

The SPRUCE MOOSE

A publication of the SUNY-ESF Adirondack Ecological Center

Spring 2011

Adirondack Interpretive Center: Nature, Recreation, Culture

By Claire B. Dunn

The SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) took over programming at the renamed Adirondack Interpretive Center in Newcomb Jan. 1, expanding services to both visitors and area residents with programs that will explore science, recreation, natural history and culture.

The interpretive center at ESF's Huntington Wildlife Forest in Newcomb will remain open all winter, with 3.6 miles of trails available for those wishing to snowshoe, cross-country ski or look for signs of winter wildlife. Trails are open dawn to dusk daily.

The interpretive center's main building is open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, providing a place for visitors to warm up and watch winter birds, such as finches, nuthatches and boreal migrants, at the feeders outside the lobby windows. Visitors wishing to ensure the building is open when they arrive are advised to check in advance by calling 518-582-2000.

The facility was formerly operated by the Adirondack Park Agency and was known as the Visitor Interpretive Center. When ESF assumed ownership, the name was changed to reflect both its location and its mission to serve regional residents as well as visitors from beyond the park's boundaries.

"We want to carry forward the legacy of the Adirondack Park Agency's interpretive program," said Paul Hai, an AEC educator who is planning programs for the interpretive center. "We want the facility to be more than a nature center. We want to offer educational

and recreational programs that are based on a foundation of natural history and science."

Plans have been finalized for three programs that will be among those held through the spring and summer.

- **Fly-fishing:** A series of workshops will explore the natural history of fish and the culture of fly fishing and teach fly-fishing techniques. Participants will have an opportunity to fish waters in the AEC's Huntington Wildlife Forest that are otherwise inaccessible to the public. Participants can choose to attend one session or all in the series, which will be held periodically through the spring and summer.

- **"Working Forests Working for You":** This series will bring experts to the center for programs and presentations on various aspects of forestry and the forest products industry, from silviculture to forest management and pulp and paper mill operation.

- **"Northern Lights":** This series on luminaries in the Adirondacks will include presentations on famous people whose work had a relationship with the Adirondacks. Subjects will include John Burroughs, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Winslow Homer.

Other programs include professional development workshops, a series exploring the role of the Adirondacks in modern philosophy, a book club and canoe skills training.

For more information about the Adirondack Interpretive Center, go to: www.esf.edu/aic.



The AIC offers a rich educational environment with many hands-on displays.

What and Where Is Wilderness in the Adirondacks?



By Abigail Larkin

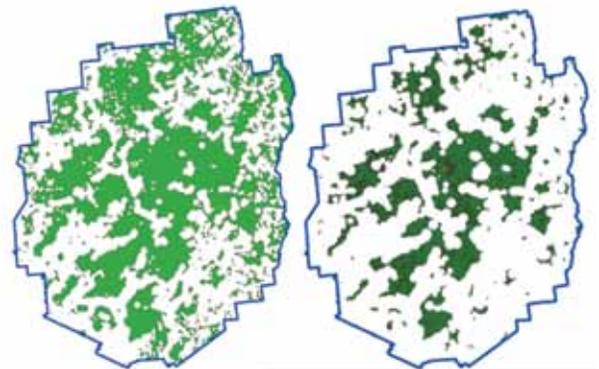
Wilderness is a fundamental characteristic of the Adirondack Park, which is the largest protected landscape in the contiguous United States and a classic example of wilderness conservation internationally. But what really is *wilderness*?

Working with AEC ecologist Dr. Colin Beier, I am keenly interested in the driving forces of wilderness perceptions and how they vary between stakeholder groups and geographic locations within the Adirondack Park.

The Adirondack Park consists of 17 wilderness units defined by the State Land Master Plan. These units protect important natural resources and ecosystems and attract a vibrant visitor base that supports local economies. However, wilderness protections can inhibit some forms of economic development desired by local residents.

My research investigated the significance of wilderness to different stakeholder groups within the Adirondacks; I did this by conducting a survey and translating the results using a geographic information system to create maps of perceived wilderness.

