



THE NIAGARA EXPLORER

*Newsletter of Adirondack Mountain Club Niagara
Frontier Chapter*

Message from the Chair

Friends,

As we wrap up another incredible year of adventures, I want to extend my warmest wishes to all our members for a joyful holiday season. This year, we've hiked new trails, camped under starry skies, and shared countless moments in the great outdoors. Your enthusiasm and commitment have made our community stronger and more vibrant than ever.

Looking ahead, we have exciting plans for the year to come—more trips, new challenges, and even opportunities to give back to the environment we cherish. As you enjoy the holiday season, I encourage you to take a moment to reflect on your favorite memories from our outings, and perhaps plan your next adventure.

Whether you're cozying up by the fire or tackling winter hikes, I hope you find time to connect with nature in whatever way brings you joy.

Thank you for being such an integral part of our club, and I look forward to seeing all of you in the New Year. Wishing you peace, happiness, and plenty of outdoor exploration in 2025!

— **Jonathan Coupal**



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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

The Chapter is still seeking a volunteer to fill the positions of **Education Chair and Newsletter Editor**

If interested, please reach out to Chapter Chair, Jonathan Coupal.

December Program

Holiday Potluck Dinner and Meeting December 10, 2024

Come one, come all, but don't let someone else eat it all! Please come for an evening of fun, food, and cheer on **Tuesday, December 10, 2024**, at **6:00 pm** with your dish to share along with serving utensils and your individual place setting. We'll start setting up and appreciate extra hands -many hands make light work as my grandmother said! We'll dine at **6:30 pm**; you are welcome to bring a guest. Help us make a warm & memorable get together by bringing your favorite signature hot or cold dishes to pass. Appetizers, salads, meat, or meat-less creations, cookies, desserts - use your noggin - a variety of food options is always a big hit. We will have extra tables set up to place your contribution(s), but please remember to **bring serving utensils**. Coffee, tea and water will be provided. On behalf of the planet,



members are asked to bring their own reusable plates and utensils. This is a wonderful time to socialize with old friends and to make new ones. Door prizes will be a little different this month and holiday themed. Members, please bring a bag to take your dirty dishes home with you (no clean-up in the kitchen as it takes too much time and the focus is on socializing, fun and fellowship)! Don't forget to dress in holiday attire!

Note: please **no** alcoholic beverages as requested by our landlord; you may bring non-alcoholic beverages.

— **Programs Co-chairs Pam Sander and Larry Moses**

Housekeeping Reminder—Church of the Nativity has specific kitchen protocols - please do not enter the kitchen to wash your hands or throw liquid beverages down a sink. The bathroom is located near our meeting room (make an immediate left at the bottom of the stairs). If you have a liquid beverage to throw out, kindly hand it to our hospitality team (Sandy or Pauline)- they are happy to assist you.

Looking Ahead... The **January 14, 2025**, monthly meeting main program features the Zoar Valley Coalition at 7:30. Come and learn about this controversial issue that involves the logging plans proposed by NYS DEC and Audubon. The **Education Program** will begin at **6:15 with Chris Watson** of the Niagara Frontier Search and Rescue, who will be discussing survival priorities when you get lost in the woods, based on his own experience doing rescues.

November Program Recap

The monthly meeting on **Tuesday, November 12th**, featured our former chair, Mike Radomski, who presented a slide show of terrific pictures and GoPro videos of his Winter, 2024, Grand Canyon vacation.

Mike began his program by detailing thorough pre-planning needed for a group of 16 adventurers on a 23 day, 226 miles, mind blowing private whitewater rafting trip filled with big rapids and epic views of the Grand Canyon.

November Program Recap (cont'd)

This trip planning required regular communication among the group of participants and the tour company and each participant received a “nuts and bolts” booklet that provided every detail of the excursion, from start to finish. Decisions such as how to get to Arizona (fly, or drive); Mike chose to carpool so he could take some of his gear while others chose to ship their gear to the outfitter. Once in Arizona, the next step was a flight to Flagstaff, followed by shopping trips to REI co-op for more gear, grocery shopping, and beer/liquor stores for needed post rafting celebrations.

The group put in their watercrafts (rafts, kayaks, paddle boards) at Lees Ferry. Mike’s raft was an Oar Rig boat (his first experience with this type of whitewater raft). Pictures and cool Go Pro videos took us on a ride through a series of fantastic rapids (rated in a 1-10 class system): House Rock, Hance, Horn Creek, Granite, Hermit, Crystal, Bedrock, Deubendorf, Upset, and Lava Falls Rapids in the Grand Canyon on the Little Colorado and Colorado Rivers. Mike shared some of the amazing hikes he was able to enjoy when off the river, and fantastic pictures of the Grand Canyon. Mike got to see beautiful wildlife (California Condors, bighorn sheep, and mule deer) and natural wonders (Poncho’s Kitchen, Stanton’s Cave, and a plethora of beautiful waterfalls), and ancient petroglyphs, which are man-made rock carvings! This trip also included a stop at Phantom Ranch, a historic oasis nestled at the bottom of Grand Canyon where the group used the pay phone, cantina, and bathroom with a much-needed hot shower.

