

# THE NIAGARA EXPLORER

Newsletter of Adirondack Mountain Club  
Niagara Frontier Chapter

## March Monthly Program

- Website: [adk-nfc.org](http://adk-nfc.org)
- [Chapter Outings & Events Calendar](#)
- Facebook Group: [ADK-Niagara Frontier Chapter](#)
- Follow us on [Instagram \(adk\\_nfc\)](#)
- Keep up to date by checking your weekly emails

What was WNY like 380 million years ago? Come to our March meeting to find out! Geologist Dan Krisher, former head of geology of Wards Natural Science, Rochester, NY will present the following program: “New York State - 380 Million Years BCE.”

380 million years ago, Western New York was in the southern tropics and was host to a variety of life, much of it somewhat familiar to us, but some of it quite strange. The presentation will start

with a brief overview of what the environment of Western New York was like back then, and will then delve into a review of the lifeforms that populated our state at the time.

Dan retired as head of geology from Wards in 2014. He obtained his Bachelor of Arts -Geology from SUNY Geneseo in 1976, and a Masters of Science-Paleontology - Indiana University, in 1978.

Dan represents the Rochester Academy of Science at the annual ADK Genesee Chapter Outdoor Expo at Mendon Ponds.

Dan’s main areas of research interest are corals, particularly the Paleozoic coral faunas of New York State. He will be bringing Devonian



fossils (385 million years old), from NYS, including brachiopods, bivalves (clams and scallops), gastropods (snails), trilobites and corals. Dan will also have some examples of Eurypterids (like horseshoe crabs), which is the official NYS fossil. In addition, he plans to bring museum display quality fossils from around the world.

Please join us for a fascinating look into the past, and check our future newsletters for a geology jaunt with Dan!

- Susan Kolasz & Pamela Sander

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## March Education Workshop

Our March 14, 2023, education workshop at 6:30 pm features member Ed Kasperzek who will discuss all the basics needed



to lead a successful safe and fun hike. Ed has vast experience which includes the distinction of hiking the 46 High Peaks (summer/winter), summiting Mt. Kilimanjaro, extensive Top Rope experience in ice and rock climbing (primarily in the 18 Mile Creek gorge). Ed is the former President, Vice President and co-founder of Niagara Fron-

tier Search and Rescue. Ed's credentials also include his past accreditations as a NYS DEC Crew Boss, certified NYS DEC Wild Land Search, NARSAR SARtech II, NYS Rescue Tech I, Rope Rescue Operations I, and participated in FEMA operations. Ed is a former employee of EMS where he was an instructor. Ed led hikes and was an instructor at Gear for Adventure in Hamburg. Ed's resume continues as a former LNT trainer, ADK 46er Trail Head Steward, and former NYS licensed guide (hiking, camping, Top Rope-Ice and Rock), and has led many chapter hikes.

Ed is a current member and former director of Chestnut Ridge Conservancy. The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy, incorporated in 2010, has collaborated with Erie County on the restoration and new build projects. Some of the improvements at the park include: Casino floor refinishing, Eternal Flame trail head rest area, stone wall restorations, new park entrance signs, Casino mural restoration, pet waste collection stations, and many more. To learn more about Chestnut Ridge Conservancy at: <https://chestnutridgeconservancy.org/>

## February Education Recap



Our February education workshop was titled "Emergency Shelter Options for Day Trippers."

For those members who were unable to attend, I will summarize the information here. This information applies principally to spring, summer, and fall conditions. Winter survival is much more involved.

Day trippers head into the woods to enjoy a variety of activities, such as hiking, mountain biking, kayaking, bird watching, or fishing. They all expect to be home for dinner, and sleep in their own bed. Sometimes, however, things don't go according to plan. People get lost, hurt, sick, or are stranded by bad weather or equipment failure.

You should always discuss your plans with a reliable

person, who will notify the authorities if you are overdue. The average search lasts up to 72 hours. So, it could take as long as three days and nights to be rescued. In the north woods where we spend most of our time, the greatest threat to survival in this situation is hypothermia, a loss of body temperature. This is true even in the height of summer. Your most important tasks are to signal

for help, and stay warm until you are found. Signaling is a separate topic, worthy of an education session of its own.



