

# THE NIAGARA EXPLORER

Newsletter of the Adirondack Mountain Club  
Niagara Frontier Chapter



## General Meeting

**Tuesday,  
March 11, 2025**

**6:15pm**  
Education Program  
TBD

**7:30pm**  
Main Program

Church of the Nativity  
1530 Colvin Blvd.  
Tonawanda, NY 14223

Keep up to date by  
checking your

- Weekly Emails
- ADK-NFC Chapter Facebook Group
- Meetup
- Instagram



## Event Calendar



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## Message from the Chair

### Spring is Just Around the Corner (I Promise!)

What an amazing winter it's been, and it's been a good winter to be a part of the ADK club. The trip to the Loj is full this winter, with a number of fun activities planned including a summit hike and several X-C ski events to keep everyone outdoors.

I've also noticed a few chats in our Meetup group regarding folks who are down in Ellicottville skiing or doing other activities, and the opportunity to meet others in the club is outstanding. The Meetup group is an excellent resource for real-time communication with other members of the chapter, and if you want to be more active (including scheduling your own hikes), reach out and we'll help you get setup so that you can post your own hikes that you might be planning.

I also want to share my satisfaction in seeing the NY/CT Audubon Society withdraw from the Zoar Valley project. Props to Lynn and the Zoar Valley Coalition for making their voices heard, and hopefully their hard work will result in a better future for Zoar Valley and for the community that enjoys recreating in that area.



The next several months look to be great – I know that I'm looking forward to some of the recreational activities being planned by some of our members, and also keeping an eye out for some of the conservation activities that the Chapter will be doing – the ADK's mission is to work to protect New York State wild lands and waters by promoting responsible outdoor recreation and building a statewide constituency of land stewardship advocates. This means not only recreating in the 'Daks, but also in our neck of the woods, and to bring that spirit with us wherever we go to enjoy the outdoors!

- Jonathan Coupal

## Membership

If you would like to join the  
**Niagara Frontier Chapter**  
you can sign up at a monthly meeting  
or online at

<https://www.adk-nfc.org/membership>



## Monthly Program

**Tuesday, March 11, 2025  
7:30 p.m.**

ADK-NFC is happy to welcome  
Citizen Coalition for Wildlife and Environment (CCWE)

### ***Native Plants, Ecological Gardening, and Creating Habitats for Wildlife***

Dr. Nicole Gerber and Dr. Dave Reilly will cover the following questions:

- Why protect and assist nature?
- Why practice ecological gardening?
- How do we support biodiversity?
- Why are native plants critically important?



The mission of CCWE is to be the voice of wildlife and stewards of the environment, to encourage and enlist citizens in the practice and promotion of compassionate coexistence and the realization of a kind and compassionate world, and to use education and action to protect our ecosystems and the lives of animals. Nicole and Dave are Master Naturalists and have developed a number of environmental educational programs for children and adults.

CCWE is housed at the Alt Nature Preserve and Center which is located in a historic old schoolhouse building at 2489 Whitehaven Road, Grand Island, NY 14072. Situated on 36 acres, the Alt Nature Center property was purchased in 2022 by the Western New York Land Conservancy, and is permanently protected from development.

Dr. Nicole Gerber received her PhD in Biological Sciences at the State University of New York at Buffalo. She serves as the Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center's Emergency Manager and Biosafety Officer and is a certified Wildlife Rehabilitator and a Wildlife Control Officer.

Dr. Dave Reilly is the director of International Studies and chair of the Department of Political Science at Niagara University, where he teaches a variety of courses that include Environmental Thought and Environmental Policy. Together, Nicole and Dave have started the Citizen Coalition for Wildlife and the Environment, a non-profit based in Western New York.

CCWE partners with a number of organizations which include Humane Society of the United States, SPCA Serving Erie County, NY, WildCARE of WNY, WNY Land Conservancy, Niagara River Greenway, Eastern Monarch Butterfly Farm, Oakmoss Education, NYS Master Gardeners & Naturalist, and others.