With the strictly enforced L.N.T. practices, everything brought in was hauled out (including human poop that was transported on a special raft, until they left the canyon). We learned what a groover is (it’s a toilet, impress your friends), and it’s ok to pee in the water because urine breaks down faster than in sand! And what is a sock-dolager, a term used by white water rafters? It’s another name for a rapid (but has other fun definitions)! For the flora lovers among us, Mike highly recommends *Brave the Wild River: The Untold Story of Two Women Who Mapped the Botany of the Grand Canyon*.

Can you imagine \$1,800 for this 16-day adventure and trip of a lifetime? I’m going a wee bit long on this summary, but boy, it’s hard to keep it short (sorry, newsletter editors)!

Mike Radomski is the founder of Outside Chronicles and the WNY Hiking Challenge. He is an avid outdoor enthusiast who has achieved ADK 46 statuses and the Catskill 3500. Mike is a New York State licensed whitewater rafting guide, and certified in Wilderness First Aid, CPR/AED, and Swiftwater Rescue. Mike has a master’s degree in Great Lakes Environmental Science. — **Programs Co-chair Pam Sander**



Are you a current ADK member? We will soon be switching over to the ADK membership list as supplied to us by the ADK. However, the ADK is running late in processing new members and adding them to the roster. If you are not a current member please renew SOON since if you are not on the list, you will not be getting any newsletters in the future! See our Facebook page for details—<https://www.facebook.com/groups/adknfc>

Conservation Corner

Take Action: Erie County: There is still time to complete the survey that is part of the Erie County process of updating its Forest Management Plan. Forestry staff emphasize that public input will help determine how the Forestry Management Plan is written. Use this link to access the short on-line survey <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/T8B6GN8>.

As an outdoor recreational group we are interested in maintaining the current trails and possibly expanding hiking trails at the Sardinia Forest Lot or possibly creating new trails on other forestry lots. Something else to keep in mind is that at the time these lots were originally purchased, the world was not experiencing an imminent climate crisis. What other benefits does a forest provide besides timber? A forest contributes to improving the health of the environment for humans and animals by decreasing global warming, sequestering carbon, lowering the temperature, providing wildlife habitat and corridors for animal migration. Spending time enjoying nature provides many physical and mental benefits.

Please write in a comment if the answers provided do not include an option you believe is important for the plan to consider. Express your views on whether the undeveloped forest plots should be part of New York States commitment to the 30 x 30 global campaign to protect 30% of ecologically productive lands and waters by the year 2030.

Background information about the Forest Management Plan update can be accessed at [Home | Erie County FMP \(wixstudio.io\)](#).

Adirondacks: Make your voices heard, the Adirondack Park Agency is accepting public comment on proposed amendments to the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan. ADK fully supports the APA's intention to create a comprehensive plan for accessibility and accessible features in the Adirondacks. However, the proposed amendment changes do not provide clear guidance through an APA or DEC accessibility policy, nor does it adequately ensure protection of non-motorized areas of the Forest Preserve, including wilderness. Go to the ADK webpage [Take Action Now! | Adirondack Mountain Club \(adk.org\)](#) to join the letter writing campaign to protect the Adirondack Wilderness from motorized use.

In the news:

Zoar Valley – To learn more about the DEC plan to log over 1000 mature trees in a mixed hardwood forest in the Zoar Valley Multiple Use Area that abuts the protected Zoar Valley Unique Area go to the Zoar Valley Coalition website [Zoar Valley Coalition – Standing together in preservation of the old growth forested ecosystem in Zoar Valley, New York](#). ADK is not a member of the coalition but is providing this information as a courtesy to our members who are inquiring about the recent news articles.

Conservation Committee meetings Join us for a zoom meeting on Tuesday, **December 17th at 7 pm**. All members are welcome to attend to find out the latest conservation news. The zoom link will be in the Weekly ADK Email. —**Lynn Rehfeld-Kenney, Conservation Chair**

Advisory Council Report

As I'm sure you have seen in the latest edition of the Adirondac magazine there are lots of things going on including the search process for a new Executive Director and the hiring of new staff for communications and publications. A variety of workshops and outings are available for anyone to sign up for and are listed in the magazine.

The new computer system for membership is running well enough to get lists of members now, and everyone should go on the ADK.org website to check their information in the system. There are still some problems with family memberships and data on certifications. The Advisory Council has a communications committee that is working with staff and chapters to help provide feedback and suggestions. Jonathan Coupal and I are on that committee. I also joined the finance committee and can report that the board passed the new budget for next year. Please respond to the ongoing fund-raising campaign because the club really needs everyone to provide support. The various changes and upgrades have been expensive but are very important for the future of the club.

