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Adirondack Trail Improvement Society

NEWSLETTER

FALL 2021

FROM THE OUTGOING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

This page is normally reserved for the president of the organization, but for this issue President Simon Cornelissen was gracious enough to allow me to use this space to reflect on my 35 years as executive director of ATIS. It has been both an honor and a joy to serve in this capacity as I helped to meet the needs of both the ATIS membership and the greater hiking community. I am pleased with the way the organization has been able to grow to meet the challenges posed by both a larger ATIS and AMR membership and an exponential growth in the number of hikers using trails maintained by ATIS.

When I assumed this position in October of 1986, I inherited a Junior Program that my father had managed to build up to three trips each day conducted by a staff of six or seven counselors. This was a great starting point, but during my first summer I soon found that trips sometimes didn't run because of a lack of transportation. I also learned that Alderdice overnights might include a six-year-old accompanied by an adult babysitter along with some young teenagers - a dynamic that somehow just didn't work. The solution to the first problem was the request that all parents remain with their children until the transportation had been arranged; and I sincerely thank all the parents who, over the 34 years since, have complied with this request. Alderdice overnights were subsequently restricted to seven to ten-year-olds - a pattern that has continued to successfully provide a first overnight experience for many ATIS participants.

Today, ATIS offers five or six activities each day conducted by a staff of up to 16. The program now includes a range of activities from rock climbing to nature activities for children as young as four. My sincere thanks, both to all those who have stepped up with their contributions to support this expansion and to Sam Hoar, the current director of the Junior Program who has overseen this expansion.

Early on, the trail crew consisted of three or four workers who worked a 10-week season. They used hand tools to clear the winter blowdown on 90 miles of trail while also performing minor maintenance on ladders and smaller bridges. At that time, ATIS did not own a single shovel, pick, or crowbar. My father had recognized that the DEC had not performed much, if any, maintenance on the Elk Lake-Marcy Trail for many years and received permission for ATIS to maintain that trail. This was the first addition that now has ATIS maintaining 115 miles of trail. By 1990, the crew had managed to deal with the deferred maintenance on the Elk Lake-Marcy Trail and could start doing rock work on Noonmark with some tools newly acquired for that purpose. Soon, the crew added heavy-duty winches to their tool collection, which allowed for more efficient rock work. ATIS also gained the ability to work on the large bridges over the Ausable that ATIS had previously paid the AMR to maintain. This transition culminated in the 2020 rebuild of the 130-foot-long ATIS bridge below the Lower Lake dam with Trails Program Director Erik Jacobson in a lead role in this effort.

I could, of course, go on to list many other accomplishments for both the Junior and Trails programs, but I didn't do all of this by myself. These accomplishments were only made possible by the several hundred counselors and trail crew who have served ATIS for the past 35 years. Equally important has been the financial support from a loyal membership that has paid and equipped these workers. The combination of these two have built lasting relationships that have made for 35 years that have been extremely rewarding, enjoyable, and for the most part downright fun. I certainly hope that my successor, Ben Runyon enjoys this job as much as I have.

Thanks.
Tony Goodwin

TRAIL CREW:

The Trail Crew managed to have a productive season despite the challenges posed by the regular heat, the pandemic, and a staffing shortage at the close of the season. Bridge building continued to be the major focus for the 2021 season with the crew working on 3 main projects.

CASCADE BROOK BRIDGE: Originally built in 2004 with funds contributed in memory of Matthew Dwyer, the bridge was destroyed by a large birch tree that fell and split the bridge in half. The crew completely rebuilt this 40-foot bridge while also improving the abutments, armoring the stream banks with stone, and removing remaining hazard trees that threatened the new bridge. Matt's widow, Barbara Dwyer, contributed to help pay for the rebuild.

BARTLETT RIDGE: The second major project was the installation of a new and extensive boardwalk across a high elevation wetland on Bartlett Ridge. After 2 years of delay getting the material (lumber that ATIS purchased in 2018) flown in by helicopter, it was finally delivered this spring. The crew was able to install over 300 lineal feet of bog bridges and boardwalk through the wettest and muddiest locations. It should make passage through this area much improved during wet periods. This installation was made in early June when the biting insect population peaks and there were some truly challenging days knee deep in mud setting the heavy timbers and swiping away handfuls of bugs.