While based at the AEC, I collected 687 surveys at trailheads, boat launches, community events and town centers in Old Forge, Lake Placid, Lake George, and Newcomb during the summers of 2009 and 2010. My goal was to compare the wilderness perceptions of residents, seasonal residents, and visitors. The survey asked respondents to rate the desirability of certain features, such as maintained campsites, roads, and evidence of human impact. Respondents were grouped into four categories – non-purist, neutralist, moderate purist, strong purist – on a scale that represents an increasingly strict perception of what is, and what is not, wilderness.



Moderate Purist

Strong Purist

Results indicated that age, education and politics are important factors that explain how different people perceive wilderness in the Adirondack Park. The highest concentration of strong purists was in Newcomb and among seasonal residents, while residents were mostly non-purists.

To visualize wilderness for each group, a wilderness perception map was created, consisting of four layers, one for each of the four purism groups. Based on the 16 features in the survey, undesirable features were excluded or buffered out of the map for each purism group layer, creating a map of perceived wilderness and non-wilderness areas.

Wilderness perception maps will be used to compare differences among residents, seasonal residents and visitors; to compare responses from different regions in the park; and to compare the extent of perceived wilderness and the areas currently designated as wilderness to illustrate similarities and differences between perceptual and legal wilderness. These maps can serve as management tools by increasing our understanding of the public's perception of wilderness landscapes such as the Adirondacks.

Abigail Larkin is pursuing her Master's Degree at SUNY-ESF in the Department of Environmental and Forest Biology and can be reached at amlarkin@syr.edu.

Common Thread

Interdisciplinary Research Focuses Students on Water Issues



By Joseph Hoover

What do graduate students studying ecology, economics, geography, history and hydrology have in common? The common threads for 12 graduate students from three countries include the Adirondack Ecological Center (AEC) and a passion for researching water issues.

Graduate students in the physical and social sciences and the humanities were brought together last summer through the Humans Transforming the Hydrologic Cycle Summer Synthesis Institute supported by City University of New York, the Consortium of Universities for the Advancement of Hydrologic Science Inc. and the National Science Foundation. Our aim was to conduct interdisciplinary hydrologic research during our seven weeks together. For the first three weeks we bunked and did research together at the AEC. Our mission was to document and analyze the environmental, social, and economic impacts of humans on the hydrologic system in the Northeast United States between 1920 and the present. Our challenges were daunting: construct and implement an interdisciplinary research project while dealing with capricious weather and black flies.

Upon arrival in Newcomb, the research benefits of spending three weeks in the Adirondacks were difficult to identify. We initially felt isolated because we had no cell phone service, and the population of the closest town was 471 people. We were brought to the AEC so we could focus almost exclusively on our research without distraction and to become acquainted with our fellow scholars. As we quickly realized, living in a one-room bunkhouse for three weeks provides a unique opportunity to get acquainted with others' personal and academic values and to exchange ideas.

During the day we worked in groups at the AEC, discussing research ideas, narrowing questions and designing methodologies. As we learned, when 12 people work in one room with eight tables, they have unusual conversations and gain insights into how researchers from other disciplines approach environmental issues. Within a 15-minute period, I was able to speak with a hydrologist about stream flow, an economist about the water stress index, and a historian about dam construction patterns in the Northeast during the 20th century. The ability to immediately access and share disciplinary information that would be otherwise arduous to obtain proved to be one of the greatest benefits of our time in the Adirondacks.

At the conclusion of each day, weather permitting, we explored the Adirondacks by hiking, biking, canoeing or kayaking. The beauty I observed and serenity I found sitting in a kayak in the middle of Rich Lake after a long day of conversation and research is indescribable. The rejuvenation we found through the charm and magnificence of the Adirondacks enabled us to sustain intense 10- to 12-hour research days for three weeks.

Our time at the AEC enabled us to spend three weeks living near the headwaters of the Hudson River, where we developed our understanding of water resource issues in the Northeast and the challenges and benefits of interdisciplinary research. The progress we made in the Adirondacks enabled us to complete our project during the remaining four weeks of the program spent in New York City at the mouth of the Hudson River.

Joseph Hoover is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Geography at the University of Denver. For more information on the Summer Institute, see: <http://hydrosynthesis.cuny.cuny.edu>.





Cait discovers a toad while searching for salamanders.