There may be some revisions to the current policies on conservation activities conducted by chapters. Lynn Rehfeld-Kenney and our conservation committee will be providing input to an Advisory Council committee gathering information to give to the board. We are hoping to go back to working on a broader range of issues than those developed through the strategic planning process several years ago.

For those who plan to stay at the Adirondack Loj, a new meal plan has gone into effect that limits dinner meals seasonally to one location per season, so in winter there will be a more simplified dinner and in summer there will be no dinner at the Loj but there will be food at the Hungry Hiker which is next to the main parking lot at Heart Lake. Dinners at the Loj will now cost \$33 due to a 46% increase in the cost of food. The system of hiring a chef hasn't worked out and a variety of staff will now be cooking to ensure coverage.

If you have any questions or concerns about the Club send them to me at hackerks@gmail.com

— **Kate Hacker, Advisory Council representative and Club Board Member**

Trivia Challenge

At what newly created nature preserve in the 1970's did ADK volunteers help to plant trees?

A) Reinstein Woods B) Tiff Nature Preserve C) Deer Lick Nature Preserve

Answer on page 11

Trip Reports and Outings

☀️ Eleven ADK hikers met at the Conservation Trail in **Sergeant Mark A. Rademacher Memorial Park** on **Saturday, November 2**. We were treated to a beautiful, but chilly day. Although this section of the 177 mile long Conservation Trail can be crowded with fellow hikers and mountain bikers on a lovely weekend, we had the trail to ourselves much of the hike.

Along the way, several of us noticed small orange berries, and yellow shells on the forest floor. After looking them up it was announced that they were from the bittersweet vine.

The extreme drop offs to Hunters Creek led to a discussion of the various ravines and topography in that beautiful area. — Leslie Salathe



☀️ On **Sunday, November 10**, we had a wonderful group of 9 hikers show up at **Sprague Brook Park** to join us on a 6 1/2 mile hike on the trails, despite the forecast of rain. We had a dry first hour, but then the rain



came, as predicted. We stopped to see if everyone was good with continuing, and to our delight, no one wanted to turn back! What a hardy group! The rain continued throughout the hike, but the trails were in good shape and the beautiful scenery made for a lovely hike. The last half hour passed slowly as we were all quite drenched but everyone was still in good spirits. After the hike, a group of us headed to Steelbound Brewery in Springville for lunch and laughs. Despite the rain, we all had a great time! — Randy Barker and Sue Kolasz

☀️ A group of 8 ADK-NFC members and friends planted 29 native trees at **Tifft Nature Preserve** in not so stellar weather on **Veterans Day 2024**. Conservation chair, Lynn Kenney, organized this fun event with our friends at Tifft. Our chapter has contributed to tree plantings and other projects at Tifft over the past 45 years and, hopefully, we'll do more plantings next Spring!

Participants were asked to view a YouTube instruction video on tree planting, and Tifft provided gloves, shovels, and heavy-duty dibbles (necessary to cut through Tifft's tough soil). A multi-year government grant funded the purchase of the 2-foot-tall saplings grown locally. We worked in an area near the "mounds" not far from Lake Kirsty. Five native tree varieties that included black cherry, tulip, swamp oak, basswood and maple, were planted in soil that was previously overgrown with buckthorn. We got wet, we got muddy, as we used the mighty hand tools to open up the soil, removing all sorts of obstacles including bricks, slag, cement boulders, glass, and random miscellaneous objects, to create adequate holes to plant the trees. One interesting treasure was an intact sole of what was probably a very fine shoe!



Trip Reports and Outings Cont'd

Tift Nature Preserve is a 264-acre urban preserve dedicated to the protection of natural resources, scientific research, environmental education, and public enjoyment. This former brownfield provides valuable wildlife habitat and green space within the city of Buffalo. Major habitats include a 75-acre cattail marsh-the largest in Erie County-woodlands, grasslands, three ponds and a small stream. Tift Nature Preserve is an important stop-over for migrating birds and a nesting habitat for rare marsh birds. The preserve is operated by the Buffalo Museum of Science. The programs of the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences are supported in part by public funds from the County of Erie; City of Buffalo; New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; and members and friends. — **Pam Sander and Lynn Kenney**

☀️ 18 hikers geared up and enjoyed the Orienteering Trail at **Chestnut Ridge Park** on Bill's bye week, **Sunday, November 24, 2024**. This 5.8-mile hike was a pop-up hybrid type - posted on ADK-Niagara Frontier Chapter Meetup and in our weekly newsletter.