Staying warm is accomplished with a combination of clothing, shelter,

and fire.

You may not be able to start and maintain a fire, or to build a shelter out of natural materials, at least not right away. The only things that you can count on are the clothing and shelter materials that you are carrying with you.



How much clothing do you need? Do not simply rely on the weather report. Consider the location, terrain, climate, and season of your destination. What is the daytime high and nighttime

low that you could reasonably expect to encounter? Then, assemble one complete set of layers that will keep you warm in this range of temperatures. Now check the forecast. Put on what you need for the current conditions, and stow the rest of the clothes in your pack. During your trip, add or subtract

layers as needed. If you get into trouble, you should have enough insulation to keep warm, even at night.

You can lose a lot of heat through the ground. Find a sheltered spot where you can sit and lean against something, instead of lying down. That way, less of your body is in contact with the cold ground. Sit on your day pack. An even better idea is to carry a foam pad to sit on. Then you can lean against your pack. Plant your feet flat on the ground. Your socks and footwear provide insulation. Keep your knees bent and hug your legs. This position will hold in more heat.

It is vital to stay dry and get out of the wind. You lose a lot more heat when you are



wet, and we've all heard about wind chill. The first line of defense are your outer shell garments, such as windbreakers, ponchos, and windproof/waterproof jackets and pants. However, adding some form of shelter will provide even greater protection. Fortunately, there are a number of options that are reasonable to carry on a day trip. Everyone needs to analyze their own risk factors and make an appropriate choice for the expected conditions.

The simplest of these is the lowly trash bag. They are light, compact, inexpensive, and widely available. However, one is usually not enough. I recommend three. One is pulled on as a foot sack. The second, with a slit cut for your face, goes on top. A third, with the bottom slit open, acts as a cummerbund and fills in the middle. With three trash bags, and a few minutes of effort, you can completely encase yourself in a windproof and waterproof cocoon.

An even better option is to carry a 55-gallon

drum liner. With a slit cut for your face, you can quickly pull it down over your body before sitting. If you're taller, you might want a trash bag or a second drum liner as a foot sack.

Another choice is a commercial bivy sack. Some are made out of space blanket material and will wear out quickly. Others are sturdier, and will last

***The only things that you can count on are the clothing and shelter materials that you are carrying with you.***

several nights. Some are designed for routine, long term use. This is a good choice for extended travel above the tree line, where trees and other wind-breaks are hard to find.

Space blankets are a common choice for emergency shelter needs. These can be very useful as ground clothes, walls and roofs, fire reflectors, and air to ground signals. I always carry one in my pocket. However, it is much harder to keep yourself wrapped snugly with a flat sheet of material than with one of the other options, especially in high winds.

My choice is to use my space blanket and foam pad beneath me, lean against my pack, and cover myself with my pon-

cho. In the summer, when I am already carrying it as rain gear, it serves double duty. A poncho/space blanket combination is incredibly versatile.

The final option that I discussed is to pitch a tarp and spread out a waterproof floor. You can use a wide variety of items for your material, such as regular or heavy-duty space blankets, ponchos, plastic painter's drop clothes, the blue tarps found in home improvement stores, and nylon tarps from outdoor stores that are made for that purpose. Just make sure to carry some nylon cord, and maybe a few tent stakes. I always carry 50 feet of paracord and four lightweight stakes. There are a number of ways to

pitch a tarp, and many on-line videos demonstrating them. I suggest that you consider learning the lean-to and the plow point.

Whatever choice you make, you need to watch out for condensation forming on the inside of your shelter, and vent it occasionally. Otherwise, your clothing can become wet and chill you.

In summary, bring enough clothing to keep warm, both day and night. Carry a foam pad to sit on, and pack the shelter option that seems to best fit your particular needs. Finally, don't neglect the rest of the 10 Essentials.

- Paul M. Gannon

## February Program Recap

Our February program featured Korah Witherell, an environmental educator from Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve. Korah is from Portville, New York and graduated from SUNY Cobleskill in 2022. Before coming to Reinstein, Korah was an Assistant Forest Ranger at the



NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and a former DEC Summer Camps counselor. Prior to working for the DEC, Korah worked for the Portville Central School District.