Examining a salamander’s menu

By Stacy McNulty

Does the early salamander really get the worm? To find out, Caitlin Snyder captured salamanders near dawn to study the influence of a calcium gradient on the diet, habitat, and abundance of woodland salamanders, with attention to potential impacts of non-native earthworms. This past summer, Cait sampled diets of 177 salamanders across 12 Adirondack sites. She was assisted by Tivona Renoni, an undergraduate conducting independent research supported by ESF’s Roosevelt Wild Life Station. Earthworms were not often consumed by salamanders, on these sites, regardless of soil calcium and acidity. Tiny snails, mites and larvae were typical prey items of red-backed and dusky salamanders foraging in the cool, wet leaf litter.

Cait, a master’s candidate in conservation biology in the Department of Environmental and Forest Biology, shows great promise as a scientist and educator. During SUNY-ESF’s Take Your Kids to Work Day, in Syracuse, N.Y., she shared her enthusiasm for field biology with a hands-on presentation, “The Dirt on Worms,” with more than 30 children. She also provided information to hundreds of people on earthworm invasion ecology during the Adirondack Park Invasive Species Program Awareness Week. Caitlin’s research received support from the Walker Fellowship of SUNY Potsdam and a Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Grant from the American Museum of Natural History (a fitting connection to ESF).

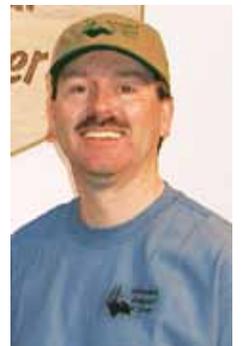
The calcium gradient is important to plants and wildlife in Adirondack forests still recovering from acidic deposition. Look for more research results in future issues.

AEC to Donate Proceeds to Sage Apprentice Fund



The Adirondack Ecological Center staff is donating proceeds from the sale of the official AEC T-shirts to a fund that is dear to their hearts. The Richard W. Sage Jr. Apprenticeship Fund was established by the family of Dick Sage in an effort to continue to enrich the educational experience of ESF students at the AEC. Dick was a forest ecologist at Huntington Wildlife Forest for 38 years, for a time serving as associate director. Dick was passionate about teaching and bringing science to students in exciting and engaging ways to enrich their educational experience.

The recipient of this award gains valuable field and management experience at the AEC, typically having research coordination and monitoring responsibilities during summer. Staff member Charlotte Demers, who had the privilege to work with Dick, said, “If we can continue to add to this fund, someday we may be able to fund the Sage Apprentice for an entire year.” AEC is pleased to be able to contribute to this fund and to continue his legacy. For more information, please see <http://www.esf.edu/development/>.



Mike Gooden shows off some stylish AEC apparel.

AEC’s Wish List

We seek equipment in good condition for research projects and classes. Items include:

- 13-foot aluminum canoes
- 12 or 14-foot aluminum rowboats
- 4-stroke outboard motors
- Oars and oar locks
- Life vests (adult and child size)
- Waders (no leaks)

Please contact Charlotte Demers at 518-582-4551 x103

How Do Beavers Affect Our Forest ?

By Anna Harrison

The presence of beavers in a body of water can be a product of both the natural features of the landscape and the changes produced by beavers themselves to make the landscape more suitable to their needs. My research uses a set of data, collected over 30 years, that tells the story of beaver presence at Huntington Wildlife Forest to learn about the relationships between landscape features and occupancy of beaver colonies.

My hypothesis was that long-term beaver occupancy at a site is related to three main factors: the landscape's ability to support suitable beaver habitat, the effort required for dam construction and maintenance, and the quality and quantity of available food. I evaluated these influences on beaver occupancy at 14 pond and wetland sites in Huntington Wildlife Forest.

I learned that sites with the highest beaver occupancy had more habitat area and deciduous stands and required minimal effort to maintain ponds. Large ponds are advantageous, allowing the animals greater access to both dam materials and forage in the uplands adjacent to the pond.