From the Newton Road parking lot, our little troop followed the perimeter of the park that included great photo-ops of creek crossings, and a section of open fields before exiting at Seufert Road at the halfway point. We ate lunch near marker #80, which is close to the great dump cleanup of 2024-a gully previously littered with decades of assorted junk. The cleanup was conducted on August 29, 2024; a big project organized by member Ed Kasperek and included volunteers from our chapter. Some of us parked our gear on an old picnic table off the trail that has since seen better days. Nearby, we saw remnants of other structures that were in various stages of decay (nature doing its thing- won't be too long before they disappear completely from sight).



A number of certified level one hike leaders were in attendance (I asked for a show of hands at hike introductions); kudos to Randy Barker, Doug Kenney, and Frank Meyer for their splendid guidance keeping our party of 18 intact.

More posted outings will be in the weekly newsletter and announced at the December 10, 2024, monthly meeting! — Pam Sander

Winter Outing at the Loj in Lake Placid February 27 through March 2 Leader: Kate Hacker

☀️ We are going to do another winter outing at the Loj in February again this year. We reserved 3 nights starting Thursday and leaving Sunday, and the chapter will pay for one of the nights. We hope to get some people who have never stayed there before along with some experienced people who know the area and can lead hikes or other adventures. There are many good trails out of the Loj and good skiing is just down the road or out of the Loj. We reserved the loft which has 12 beds in one large room and will subsidize one of those nights. Once we fill up, others can reserve other spaces including the smaller bunkrooms or private rooms on their own and the chapter will reimburse you for one night at the loft rate which is \$65.

Winter Outing at the Loj (cont'd)

You can also add an extra night to the three days, but you will need to do that on your own. Reservations at the Loj fill up well in advance, so you should contact them ASAP. You can call them at 518-523-3441. If you want to reserve one of the loft spots you will need to first send me an email saying you want to attend, and then send \$130 to Brian Monckton, 2089 Boies Rd, West Falls, NY 14170. The check should be made out to Niagara Frontier Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club. That will cover your bill for two nights. You will have a separate bill for dinners, trail lunches and drinks which you will have to pay to ADK at the front desk when you leave. Breakfast is included. If you only want to stay two nights you will still have to pay the full fee because the chapter will have to pay for your space. Mike Radomski has volunteered to lead a couple of High Peaks hikes and I will lead ski outings.

Please email me at hackerks@gmail.com to reserve a spot or to ask questions. I will be keeping a wait list and require final decisions a week in advance.

SEND ME YOUR OUTINGS!

Frank Meyer, Outings Chair and editor of the Weekly Newsletter

Ph: 716-982-3086 Email: edendds@gmail.com

In This Time of Giving, Let's Help **Friends of the Night People!** Our former hospitality chair, Carol Schuster, is a longtime volunteer at Friends of the Night People, an organization that serves adults in the downtown Buffalo area.

Carol says the items most in need are items to keep adult hands and feet warm as we go into the winter months. Gloves/mittens (can be used but in undamaged shape), and new socks would be most appreciated.

Please bring your donations to the **December 10, 2024** meeting and place your items in the boxes in our meeting room. Thank you! For more information, go to: <https://friendsofnightpeople.com/>

Where to find us

Website: adk-nfc.org

MeetUp: <https://www.meetup.com/adk-nfc/>

Facebook Group: [ADK-Niagara Frontier Chapter](#)

Follow us on Instagram ([adk_nfc](#))

Membership: If you would like to join the Niagara Frontier Chapter you can sign up at a monthly meeting or online at <https://www.adk-nfc.org/membership/>

[Chapter Outings & Events Calendar](#)

Picture Page

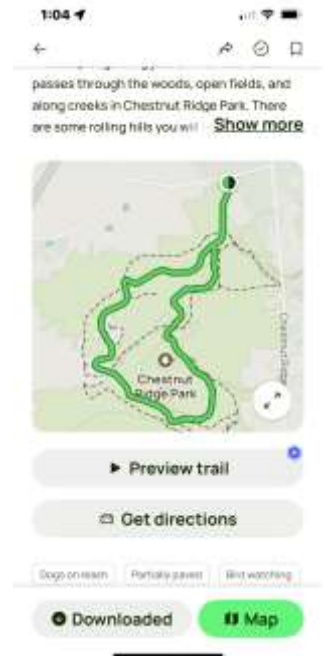


Hike in Sprague Brook

Tift Tree Planting



Picture Page



Hike in Chestnut Ridge



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Mossy Point, East Aurora, NY

Photo Credit Peggy Naughton

Trivia Challenge Answer

B) Tift Nature Preserve

ADK volunteers helped to plant 700 trees at the newly created Tift Nature Preserve on the mounds that covered a City of Buffalo landfill. ADK members have volunteered several times at the preserve since then, including this past November when 29 saplings were planted at the base of the mounds.