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Adirondack Trail Improvement Society

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2023

★ FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Greetings to this treasured ATIS community of current and former campers, trail crew, counselors, parents and family members, and countless friends and supporters—

I hope this letter finds you and your family in good health and high spirits. Like me, I suspect that many of you are counting down the days to the start of another memorable ATIS summer! I am so grateful for your support and involvement in our beloved organization. ATIS' success is driven by the commitment of our community to our important mission: to inspire responsible stewardship of the High Peaks region and all wild spaces, and to support all individuals to develop the skills and qualities necessary to thrive in the natural world and beyond. It is due to your unwavering support that ATIS has been able to provide enriching experiences to our community.

With the summer season approaching, I wanted to provide you with some exciting updates. Thanks to your generous contributions during our 125th anniversary annual campaign, we have been able to acquire new equipment. This includes eight new tents, four canoes, 45 personal flotation devices, as well as new stoves, water filters, and equipment for our trail crew. Additionally, we have made necessary repairs and maintenance to the war canoe, plus are investing in additional staff training. These investments will ensure the safety and enjoyment of everyone who participates in our programs and hikes along our trails.



In recent years, we have seen a substantial increase in operating costs because we raised staff salaries to remain competitive and to attract great counselor and trail crew talent. Historically, ATIS has operated on a donation-based model, and while our community is incredibly generous, the rising costs associated with running ATIS can no longer be fully covered by donations alone. Therefore, after careful consideration and deliberation, the ATIS Board of Directors has made the decision to introduce a participation fee for the Jr Program of \$30 per day for each participant (slightly more for overnights, sunsets, and rock climbing trips). This fee is well below the true cost to ATIS for each participant per day and is heavily subsidized by donations. We understand that this change may come as a surprise, and we recognize that some of you may have concerns or questions.

Rest assured, we have allocated funds to offer financial assistance to those who require support, ensuring that financial constraints do not hinder any child from experiencing the magic of ATIS. In the coming weeks, we will be reaching out to our Jr Program families to provide detailed information about the participation fees and the available financial assistance programs. Your feedback is invaluable to us, and we encourage you to reach out with any questions or concerns.

Furthermore, I would like to emphasize the importance of your annual membership donation. Your support directly contributes to the maintenance of 120 miles of trails, bridges, and rock staircases in the High Peaks region, as well as heavily subsidizes the Jr Program trips and activities. It also provides financial assistance to families in need and supports other critical initiatives. Your annual membership donation is vital for the longevity and legacy of ATIS.

Thank you once again for being an integral part of our ATIS community. We look forward to your continued involvement and the smiles that we will share throughout the upcoming summer.

Lyla Kuriyan
President, Board of Directors
Email: lylakuriyan@gmail.com

★ TRAIL CREW:

The 2023 season is now only weeks away. The High Peaks had a decent snowpack going into April, but a sustained heat wave in mid April resulted in a great deal of melt. As a result the trails are drying out sooner than anticipated and should be in decent shape when we begin our annual blowdown patrol. Dan Hausner will return for his 6th season on the crew and the 4th as Crew Boss. Also returning from last year are Patrick Taylor, Harris Billeci, Lars Ellwanger, Erik Fatzinger, and Ed Donnelly. New crew members this season include Max Mclenithan, a former Assistant Forest Ranger in the Eastern High Peaks, and Michael Yaples, a recent graduate of the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry.



*Repairing Elevator Shaft bridge
after a large spruce tree fell on it*

This year the main focus for our efforts will be the continuation of the work that began last year rerouting of the first half mile of the Mossy Cascade Trail. Given this trail's heavy use and its proximity to Route 73, we are striving to make the new section of trail sustainable and low maintenance. We hope the new portion of the trail will be open to the public later in the summer. In addition to this major project, the crew, as always, will be working all around the Eastern High Peaks repairing wooden infrastructure, maintaining drainages, replacing worn signs and generally improving the tread.

Erik Jacobson
Trails Director
Email: erikjacobson@atistrail.org

★ JUNIOR PROGRAM:

Things are shaping up really well for the 2023 season, with a very experienced, terrific staff and a calendar that we hope offers plenty of exciting, adventurous trips for campers of all ages. Harvey Runyon will lead the staff as head counselor this year, with Aurelia Bolton, Jojo Crow, Ilana Mirel, Sophie Nardelli, Megan Quinn, Riley Raker, and Eleanor Winterer joining Harvey as our senior counselors and trip leaders. Andrew Buchanan, Dixon McClintock, and Finn Peartree all return as junior counselors, while Julia Cooper, Ari Ginsberg, Olivia Hall, Soren Jacobson, and Audrey Schedler will enter their second year in the CIT program. We'll also bring on six new counselors-in-training: Oscar Anderson, Sayre Boutte, Julia Brown, Emily Caputo, Cedar Larson, and Thayer McClintock. All promise to make terrific contributions to the program this year and beyond.

As in the past two summers, the Junior Program will partner again this year with both the Keene Youth Commission and Girls, Inc. of the Capital Region to help both organizations get their young kids out onto the trails around Keene Valley. You'll notice that we've now listed the Keene Youth Commission trips (labeled as "with KYC") on the calendar on Tuesdays between July 11 and August 15; our hope is that we can have plenty of ATIS and Youth Commission youngsters getting to build friendships out on the trail this summer! We're also excited to be able to host the Girls, Inc. group for an overnight trip on July 27 and 28 that will allow the girls to explore the mountains and lakes of the High Peaks in much greater depth than during our two previous ventures. We're greatly indebted to Keene Central School for their willingness to help provide a place for the Girls, Inc. group to stay overnight while in the area.