Beavers not only altered ecosystems by impounding water and creating ponds but also by removing woody vegetation from the surrounding area. To better understand the forest community surrounding beaver ponds, I analyzed tree size and species preferences of beavers and characterized the impacts of proximity to beaver ponds on tree density, basal area, and seedling/sapling recruitment within the beaver foraging area. Beavers harvest trees most heavily near their ponds. Intense foraging adjacent to ponds has resulted in reductions of preferred species, like striped maple and American beech, near ponds; lower densities of small stemmed trees (2-5cm in diameter); high densities of multistemmed, shrubby trees adjacent to the beaver ponds, indicating a long-term structural effect on vegetation; and seedling regeneration dominated by sugar maple, the less preferred species of beaver. The cumulative effect of decades of beaver foraging has resulted in a gradient of impacts on forest composition, where impacts decrease with increased distance from the pond edge.

Anna Harrison is a master's student in the Department of Forest and Natural Resources Management at ESF working with Dr. John Stella.



Photo by Carl Heilman II

HWF Dedicates New Lean-To Site

A site on Deer Lake has been designated for recreational and research-related camping. The new lean-to site recognizes Bill Porter’s legacy, his appreciation of the Huntington Wildlife Forest and his dedication to working with students in this fantastic setting. The private roadside location will permit seasonal camping in addition to

the Birch Point Lean-to, which is accessible by boat. The traditional Adirondack lean-to will be installed once the necessary funds are raised. With your help, future students and alumni will be able to enjoy a lake-side retreat in a beautiful spot. To contribute to the lean-to construction, please contact AEC at 518-582-4551 or aechwf@esf.edu.

Andy Saunders – A Look Back



Andy Saunders

There are lots of clichés about “endings”: how they are really new beginnings, or the opening of a new door with the closing of an old, but the truth is they still have a core of finality, even if they are a cause for celebration. This summer we celebrated a significant ending, the retirement of D. Andrew Saunders, creator of and quiet force behind ESF’s environmental interpretation program.

Andy started his ESF career at HWF in 1985, building and running the Adirondack Wildlife Program using natural history as the touch-

stone for teaching the process of science in regional public schools.

Since he started here, it was appropriate we celebrate his retirement at HWF, too, with a barbeque picnic on Rich Lake beach Saturday, Aug. 21. More than 45 colleagues, current and former students, friends and family from across New York and as far as Ohio came to share their appreciation for and memories of working with Andy during his 25-year tenure. We are thankful that he will continue to be involved with ESF in between fishing trips and time with wife Gail. While his daily presence in Illick Hall has ended, his program and legacy will continue through the countless students, teachers and professionals he taught and inspired.

Seasons of Change



Dr. William Porter

One of the primary values of a field station like the AEC is the ability to witness changes to a system over time. Marked changes have occurred at the AEC this year, not in the flora and fauna, but in the staff and administration.

Our longtime director, Dr. William Porter, retired from ESF after 29 years at the AEC’s helm. Bill is now the Boone and Crockett Endowed Chair of Wildlife at Michigan State University, a prestigious position focused on wildlife ecology research. At the alumni reunion weekend the staff presented Bill with a memory book and beautiful photo of Deer Lake by famed Adirondack photographer Carl Heilman II. We dedicated a new lean-to site in his honor (see story above) and a group of current and former graduate students provided a plaque detailing Bill’s contributions to the AEC. It was a lovely weekend and a fitting sendoff. (see next page)



Dr. Douglas Allen

Dr. Douglas Allen has been named interim director of the AEC. Doug is a forest entomologist who taught at ESF for 37 years and until retiring four years ago; he maintains active

research on pests of sugar maple and a keen interest in Adirondack research. We wish Bill well and welcome Doug to the fold!

We have had a number of staffing changes. Stacy McNulty was named associate director in July and oversees day-to-day operation and station activities. ZoeAnn Jeffery joined us in March as the business manager. Zoe has a wealth of experience in accounting, budgeting and office management and she and her husband, Dell (a DEC forest ranger), have lived in Newcomb for more than two years.



ZoeAnn Jeffery

We bid adieu to three former staff members. Kathy Poulton took a new position with Newcomb Central School this fall after handling administrative and housing needs for three years. Marianne Patinelli-Dubay is pursuing her doctorate in philosophy. Marianne is still a part of program offerings through the Northern Forest Institute. Erin Vinson has moved on to a new job as well.

We thank Bill, Kathy, Marianne and Erin for their dedication to serving students, researchers and visitors to the Huntington Wildlife Forest. The entire AEC staff welcomes Doug and Zoe and looks forward to a bright future.

AEC Alumni: Yesterday and Today

70 Attend Reunion

The Huntington Wildlife Forest Alumni Reunion was held August 13-15, 2010. Nearly 70 former students, researchers, and alumni and their families attended and the weather was spectacular all weekend. Alumni traveled from across the country to relax and enjoy the barbeque on Rich Lake, as well as catch up on current research.



The wine and cheese social was held in the Huntington Lodge; alumni marveled over its transformation. Field trips and presentations on current research and Adirondack history, hikes, canoeing, games and campfires were enjoyed by all. Plan now for the next alumni reunion to be held in two years!

Alumnus Looks Back

Dr. Karl Wolter (ESF '58) visited the AEC last autumn to share his memories of HWF. After returning from the Korean War like many he went to school at SUNY-ESF on the G.I. Bill. Dr. Wolter brought video footage of summer 1956 when he was a HWF technician tagging fish, capturing mice and reseeding logging roads. He retired from a career as a plant physiologist at the University of Wisconsin and now volunteers at a wildlife rehabilitation center.

Alumni: Do you have photos of your time at HWF? Share them on the AEC's Facebook site or send them to aechwf@esf.edu

The Summer that Changed My Life

By Timothy Watson

I arrived at the Huntington Wildlife Forest the day after I graduated from ESF to be the Sage Apprentice for the summer. I had been to HWF a few times and had fallen in love with it. I wasn't really sure what to expect from the job but I knew that this would be a summer to remember.

The Sage Apprenticeship is a position set up in honor of the late AEC Associate Director Richard "Dick" W. Sage. I had never met Dick, but from what I hear, he was an amazing biologist and forester who was at home in the field. Working with AEC ecologists, as the apprentice, I conducted a variety of surveys and supervised the summer work-study students. (See page 4.)

I had a week to get organized for the summer before the work-study students arrived. I was a little worried about being in charge of students not much younger than me but I couldn't have asked for a better group. All six students worked hard day in and day out no matter what job they were assigned.

Our work included loon surveys, salamander surveys, small mammal trapping, marten trapping, and deer telemetry. We accomplished a lot that was credited to me but without the students, almost nothing would have gotten done.

This summer I learned more than I ever thought possible, made some amazing friends along the way, and connected with professionals who offered me future employment.

One of Dick's famous quotes is a comment he often made to visitors to the Huntington Wildlife Forest: "Give me an afternoon and I can change your mind, give me a summer and I can change your life." Despite never having met me, he definitely changed my life this summer.



Tim Watson takes in the view from the Goodnow Mountain fire tower overlooking Rich Lake.

Tim Watson is a 2010 EFB graduate who recently worked on Gulf oil spill damage assessment and Adirondack marten ecology.



The Spruce Moose is a publication of the Adirondack Ecological Center. The mission of the AEC is to provide an understanding of the Adirondack ecosystem through research. The AEC is located on Huntington Wildlife Forest, a 6,000-ha research facility in Newcomb, N.Y., operated by the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry since 1932.

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Source to Sink: Hudson Watershed Coordination

The Hudson River, flowing 315 miles from Adirondack wilderness to the nation's most populated city, is "Balkanized" by disjointed management, according to ESF researcher Karin Limburg.

The river, integral to the founding of our country, becomes tidal at the Federal Dam in Troy, halfway from its High Peaks origin. The watershed is managed in three sections by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and its long run from the Adirondacks and its Mohawk River tributaries to urban New York City makes contemplating, studying and managing the entire watershed challenging, Limburg says.

In an effort to solve that problem through expanded networking and coordination of research and education in the Hudson Watershed, a two-day conversation was held in October at the Huntington Wildlife Forest. Sponsored by the AEC and the Environmental Consortium of Hudson Valley Colleges and Universities, the gathering drew representatives from nearly 20 organizations who discussed ways to share information and explored the Hudson headwaters.

With its lakes draining into the Hudson, HWF was an ideal place for the Source to Sink meeting. Arbutus Lake is part of national atmospheric deposition, mercury, and other monitoring networks. The restored Huntington Lodge is nestled on the shore of Arbutus Lake and was the location for the poster session and evening festivities. Also included in the constellation of upper Hudson resources is ESF's Northern Forest Institute, an education, training and outreach center. Limburg, who helped organize the meeting, teaches a weeklong course in which she and her students travel from HWF down to Manhattan to study the river. The course is an excellent example of a whole-watershed activity (for more on these topics see the Spring 2010 and Fall 2008 Spruce Moose).

