com)

**Sat. Sep. 16 - LONE & ROCKY**

Distance: 10 mi. Ascent: 2500', Elevs: 3700', 3487'

Slow paced bushwhack.

Registration Period: Open

Leader: Michael Bongar #2173 W994

[michael@bongarbiz.com](mailto:michael@bongarbiz.com)

**Tue. Sep. 19 - NORTH DOME & SHERRILL**

Distance: 6+ mi. Ascent: 2450', Elevs: 3605', 3558'

Moderate pace bushwhack with steep climbs. Beginners welcome. Shuttle required.

Registration Period: Open

Leader: Erica Pellegrino #3463 W1390

[ericapellegrino71@gmail.com](mailto:ericapellegrino71@gmail.com)

**Sat. Sep. 23 – WEST KILL**

Distance: 6.6 mi. Ascent: 1960', Elev: 3891'

Relaxed Pace. Beginners welcome.

Registration Period: Open

Leaders: Marcy Felter #3492 W1480 & Joe Felter #3560 W1479

[mjfelter1@me.com](mailto:mjfelter1@me.com)

**Sun. Sep. 24 - FIR, BIG INDIAN, EAGLE & BALSAM**

Distance: 14 mi. Ascent: 4180', Elevs: 3629', 3699', 3583', 3607'

Long, challenging bushwhack and trail traverse from Biscuit Brook to McKenley Hollow at a quick pace. Shuttle required.

Registration Period: Open

Leader: Erica Pellegrino #3463 W1390

[ericapellegrino71@gmail.com](mailto:ericapellegrino71@gmail.com)

**Tue. Sep. 26 - BALSAM LAKE & MILL BROOK RIDGE**

Distance: 8.5 mi. Ascent: 2800', Elevs: 3729', 3465'

Moderate pace. Easy trail hike to Balsam Lake and Millbrook Ridge, then a short bushwhack down to Kelly Hollow. Shuttle required. Beginners welcome.

Registration Period: Open

Leader: Erica Pellegrino #3463 W1390

[ericapellegrino71@gmail.com](mailto:ericapellegrino71@gmail.com)



A sea of nettles on Eagle. Photo by Rob Stewart #2186 W1036

## NEW MEMBERS

For the first time in recent history, the Catskill 3500 Club's "Class of 2023" has fewer new members than the previous year's class. However, finisher numbers are still considerably higher than pre-pandemic numbers. The Class of 2023 had 257 new regular members as well as 68 new winter members compared with 343 and 87, respectively, for the Class of 2022. For comparison, the Class of 2019 (the last class before the pandemic) had 164 regular and 64 winter finishers. In addition, Life Memberships in calendar year 2022 included 74 new members and 19 new aspirants.

Slide Mountain is a perennial favorite first climb and the Class of 2023 started there 39 times. Indian Head (31), Panther (28), Hunter (24), and Balsam Lake Mountain (23) round out the top-five most popular first peaks. All but five mountains from the tally—Lone, Friday, North Dome, Sherrill, and Rocky—were climbed as first peaks. Interestingly, Cornell was climbed by one new member as their first peak.

The four winter climbs necessary for membership lead the list of top mountains on which the Class of 2023 finished their membership journeys—Panther (39), Slide (24), Blackhead (21), and Balsam (16). The next most popular mountain to finish on was Rocky, with 15 finishers. For those who earned their winter patch, West Kill, Balsam Lake, and Rocky were tied for most popular last peak, with six finishers each.

While a majority of the finishers in the Class of 2023 started their tallies in 2000 or 2021, the earliest recorded first peak from the class was an ascent of Wittenberg in November 1998.

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; as such, more recent finishers will be listed next quarter. However, Life Memberships are tracked on a calendar-year basis.

**New Lifetime Members:**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Name</b>
2375	Thomas Keegan
2390	Amber Newman
2432	Robert Peak
3032	Sarah Lamond
3414	Zachary Stufflebeam
3540	Elizabeth Ristow
3541	Joshua Massicot
3860	Kat Bridges
3861	Adam Piontek
3937	Ruby Rainbow Miranda
3961	Tracy Rakin
4031	Christine Saturno
4199	Roger Husted
4205	Adam C Korel
4208	Brenda Robie
4209	Jessica Robie
4218	Andrew Konzelmann
4219	Kishan Patel
4229	Eric Rosario
Asp	Barb Adams
Asp	Ben Jones
Asp	Zehra Sura

**New Members:**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Finish</b>	<b>Final Peak</b>
4153	Keith M Clark	2/26/2023	Slide
4154	Laura Fredricks	2/20/2023	Bearpen
4155	Christopher Parrella	1/8/2023	Rusk
4156	Lisa Whitteaker	2/23/2023	Panther
4157	Claire Guyer	2/26/2023	Halcott
4158	Anthony Scotto	2/26/2023	Big Indian
4159	Matthew D Solo	2/27/2023	Kaaterskill
4160	Alex Laifer	1/27/2023	Friday
4161	Michael G Kellner	3/11/2023	Slide
4162	Thriveri Bhakta	12/26/2022	Slide
4163	John C Nelson	2/15/2020	Sherrill
4164	Joshua Huntley	3/13/2023	Balsam
4165	Jennifer Mensing	3/11/2023	Sherrill
4166	Steven D Morton	3/18/2023	Windham
4167	Allie Soldau	3/17/2023	Balsam
4168	Janet Laytham	3/19/2023	Slide
4169	Kyle T Bittner	3/19/2023	Panther
4170	Maureen Hutcheon	3/18/2023	Sugarloaf
4171	Jason Friedman	3/10/2023	Blackhead
4172	Richard Douglas	3/16/2023	Blackhead
4173	Carl Gaspar	3/18/2023	Kaaterskill
4174	Anthony W Montana	3/18/2023	Panther
4175	Jeff Herrick	3/18/2023	Panther
4176	Sonya Herrick	3/18/2023	Panther
4177	Christine Rounds	3/19/2023	Slide

4178	Alyse Ford	3/8/2023	Balsam
4179	Samantha Diaz	3/18/2023	Blackhead
4180	Rob Lindsey	3/19/2023	Blackhead
4181	Jeffrey Kontak	3/12/2023	Windham
4182	Richard J Rodek	3/17/2023	Blackhead
4183	Steven D Schneider	3/29/2023	Bearpen
4184	Nathaniel Wardlaw	12/23/2022	Slide
4185	Nicole Fahrenfeld	1/29/2023	Slide
4186	Andrew Rossin	10/15/2022	SW Hunter
4187	Catherine Villarica	10/15/2022	SW Hunter
4188	Sunny (Hyunsun) Kang	3/11/2023	Balsam Cap
4189	Doug DeGross	3/11/2023	Balsam Cap
4190	Jack Walker	4/8/2023	Balsam Lake
4191	Phoebe Blume	3/12/2023	Panther
4192	Nathan Conway	3/21/2023	Panther
4193	Loren M Black	9/24/2022	Big Indian
4194	Kellsey Buerge	4/16/2023	Lone
4195	Michael O'Hearn	4/15/2023	Cornell
4196	Casey Bradley	3/10/2023	Panther
4197	Robert Gianotti	4/10/2023	Rocky
4198	Von Hintermeister	4/12/2023	Rocky
4199	Roger Husted	4/18/2023	Plateau

**New Winter Members:**

<b>Winter Number</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Date of Finish</b>	<b>Final Peak</b>
1551	Laura Fredricks	4154	2/20/2023	Bearpen
1552	Dawn Rivera	3997	2/25/2023	Rocky
1553	Ernie Mossi	2914	2/25/2023	Big Indian
1554	Theresa Ruth	2913	2/25/2023	Big Indian
1555	Mark Evans	4101	2/19/2023	Cornell
1556	Zachary Stufflebeam	3414	3/5/2023	Sugarloaf
1557	Romas Bajoras	4124	3/5/2023	Peekamoose
1558	Julia Chapman	4126	3/5/2023	Peekamoose
1559	Christopher Hummel	4097	3/5/2023	Kaaterskill
1560	David Mahoskey	2999	3/4/2023	Rocky
1561	Jonathan Pierce	259	3/5/2023	Kaaterskill
1562	Kelly Scotto	4026	3/5/2023	Kaaterskill
1563	Rick Inzerillo	4003	3/11/2023	Windham
1564	Victoria Inzerillo	3882	3/11/2023	Windham
1565	Christopher "Kip" Wilson	3485	3/5/2023	Indian Head
1566	Paul Gebhard	3501	3/10/2023	Rocky
1567	Katelyn Pugliese	3397	3/12/2023	Balsam Lake
1568	Julie Clas	4020	3/16/2023	Balsam Lake
1569	Alex Laifer	4160	1/27/2023	Friday
1570	Jennifer P Howland	3785	3/10/2023	West Kill
1571	Jennifer Sunflower Swantz	3747	3/10/2023	West Kill
1572	George Kushner	3927	3/11/2023	Southwest Hunter

1573	Allison Polesky	3778	3/10/2023	Balsam Lake
1574	Matthew McBride	3841	3/12/2023	Balsam
1575	Orion Whitney	3959	3/12/2023	Sherrill
1576	Karl O'Leary	4144	3/19/2023	Hunter
1577	Kyle T Bittner	4169	3/19/2023	Panther
1578	Daniel Weisberg	1630	3/12/2023	Sherrill
1579	Michael Krejsa	3879	3/18/2023	Twin
1580	Kris LaRosa	3818	3/12/2023	Eagle
1581	Carl Gaspar	4173	3/18/2023	Kaaterskill
1582	Sonya Herrick	4176	3/18/2023	Panther
1583	Jeff Herrick	4175	3/18/2023	Panther
1584	MariaJose Orchard	4120	3/18/2023	West Kill
1585	Allison N Bier	3311	3/18/2023	West Kill
1586	Dave MacEntee	3994	3/18/2023	West Kill
1587	Merissa Lombardo	4142	3/19/2023	Big Indian
1588	Noah Roefs	4107	3/20/2023	Friday
1589	Colin DeVries	3382	3/21/2023	Balsam Lake
1590	Frank Vigna	4005	3/21/2023	Indian Head
1591	Victor "Chip" Nippert	3947	3/19/2023	Cornell
1592	Matt Mackie	3422	3/11/2023	Balsam Lake
1593	Kate Arket	3454	3/12/2023	Sherrill
1594	Darren Davidowich	3453	3/12/2023	Sherrill
1595	Danielle Fried	3952	3/19/2023	Wittenberg
1596	Todd France	3729	3/11/2023	Southwest Hunter

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Off trail on Fir. Photo by Steve Aaron #3199

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## Editor's Notes

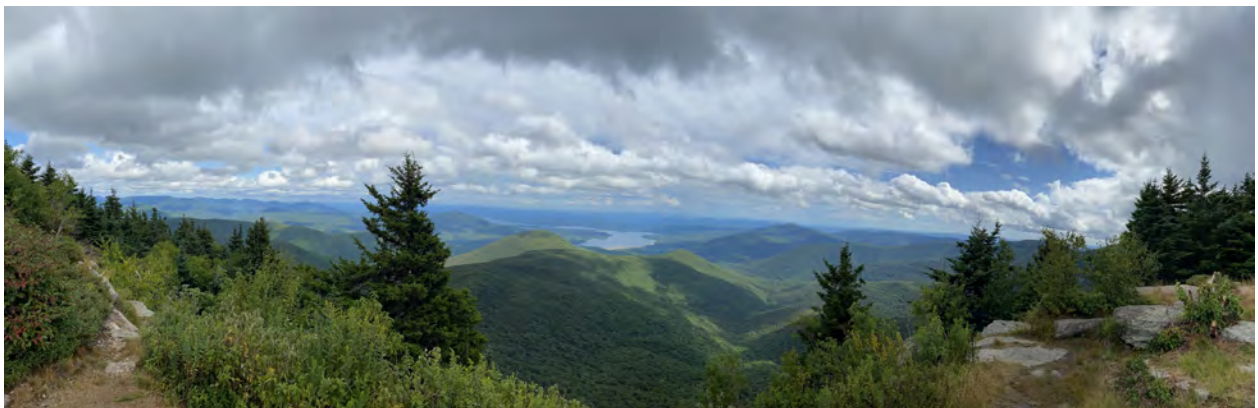
By Yana Levchinsky-Grimmond



I hope you are continuing to enjoy *The Canister*, and I thank each and every one of you who has reached out with feedback, suggestions and of course, with submissions. Feedback, as well as content contributions to future editions and ideas are very much welcomed and appreciated. Submissions on the topics of hiking with kids, pushing your limits, exploring something new and exciting, history of the Catskills, ecology, wildlife and geology, your personal experiences, advice, etc. are just some of the examples of what we would love to include in the next issue of *The Canister*! Any book lovers out there? I would love to publish your review of a relevant nature/Catskills/hiking book. Poems are always welcome as well! For photo submissions, please ensure the photos are high resolution (several MB at a min) and in a landscape or panoramic format. We would love to see your photos of foliage, geological oddities, waterfalls, wildlife, views, flora, sunsets and sunrises. Please contact me at [editor@catskill-3500-club.org](mailto:editor@catskill-3500-club.org).

Please note: the newsletter will print best if downloaded as a pdf file directly from the [Club's site](#).

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Wittenberg summit view. Photo by Yana Levchinsky-Grimmond #2814 W1222



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Just a little green from Panther. Photo by Elise Gold #3600

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