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Be Active and Avoid the Crowd

By Dave Kraus

As social distancing has become the “new normal” for a while, bicycling alone or with loved ones has become one of the few ways to get together, exercise, and get out of the house. Across the country, thousands of long-neglected bikes have been hauled down from attics, up from basements, out of garages, and returned to active duty on close-to-home urban bike trails across the country.

But there’s just one problem with this two-wheeled resurgence: everyone else seems to be doing it, too. Certain sections of urban multiuse trails are so popular that it’s almost impossible to keep safe social distance from the crowds looking for the same benefits.

But there are a number of trails in the Capital Region and beyond, which offer a variety of riding experiences to suit just about any kind of rider, while avoiding most of the crowds. Check out our list below. Just make sure to be prepared before you go seek them out:

Watch the clock – Consider riding at “off-hours,” such as early mornings, evenings or weekdays. *Step aside and keep your distance* – Don’t be afraid to pull over off the trail to allow others to pass while maintaining at least six feet of distance. *Bring your mask* – Even if you decide not to wear it while riding, tuck it into your jersey pocket, or keep it around your neck, in case you stop to meet others or go into a local business.

Know your trail etiquette – This is not the Tour de France. Ride at a reasonable speed and call out before you overtake other cyclists or pedestrians. No reaction? They’re probably wearing earbuds, so act accordingly. Let others know you are “passing left” or “passing right.” *Call ahead* – Many of these trails have local



CHAMPLAIN CANALWAY TRAIL FROM WATERFORD TO HALFMOON. DAVE KRAUS/KRAUSGRAFIK.COM

businesses nearby.

If you’re planning to stop for ice cream, a drink or to see a visitor center, call first to make sure they are open during the pandemic. We’ve included phone numbers here where appropriate. *Stay safe* – Don’t let this be your final ride. Wear your helmet!

Now for the trails. Some are short. Others are long. There’s something for everyone.

Champlain Canalway Trail, Waterford to Halfmoon, 5 miles one-way – Any wide-tired bike, gravel, all off-road, dogs allowed on leash. This newly renovated urban-rural trail follows the tow-path of the 200-year-old Champlain Canal north from Waterford and is a great option for families with children. Park at Brookwood Road in Halfmoon and explore in either direction. Go north to see a large beaver dam and walk down into historic Lock 26, where in the early 1800s mule-drawn barges passed through on their way north to Lake Champlain with the products of a growing nation.

Or go south and find an even larger beaver dam and views of the Momentive chemicals factory. In either direction, you’ll find wildlife including geese, ducks, turtles, muskrats, and in the early morning you may get a glimpse of beavers at work.

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PADDLING

Lessons I Have Learned

By Rich Macha

There are numerous ways we can learn about a subject, but for many of us, there is nothing like first-hand experience to really drive a point home. However, some of those experiences are best avoided and we can learn by listening to the voice of experience whether it be in print, video or in person. There are a few paddling-oriented things that I do not think get enough attention and I will touch on some of them here.

The weather - There are several ways we can get a weather forecast these days, and thanks to the internet, it's possible to get a forecast for the exact location you are planning to paddle. Knowing that it will be warm and sunny is nice but it will be the strength and direction of the wind that will affect your paddling day the most. The wind, and resulting waves, will be a greater factor when paddling large lakes and less important when paddling small streams. I have changed plans from the former to the latter when I saw that moderate to high winds were in the forecast. The greater the fetch, the distance over which the wind travels unimpeded, the more you will feel its effects. When the forecast is predicting winds of 10-15mph, I usually anticipate it to be 10-20mph once I get out on open water, and I question whether that would be advisable to paddle.

The *direction* of the wind is also very important. For example, if the lake is oriented in a south-north direction, and the wind is coming from the north or south, it will affect the conditions much more than if the wind was from the west or east. A number of years ago a small group of us kayaked out to Valcour Island on Lake Champlain, and camped on the island's east side, only to find that the wind had turned to the south the next morning - and waves were in the three-foot range. None of us wanted to return to the Peru boat launch in those conditions, even though it was only two miles away. I also wondered if I had brought enough food to stay another day and wait for things to calm down. Luckily, by late afternoon, the wind direction changed to westerly and we were able to paddle out uneventfully.

If you must paddle in the wind, you will have an easier time of it if you paddle along the same shore that the wind is coming from. For example, if the wind is coming from the west, then paddling along the west shore should be fine. I have often paddled a longer but safer distance by following the shoreline, plus I find that there is always more to see there anyway. Mornings are usually the best time of day to paddle when the lake surface is often calm, and special memories can be created while experiencing sunrises and morning mist. Kayakers have the advantage of choosing to use a spray skirt to keep water from entering the cockpit area, and there can be times where paddling in waves can actually be fun when so equipped.

Decision making, aka the warm and sunny day syndrome - It's a sunny spring day with the temperature in the 70s so let's go kayak the Schoharie Creek despite having limited skills - like being able to maneuver in a strong current - and despite the fact that the water level is sort of on the high side.

Two people, in separate incidents a few hours apart, were rescued from the creek early this May. A fair amount of rain had fallen that week and the water level had risen to three feet on the gauge at Burtonsville. Through my research and experience, I have learned that a level of between 1.5-2 feet is best for a fun trip on the Schoharie above and below Middleburgh. At three feet, the flow is three times more powerful than when the river is at two feet - 4,500 cubic feet per second versus 1,500cfs.

My biggest fear when paddling moving water is coming up on *strainers* - trees that have fallen down across the water. Often, there is a way around them but there may only be a



WIND WAVES ON LAKE CHAMPLAIN AT AUSABLE POINT.

small opening and aggressive maneuvering is necessary. This was the case at the time of the incidents on a stretch of the Schoharie, across from the cliffs of Vroman's Nose, and the kayakers were unable to paddle past successfully. Rescue personnel included fire and ambulance, swift-water rescue, search and rescue, police and homeland security - not good in these days of Covid-19.

When exploring moving waters for the first time, I highly recommend that you go with someone who knows the river well, learn and practice some maneuvering strokes like draw strokes, and do some research before venturing out.

Painters - A painter is just a rope that is attached to your canoe or kayak, most often to the bow, but it does not hurt to have one attached to the stern too. A painter can be used to line a boat through shallows, pull it over beaver dams, and to secure it on shore when you stop for a break or at a campsite so that it does not wander off when you are not watching.

I was once camping on one of the islands on Lake George, and sat by the water enjoying my morning coffee, when I spotted an empty canoe floating between the islands. I jumped into my canoe, and towed it back to my island, where I tied it to a tree in a spot where it could easily be seen. Unfortunately, I did not get to see the faces of the owners when they discovered their transportation out of there was missing. Since then, I always tie down my boat even when I bring it in well away from shore - you never know when the wind could kick up and take it away.

On a downstream trip on the Batten Kill a few years ago, our group of six solo paddlers stopped for lunch on a gravel bank. A pretty good rainstorm had passed through earlier that day and the water level rose slowly throughout the day. After a time, one of the group members counted only five boats. All of us jumped up and made our way downstream, and luckily found the stray canoe hung up on a strainer (a downed tree) about 200 yards below our lunch spot, and we were able to extricate it with a little effort. The paddle had remained with the canoe but the life jacket was missing - we



DOWNED TREES, OR STRAINERS, CAN BE A PROBLEM.



LINING THE CANOE THROUGH SHALLOWS BETWEEN TURTLE AND SLANG PONDS IN THE SAINT REGIS CANOE AREA.

found it about a mile further downstream. Now, if that canoe had been tied to a tree, this never would have happened.

Speaking of trips that involve shuttles, the group should make sure that the owners of any cars at the take-out should remember to bring the car keys - this did not happen once on an Oswego River trip in New Jersey's Pine Barrens. Hitchhiking was not working and we had to wait an extra-long time in cool temperatures for a ranger to come and bail us out.

Our lives may have changed recently but nature and life on the water are not much different - please enjoy safely and responsibly. 🌲

A lover of wild places, Rich Macha of Albany has led many trips for the Adirondack Mountain Club, and has spent 20 years in the paddlesport/snowsport business. More of Rich's adventures can be found at northeastwild.blogspot.com.

A KAYAK WANDERS AWAY ON CHUB LAKE. PHOTOS BY RICH MACHA

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Be Optimistic

With so much uncertainty stressing our mental health, it seems crazy to focus on optimism at this time. You may be worried about money, loved ones, your health or feeling helpless. But optimism is simply being hopeful, even when today feels so negative. It happens to be the most useful during a crisis because it can reduce negative effects of stress, help us cope and recover.


One of the keys to being more resilient is to practice compassion. This can be focusing on breathing, getting outside, or talking with family or friends to get a new outlook – such as ‘one day at a time,’ ‘I can handle it,’ or ‘do the best you can.’ Another is to find pleasure in small things like baking, doing puzzles, listening to music, or taking the dog for a walk. Enjoy the moment with fun activities or welcome distractions to avoid news overload.

During this challenging time look for meaning to better know yourself, focus on what’s important, be compassionate toward others, and what you strive to be in this world. This may help reduce stress, increase positivity, learn lessons and avoid illness. Give back by staying home, socially distancing (wear a mask), and supporting others – getting groceries or contacting friends or family. This can make you feel better as well.

Pay attention to your negative feelings, which can help identify important things, but don’t be overly optimistic. Resilience requires emotional complexity and the ability to experience positive and negative emotions at the same time. Use this stressful time to cope with challenges, change for the better, and find new solutions. Optimism is giving yourself reason to hope, manage negative thoughts, and learn new ways to endure uncertainty.

Hang in there!

Danyel



A RAINBOW PROVIDES HOPE ON A RECENT RIDE WITH MEGHANA CARON IN CLIFTON PARK.

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– Recent Competitors





Tour de Cure is Now Virtual

ALBANY - The health and safety of people living with diabetes, their families, supporters and volunteers is the American Diabetes Association's top priority. With that in mind, they're hosting the Tour de Cure: Capital Region on Sept. 13 in Ballston Spa, and ALL events nationwide, virtually. The virtual event is a chance to participate with other supporters in the community, keeping safe distancing in place. Prior to event day, they will have engaging ways to connect to our community of supporters.

To participate, ride, run or walk your intended distance and wear red to represent the ADA. Post on your social network why you're participating - in honor or memory of someone; to encourage others to live a healthy lifestyle. Share a picture, a post or video using the hashtag #VirtualTourdeCure2020. Track and share your progress as you train. Post a fundraising goal and a link to your fundraising page. Join the ADA community Facebook group to stay connected and enjoy the virtual experience together.

People living with diabetes are at greater risk from the coronavirus and ADA ensures they have the resources

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needed with the latest info and resources at diabetes.org/coronavirus.

Over 34 million Americans are living with diabetes, 88 million people are living with prediabetes, and 90% of them don't even know it. Every 21 seconds someone in the US is diagnosed with diabetes. ADA is committed to helping those living with diabetes thrive.

The Tour de Cure offers year-round engagement with motivated participants and support from the business community, including sponsorship and corporate teams, TdC events across the country raise funds for research, advocacy, programs and education. There is no registration fee for the 2020 virtual Tour and the fundraising goal is only \$100 to earn your event T-shirt (\$50 for 12 and under). Register: diabetes.org/capitalregion. For more info, contact Laura Greenaway at lgreenaway@diabetes.org or 518-218-1755 x3606. ▲

Bianchi Bikes to Young Survivors

HAYWARD, CA - Bianchi USA continues its partnership with the Young Survival Coalition, supporting the 2020 Survivor Bike Program, which supplies free bikes to young adults facing breast cancer and unable to afford to ride in YSC Tour de Pink. YSC provides info, resources, and support to women in the US diagnosed with breast cancer before their 41st birthday. Tour de Pink, three-day rides on the East (10/2) and West (10/23) coasts with 250 riders each, hope to raise \$1.2 million in 2020. Tami Flanders, a local bicycle recipient and survivor, was 39 when diagnosed in 2015. Although her mother and grandmother had the disease, she was otherwise healthy.



TAMI FLANDERS, LEFT.

Tami learned about the program online, "It made me feel less alone. I got to meet up with others who talked to me about their experiences. Everyone was so accepting and uplifting." She did Cycle the Erie Canal with her daughter for four years, and planned to do Biking Across Kansas this year before it was canceled due to Covid-19. She picked up her bike at Tomhannock Bicycles in Pittstown. "The partnership directly connects with our mission to get more people on bikes. Working with our retailers, we deliver bikes that change lives", says Heather Mason, program coordinator. Bianchi's Dama Ambassador Team raises funds at yscchampions.org/survivorbikes to buy bikes for cancer survivors. Dama team members will ride with recipients at the October rides. For more info, email heather@bianchiusa.com, visit youngsurvival.org, or join the ride: ysctourdepink.org. ▲ -Linda Waxman Finkle

Hike-A-Thon is Going Virtual

BOLTON LANDING - Due to the pandemic and focus on individual outings, the Hike-A-Thon will be run as a virtual event rather than volunteer-led groups. Lake George Land Conservancy knows that it's disappointing, but after considering multiple factors, it's the best decision at this time. The event was on route to be the largest, most exciting Hike-A-Thon yet. And it still can be, with your help. They encourage everyone, registered or not, to participate. Registered hikers will still receive their free 2020 Hike-A-Thon shirt.



To participate, go outside on Sunday, July 5 to enjoy an outing on your own. This may be in your own backyard, a local park, or other favorite hike or paddle. Practice social distancing and choose a destination that is local to you and not crowded. Show your pride with a shirt from a past Hike-A-Thon or this year's event. If not registered, the shirts are available for purchase on lgcstore.myshopify.com (orders by 6/5 for delivery by 7/1. Share a selfie or two on Facebook or Instagram, with the hashtag #LGHikeAThon2020 - be sure to let LGLC know where you are and who you're with. Follow them @HikeLakeGeorge and @LakeGeorgeHikeAThon. If not on social media, email pics@shoffman@lgc.org. For more info, visit lakegeorgehikeathon.org. ▲

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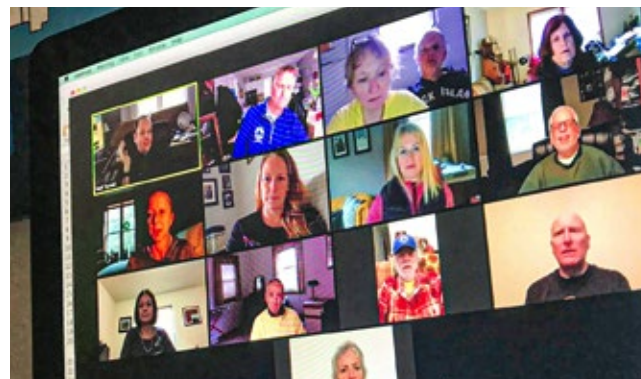






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RUNNING



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- SARATOGA STRYDERS POST-RUN GATHERING ON ZOOM.

By Laura Clark

Races canceled. Schools closed. Theaters shut down. Stadiums locked... Overnight we went from overload to scarcity; from no personal time at all to way too much. Accompanying that, we acquired a new vocabulary: abundance of caution, social distancing, new normal, quarantine. As runners we are fortunate that ours is not a contact sport. Or is it? Think Boston, Freihofer's or any mega start/finish line, and we have to reconsider. But unlike team players who really need a lineup, we can at least get out there solo or with family for our daily fix.

Still, we all need a community, human contact that involves more than Facetime. To this end, I'm amazed at how quickly running clubs and shops have reinvented themselves, making the best of a difficult situation, and striving to maintain connectivity however virtual that may have to be. Below is an inventory of what regional entities have creatively designed to help us remain in the game.

Saratoga Stryders has been gradually adding options. While their Saratoga Spa State Park gatherings and weekly runs are canceled, club coaches John Couch, Mary Fenton and Tony Lupo have been diligently creating videos and written descriptions of the Wednesday night workouts for members to execute, either singly or with a socially-distanced friend. Afterwards, instead of meeting at R.S. Taylor & Sons Brewery, participants share our stories via Zoom - often, with a drink in hand.

With Stryders Grand Prix races canceled, the events are now virtual. So far, a virtual 5K drew over 80 registrants to benefit a good cause, and members are looking forward to virtual 1M, 10K, 4M, and 5K trail races. Virtual events can be run on any similarly-distanced route, trail or road, flat or hilly, with participants posting via Strava or Garmin, or emailing time and route. Events typically occur over a span of a few days to a week or more - so if you are not pleased with your time, you have the option of repeating... When have you ever been able to run the same race twice to post the better time! While obviously not a "real" race with myriad participants,

Running Reinvention

this feature does pose a fun challenge, with members wearing favorite old racing bibs, and donating to selected charities.

Since it seems as if we runners will be using our imagination for a while, the Stryders Book Club, normally hosted by Palette Cafe, will resume via Zoom on June 2 with *Let Your Mind Run* by Deena Kastor taking the spotlight. For more info, visit saratogastryders.org.

In nearby Malta, the Roundabout Runners Club, under the leadership of Malta 5K/10K race director Paul Loomis, has been inventively keeping members engaged. This is a somewhat unusual club for the area, in that besides the usual adult component, it includes an enthusiastic youth membership focusing on track & field and cross-country. The group is especially close-knit as many of the adults are themselves parents of the participating kids. According to Paul, "We have been sending out a club email with a list of workouts for the kids. Parents have been great sending out pictures of the kids through our TeamReach app." Participants in the adult social runs keep in touch via Facebook Messenger app, and currently have logged a virtual half marathon to replace AREEP's Helderberg to Hudson. Finally, every Saturday a revolving group of family volunteers gather to work on the Luther Forest trails, using materials donated by the Town of Malta and Global Foundries, with the eventual goal of holding a bimonthly trail series. Go to roundaboutrunnersclub.com.

Next, travel to Hudson-Mohawk Road Runners Club to read *The Pacesetter*, their club newsletter for some interesting profiles about how various members are coping with Covid-19 restrictions - lots of good advice. HMRRRC offered a virtual option for the Runnin' of the Green race,

and more opportunities are anticipated for those who do better at maintaining consistency with a fixed goal in mind.

Also, Albany Running Exchange's Social Distance Running Challenge, where runners can select 5K, 10K or 13.1M options to be completed any time during the month of May. Distances can be run repeatedly, with the fastest selected. All participants receive a customizable bib, and a must-have toilet paper roll medal, as well as the option to contribute to the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern NY. Check out socialdistancerunningchallenge.com.

While qualifying as neither a running club or specialty store, Freihofer's Run for Women is such a local institution that it deserves mention. Not to be deterred, co-race director Kristen Hislop muses, "How do you cancel a race that has been running for 41 years? Do you try to postpone to the fall, compete with the fall calendar, and all the newly postponed events?" Their solution is to offer a menu of selections: allow registrants a full refund, offer the option to donate their fee to the race charities, or propose a virtual component stressing the sheer joy of running for you.

Freihofer's Run has been a long-standing tradition for my daughters and grandkids, and now thanks to this opportunity, one of my daughters who lives in Ohio can once again run with us! On the plus side, next year they're considering virtual opportunities for loyal Freihofer's Run followers who find themselves scattered in different parts of the country. For more info, freihoferstrun.com.

In Saratoga Springs, iRun LOCAL is partnering with Freihofer's Run, offering a gift card for their raffle. Owner Jamie Mastroianni states her shop is open for

online orders, curbside pickup, free local deliveries within a 45-minute radius, and free shipping - so there is no excuse to postpone your run. She also mentioned that breathable runner-specific face masks will be available soon. Go to irunlocal.com.