Some of the next steps include distributing the new Hudson Educator Resource List, a compilation of facilities and organizations that host river-related programs for K-16 and public edu-

cators; creating a journal and web-based Hudson River Communication Website showing locations and topic areas of activities; coordinating existing research networks; and increasing participation in whole-watershed community and educational activities such as the Hudson River Almanac.

Our understanding of the ecological functions and attendant ecosystem services and economic benefits of the Hudson River has increased over the past decades; however, many threats impact the entire basin, requiring innovative and collaborative solutions. Interested parties are invited to engage in this network focused on the entire Hudson Watershed— from source to sink. Visit http://www.environmentalconsortium.org/news/source_to_sink.html.

The Source to Sink Hudson Watershed meeting was supported by a SUNY Conversation in the Disciplines Grant.



Swift or smooth, broad as the Hudson or narrow enough to scrape your gunwales, every river is a world of its own, unique in pattern and personality. Each mile on a river will take you further from home than a hundred miles on a road.

~ Bob Marshall, ESF graduate and wilderness advocate

Newcomb Winter Meeting: A Continuing Tradition

By Jerry Zaykoski

It's a beautiful late-winter Friday in March as I drive east on Route 3 from Watertown toward Tupper Lake. My destination is the remote hamlet of Newcomb, nestled in the heart of the Adirondacks. The closer I get, the more my anticipation builds. Today the trip seems to be taking longer than it ever has before.

Driving down bumpy Route 28N, the familiar Huntington Forest sign appears and Arbutus Road is to my left. Turning north, the drive continues down what seems like a long one-mile road that ends at a familiar lodge. Home at last. Well, that's kind of what it feels like.



Huntington Lodge hosts meetings and small conferences.

I'm here because I work for the Department of Environmental Conservation's Mined Land Reclamation Program and my job entails meeting with program members from around the state.

Back in 1993, the winter meeting was scheduled for a place that was new to me: Huntington Lodge at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry's Adirondack Ecological Center in Newcomb. Many of my colleagues wondered about this remote place and what kind of activities it might offer when our business was completed.

That first Newcomb meeting began Sunday, Jan. 31, 1993. It was Super Bowl Sunday and I was driving on State Route 30 through the middle of the Adirondacks. It was late afternoon, dark with heavy snow and cold temperatures that made the driving difficult. Entering Long Lake, you see a road sign, Route 28N – Newcomb. Almost there, I mused. Eleven miles later, I turned onto a narrow, snow-covered road that led to a group of cabins and a larger lodge. The name on the sign said Huntington Lodge.

The first thing to do was to explore the place. It was mostly a rustic lodge with several bedrooms,

a living room and a couple bathrooms. In the middle was a stairway to the second floor. Midway up was a moose-head mount in the middle landing. I chose a bedroom, tossed my belongings onto the bed and went back downstairs to check out the rest of the lodge.

My friends had said there was this one room that had to be seen to be believed. It is a large great room with a high ceiling and a dominating fireplace where a fire was roaring. A geologist by training, I had to marvel at the rocks that made up this impressive feature. The room had three elk mounts on the walls, many deer mounts, and several small stuffed animals on shelves around the room. It was a lovely setting for our meetings.

The snow ended overnight and by morning the skies were clear and sunny. It was a spectacular Adirondack winter morning, including the temperature which was far below zero! Our meeting commenced at 1 p.m. with a comforting fire in the background. Our only real concern was if we had enough wood to keep the fire ablaze. A quick look onto the back porch revealed a plentiful supply.

When the first day's business ended, several of us decided to go snowshoeing on some of the trails around the facility. (In later years we cross-country skied around Arbutus Pond.) We returned to the lodge as several colleagues were preparing dinner. We ate and relaxed around the lodge, mostly in the great room. This routine continued through noon Wednesday when the meeting concluded and we decided to do this again next year. We all went room-to-room and cleaned up, wanting to leave the place cleaner than when we arrived.