This being Valentine's Day, we were treated to a special presentation on animal relationships. Korah began by outlining the various social structures

in the animal world. Some species, such as moose and polar bears, tend to be solitary creatures, who only meet up to mate. Others live in groups, where they travel in herds and experience the benefits and drawbacks of living together. Herds can provide protection and genetic diversity, but also facilitate the spread of disease. Some species go beyond merely living and traveling in

close proximity. They are highly social with complex relationships.

Korah went on to describe, and even demonstrate, the methods that animals use to communicate with each other. These methods include visual signals and displays, sounds such as grunts and cries, smells, and even touch.

In keeping with the Valentine's Day theme, Korah discussed the various ways that animals engage in courtship, using colors, sounds, and actions. Some animal species actually construct elaborate displays of art forms to attract attention.

She reviewed the different mating systems found in nature. These systems determine the structure of family life and the ways that animal species nurture their young. Some animals are monogamous for life,

although that is rare. Others practice social monogamy, where they mate with a partner and then stay together until the young are raised and leave the nest. This usually lasts for a single season. Other species practice polygyny, which takes two forms.



Some males accumulate a harem of females and prevent any other males from mating with any of them. The other form is where multiple males perform courtship rituals in places known as leks. They compete to attract the attention of females. Korah

also described a system known as polyandry which is common among bees. In this system, there is one queen who dominates the hive and does all the mating. The queen will kill any other queen who attempts to intrude.

Finally, some animals are promiscuous.

Korah's presentation was received enthusiastically, and there was much discussion and many questions. It gave us all a new appreciation of the complex web of life found in nature.

With the advent of spring, hopefully we will have the chance to observe these animal behaviors in the wild.

- Paul M. Gannon

## Looking ahead...

Annual T-Shirt Sale! On-Line (ONLY) ordering coming late April to late May. Details in upcoming newsletters (with plenty of reminders on fb and at our meetings-you snooze, you loose)! Orders to be mailed directly to home addresses and in time for our picnic.



CHAUTAUQUA  
WATERSHED  
CONSERVANCY

April 11, 2023, Monthly Meeting:

- Workshop at 6:30 pm with Aaron Slosman: Biking Information and Gap Ride Discussion.
- April's main program at 7:30 features Twan Leenders of Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy.

Picnic 2023 will be Saturday, June 10, 2023 (details TBA).



## Message from the Chair

***Remember that Leave No Trace teaches us to walk through the mud, not around it.***

We still have a few weeks of "official" winter, however, we are entering what is called the shoulder season, the time between Winter and Spring. In WNY, we have come to expect large swings in temperatures and maybe one last big snowfall before we turn the corner to Spring.

Expect muddy and icy trails. Remember that Leave No Trace teaches us to walk through the mud, not around it. Walking through it prevents the trail from getting wider and prevents erosion.

I hope you enjoyed Paul Gannon's Education Program on shelter building as much as I did. We had

great questions from the crowd and Paul gave wonderful demonstrations. I walked away with 5 or more tips for my pack. We have so much collective

knowledge within ADK-NFC. If you are interested in passing on your knowledge, please let me know.

And let's get outside together! We still could use some more trip leaders to start filling up our outings calendar for the Spring. I am looking forward to the whitewater rafting season and spring ephemerals. But I would not mind strapping on my snowshoes one more time!

See you outside,

Mike



Outsidechronicles.com

## In Remembrance...

Walter Simpson, an eloquent and devoted Conservationist and long time ADK member, has passed on.

Walter was one of the initial leaders of the Western New York Peace Center, a local renewable energy leader, Sierra Club

member and the person who led UB's energy conservation and solar energy initiatives in the 1990's. A celebration of his life is being planned for a future date.

[Full obituary from BuffaloNews.com](http://BuffaloNews.com)



## Congratulations!

Brett Shurtliffe is our chapter's latest 46ers, finishing on Saddleback Mountain on September 10, 2022.

Congratulations Brett!

Read the story of Brett's 46 on the next page.