INLET BRIDGE: The season's last major effort was a complete rebuild of the Inlet Bridge on the Elk Lake/Marcy Trail, which was destroyed in the Halloween Flood of 2019. Located in a flood plain, the bridge needed to be raised to survive the next flood. Discussions with the NYSDEC resulted in a new design to raise the bridge above the flood plain. The DEC then delivered multiple large loads of timber via helicopter for the elevated bridge abutments. Unfortunately, the closest reasonable drop zone was nearly ¼ mile upstream so approximately 5,000lbs. of lumber had to be floated downstream to the bridge site. Additionally, the stringers required for this bridge (50 feet) were too long for the helicopter to fly, so the crew had to use native material. Like the timbers, the large trees were felled upstream which meant floating the 50-foot-long trunks down the narrow and sinuous Inlet to the jobsite - another effort unto itself. Finally, with the lumber on hand and the other building material shuttled in by boat the actual construction process could begin. The rebuild took several weeks, and the crew camped out during the build due to the remote location. Again, the heat and proximal location to the swamp and swarming insects, made for some very long days. At several feet higher, the finished project is far more robust than previous iterations and should endure much longer - the cribbed abutments raise the bridge about three feet above the flood plain. The cribs are anchored with "dead men" buried in the ground and steel reinforcing rod driven into the ground. The copper flashing will shed water and significantly slow any decay on the native stringers

The crew that accomplished all the above was composed of Dan Hausner (Crew Boss), Cal Seeley, Sam Gallery, Ben Koblenky, Joseph Wilson, Nick Mckalip and Pat Taylor. They were a great crew, and thankfully many of them live locally or attend colleges nearby, so many of them will be out on the trails this fall preparing them to better endure the spring runoff.

Erik Jacobsen



The New Cascade Brook Bridge



The New Inlet Bridge

JUNIOR PROGRAM:

Although we were able to run limited trips during the summer of 2020, it felt like a huge boost to return to a relatively normal Junior Program calendar in 2021. We were able to offer a much wider slate of trips each day over the course of the summer, with six trips available nearly every day of the week for participants to choose from, with offerings ranging from grueling full day hikes to two-hour long nature explorations with our youngest campers. It was great to see so many faces back with the program this summer, and wonderful to meet many new kids and get to share our love of the Adirondacks with them. We are so grateful to all who participated in ATIS trips this summer, and to the parents who made it possible by driving kids all over the park and by supporting the organization in countless other ways. We are lucky to have such a supportive and enthusiastic community year in and year out.



Tony at August Picnic

The 2021 counselor staff also deserves significant thanks for their work this summer. Although many places around the region struggled for employees, the dedication of our counselors allowed us to keep our schedule unchanged throughout the summer and to run every trip we offered on the calendar. Many of those counselors stepped up in big ways this summer, taking on new responsibilities without batting an eyelash and doing whatever was needed to help the organization function effectively.

Finally, we are most indebted to Tony Goodwin, whose leadership of this program has made it into what it is today. As Tony likes to say, during his tenure ATIS has grown from being an organization with just a bulletin board to the far more sizable operation it is today, but under his leadership the organization has never lost that sense of community and personal touch that we believe are at the core of what we do well at ATIS. Generation after generation of campers at High Peaks Camp and during the “regular season” have had the opportunity to witness firsthand Tony’s dedication to and stewardship of the outdoors, and his legacy with ATIS will undoubtedly live on in their passionate pursuits in the outdoors.

True to form, Tony worked to the very end—when given the opportunity to join a trip on the final day of trips for the 2021 season, Tony chose the C trip to Nubble so that he could hang a few signs that he thought might be missing along the route. His work ethic and dedication to this organization are extraordinary, and he will be sorely missed in his retirement—though we expect we’ll see him plenty out on the trails and on the lakes.

Sam Hoar

FROM THE INCOMING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

I am honored to be taking over the leadership of this organization that has been in the able hands of the Goodwin family for many decades. ATIS was my first employer in the early 1980's and after spending more than 30 years as a teacher and administrator in private education I am happy to be back. I look forward to continuing the important work of maintaining the trails on the AMR and providing transformative leadership opportunities to a new group of Adirondack hikers, paddlers, and climbers.

Ben Runyon

ANNUAL MEETING

At the August Picnic the nominating committee of board offered the following slate of officers for approval, and they were approved.

Officers Directors, Advisors: 2021-2022

President – Simon Cornelissen
Vice President – Heather Raker
Vice President- Laura Caputo
Secretary – Nia Spongberg
Treasurer – John Hutchins

Board of Directors: 2021-2022.

Term Ending 2022

Terry Buchanan
 Barbara Dwyer
 Margie Wolf
 Nancy Emrich Freeman
 Mary Janeway
 Laura Caputo
 Simon Cornelissen- President

Term Ending 2023

Jenny Hennessey
 Suzanne Siner
 Nia Spongberg
 David Landers
 Doug Tansey
 Sam Ticknor
 Ed Hoffman

Term Ending 2024

Helena T. Grant
 Betsy Denny
 Stepahani Tansey
 Bobbie Landers
 James Morley
 Heather Raker-VP
 John Hutchins- Treasurer

Advisory Council

Ana Bickford, Anna Boardman, Jessa Boutte, Karen Doman, Tyler Eaton, John Fritzingler, Timo Fritzingler, Eliza Harris, Janet Hentschel, Emily Koch, Lyla Kuriyan, Tamra Mooney, Summer Reed, Cyr Ryan, Joanna Smith, Reid Jewett Smith, Lise Strickler, Ben Ticknor, Margie Ticknor, Tinny Weintraub, Bob Wittppenn. Roly Morris and John Schuler - ex-officio

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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ADIRONDACK TRAIL IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY