

# NORTH WOODS NEWS

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH WOODS CHAPTER  
OF THE ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN CLUB

## From our Chapter Chairperson

### Welcome to Summer 2020!

Many of us have come to the conclusion that we are some of the luckiest people to live in such a beautiful spot in the Adirondack Mountains during a “stay at home” order. I have to admit in March and April I might have been happier with better weather but once we could get out more often on our own or with a few friends, life was good. I’m not sure I’ve ever paddled so early in the season but many of us were ready to get in our boats. Life slowed down and allowed me to experience more nature sightings than I’ve ever had: I saw a female moose on the highway between Lake Placid and Saranac Lake, a very small fawn in the grasses of my backyard trying to stand on wobbly legs, the two eagles, one on the nest, on Osgood Pond, a huge snapping turtle walking down my driveway. I hope many of you had the same experiences. Now we get to move on from our quiet life!

We are “phasing” into Summer with our third quarter Outings Schedule. There is a good representation of hikes, paddles and bicycle rides every week. There are some Covid 19 requirements related to Outings to be aware of:

- Must be an outdoor activity
- No more than 25 participants
- Must observe social distancing
- Masks would not be necessary unless it were expected that the group would be using some public facility, such as a highway restroom or restaurant. In that case, they would be carried and used at that point.
- Hand sanitizer should be carried by the leader.
- Leaders should screen participants by asking if they feel sick or have been exposed to anyone with Covid 19 in the last 14 days.
- Avoid carpooling.

We welcome new members to join us on our adventures to get to know other members in the North Woods Chapter. We’re sorry you had to wait but please come join us now! You will notice the Annual Picnic has been left off the schedule. We’re putting that on hold for the time being and can revisit the possibility in the Fall. I’ve missed our club activities with friends and look forward to getting out there in July!

Hope to see you all soon!  
Enjoy your Summer!

*Gretchen*

<p>CHAPTER OFFICERS and COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS Chairman: Gretchen Gedroiz Vice Chair: Kathy O’Kane</p>	<p>Secretary: Susan Omohundro Treasurer: Elisabeth Craven Director - Kathy O’Kane Outings: Carol Edmonds</p>	<p>Conservation: John Omohundro Membership: Elisabeth Craven Newsletter: Jim Edmonds Programs: Marilyn Gillespie</p>
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## Conservation Report

I invite you to join our informal conservation committee, which selects Adirondack issues, investigates them, drafts a position statement, then often sends that to the responsible parties. Contact me at [omohunjt@northnet.org](mailto:omohunjt@northnet.org). I promise not to have a Zoom meeting.

One topic our committee recently addressed was the question of overcrowding on trails. The High Peaks Strategic Planning Advisory Group, which includes an ADK representative, has published its 43-page report. The gist of its recommendations for coping with the crowds is limited parking, visitor education, shuttles, continued monitoring, and more facilities like restrooms. It stopped short of recommending limiting hikers with a permitting system. The group did not reject permits as an option in the future. The recommendations were closely in line with the majority view of our conservation committee.

If you wish a copy of the report, let me know.

This October I'll return to the subject of salting the roads. Perhaps then we'll have a better idea whether the Little/Jones legislation has a chance this session.

Thinking ahead to November, (if you can): on the ballot will be a bond initiative called the Restore Mother Nature Bond Act. If it passes, New York will spend \$3 billion on a variety of environmental projects across the state, including reducing crowding, acquiring land, and building trails in the Adirondacks, but also municipal clean water and sewage-treatment, green energy, and marine restoration, among others. I'll assemble a more complete and detailed list for the next newsletter. This is a good act, but it's not yet certain it will survive to Election Day. The governor has been given the authority to take the act off the ballot if he thinks New York can't afford it, so we wait and watch for that decision.

The governor has finally confirmed the nominations of seven individuals to the Adirondack Park Agency (APA). Environmental groups were urging him to select persons with expertise in science, land management, zoning, or such backgrounds that would assist the APA in its role in supervising activities in the park based upon the state and private land use master plans. It appears that he did not follow that advice. As Adirondack Wild's David Gibson observes, "While all are fine, hard-working individuals, the majority background [of the new appointees] is in local government and economic development, not natural resources, environmental law, or planning." The APA also needs a new chair, who ought to be a planner not a developer.

- *John Omohundro, Conservation Chairman*  
[omohunjt@northnet.org](mailto:omohunjt@northnet.org)

## Outings Schedule

The 3rd Quarter Outings Schedule was distributed to Chapter members on June 21st. Chapter members may request a replacement at [adknorthwoodsnews@gmail.com](mailto:adknorthwoodsnews@gmail.com). Watch for changes on the online calendar.

## The History Corner

by the History Guy

### The End of the Road: Sabattis

In early May, Susan and I joined Bill LaRoque, appropriately distanced, for a visit to the site of old Sabattis, or West Long Lake. Sabattis is at the end of the Little Tupper Road, past the turnoff to Lake Lila. Nothing remains of old West Long Lake community except the New York Central railroad tracks passing through from Lake Lila to Tupper Lake Junction. A gate blocks a road going north to Long Lake Boy Scout District reservation, the one we know on Lows Lake.



A turn-of-the-century topographic map showing old Long Lake West and the NY Central Railroad line, before the fire. The road heading east here passes by Little Tupper and Round Lake.

Another gate blocks a road south to Robinwood Club, a 7600-acre private family recreational reservation partly on land once owned by A. A. Low, the industrial baron on the Bog River. Robinwood encloses Bog Lake, Clear Pond, and Rainer Pond. Forty-six private houses and a clubhouse have been built there.

West Long Lake, also called Sabattis, was a settlement of about one hundred souls at the southern edge of Low's Horse Shoe Forestry Company, which produced maple sugar, logs, water, wine, and vegetables for shipping to east coast cities. In West Long Lake Mr. Low built the Wilderness Inn, a large hotel. There were also a train station, a post office, a pool hall, a barber shop, seven dwellings, and a school. This community has the unfortunate distinction of being the victim of the Adirondack forest fire that damaged the most property. Several fires from steam locomotives burning around the community in September, 1908, got out of hand in the wind. The villagers were evacuated by train in a matter of hours, with whatever possessions they could carry. The train carried them north to Low's station at Tupper Lake, while the firestorm converted the settlement to ash. Low's forest empire was also severely damaged, and he soon abandoned the enterprise and returned to New York City.

*-continued, next page*

**The History Corner - *continued***

The Long Lake West fire leveled most of the community and destroyed A. A. Low's nearby forest empire. Villagers escaped on the train to Tupper Lake. Photo from wikipedia.

As a boy Bill saw a three-story schoolhouse on the hill east of the railroad tracks. It must have been far enough away from the “downtown” to survive the fire. We tramped around in the flat places up there but found no trace of a foundation, just an ash bucket and an old fuel can. Nearer the tracks, we found a flat grassy area where the general store or hotel probably was located. Our best artifact there was a cast iron pot with flower decorations.

Returning west on the Little Tupper Road to our hiking destination, we crossed Bear Pond, a gorgeous body of water surrounded by the Sabattis Boy Scout reservation. Named for famous Abenaki guide and boatbuilder Mitchell Sabattis, this camp was once Sabattis Park, the site of the great camp of Charles M. Daniels and his wife. Daniels was an eight-time Olympic medalist and world record-holder in swimming events. Their house, named “Tarnedge” from the Scottish for “beside the lake,” was situated at the north end with a fine view of Bear Pond. Its architecture was Elizabethan, which I infer means Jim and Carol Edmonds spent many years volunteering for Sabattis camp. Jim says that all that remained of Daniels’ estate when the Scouts owned it was a group of massive barns and an excellent child’s playhouse.

On the Little Tupper Road also were signs in the late-winter woods of old work centers and logging landings. Bill pointed out an outhouse standing like a single erratic in the woods, the maintenance garage it serviced having disappeared. We walked north into the woods from an old camping spot by the road to find another outhouse, still sporting a usable potty seat. Nearby were a couple of small foundations for buildings, an enamel pan, and an axle with wooden spokes.

We capped our archaeological adventures with a pleasant walk in young hardwoods on a DEC trail lined with trout lilies to Trout Pond—a fishers’ paradise, we’re told—and up a hill nearby the aptly-named High Pond, smaller but attractive, and also good for trout.

### The Bard of Birch Street

*The Bard of Birch Street is an Adirondack curmudgeon who rarely speaks, but when he does, his every utterance is in the form of a limerick. Frustrated by the lack of Chapter outings, the Bard has been venturing out with a few of his closest friends, appropriately distanced.*

### Footloose in the Park

The Chapter's quiescent these days,  
No outings, to keep Covid at bay.  
    But what fool would assume  
    That folks'd just cower in gloom?,  
The Park's where Covid holds no sway

Some paddled on Jones, Abanakee,  
Or hiked up St. Regis, MacKenzie,  
    Some are out on their bikes  
    Now the roads are swept nice,  
And the bugs in the Park? They're bugs you can see . . .

*The Bard of Birch Street, fired up*

### Trip Reports

This section is left unintentionally blank,  
'cause we wern't able to have any Trips during the 2nd Quarter.