Besides their usual offerings, Fleet Feet in Albany and Malta is emphasizing hydration systems and on-the-go energy products, a wide buff assortment and face masks - everything to make you an independent runner, not reliant on unnecessary exposure. Owner Charles Woodruff is busy smoothing out supply changes and instituting virtual fittings - processes that will enhance the experience once the stores reopen.

Fleet Feet's Training Programs have shifted to virtual workouts, and they cap-off every week with a computer-generated Thursday night happy hour! Coach Mark Mindel has connected the Fleet Feet training teams to the national Run Free Grand Prix, through USATF New England, with a virtual 10K, 1M, 5K and 13.1M. Once the half-marathon is completed on May 7-10, Mark plans to ramp-up a set of Fleet Feet Grand Prix races in various distances as well. If you opt-in, expect lots of informative and entertaining updates from Mark, and fellow-runner profiles to keep things interesting! Visit fleetfeetalbany.com.

Although there is no real comparison, our "new normal" reminds me of the time when the children's floor of the Saratoga Springs Public Library was closed for a few months for a facelift. We crammed as many library items as we could into one room and carried on. No longer did we have fancy toys, but selected only the basics - a set of wooden blocks and animals. Amazingly, and with no complaints, the kids played cooperatively for hours, building elaborate structures and story lines. While I wouldn't go back, I do still miss those days of imaginative play.

Although no one wanted this pandemic and staying home to happen, the inventiveness, sense of community, and sheer appreciation of the simple act of running without all the frills are lessons we can apply to a post-Covid world! 🌲

Laura Clark (snowshoegal133@gmail.com) of Saratoga Springs is an avid trail runner, ultramarathoner, snowshoer and cross-country skier. She is a children's librarian at the Saratoga Springs Public Library.

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HIKING & BACKPACKING

Big Bad Luck

By Bill Ingersoll

Often, the name of a backcountry landmark suggests an interesting tale. For instance, Calamity Pond in the High Peaks got its name when a gun accidentally discharged and killed a man. Good Luck Pond near Arietta was named when the same event occurred but no one was injured. Between those two ponds is Big Bad Luck Pond near Indian Lake. I'm sure there is a story here too, but so far, I haven't come across it.

There has been a marked hiking trail to Big Bad Luck and its neighbors for about 20 years, although ever since the opening of nearby OK Slip Falls to the public, the ponds have been getting short shrift. Since social distancing measures were first implemented in March there has been a crowding issue at the trailhead parking area, but I recently revisited the area confirmed that nearly everyone has been going to the waterfall. The branching trail network to the ponds has been cleared out this spring, but it sees far less use.

Getting There

The trailhead parking area can be found on NY Route 28, 7.8 miles east of the hamlet of Indian Lake (or 9.7 miles northwest of the hamlet of North Creek), at a fork with an unnamed side road. You will need to walk westward along the shoulder of the highway for 0.2-mile to find the sign for the start of the trail.

The Trail

The trail to Ross, Whortleberry, and Big Bad Luck ponds shares a common trailhead with the route to OK Slip Falls. Begin by following that trail down from the highway and through a short muddy area, intercepting an old road within minutes. Bear right and follow the marked foot trail for 0.7-mile, over a small hill to a junction where the new blue-marked trail to OK Slip bears right.

The trail up to this point has become a well-worn route ever since the OK Slip purchase. The old trail to the left seems like a faint wilderness track by comparison, although it is marked and relatively easy to follow. It follows the trace of an old roadbed north and downhill into the valley of Bell Mountain Brook. This stream, which you reach at 1.1 miles, does not have a legitimate bridge but is easy enough to cross. On my spring visit, I kept my boots dry by stepping on an assortment of small logs placed in a bridge-like position.

The trail then embarks on its longest climb, rising 220 feet in 0.4-mile to a rugged little notch with rock outcrops. A prolonged descent follows, with the trail passing close to beaver meadows, which appear forlorn and muddy with their dams in disrepair. The trail circles through a muddy area, with a few stepping stones erratically placed, and at 2.2 miles you reach the junction with the side trail to Ross Pond (see map).

Continuing northwest, you dip through a glen and reach the side trail to Big Bad Luck Pond at 2.6 miles (see map). Still following the main trail to Whortleberry, watch for a right turn 0.1-mile later. The trail is arcing northeast through a coniferous forest, but an unmarked trail continues straight, enticing you to stray in the wrong direction.

The rest of the hike to Whortleberry Pond passes through a thick forest of spruce, balsam, and pine, with the marked trail ending at 2.9 miles at a campsite in a rocky clearing. You are very close to Whortleberry Pond at this point, although you can barely see it from here.

There are two ways to proceed. The shortest route to the shoreline is an unmarked path that leads northwest and downhill for about 250 feet to the pond's southern shore. This area is wooded and boggy, and the view of the pond will entice you to seek out something better.

The better option used to be to follow another unmarked trail leading northeast from the campsite for 0.2-mile. I speak in the past tense because beaver flooding has effectively cut off easy foot access to the scenic campsite at the east end



MAP & PHOTOS BY
BILL INGERSOLL

of Whortleberry. The path led toward the outlet of the pond, crossed it, and then hooked west to reach the campsite. Northern Frontier, the nearby youth camp on OK Slip Pond, keeps a small fleet of boats stashed on the south bank of the outlet, presumably to make this crossing easier.

Side Trail to Ross Pond

A yellow-marked side trail (see map) leads to a very charming campsite on the south end of Ross Pond. The spur is 0.3-mile long and has a very faint tread, but basically it circles the shoreline around the southernmost tip of the pond, hops up a small rock ledge, and ends at the prominent campsite. A herd path leads down to a scenic ledge. The campsite is spacious, and the water seems inviting for a summer swim – I haven't had the chance to try that yet. Because the total one-way hiking distance from Route 28 is only 2.5 miles, this is probably the popular favorite of the three ponds.

Side Trail to Big Bad Luck Pond

This is the largest of the three ponds, although admittedly the trail experience always leaves me wanting more. The blue-marked hiking trail turns left from the stem trail to Whortleberry (see map), leading generally west for 0.7-mile. Much of that distance takes you through a coniferous forest, but there is also a prolonged section – very pleasing! – that leads along the southern edge of Big Bad Luck's wide outlet.

The problem is that the marked trail ends well shy of the pond's widest point, meaning that you can only see a corner from land. There is a small fleet of rowboats here, and you would definitely need a boat to explore more of the pond. There is also an attractive campsite here – you can see it from the trail, about 0.2-mile away on the opposite shoreline.

Wilderness Recreation in the Time of Covid-19

Our favorite outdoor recreational pursuits are perhaps more vital to our mental health than at any time previously.



BIG BAD LUCK POND.



WHORTLEBERRY POND.

However, not only do social distancing guidelines remain in effect, but many facilities and services in the Adirondacks remain closed.

Key Guidelines for Outdoor Recreation – 1) Stay local, keep visits short, and avoid high-traffic destinations. 2) Be safe by keeping a six-foot separation from other people on the trail. 3) Be ready to move quickly through places where other people might be congregated, including parking areas and scenic vistas. 4) Stay home if you are not feeling well, or fall within one of the high-risk groups for contracting Covid-19. 🌲

Bill Ingersoll of Barneveld is publisher of the *Discover the Adirondacks* guidebook series (hiketheadironacks.com). For more info, consult *Discover the Central Adirondacks* or his recently-published *50 Hikes in the Adirondack Mountains* (Countryman Press).

 **ATHLETE PROFILE**

Anna Laloë

Adventure in her DNA



NIGHT RIDING IN SMBA TRAILS. DAVE GIOKAS



ANNE-SOPHIE AND ZOE AFTER A MOUNTAIN BIKE RACE.



WITH TEAMMATE JENN DEAN AT NYS CYCLOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIPS.

By Linda Waxman Finkle

If all you knew about Anna Laloë was that she started the Saratoga Girls' Mountain Bike Group and STEAM Talks for Kids, you'd be impressed by her creativity, initiative, and willingness to take risks. In each case, she saw a need, and harnessed her talents to meet it. The reality is that these character traits have been consistent throughout her life, and these two projects are just the latest tip of the iceberg, a fitting metaphor.

Since her childhood on Cape Cod, Anna has led an exciting and atypical life, combining a love of learning and sports, with a burning desire to be outdoors. With a mom who was an archaeologist and an Ironman triathlete – top 10 overall female at the Kona Ironman World Championships three times – a sense of adventure and a competitive spirit are in her genes. Weekends were spent traveling from race to race, and she was a three-sport athlete in high school, excelling in track, cross-country and gymnastics. Ultimate Frisbee was her sport at Carleton College in Minnesota, and she won the College National Championships her senior year. “I studied Geology as an undergrad as an excuse to be outside,” she freely admits.

After college, unsure of what she wanted to do next, she moved to Alaska and worked for the National Park Service for a year, at the base of Exit Glacier. Her undergraduate summers had been spent in Iceland and Svalbard (Arctic Norway) studying glacial sediments, and she decided to pursue that field, earning her master's degree and PhD at the University of Cambridge in England. Although there were no women who played Ultimate Frisbee there, she joined the team and coached, eventually becoming part of the Great Britain National Women's Team, playing all over Europe and the world.

Working in Antarctica for the British Antarctic Survey came next, including three field seasons camping with only a field assistant, as she studied ancient glacial sediments to reconstruct past climates. “We

RESIDENCE: Saratoga Springs
HOMETOWN: Cape Cod
AGE: 41
FAMILY: Anne-Sophie, 10; Zoe, 8
CAREER: Geologist/Environmental Consultant
SPORT: Mountain Biking

lived in a four-sided 9' x 9' pyramid canvas tent with no floor, hiking every day, and taking in so many calories just to maintain our weight. Once, we were stuck inside for four days straight as a snowstorm raged outside,” she recalls.