I was one of the last to leave and while driving back toward Route 28N a thought entered

Continued on back cover



An Adirondack Service Adventure

*By Rebecca Mary Long Osborne
Photographs by Aaron Knight*

On the morning of March 6, 2010, 50 ESF and Syracuse University students departed from Syracuse and made the long winding journey up to the Adirondack Ecological Center. The purpose was to get away from the hustle and bustle of Syracuse and escape to a retreat in the beautiful mountains and lakes of the Adirondacks. The group consisted of brothers from a co-ed community service fraternity on campus called Alpha Phi Omega. All 10 cars arrived in Newcomb greeted by sunny weather and zero cell phone service, which may have been initially shocking for some, but overall it was great for a weekend full of good old-fashioned bonding.



After our arrival we went right to work; as a community service fraternity we are in no way strangers to volunteering and in exchange for outreach efforts we received a place to stay. We split into two work groups; one went to Goodnow Mountain, the other to the Visitor Interpretive Center nearby to do some trail work via snowshoes.

I was a part of the first group. We congregated at the base of the mountain and were greeted by two AEC staff members, forester Bruce Breitmeyer and educator Erin Vinson, as well as staff from AANet, the organization we were helping. There waiting for us was a lineup of seven batteries, weighing more than 50 pounds each, strapped onto sleds to be hauled up the mountain. The batteries were to be used as backup for solar panels powering wireless Internet access across the research station. It seemed like a simple task with more than 30 people and only six sleds to haul to the top. We quickly learned that this task was anything but simple!

Three burly brothers pushed and pulled a sled holding two batteries all the way to the top, with the rest of the group all around them lugging their own sleds. There were many different techniques to observe as we diligently hiked: pushing and pulling, sprinting and resting, collapsing in the snow, and more. Everyone seemed to figure out their own personal system for making it to the top. It was definitely my most intense service project to date, and I have never been so relieved to get to the top of a mountain!

All of the participants were rewarded with an awesome 360-degree view of the Adirondacks along with enough cell service to send some pictures back home!

The trek down was much less laborious and the rest of the retreat was completely relaxing and carefree. We were served dinner and dessert, some Boy Scouts in the group made a fire so we were able to roast marshmallows and even do some stargazing from the frozen lake. The group had a great time and would like to thank the Adirondack Ecological Center for providing a restoring weekend getaway to the beautiful Adirondacks.

Editor's note: The AEC and AANet would like to extend our gratitude to APO for their hard work, enthusiasm, and endless supply of energy!

Recent Publications

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Researchers: If you have recent publications involving data or resources from Huntington Wildlife Forest, tell us about it! Please email the details to aechwf@esf.edu





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Newcomb Winter Meeting



Sun shines on the grounds of the refurbished Huntington Lodge.

my mind: Wow, what a jewel this place is here in a remote part of the Adirondacks. I couldn't wait to come back!

For years we did just that. But in early 2008 we learned the lodge would soon close for repairs and remodeling. We had no choice but to cancel our Newcomb meeting for 2009.

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In late January 2010, we found out the lodge was once again available and we would be the first group to rent it. We immediately began to make arrangements and set the meeting for March 5 through 7.

Upon entering the lodge after that two-year break, I met my colleague, Matt Podniesinski, along with Paul Hai, who provided a tour of the remodeled facility. We were impressed with the new kitchen: new cabinetry, stove, microwave, refrigerator and a dishwasher were in place. The former living room had been remodeled into a dining/conference room. The old green carpet was gone and the wooden floors have been renewed. Most impressive is the fireplace that was discovered behind the closet next to the stairway. With the work of a local stonemason to do the rehab work, it looks beautiful and is fully functional. The great room is as great as ever with a new floor and exquisite new furniture.

As the remaining members of our group arrived, we delighted in showing them the "new" place. We settled into our Newcomb routine for the next couple days and too soon Sunday morning rolled around. We usually awaken Sunday morning with a melancholy feeling, knowing soon we have to leave. This year, as always, we packed up and went from one end of the lodge to the other to clean up. As usual, I was the last to leave. As the drive down Arbutus Road begins, I think to myself, what a jewel this place is. I can't wait until next year!

Jerry Zaykoski works for the N.Y. State Department of Environmental Conservation's Mined Land Reclamation Program in Region 6.