<https://www.citizencoalitionwe.com>

- Pam Sander/Programs Co-chair

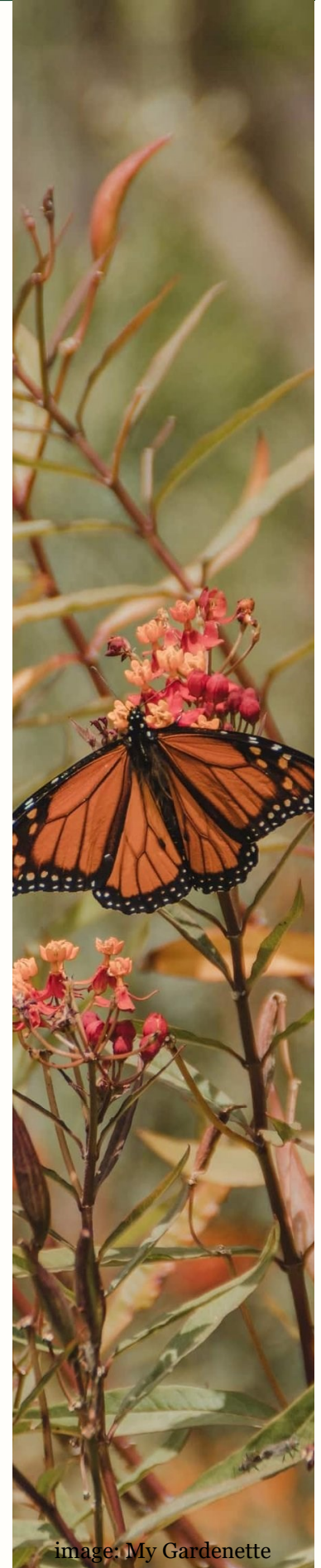


image: My Gardenette



## February Program Recap

### You Can't See the Forest for the Trees 2-11-2025

On February 11, 2025, the main program was presented by Josh Konovitz, CERP, CNLP, owner of Druid, E.C. Forester, Co-owner of Ecos, and member of the local chapter of Wild Ones. The title of the program, *Can't See the Forest for the Trees*, is an idiom that means to be so focused on details that you can't understand the bigger picture.

Josh's education background includes his current enrollment in Paul Smith's College Natural Resource Conservation Graduate Certificate program, graduate of SUNY University at Buffalo Evolution, Ecology, and Behavior Graduate program, and graduate of SUNY College at Buffalo B.S., Individualized Studies in Restoration Ecology. Josh's professional certifications include land restoration, nursery and landscaping, commercial pesticide application, aquatic vegetation remediation, logging, Wilderness First Aid, CPR and AED, wetland conservation, and is a New York Master Naturalist.

This program included discussing the differing views on forests and how they are managed for use by people and wildlife. The forest through the trees saying has long been used to describe a situation where the big picture is missed because the whole is more than just the sum of its parts. The forest is more valuable than the trees that comprise it, and we have to consider how our management impacts the ecological trajectory of the community. Josh explained and gave examples of how every action has costs and consequences, and there is no one-size-fits-all solution to forest management. A variety of management strategies and styles and how they impact and influence the current and future status of a forest community, and our perceptions of them, were discussed.



Josh discussed the Erie County Forest Management Plan that members have been urged to complete (the deadline was February 18, 2025). The public will have an opportunity to attend the next and possibly last in-person meeting of the E.C. Forestry Plan this Spring (date has not been announced). View the county website <https://www3.erie.gov/parks/parks/erie-county-forest-management-plan> and stay informed. As residents of Erie County, we have a role and responsibility in shaping the future of E.C. Forest. As an organization that has long enjoyed outings in E.C. Forest, we have a personal stake in the management plan, for ourselves and future generations. The Forest Management Plan is for twelve county owned forest lots and will be completed in 2025.