After returning to the US, she continued to publish academic papers, and gave birth to her two daughters, Anne-Sophie and Zoe. But she missed competing. Mountain biking became a big part of her life in 2014, after an astute neighbor brought her to the Saratoga Mountain Bike Association trails, right behind Skidmore College; he didn't tell her that they were some of the most technical trails in the Northeast. “I was a stay at home mom in Saratoga, and mountain biking became the little bit of crazy that I needed in my life.” She was hooked.

She hit the road for three to five hours every day, and raced with North American Velo, a Saratoga-based cycling race club, becoming 2017 and 2018 NYS Mountain Biking Champion in Category 1. “If you have the chance to ride the same trails on a different bike, or the same bike on different trails, your bike handling skills will improve dramatically,” she offers. This approach worked well when she raced cyclocross in the Elite category.

This was also the time when Anna began her XTERRA career in the off-season. XTERRA organizes off-road triathlons and trail runs around the world, and SkyHigh Adventures at Grafton Lakes State Park was one of the oldest races in the country with a 1K swim, 15K mountain bike, and 6K trail run. With relentless perseverance, she became northeast regional champion in short order, qualifying for the XTERRA World Championships in Hawaii.



OVERALL FEMALE PODIUM, WITH STEPHANIE LANDY (CENTER), AT XTERRA SKYHIGH OFF-ROAD TRIATHLON AT GRAFTON LAKES STATE PARK.

Regularly training three to four days per week in the off-season, for three to four hours at a time at a low heart rate, her endurance grew rapidly. “I was really just cross training for mountain bike racing, basically swimming Ironman distances every time I jumped in the pool (2.4 miles) and running two half marathons per week,” she explains. She also snowshoed, cross country skied, and took out her fat bike.

These days, Anna is focused on getting young girls on bikes. “I started this selfishly a couple of years ago for my then six- and eight-year-old daughters. When you hike and bike with your own children, they'll often complain. But, as soon as other adults or kids join, the complaints stop.”

Participants in the Saratoga Girls' Mountain Bike Rides range in age from five to 11 years old, but kids are eligible as soon as they're off training wheels. They meet once a week – usually Wednesdays or Fridays at 4pm – in the fall and spring, for about eight to 10 weeks each season. While there are about 130 families involved, 10 to 20 girls (plus moms and other women who lead), show up every week; these break up into a few groups of five to seven riders each. Special bikes aren't needed as kids' bikes have wide tires. “This isn't a racing group – that would mean fewer opportunities for the girls who want to do this. There's healthy peer pressure. We want them to feel a sense of accomplishment, and also that they've been on an adventure every time they go out,” she says.

The fun begins with an information session and learning very basic mountain biking and group riding skills, such as leaving enough space between riders. Anna provides the snacks, and the girls bring their own water bottles. They start off together, and then split, with two adults riding with each group for about an hour. To cover insurance costs, there's a nominal \$40 fee per girl for the eight-week sessions, and rides usually take place in the Saratoga Spa State Park or Luther Forest.

One of Anna's hopes, although not an expectation, is that the girls will be ready to join a NICA NY team once they're in sixth grade. The National Interscholastic Cycling Association aims to foster character development through mountain biking programs for student-athletes across the US (racing is not required to participate). NICA also has a GRiT (Girls Riding Together) program specifically designed to get more girls together on bikes, including special rides and camps. Some of these NICA girls go on to compete at a college level.

Girls living in the Capital Region in grades six to 12 that would like to join a NICA team, can contact Andrew Rizzi (arizzi5@yahoo.com) with the Niskayuna/Mohawk Mountain Goats or Rich Tortorici (rcubed-nica@gmail.com) with R-Cubed. The teams even have a few loaner bikes for those in need. Girls in Glens Falls and Saratoga



RIEDLBAUER'S ROUND TOP RALLY. STEVE JONES



GIRLS' MOUNTAIN BIKE CLUB IN SARATOGA SPA STATE PARK. NORTH COUNTRY MTB.



SOME MEMBERS OF NORTH AMERICAN VELO.



Springs, should contact Niles Gagnon or Steve Fairchild with Grey Ghost Bicycles (greyghostbicycles@gmail.com). The teams ride and race with the New York High School Cycling Association, but racing is optional and not required for joining; everyone rides no matter what her/his ability or skill level.

When Covid-19 hit and kids were suddenly home, Anna developed another idea that quickly proved popular, "STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) Talks for Kids!" a Facebook group where she hosts weekly Zoom calls for 200+ families. "I have a large network of people with very interesting backgrounds - scientists and artists, for example. I reached out to them and asked if they would share their knowledge, and now we have 20 to 70 kids on every week." Topics include emperor penguins in Antarctica, muscle movement and foot orthotics, what being a pediatrician across the world is like, and how the body functions in space. While listening in on a talk by Anna's cousin, who works for

Facebook, it was clear that the kids were soaking it all in.

Professionally, Anna works as an environmental consultant for Arcadis, focusing on sustainability projects around the world. "I missed my career, and am glad to have found my science path again. It's wonderful to have the flexibility that allows me to be home with my kids and also to do work that I'm passionate about."

When asked to recall her best races, her most memorable is the Black Fly Challenge in the Adirondacks. "It was the very first cycling race I ever entered, 40 miles in one direction on any kind of bike on chunky gravel roads. I won the Sport category, and it just fueled my fire for racing. It's one of the original 'gravel grinders' that have become so popular in bike racing in the last couple of years."

Anna's favorite mountain bike race is the Vermont 50, a 50-mile race in Brownsville, Vt. "This is a trail system that only opens to the public one day each year for the race because many parts are on private land. It begins at 6am., you start off wearing a headlamp, and then you're out on these gorgeous trails, racing for six hours. There's just an amazing level of grit and endurance required in the race," she says.

And, how are things going during the pandemic? "I love having the kids at home. We've been doing fun things like sleeping outside." What do you want your daughters to learn? "To have fun and be kind. That they can have it all - they can play and have a career in the outdoors. I hope that I can always adventure with them the way I

adventured with my family - respecting the environment while fully enjoying being surrounded by it. I want them to understand that you can have fun, that life can be an adventure, and that you can also be successful all along the way."

Clearly, it's all in her DNA, and her kids, and now all of us, are the lucky beneficiaries. 🌲

Linda Waxman Finkle (LWF518@gmail.com) is an Albany-based writer who loves sports, science, history, and learning new things. She spends many hours on the road, exploring the world, and visiting family and friends.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MAY TO AUGUST 2020* *Events beyond this range are advertisers in this issue

BICYCLING: ROAD

ONGOING

Daily Mohawk Hudson Cycling Club. Group rides on hold. Capital Region. mohawkhudsoncyclingclub.org.

MAY

- 2-31 Holeshoot Hill Climb. Friendly virtual competition in western Schenectady County: Crawford, Sterling & Ennis roads. Schenectady. holeshootevents.com.
- 16 **Pucks and Pedals Cycling Tour.** Postponed: date TBD. 40M/20M road rides. 9am. Glens Falls Civic Center, Glens Falls. bikereg.com.
- 17 **Team Billy.** Postponed to 9/27. 10M/25M/50M rides & 3M walk. Farmer's Market, Saratoga Springs. teambilly.org.
- 17 **Prospect Mountain Hill Climb: Virtual Race.** 5M. Fundraiser for Freedom Machines. Veterans Memorial Highway, Lake George. Details: itsyourrace.com.
- 17 Spokes & Folks: Bikeatoga's Virtual Film & Music Festival. 4:30pm. Virtual screening of locally-made short films & music. Free but donations welcome. bikeatoga.org.
- 30 Ride the Ridge Bike Challenge. Postponed: date TBD. 80M. Stone Ridge. bikereg.com.
- 30 Cazenovia Hillbender Cycling Festival. 38M. 9am. Cazenovia Ski Club, Chittenango. cazenoviahillbender.com.

JUNE

- 26-28 **Bike Adirondacks: Weekender.** Paul Smith's College, Paul Smiths. 518-524-4674. bikeadironacks.com.
- 27-28 Ride for Mental Health: Virtual. New Paltz. rideformentalhealth.org.

JULY

- 12 **Janey's Ride.** Road - Metric (62M, 8:30am), Recreation (30M, 10:30am), Family (17M, 11am). Gravel Grinder - Muddy Mother (75M, 8am). Grey Ghost Bicycles fundraiser for Breast Cancer Care & Research Fund at Glens Falls Hospital. Common Roots Brewing, South Glens Falls. bikereg.com.
- 12-19 22nd Cycle the Erie Canal Bike Tour. Canceled. 400M. Buffalo to Albany. ptny.org.
- 17 **9th Ride for the River.** Hungry Trout Resort, Wilmington. bikeadironacks.com.
- 18 Tour de Hope. 25M. Centerville Fire House, Saugerties. bikereg.com.
- 18 Barns & Boats Bike Tour. 12M, 36M, 52M. Chaumont. bikereg.com.
- 19-24 20th Great Big FANY Ride. Canceled. 500M across NY. Plattsburgh to Poughkeepsie. fanyride.com.
- 26 **Ididaride: Adirondack Bike Tour.** 55M road (new route!): 9am. 23M gravel grinder: 10am. Gore Mountain Ski Bowl, North Creek. adk.org/ididaride.com.

AUGUST

- 1 13th Tour of the Catskills. 75M, 52M, 24M. Tannersville. bikereg.com.

- 8 30th Tour de Loop Road Race. Canceled. Oswego. bikereg.com.
- 16 **MHCC Empire Cyclefest.** 30M, 50M, 62M, 100M rides. Formerly MHCC Century Weekend. New venue, one-day event, food/drink options. Mabee Farm, Rotterdam Junction. bikereg.com.

SEPTEMBER

- 6 **Catskill Mountain Cycling Challenge Road Rides.** 29M, 57M, 99M. Catskill Recreation Center, Arkville. bikereg.com.
- 13 **Capital Region Tour de Cure: Virtual.** Bike: 10M, 30M, 50M, 62.5M, 100M. Run/Walk: 5K. Ballston Spa. To benefit American Diabetes Association. 518-218-1755 x3606. Diabetes.org/capitalregion.
- 26 **9th Drops to Hops Race & Ride.** 43M & 23M. Brewery Ommegang, Cooperstown. clarksportscenter.com.