## Tift Nature Preserve Hiring Summer Discovery Camp Counselors

Tift Hiring Seasonal P/T Positions/ Discovery Camp Counselors! Do you know a young person interested in working at Tift Nature Preserve this Summer? HS graduate minimum or equivalent with an interest in environmental education or life sciences preferred. Up to 37.5 hours weekly

with mandatory week training June 10th and 17th from 9 am to 4 pm; 10 week commitment. Love of nature and working with children ages 3-10. For more detailed information or to download an application see <https://www.tiftt.org/programs/discovery-camps/>



## Finger Lakes Trail News

Some updates and events from the Finger Lakes Trail ([fingerlakestrail.org](http://fingerlakestrail.org)):

The popular FLT50 challenge will be happening again this year. An announcement with the rules and registration should be out soon.

This year's county hikes series will be Schuyler county. There will be five hikes between May and September. Registration

will be announced in March.

The North Country National Scenic Trail, which follows the FLT for 422 miles, is having their annual event, Celebration, from September 27—October 1 in Chestertown, NY—a wonderful access point to the Adirondacks. A wide variety of activities are offered to Celebration participants, including many guided hikes, skills workshops,

presentations, and much more. Learn more and register at [northcountrytrail.org/celebration](http://northcountrytrail.org/celebration) or visit [northcountrytrail.org/giving-membership/join-renew](http://northcountrytrail.org/giving-membership/join-renew) to join the North Country Trail Association.



## Becoming an ADK 46er

My name is Brett Shurtliffe, and I'm a new 46er! Well, as of Sept. 10 2022 I am. I'm down in Colden and call Sprague Brook and Chestnut ridge my home turf. By day (and night) I am a musician with the Buffalo Philharmonic, but try to get outside as much as my busy schedule allows.

I first heard about the 46 in 2013 when out backpacking in the West Canada Lakes area with a friend of mine who grew up outside of Syracuse. I was intrigued, but at that time not into peak bagging, so it stayed in the back of my mind until I was looking to plan another backpacking trip with my friend the following year. We had planned on going back to the ADK, but at the last minute he wasn't able to make the trip. I knew he wouldn't be into the physical demands I expected to find in the high peaks, so I decided to make a route up and over Marcy on my own in early Oct. 2014.

I packed in from Upper Works and stayed at the Uphill Lean-to my first night, in total awe of my surroundings. To this day, that stretch of the Opalescent from Colden

damn to Lake Tear remains one of my favorite places in the ADKs. The following day I planned to go up and over Marcy and down to Avalanche Camp. The day was rainy and foggy and at the last minute I decided to go up Skylight first to see how this whole mountain climbing this was. Upon an easy up and down, I decided I was going to try Gray as well, and look for the herd path I read about in my outdated guidebook. So up Gray I went in my full pack, in the rain, only to be unable to find the herd path in the fog and decided to backtrack to Four Corners (especially since I hadn't told anyone I was going to go up Gray and was in a bit of danger of getting lost in the fog). By now I was getting soaked, cold, and the day was getting away from me. But I pushed up Marcy still under full pack weight, (which at that point was probably close to 40 pounds). The rain was going sideways above tree line, and I stopped at the summit and took shelter under the plaque to have a snack and try to warm up. My rain gear wasn't cutting it, and the trash bag that was covering my

backpack was starting to rip in the wind. But with no other option but to head down, I stumbled my way all the way down to Avalanche camp only to find the lean-to full, and me without a tent. My previous experience hiking in the ADKs meant there was always an open lean-to to be found, and I wasn't expecting the numbers of other people I encountered during my first time in the high peaks. So, I had to hike back to the Marcy Brook lean-to in the dark (my first time walking in the dark) in hopes of finding shelter. I spent the night drying out with a great father-daughter team from Montreal. The next day was beautiful for my trip through Avalanche Pass and back to Upper Works. I was in awe of the pass, and even despite the heavy legs, I was hooked!

The following year I brought my Syracuse friend for a circumnavigation of the Seward's, which was great. Later that year I took a day trip from his place to do the lower Great Range on my own, and on the top of Gothics (my favorite 46) I knew this would become a life-long love affair. The same year I brought my family to Lake Placid to camp in the





summer and took my 4 and 7 year olds up Cascade, and they were hooked. We have returned each year since, and while I've been adding to my list on my own, my girls are now at 12 and looking to do all 46. We are headed up for February break to possibly do the lower great range, and plan to do the Dix range in August.