High Peaks Camp 2022 at Panorama

Finally, you may also observe that the calendar includes a couple of changes from years past. As discussed elsewhere in this newsletter, with ATIS moving to a new payment system, we have not listed additional costs for overnight, sunset, and rock climbing trips that help to cover the food and equipment upkeep expenses; instead, those costs on those trips will be incorporated into the fee in the online payment system. We've also changed the times on a few trips—especially our A and B trips—allowing more time so that groups can move at a more moderate pace that should allow them to explore and further enjoy their time together in the mountains. In an age when kids are increasingly incentivized to disconnect from each other and plug into their devices, we hope this additional time together in the mountains will serve as a further opportunity to find fulfillment in the outdoors and in the company of others who share those passions.

Sam Hoar
Junior Program Director
Email: sam@atistrail.org

★ FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

In preparation for the coming season, work has begun on repairing the war canoe. Nate Atkinson (Atkinson Adirondack Craft) is replacing both outwales, the keel and the brass band that runs along the length of the keel. He will also fill some damage on the stem, sand the hull and give the boat a fresh coat of paint. All of this should be completed before we need to use the boat for High Peaks Camp.

New equipment has been purchased for the Junior Program. Eight new tents, four new canoes, forty-five new life jackets, four new stoves and three new water purifiers will be available for use this summer. Some climbing equipment will be replaced before the start of the season. We also purchased a new battery operated weed wacker and a battery operated chainsaw for the trail crew.

High Peaks camp and Leadership camp are both full and will get underway in mid-June. There will be a resurgence of the Adult Program. Thanks to all who have had a hand in that work!



Repairing the War Canoe

Thanks to the generosity of longtime supporter Gary Koch from Tupper Lake, ATIS was given two Wenonah Kevlar canoes and some great camping equipment. You may recognize Gary from the Trivia Corner section of Adirondac magazine. For many years he created that feature for the Adirondack Mountain Club's publication.

Ben Runyon
Executive Director
Email: atis@atistrail.org

Notice of Annual Meeting

The 2023 Annual Meeting of the Adirondack Trail Improvement Society will be held on Wednesday, August 16, 2023 at approximately 5pm at the Lower Lake in conjunction with the ATIS Picnic.

★ ATIS BOARD OF DIRECTORS & ADVISORY COUNCIL

Open positions on the ATIS Board of Directors and Advisory Council

ATIS is currently recruiting volunteer Board Members for a three-year term, starting in August 2023, as well as volunteer Advisory Council members to serve on committees. There are many types of open roles available, including for the Treasurer of ATIS, as well as openings on the ATIS Governance Committee, Finance Committee, Development Committee, DEI Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, Adult Program Committee and Merchandise Committee. ATIS welcomes potential candidates with different professional backgrounds and skills; for example, non-profit boards typically seek professional experience in the following specialized areas: lawyer, banker/finance/accountant, non-profit management, human resources/compensation, corporate/business, fundraising/development/capital campaigns. Previous experience as a Director on a non-profit board or for-profit board is desirable, but not required.

If you are interested in a position, please submit a resume and a letter of interest that highlights your relevant background information to: David Landers, Chair of the ATIS Governance Committee, davidblanders@gmail.com. We also welcome your nominations or referrals of those in the community that we should reach out to consider for the ATIS Board or Advisory Council.

Thank You!

ATIS extends deep gratitude to Jenny Hennessey, Betsy Denny and Helena Grant who stepped down from the Board, and to Ana Bickford, Anna Boardman, Nancy Emrich Freeman, John Fritzingler, Mary Janeway, Tamra Mooney, Summer Reed, Stephanie Tansey, Bob Wittpen, and Margie Ticknor Wolf who stepped down from the Advisory Council. Thank you for your many years of service and leadership to ATIS. We are so grateful for you!



Summer 2022 Adult Program trip on Cobble Mtn

ATIS Board of Directors

Board, Term Ending 2023: Suzanne Siner, Nia Spongberg (Secretary), David Landers, Doug Tansey, Sam Ticknor, Ed Hoffman.

Board, Term Ending 2024: James Morley, Heather Raker (Vice President), John Hutchins (Treasurer), Eliza Harris (Vice President).

Board, Term Ending 2025: Brendan Buschman, Mary Beth Kelly, Reid Jewett Smith, Heidi Kerko, Lyla Kuriyan (President), Cyr Ryan.

Advisory Council: Jessa Boutte, Terry Buchanan, Laura Caputo, Sarah Carnevale, Karen Doman, Barbara Dwyer, Tyler Eaton, Timo Fritzingler, Tony Goodwin – Director Emeritus, Maya Judd, Bobbie Landers, Joanna Smith, Lise Strickler, Ben Ticknor, Margie Ticknor, Tinny Weintraub.

ATIS Mission

The mission of ATIS is to inspire responsible stewardship and facilitate healthy enjoyment of wild lands and to support individuals in developing the skills and qualities necessary to thrive in the natural world and beyond. The mission is accomplished via educational and recreational programs for youth and adults from diverse communities and the maintenance and enhancement of public hiking trails in the vicinity of Keene Valley, New York. To learn more, visit www.atistrail.org

If you would like to donate to ATIS, please see www.atistrail.org/donate. You can also send a donation via Venmo to @ATIStrail.

The Adirondack Trail Improvement Society is a 501(c)(3) organization.

Our mailing address is:

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Keene Valley, NY 12943

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