OCTOBER

- 4 **19th Whiteface Uphill Bike Race.** 8am. 11M. Whiteface Ski Center, Wilmington. bikereg.com.

BICYCLING: OFF-ROAD

ONGOING

Daily Mohawk Hudson Cycling Club. Group rides on hold. All abilities welcome. Capital Region. mohawkhudsoncyclingclub.org.

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MAY

- 16 **TOBIE:** Ultimate Adirondack Gravel Tour. 35M/20M. Old Forge. 518-524-2292. Cycleadirondacks.com.
- 16 **Sweat N' Spring** Gravel Adventure. 60M. 8am. Ballston Lake. bikereg.com.
- 30 **NatiFo Forty** Gravel Grinder. Canceled. Hector. Mainstreetbikeshop.com.
- 31 **NYS MTB Series #1:** Williams Lake Classic. Canceled. Williams Lake, Kingston. Bikereg.com.

JUNE

- 13 **25th Black Fly Challenge.** Canceled. Adirondack gravel grinder. Inlet to Indian Lake. blackflychallenge.com.
- 14 **Racoon Rally** XC Mountain Bike Race. Salamanca. bikereg.com.
- 27 **Getting Happy in the Valley** Gravel Race. Canceled. Williamstown. bikereg.com.

JULY

- 11 **Peak Woodsplitter** 6-Hour Mountain Bike Race. 9am. Pittsfield, VT. bikereg.com.
- 12 **Janey's Ride.** Gravel Grinder - Muddy Mother (75M, 8am). Road - Metric (62M, 8:30am), Recreation (30M, 10:30am), Family (17M, 11am). Grey Ghost Bicycles fundraiser for Breast Cancer Care & Research Fund at Glens Falls Hospital. Common Roots Brewing, South Glens Falls. bikereg.com.
- 12 **NYS MTB Series #2:** Blood, Sweat & Gears XC Race. Oneonta. nysmtbseries.com.
- 18 **1st Tug Hill Epic** 106M Gravel Grinder. Also: 75M, Fun 40M, Beginner 15M. Lowville. tughillepic.com.

- 26 **IDIDARIDE: Adirondack Bike Tour.** 55M road (new route!): 9am. 23M gravel grinder: 10am. Gore Mountain Ski Bowl, North Creek. adk.org/ididaride.com.
- 26 **NYS MTB Series #3:** Chain Stretcher. Blue Mountain Reservation, Peekskill. bikereg.com.

AUGUST

- 2 **NYS MTB Series #4: Churney Gurney MTB Races.** XC race, new DH race, skills course, group rides & kids' race. Gurney Lane MTB Park, Queensbury. churneygurney.com.
- 15 **D2R2 - Deerfield Dirt Road** Randonee. 180K to 100K routes. Deerfield, MA. bikereg.com.
- 15 **EPIC Farmall Hill** Mountain Bike Challenge. 28M. Sprint 11M. Fairport. bikereg.com.
- 16 **Wicked Vermonty** XC Mountain Bike Race. Grafton, VT. bikereg.com.
- 23 **NYS MTB Series #5:** Pharsalia Woods Widowmaker XC Race. Plymouth. nysmtbseries.com.
- 29 **Bale Kicker** Gravel Grinder. 25M & 40M. 10am. S&S Farm Brewery, Nassau. balekicker.com.

SEPTEMBER

- 13 **Farmer's Daughter** Gravel Grinder. 65M. Crellin Town Park, Chatham. farmersdaughtergravelgrinder.com.

OCTOBER

- 3 **Wilmington Whiteface Mountain Bike Race.** 50K or 100K. 7am. 100K: Leadville qualifier. Whiteface Ski Center, Wilmington. wilmingtonwhiteface.com.
- 24 **Cross Mountain Crusher** Gravel Grinder. Catskill Recreation Center, Arkville. bikereg.com.

HEALTH & FITNESS

ONGOING

Daily Rock Your Fitness: Total Body Training. Zoom Classes: M-W-F 6-7am & 9-10am. Call/text: 518-522-9765. facebook.com/rockyourfitnessllc.

MAY

- 20 **New York Green Amendment Webinar Series #3 - NY Green Amendment: TAKE ACTION.** 11am. Webinar series on NY's efforts to secure a Green Amendment. Hosted by Environmental Advocates of New York & Green Amendments for the Generations. adk.org or Bit.ly/NYGreenAmendment-5.
- 30 **Living Without an Omentum.** 10am-3pm. Free online educational workshop for cancer survivors. Questions: theomentumproject@gmail.com. Register:

HIKING & CLIMBING

ONGOING

Daily Summer Naturalist Series. Walks, hikes, talks. Adirondack Mountain Club. adk.org.

MAY

- 15-17 **No Contact Orienteering.** Garnsey Park, Clifton Park. Empire Orienteering Club. Eric Hamilton: 518-371-7548. skireg.com/no-contact.
- 16 **46er High Peaks: Online Workshop.** Zoom. 8:50am. Adirondack Mountain Club. adk.org.
- 17 **ADK Fire Tower Challenge: Online Workshop.** Zoom. 8:50am. Adirondack Mountain Club. adk.org.
- 20 **New York Green Amendment Webinar Series,** Adirondack Mountain Club. adk.org.

continued



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CONT. FROM PG 15

JUNE

- 10 **Hiking 101: Online Workshop.** Zoom. 8:50am. Adirondack Mountain Club. adk.org.
- 11 **Map & Compass Fundamentals: Online Workshop.** Zoom. 8:50am. Adirondack Mountain Club. adk.org.
- 17 **46er High Peaks: Online Workshop.** Zoom. 8:50am. Adirondack Mountain Club. adk.org.
- 19 **Beginner Backpacking: Online Workshop.** Zoom. 8:50am. Adirondack Mountain Club. adk.org.

JULY

- 2 **Guided Hike: Seymour Mtn.** 14.4M. 7:30am. Rte 3 & Coreys. ADK Mountain Club: 518-523-3480 x111. adk.org.
- 5 **Lake George Land Conservancy: Hike-A-Thon.** Virtual. 20 hiking sites & 2 paddles. Charles Wood Festival Commons, Lake George Village. lakegeorgehikeathon.org.
- 6 **Guided Hike: Donaldson & Emmons.** 14.6M. 7:30am. Rte 3 & Coreys. ADK Mountain Club: 518-523-3480 x111. adk.org.
- 20 **High Peak & Fire Tower: Sawteeth Mtn.** 12.8M. 7:30am. ADK Mountain Club: 518-523-3480 x111. adk.org.
- 27 **Guided Hike: Esther Mountain Summer.** 6.6M. 8:30am. Parking, Ausable River Two Fly Shop, Wilmington. ADK Mountain Club: 518-523-3480 x111. adk.org.

AUGUST

- 3 **Guided Hike: Macomb, South Dix & Grace.** 12.3M. 7:30am. ADK Mountain Club: 518-523-3480 x111. adk.org.
- 31 **High Peak & Fire Tower: Hurricane Mtn.** 7:30am. ADK Mountain Club: 518-523-3480 x111. adk.org.

MULTISPORT: TRIATHLON, DUATHLON & SWIM

ONGOING

- Tue CDTC Summer Training Sessions.** 5/26-8/25. 6pm. Swim, bike, run on Crystal Lake Triathlon course. Crystal Cove, Averill Park. cdtriclub.org.
- Thu BTC Summer Training Sessions.** 5/28-9/3. 6pm. Warner Lake, Berne. bethlehemtriclub.com.
- Wed Vischer Ferry Summer Time Trial Series.** 5/27, 6/3, 6/10, 6/24 (not 6/17). 6:30pm. Also, Sun, 8/9: 14.5M time trial. Vischer Ferry, Clifton Park. facebook.com.

MAY

- 16 The Rat Snake: Reverse Triathlon & Trail Run. Canceled. Cooperstown. theratsnake.com.
- 24 **16th Memorial Duathlon & 5K.** Canceled. Saratoga Springs. thememorialduathlon5k.com.
- 30 Cooperstown Triathlon. Check for updates. Sprint & aquabike. Glimmerglass State Park, Cooperstown. coachmarkwilson.com.

JUNE

- 7 **11th Hudson Crossing Triathlon.** Canceled. Hudson Crossing Park, Schuylerville. hudsoncrossingtri.com.
- 27 **Lake Dunmore Triathlon.** 6.2M. 8am. Olympic. Branbury State Park, Salisbury, VT. Ruth Bullock: 802-388-6888. vermontsun.com.
- 27 38th Tupper Lake Tinman Triathlon. Tinman, Olympic, Sprint, aquabike, relay. Municipal Park, Tupper Lake. tupperlaketinman.com.

JULY

- 11 **Guilderland Duathlon.** Canceled. Guilderland YMCA, Guilderland. cdymca.org/race2020.
- 11 HITS Triathlon Races. Williams Lake, Kingston. hitstriathlonseries.com.
- 11 33rd Pawling Sprint Triathlon. Lakeside Park, Pawling. runsignup.com.
- 18 Delta Lake Triathlon. Olympic, sprint, aquabike, kids' races. Delta Lake State Park, Rome. coachmarkwilson.com.
- 19 **Vermont Sun Triathlon.** Sprint. 8:30am. Branbury State Park, Salisbury, VT. 802-388-6888. vermontsun.com.
- 26 Ironman Lake Placid. 2.4M swim, 112M bike, 26.2M run. 7am. Olympic Speedskating Oval, Lake Placid. ironman.com.