This fall when I finished my 46 on Saddleback my wife was with me, and she was struck by how "not overjoyed" I was at finishing. It was an odd feeling, and I can only explain it as it didn't feel like a triumphant ending. I was a bit sad the "quest" was over, but also aware of all of the amazing possibilities that lay ahead of

me. Now I get to play tour guide for my family, and I'm starting to look at the high 100 and other ways to continue to explore the ADKs. Finishing the 46 was only just the beginning of a love affair I have a feeling will stay with me for life.

- Brett Shurtliffe,  
ADK 46er #14452



## Trip Report: Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve

There's no better way to spend a winter morning than a walk in nature. On Monday morning, January 30, a group of us met at Reinstein Woods Na-

ture Preserve at 10:00 am, and after brief introductions headed out to the trails.

Randy Barker led us through the preserve for an approximate 4 mile walk in what turned out to be a brisk, 25 degree, snowy morning. We were fortunate that the snow arrived just in time to coat the icy surfaces of the

trails. We all donned traction devices as an extra precaution, so we felt sure-footed as we strolled along. The soft snowfall always adds a bit of magic to being outdoors in the winter and it was a delightful time for all.



The woods were unusually quiet and the wildlife absent, but we enjoyed visiting with each other and getting to know a couple of the newcomers.

This winter has been quite bizarre with record

snowfalls early on, and nothing much thereafter. The early storms forced most of us to remain indoors so our snowshoes and skis suffered the same fate.

While lamenting the lack of snow, we can at least hope this will predict an early, mild spring. Either way, it shouldn't be long before the weather warms up for good and the peepers begin calling. Be sure to check our newsletters for a future spring peeper walk at Reinstein!

- Susan Kolasz & Pamela Sander



## Chapter Outings

### March 2nd-4th: Winter Outing at the Loj in Lake Placid

We are going to do another winter outing at the Loj in March again this year. We reserved 3 nights starting Thursday and leaving Sunday. This outing is full. Please contact Kate Hacker, hackerks@gmail.com if you want more information or want to be added to the waitlist.

### March 18th-19th: Winter Backpacking Trip

RSVP: Jonathan Coupal, jonathan@coupal.us

Location: Tracy Ridge Trail system to Handsome Lake in Allegheny National Forest, PA

Difficulty: Easy

Cost: \$12/campsite. Food and fuel TBD if sharing rides or meals.

Details:

This is an easy overnight winter trip to the Tracy Ridge trail system ([https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5052731.pdf](https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5052731.pdf)). We'll meet on Saturday morning in Buffalo and

drive down together to the trailhead, then backpack out to the Handsome Lake campground (approximately 5 miles). Once we've set up camp, we can have dinner followed by fellowship around the campfire until we decide to turn in for the night. After a hearty breakfast in the morning, we'll take an alternate path back for our hike out to the cars and head home shortly after lunch.

The weather for this trip would be moderate/cool, with the historical average at 33.2 (high 43/low 24) and should be a good first experience for those who have not camped in the winter before. We'll have a shakedown after the March ADK meeting for those who might be unsure of their equipment or might need a loaner. A complete gear list, along with trip details, will be shared with those who RSVP for the event. There are no limits to the size of the group, so feel free to bring a friend or guest on this one!

### April 5th (Wednesday): Spring Peeper Walk at Reinstein Woods

Please join Pam and Sue for an easy Reinstein ear-

ly evening walk. We'll (hopefully) be entertained by happy and noisy Spring Peepers (*Pseudacris crucifer* sp.) frogs whose peeps can sometimes be deafening! We'll have several stops for listening, i.e. no-talking periods, so that we may best hear our happy amphibian friends as they welcome Spring and the start of their mating season. The spring peeper first mates when it is three years old and the mating season begins in March and can last through June. The female lays up to 1,000 eggs on twigs and leaf litter in shallow water.

Spring Peepers are small frogs that have an X-shaped pattern on their backs and a light belly. They are among the earliest amphibians to breed in woodland ponds, and make a shrill, piercing peep or whistle sound by filling and releasing their vocal sacs.. They are well camouflaged in leaf litter and control insect populations.

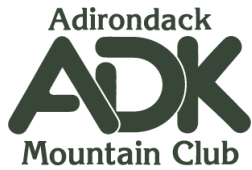
Upon registration with contact cell number, participants will get meeting time and other pertinent information.