AUGUST

- 1 Findley Lake Triathlon Festival. Sprint, Olympic, Kids' Races. Findley Lake. coachmarkwilson.com.
- 4 2020 Iron Girl Syracuse. Sprint, Aqua, Duathlon. Oneida Shores, Brewerton. raceentry.com.
- 15 **20th Crystal Lake Triathlon & Aquabike.** 0.5M swim, 18M bike, 3M run. 8am. Crystal Cove, Averill Park. cdtriclub.org.
- 16 **8th Peasantman Steel Distance Triathlons.** Full, half, relay, intermediate, aquabike, sprint & new duathlon. Indian Pines Park, Penn Yan. 315-670-7191. peasantman.com.
- 16 **Lake Dunmore Triathlon.** 6.2M. 8am. Olympic. Branbury State Park, Salisbury, VT. Ruth Bullock: 802-388-6888. vermontsun.com.
- 16 **Vermont Sun Triathlon.** Sprint. 8:30am. Branbury State Park, Salisbury, VT. Ruth Bullock: 802-388-6888. vermontsun.com.
- 22 **Duanesburg YMCA Triathlon.** 9am. Duanesburg YMCA, Duanesburg. cdymca.org/race2020.




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WHAT: Free educational workshop via an online webinar
WHEN: Saturday, May 30 from 10am-3pm
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SEPTEMBER

- 5-6 **15th Lake George Triathlon Festival.** Sat: Lake George Tri (Olympic) & Aquabike. Sun: Big George Tri (70.3) & Aquabike. King George: Olympic & 70.3. Prince George: Olympic & 70.3. Battlefield Park, Lake George. adkracemgmt.com.
- 13 Ironman 70.3 Lake Placid. 1.2M swim, 56M bike, 13.1M run. 7am. Olympic Speedskating Oval, Lake Placid. ironman.com.

OTHER EVENTS

MAY

- 31 **Women's Getaway Weekend.** Check for update: 518-656-9462 or chingachgook@cdymca.org. YMCA Camp Chingachgook, Kattskill Bay. camp.cdymca.org.

SEPTEMBER

- 18-20 **Women's Adventure Weekend.** YMCA Camp Chingachgook, Kattskill Bay. camp.cdymca.org.

PADDLING: CANOE, KAYAK & ROW

ONGOING

- M/Tu/F **Adult Learn to Row.** Check for updates. Summer. 5:30-7am. ARC Boathouse, Albany. albanyrowingcenter.org.
- Mo-Fr **Junior Rowing Summer Camps.** Check for updates. Summer. Ages 11-18. ARC Boathouse, Albany. albanyrowingcenter.org.
- Wed Summer Duathlons. 1.25M run, 1.25M paddle, 1.25M run. Little River Boat Launch, Canton. slvpaddlers.org.

MAY

- 15-17 **Adirondack Paddlefest.** Canceled; hosting smaller demos this summer. Mountainman Outdoors on Moose River, Old Forge. 315-369-6672. mountainmanoutdoors.com.
- 22-25 General Clinton Canoe Regatta. Canceled. Bainbridge. canoeregatta.org.

JUNE

- 6 **National Learn to Row Day.** ARC Boathouse, Albany. albanyrowingcenter.org.
- 6 **Paddle the Mohawk Valley.** Canceled. Erie Canalway NHC. Schoharie Crossing to Amsterdam. 518-237-7000 x204. eriecanalway.org.
- 6 Feeder Canal Canoe/Kayak Race. 5M. 10am. Feeder Dam, Queensbury to Hudson Falls. 518-225-1310. feedercanal.org.
- 12-14 **Adirondack SUP Festival.** SUP demos/sales, on-water clinics, fitness & yoga, pooch race, guided tours, long/short course races. Saranac Lake. Adirondack Lakes & Trails Outfitters: adirondacksupfestival.com.
- 13 Madrid Canoe/Kayak Regatta. Canceled. Madrid Community Park, Madrid. 315-322-4041. slvpaddlers.org.
- 18 Donald Patneude Memorial Towpath Regatta. 4.5M. 6:30pm. Gateway Landing Park, Schenectady to Aqueduct Park, Niskayuna. 518-331-2761. nypra.org.
- 19-21 **2nd Adirondack Paddling Symposium.** Canceled. Mountainman Outdoors, Old Forge. adkpaddlingsymposium.com.
- 27 Tupper Lake 8-Miler Canoe/Kayak/SUP Race. 11am. Boat Launch on Simon Pond, Tupper Lake. 518-354-8377. tupperlake.com.
- 28 Celebrate Paddling Invitational. 10am. 1M, 3M family/novice, 10M races. Lake Flower, Saranac Lake. adirondack90miler.com.

JULY

- 5 **Lake George Land Conservancy: Hike-A-Thon.** Virtual. Paddling on Jabe Pond & Northwest Bay. Hiking at 20 sites. Bolton Landing. lakegeorgehikeathon.org.
- 11 Electric City Regatta. 1M, 3M, 12M. 10am. Mohawk River/Erie Canal Lock 9 Rotterdam Junction. Ed/Kim Greiner: 518-421-2947. eleccityrace.org.
- 12 Barge Chaser Canoe/Kayak Race. 3M, 10M. 10am. Kiwanis Park, Rotterdam Junction. Linda & Bob Cooley: 518-393-9201. nypra.org.
- 26 BluMouLA-BuFuRa: BML Buoy Race. 1.5M, 7M, 14M. 10:30am. Town Beach, Blue Mountain Lake. bmlbuoyrace.com.

SEPTEMBER

- 11-13 38th Adirondack Canoe Classic. 90-Miler. Old Forge to Saranac Lake. adirondack90miler.com.

RUNNING, TRAIL & SNOWSHOE RUNNING

ONGOING

- Tue Colonie Summer Track Series. Check for updates: 6/16, 23, 30, 7/14, 21, 28. 6pm. Colonie High School Track, Colonie. hmrrc.com.

APRIL

- 20-5/31 AREEP Social Distance Running Challenge. Virtual race series - 5K, 10K and/or 13.1M - to benefit Regional Food Bank of NENY. areep.com.

MAY

- 15-8/31 One NY Virtual Challenge - Run Across NY. Race 500K (22M/week) or 1000K (44M/week) challenge from 5/15-8/31. onenychallenge.com.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CONT. FROM PG 17

- 16 **10th Kerry Hustle 5K - Color Run.** 9am. Kids' Dash: 10am. SMSA School. Glens Falls. active.com.
- 16 **2nd Malta Mile.** Canceled. Town Hall, Malta. roundaboutrunnersclub.com.
- 16 2nd Apple Blossom 5K Run/Walk. Canceled. Saratoga Apple, Schuylerville. saratogaplan.org.
- 16 5.18 Day Virtual 5K Run/Walk. Capital Region. unitedtovolunteer.org.
- 16 Earth Day Half Marathon, Relay & 5K. 8am. Emmi Farms, Baldwinsville. willowhwc.com.
- 16 Thom B Trail Runs. Canceled. Hammond Hill State Forest, Dryden. fingerlakesrunners.org.
- 16 13th Ryan's Run 5K. Canceled. Saratoga Springs. saratoga.com.
- 16 Champlain Bridge 5K Cross Country Run. Canceled. Crown Point. lachute.us.
- 16 Women's Run 5K & 10K. 8am. Van Wyck Rail Trail Parking, Wappingers Falls. mhrrc.org.
- 17 **Team Billy Walk & Ride.** Postponed to 9/27. 3M walk & bike rides. Farmer's Market, Saratoga Springs. teambilly.org.
- 17 Erie Canal Half Marathon, Relay & 5K. Virtual race. Utica. eriecanalhalf.com.
- 17 Run Like the Wind 5K Run/Walk. 10:30am. Liberty Square, Ellenville. ellenvillerunlikethewind.com.
- 17 Steel Rail Half Marathon & 8K. Postponed: 10/11. Adams, MA. steelrailhalfmarathon.com.
- 21 CDPHP Workforce Team Challenge. Postponed to 9/17. Empire State Plaza, Albany. cdphpwtc.com.
- 23 **Glens Falls Urban Assault Obstacle Run.** Canceled. Glen Street, Glens Falls. adkracemgmt.com.

- 23 Tyner Trail Run. 5K run/walk. Cole's Woods, Glens Falls. 518-791-7910. facebook.com/sodakyl.
- 23 45th Voorheesville Memorial Day 15K. 12:15pm. Plus, 3.2K Run/Walk. Voorheesville. 518-505-6991. hmrrc.com.
- 23 Patch Sprint Trail Race. Postponed to date TBD. 8am. Climb 13.5M on all four Pok-O-Patch mountains. Camp Pok-O-Moonshine, Willsboro. patchsprint.com.
- 23-31 **42nd Freihofer's Run for Women.** 5K & Junior 3K Virtual Race: 5/23-31. freihoferstrun.com.
- 24 **16th Memorial Duathlon & 5K.** Canceled. Saratoga Springs. thememorialduathlon5k.com.
- 24 Woodstock Races. 15K/5K. Canceled. Woodstock. onteorarunners.org.
- 24 Vermont City Marathon & Relay. Postponed to 10/25. Burlington, VT. runvermont.org.
- 30 Run 4 Garrett. 5K, 10K & 13.1M. Canceled. Sackets Harbor. garrettsfund.org.
- 30 Cayuga Trails 50M & 50K Trail Runs. Robert Treman State Park, Ithaca. rednewtracing.com.
- 31 Kelsey's Promise 5K Run/Walk. Canceled. Averill Park. kelseyspromise.org.
- 31 Tortoise & Hare Trail Runs. Canceled. Buttermilk Falls State Park, Ithaca. fingerlakesrunners.org.
- 31 Adirondack Coast Super Heroes 5K. Virtual. 518-314-3359. adironackcoastevents.com.

JUNE

- 5-7 Virtual Girls on the Run 5K: Capital Region. Your place, your pace. Register: gotrcr.org.
- 6 **9th Tuff eNuff 5K Obstacle Course Challenge.** Canceled. BOCES Campus, Saratoga Springs. preventioncouncil.org.
- 6 LifeSong Dash 5K. Virtual. Kinderhook. ok5krace.com.

- 6 Run the Runway 5K. 9am. Schenectady County Airport, Schenectady. zippyreg.com.
- 6 The PRIDE Rainbow Run 5K. 9am. Jennings Landing, Albany. 518capitalpride.com.
- 6 Toys for Tots 5K. 9am. Warming Hut, Saratoga Spa State Park, Saratoga Springs. facebook.com.
- 7 **Capital Region Heart Walk & Run.** Virtual race. capitalregionheartwalk.org.
- 7 13th Cantina Kids Fun Run. Congress Park, Saratoga Springs. saratogahospital.org.
- 7 Girls on the Run 5K Run/Walk. Virtual race. Albany. gotrcr.org/5K.
- 11 Route 50 Mile. Virtual. captaincares.org.
- 13 **Spring Into Summer 5K.** Canceled. Coxsackie-Athens HS, Coxsackie. Greene County YMCA: cdymca.org/race2020.
- 13 **6th Good Karma 5K Run/Walk.** Virtual. Crossings Park, Colonie. 518-429-9068. goodkarmany.org.
- 14 **Capital Region Tour de Cure: 5K Run/Walk & Bike Rides.** Postponed to 9/13. Saratoga County Fairgrounds, Ballston Spa. 518-218-1755 x3606. diabetes.org/capitalregion.
- 14 **Vermont Sun Half Marathon, 5K & 10K.** 9am. Branbury State Park, Salisbury, VT. vermontsun.com.
- 16 Mule Haul 8K Foot Race. 9am. Firehouse, Fort Hunter. 518-866-1319. fmrrc.org.
- 20 **3rd Adirondack 15K Race to the Lakes.** Canceled. Queensbury to Lake George. active.com.
- 20 Strides 4 STRIDE Run, Walk 'n' Roll. 5K/2K. Virtual. Jennings Landing, Albany. stride.org.
- 21 **4th Sasha's 5K Run/Walk.** Virtual. Wear superhero-inspired attire. Tallmadge Park, Mechanicville. sashasrun.com.
- 27 18th Dodge the Deer 5K & Kids Races. Schodack Island State Park, Schodack Landing. dodgethedeer.com.

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JULY

- 2 Hudson Headwaters 5K. 9am. Chestertown to ADK Outreach Center, Brant Lake. hhhn.org.
- 4 **14th Firecracker 4 Road Race.** 9am. 4M w/ entertainment along course. Saratoga Springs City Center, Saratoga Springs. firecracker4.com.
- 4 Finger Lakes 50s. 25K/50K/50M. 6:30am. Finger Lakes National Forest, Hector. fingerlakesrunners.org.
- 4 32th Montcalm Mile Road Race. 1:45pm. Ticonderoga. lachute.us.
- 9 35th Run for the Roses 5K. 5K: 9am; 2.5M Nature Walk: 8am; Kids' Run: 10am. Grafton State Park, Grafton. runsignup.com.
- 11 6th Friends of Wilton Recreation Park Fest 5K Run/Walk. 8am. Saratoga Springs. friendsofwiltonrec.com.
- 11 Turtle Trot Walk-Run. 3.4M. 10am. Whalen Park, Massena. 315-764-1289. northernrunner.org.
- 12 Paul Luther Memorial 5K. 10:30am. Tallmadge Park, Mechanicville. runsignup.com.
- 15 Ken Morgan Run Races. 10M: 8am. 5K: 9am. 1M Family Walk: 8:30am. Castleton Elem School, Castleton. runsignup.com.
- 18 **24th Silks & Satins 5K Run/Walk.** 8am. Jeff Clark memorial race. Fasig-Tipton Pavilion, Saratoga Springs. silksandsatins5k.com.
- 25 18th Run for the River 5K/10K. 9am. Downtown, Clayton. savetheriver.org.

AUGUST

- 1 **Churney Gurney Trail Running Races.** 5M. Sun: Mountain Bike Races. Gurney Lane MTB Park, Queensbury. churneygurney.com.
- 7-8 **Peak 2 Brew Relay: Adirondack Beast.** Canceled. 220M. 6-12 runners. Whiteface Mountain, Wilmington to Saranac Brewery, Utica. p2brelay.com.

- 8 **Peak 2 Brew Relay: Adirondack Sprint.** 60M. 3-6 runners. Tug Hill, Turin to Saranac Brewery, Utica. 10% off: p2brelay.com.
- 8 **Fox Creek 5K.** 9am. Berne Town Park, Berne. 518-861-6350.
- 15 **Camp Chingachgook Challenge Half Marathon & 10K.** 8am. YMCA Camp Chingachgook, Kattskill Bay. cdyymca.org/race2020.
- 16 Ted Petrillo Save Our Switchbacks. 7.5K. Roscoe Conkling Park, Utica. uticaroadrunners.org.
- 19 **Hump Day 5K Run/Walk.** 6:15pm. Southern Saratoga YMCA, Clifton Park. cdyymca.org/race2020.
- 23 Thacher Park Running Festival. 10K, 13.1M, 26.2M, 50K. 8:30am. Thacher Park, Voorheesville. albanyrunningexchange.org.
- 23 15th Lake Placid Marathon & Half. Olympic Speedskating Oval, Lake Placid. lakeplacidmarathon.com.
- 29 2nd Druthers Helderberg to Hudson Half Marathon. Postponed to 8/29. Albany County Rail Trail, Voorheesville to Albany. helderbergtohudsonhalf.com.
- 29 23rd Altamont 5K Run/Walk. 9am. Bozenkill Park, Altamont. 518-861-6350. altamont5k.org.
- 29 Towpath Trail Run 10K & 2M. 5:30pm. St. Johnsville Marina, St. Johnsville. 518-568-7509.

SEPTEMBER

- 7 Labor Day 5K Run. 9am. Harriman Office Campus, Albany. hmrrc.com.
- 13 **Capital Region Tour de Cure.** 5K run/walk: 11am. Bike - 10M 10am, 30M 9am, 50M 7:30am, 62.5M 7:30am, 100M 6:30am. Saratoga County Fairgrounds, Ballston Spa. ADA: 518-218-1755 x3606. diabetes.org/capitalregion.

- 19 **ADK 5K.** 10am. Save \$5 w/code by 3/28: ADKSPORTS. Adirondack Pub & Brewery, Lake George. adk5k.com.
- 19 **23rd Charlton Heritage 5K Run/Walk.** 10am. 1M Fun Run: 11am. Old Red School House, Charlton. 518-399-3797. zippyreg.com.
- 19 **Race the Lake Marathon, Half Marathon & 5K.** Clark Sports Center, Cooperstown. clarksportscenter.com.
- 20 **Saratoga Palio Half Marathon & 5K Run/Walk.** 8am. Melanie Merola O'Donnell memorial race. Saratoga Springs. themelaniefoundation.com.
- 26 **Adirondack Marathon Distance Festival: 10K & 5K road races.** Municipal Center, Chestertown. adirondackmarathon.org.
- 27 Adirondack Marathon Distance Festival: Adirondack Marathon, Half Marathon & Relays. Around beautiful Schroon Lake, Schroon Lake. adirondackmarathon.org.
- 27 **1st Montgomery County Half Marathon & 5K Race.** 8:15am. Tribes Hill Community Park, Tribes Hill. zippyreg.com.

OCTOBER

- 11 **Mohawk Hudson River Marathon & Hannaford Half Marathon.** 8am. Expo: 10/10: 10am-5pm, Albany Capital Center. 26.2M: Schenectady to Albany. 13.1M: Colonie to Albany. mohawkhudsonmarathon.com.
- 18 **Peak 2 Brew Relay: Catskills.** Windham Mountain, Windham to Brewery Ommegang, Cooperstown. 10% off: p2brelay.com. ■

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BICYCLING continued from 1

Empire State Trail West, Pattersonville to Schoharie Crossing, 11.5 miles one-way – Any bike, paved, all off-road. This section of the Empire State Trail features five miles of brand-new paved trail going west from the small parking area at Pattersonville on NY Route 5S. As you go west, check out the imposing smokestacks of the Cranesville Block factory, the Erie Canal Lock 10 right next door, and watch for wildlife along the Mohawk River. Continue westward past the Amsterdam Castle on the hill and Erie Canal Lock 11 to the historic Schoharie Crossing Yankee Hill Lock. Visit the Schoharie Crossing State Historic Site nearby (518-829-7397), then turn around at the bridge over Schoharie Creek, or continue on half-a-mile more for some take out at Karen's Produce & Ice Cream (518-829-7397).

Warren County Bikeway, Glens Falls to Lake George, 10 miles one-way – Any bike, paved, mostly off-road, dogs prohibited. There's abundant parking in Glens Falls for this trail that starts right around the corner from Grey Ghost Bicycles (518-223-0148). Head north toward Lake George through downtown Glens Falls, right past Cooper's Cave Ale Company, where you can grab an ice cream cone or a drink. Just make sure to call first, as they are temporarily closed during the pandemic (518-792-0007). There's a short distance (1.2 miles) on Country Club Road before you enter the forest near Glen Lake, where you will finish climbing gently for the first eight miles from Glens Falls. Then descend past the foot of French Mountain and the Magic Forest Amusement Park to the trail's end at Million Dollar Beach in Lake George with its steamboat rides, restaurants, taverns, and ice cream shops.

Zim Smith Trail, Ballston Spa to Halfmoon, 9 miles one-way – Any bike, mix of gravel and paved, all off-road. This trail currently extends from Oak Street in Ballston Spa to Coon's Crossing Road in Halfmoon – with work in progress to extend the trail into downtown Mechanicville. Mostly paved, it also has plenty of rest stops. Pause at Shenantaha Park, take a ride through the historic village of Round Lake, or grab a snack at Leah's Cakery (518-899-5324) – right on the bike trail. For a post-ride detour, Lakeside Farms (518-399-8359), with cider donuts and much more, has recently reopened for the season.