R.S.V.P. to Pam at [sanderpamela88@gmail.com](mailto:sanderpamela88@gmail.com)



### Coming Soon...

Keep a look out for a future hike at Mendon Ponds with Geologist Dan Krisher. Mendon Ponds is a 550 mile nature preserve just south of Rochester, NY. The preserve has 30 miles of nature trails and is rich in glacial geology.



## Our Executive Committee

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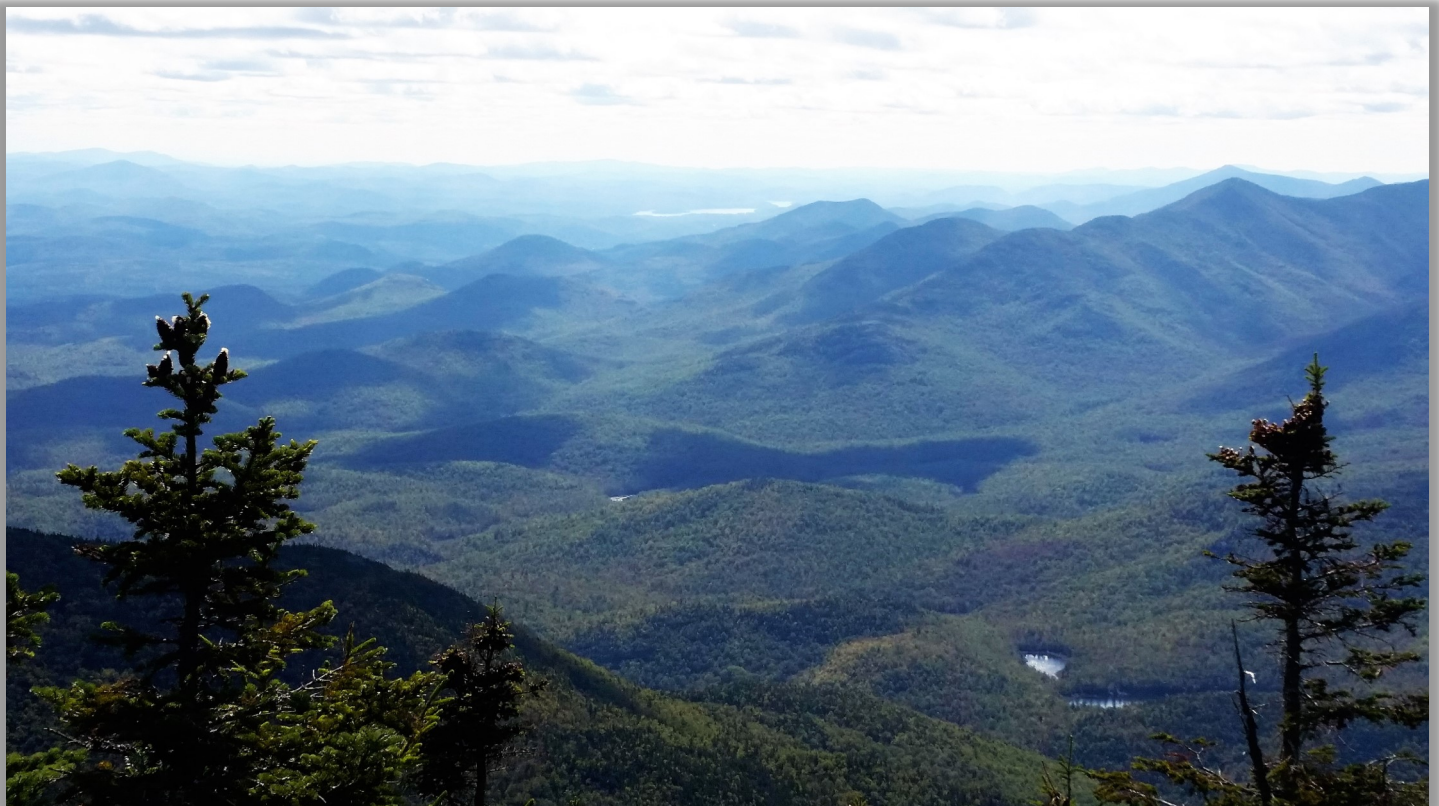
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