Fulton, Johnstown & Gloversville (FJ&G) Rail Trail, Johnstown to Gloversville, 8 miles one-way – Any bike, mostly paved, mostly off-road. This urban trail between the two Fulton County towns follows portions of the Cayadutta Creek, which was a central water source during the heyday of leather tanning in the area between 1880 and 1950. The trail alternates between neighborhood areas and



EMPIRE STATE TRAIL: SCHOHARIE CROSSING YANKEE HILL LOCK ALONG THE MOHAWK RIVER WEST OF AMSTERDAM. PHOTOS BY DAVE KRAUS/KRAUSGRAFIK.COM



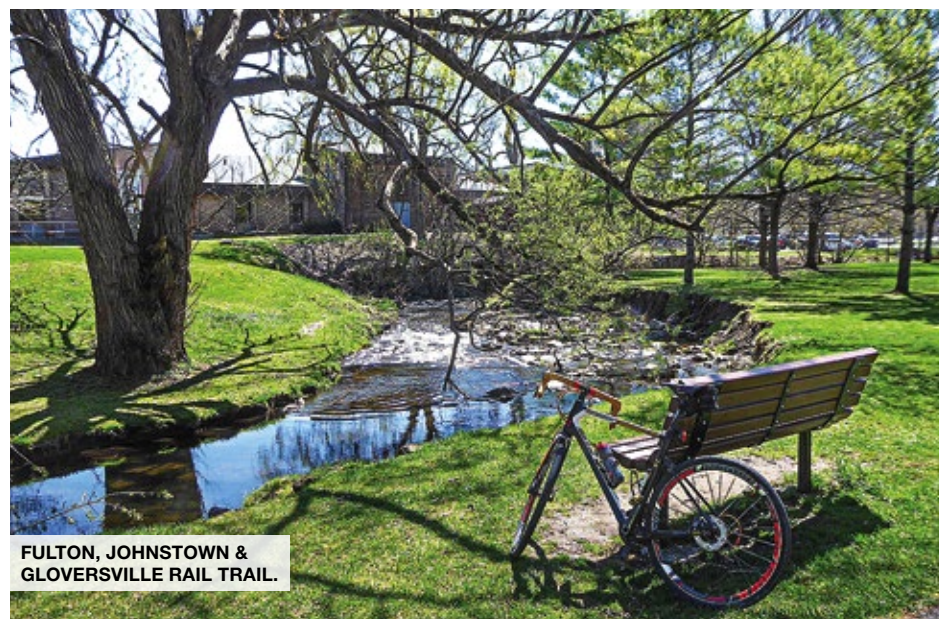
ASHOKAN RAIL TRAIL.



WARREN COUNTY BIKEWAY.

wooded sections that offer a more rural feel, and in several places passes the sites of former leather factories. In Johnstown, stop for a 'cuppa' tea/coffee from Second Wind Coffee on Main Street (518-224-0386), or at the Mohawk Harvest Cooperative Market (518-706-0681) in downtown Gloversville a few blocks from Trail Station Park. Consider parking at Parkhurst Field just north of Johnstown or at Trail Station Park in Gloversville, as parking is extremely limited at the north and south ends of the trail.

Ashokan Rail Trail, West Hurley to Boiceville, 11.5 miles one-way – Any bike, gravel, all off-road, dogs allowed on leash. This brand-new, almost totally flat trail west of Kingston – and just south of Woodstock – is a joy to ride. The compacted crushed stone route follows the former Ulster & Delaware railroad right of way along the north shore of the Ashokan Reservoir – owned by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection as it provides 40% of NYC's daily drinking water. Parking is available along NY Route 28 at either end of the trail at West Hurley or Boiceville, and midway in the village of Shokan. Benches at regular intervals provide rest stops to read the various inter-



FULTON, JOHNSTOWN & GLOVERSVILLE RAIL TRAIL.

pretive signs that describe the natural and historical features of the area. Enjoy the panoramic views of the Catskill peaks across the lake and keep an eye out for the remains of hundreds of hand-built stone walls that divided this former farmland. 📍

Dave Kraus (dbkraus@earthlink.net) is a longtime area cyclist, photographer, and writer who is looking forward to riding with all his friends again someday. Visit his website at KrausGrafik.com.



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DOWNED TREES CREATE A NATURAL BRIDGE IN VAN DYKE PRESERVE.

Swift Wetland and Van Dyke Preserve

Recreation and Education Close to Home

By Tom O'Grady

We've completed nearly two months of quarantine in order to combat the effects of Covid-19. There have been many adjustments that families have had to make in these two months in order to earn a living, educate their children and stay active. With school closings and teachers adjusting to online learning there are likely to be hiccups along the way. With quarantine guidelines tightening to flatten the curve, families that may have wanted to hike in farther away destinations are faced with limited options. One option in these times is to multitask and get out to one of the many preserves available in the Capital Region.

The Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy was founded in 1992 and offers 18 preserves with recreational, educational, and fitness opportunities in four local counties: Albany, Schenectady, Montgomery and Schoharie. Swift Wetland and Van Dyke Preserve are two MHLC parcels in the Town of Bethlehem that are ideally near the Bethlehem High School, and offer great opportunities for families with young children to get out for a short hike, and supplement the online learning that their children are completing.

Swift Wetland - This wetland is located within walking distance of the high school off of Delaware Avenue. If you are driving there you can park at the high school or in the lot off of Evelyn Drive. Regardless of age, the preserve is perfect for supplementing science lessons your children may have, particularly those that involve earth science and biology. The wetland area was made available through a grant in conjunction with Bethlehem Central High School science department with the idea of creating an outdoor classroom area. Much of the facility was made possible through volunteer work. The trails were built as part of an Eagle Scout project by a local Boy Scout and the main kiosk at the entrance was donated by The Friendship Singers and built with the help of local volunteers.

The wetland itself covers about 22 acres of land and has a little over one-mile of trails for walking. The main trail is marked in blue with two loops added on marked in yellow and red. The trails themselves are very flat



DOWNY WOODPECKER ACTIVITY AT SWIFT WETLAND. MOSSY TRAIL ON SWIFT WETLAND BEFORE WOOD BRIDGE CROSSINGS.

PHOTOS BY TOM O'GRADY

and cover easy terrain allowing the whole family, regardless of age, to slowly make their way along. Although this was not our first time here, there were several immediately noticeable things to point out during our visit in April. As the name would suggest the wetland was fairly wet and muddy. Wetlands get their names because the ground water, or water table, is very close to the surface of the soil - particularly during growing season. The Swift Wetland habitat is considered a forested swamp because it is dominated by trees and shrubs. This differs from marsh wetlands that are dominated by herbaceous vegetation or wetland meadows which are dominated by tall grass and wild flowers.

Wetlands are important for providing natural water filters that help to remove sediment and other precipitates. Swift is at the headwaters of a small stream called the Vroman Kill that eventually enters the Hudson River. Despite the water and mud, you could navigate through most of the trails without getting too dirty. As we made our way, the other noticeable feature was the re-emergence of birds in the area. We particularly noticed a lot of downy woodpecker activity. We spotted two different woodpeckers at different areas of the preserve pecking on the trees during our visit. Many trees also had markings of past and present woodpecker activity. Some other birds you are likely to spot there during the

spring are robins, orioles, blue jays, goldfinches and grosbeak.

Some other nice things we spotted included freshly cracked acorns from squirrel or chipmunk activity. We also spotted what a large patch of white paper birch bark. But there was no birch tree to match the bark in close proximity so this likely represented the last remains of rotted and decaying tree. Students of the high school have painted rocks and left messages to visitors. We spotted several of these including a few that were painted brown and orange for school spirit. Despite the short distance we spent approximately 45 minutes exploring the area and talking about the different features of the wetland we saw.

Van Dyke Preserve - This preserve is approximately one-mile east of the high school on Van Dyke Road. The entrance to the preserve can take you by surprise if you aren't paying attention. From the high school, if you pass Meads Lane you've gone too far. Van Dyke covers a little over a mile of trails and approximately 33 acres of land. The preserve is a newer addition, added in 2012, as a partnership between the Town of Bethlehem and the Van Dyke Spinney housing complex association. Prior to being a nature preserve, the land was agricultural and a mix of abandoned forests and floodplains for the Phillipin Kill, and watershed of the Vroman Kill. Both streams are very

noticeable as they make their way around and through the preserve. The water eventually makes its way to the Hudson River, and the creation of the preserve has reduced flooding and erosion, and has also improved water quality for fish and wildlife habitat.

If you're lucky, you may spot one of the various amphibians that call the preserve home. We were not lucky on our trip but spotting one would make for a good lesson on animal lifecycles and transformation of young into adults. The vernal pool pockets make particularly good breeding grounds for the amphibians and its likely tadpoles will be visible in the coming month or two. We were also a bit early for flowers and missed the native cutleaf toothworts and non-native rose, bittersweet and phragmites that will be blooming soon.

While we missed the amphibians and wild flowers we spotted the large beech, oak, hickory, and hemlock trees that were visible throughout the woods. There were a few patches that appeared to have been cleared by volunteers. The Phillipin and Vroman kills are a constant presence and you walk by and around them. The two streams snake in and around the preserve and there are several areas where very large trees and branches have fallen to make a natural bridge or walkway. We did not cross any of these but it caught our children's attention and they wanted to try their luck balancing on the fallen trees. There are several newly constructed bridges to cross as well as a bench to sit and quietly enjoy the surroundings. We likely spent another 30 to 40 minutes at the Van Dyke Preserve.

Within nearby driving distance, these two nature preserves make for a little over two miles of walking trails. While there you can take your time to learn some new facts and teach your children some interesting things about earth science and biology. The whole trip will likely take two hours and you'll get some much-needed sun and exercise. We went mid-morning and were the only ones on the trails during our visit. It was a nice respite for everyone in the family. 🌲

Tom O'Grady, PhD, MPH (thomas.james.ogradey@gmail.com) of Slingerlands is an avid runner, hiker and lover of the outdoors. Learn more at ogradeystategies.com.

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