The Q&A discussion that followed Josh's program was robust with many great questions, answers, and impassioned comments that included the DEC's proposed logging in Zoar Valley for an area off Wickham Woods and East Otto State Forest.

Pam Sander/Programs Co-chair



#### "Can't see the forest for the trees"

This saying has long been used to describe a situation where the big picture is missed because the whole is more than just the sum of its parts.

This is as apropos now as ever. The forest is more valuable than the trees that comprise it, and we have to consider how our management impacts the ecological trajectory of the community.

Every action has costs and consequences, and there is no one-size-fits-all solution to forest management.

Josh Konovitz  
<https://druid.eco/>

## Conservation Corner

### Celebrate Niagara Frontier Conservation History

Have you ever wondered what the Niagara Frontier Conservation Committee does? Find out what role the committee has played in preserving our local environment over the past decades.

#### Hikes

The Conservation Committee is excited to announce a series of hikes to our local treasures that the committee actively worked to protect. Hikes are being planned to these special places that are now preserved as parks and preserves. The first hike will be along the board walk at Amherst's Great Baerhe Swamp in early spring to enjoy the exotic looking Skunk Cabbage as it emerges from the ground and to welcome back returning songbirds. We will also hike the trail loop at the Billy Wilson Park where we will park to access the boardwalk.

#### Spring Sweep

Join chapter members with picking up trash along our waterways as we take part in the [Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper Spring Sweep](#) on April 26<sup>th</sup>.

Registration information will be announced in the ADK Weekly Email starting in March. The chapter clean-up site location will be announced at that time. Plans are underway to participate in the Re-Tree WNY bare root tree planting event again this year.



#### Mark Your Calendars:

<b>April 19<sup>th</sup></b>	Great Baerhe Swamp & Billy Wilson Park Hike
<b>April 21<sup>st</sup></b>	Earth Day History Lecture at Williamsville Clearfield Library
<b>April 26<sup>th</sup></b>	Waterkeeper Spring Sweep
<b>May 2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Re-Tree WNY Tree Planting
<b>May 17<sup>th</sup> or 24<sup>th</sup></b>	Tillman Road Wildlife Management Area Roadside Cleanup and Hike

#### Erie County Forest Plan

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Erie County Forest Plan survey which was used to obtain public input as part of updating the Erie County Forest Management Plan. A public meeting to discuss details of the plan will be held in the spring.

#### Earth Day April 22<sup>nd</sup>

This year celebrate the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day with the theme Our Power, Our Planet focused on renewable energy and fighting climate change. Peace activist John McConnell founded Earth Day due to his belief that humans have an obligation to take care of the earth.



Check this link [The 12 Best Earth Day Events in Buffalo, New York \(wearebuffalo.net\)](#) to find local Earth Day events.

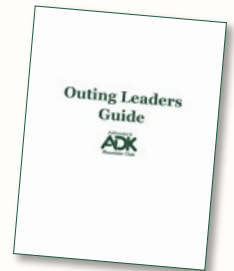
- Lynn Rehfeld-Kenney, Conservation Chair

## Advisory Committee Trustee Report



There is lots of activity going on in the Club, and the winter season is going strong! There are a variety of activities at the Cascade Center including skiing and fun programs. You can find out more about events by looking at ADK.org or looking at ADK on various social media sites.

If you haven't set up your membership yet, go on the site and click membership to do that. The new computer system will show you your membership status and renewal date, and if you want to become a trip leader you can read about how to do that. You can see all the upcoming classes and outings there.



Hiring for next summer's seasonal staff is almost complete, and volunteers are scheduled for programs such as campground host, lean-to adopters, trail adopters and trailhead stewards. The Loj front desk is implementing a new registration system that should improve operations, and an additional half time position was added at the desk. The Loj is heavily booked this year.

Representatives from chapters, the Advisory Committee and the Board conservation committees met to resolve concerns about club conservation activities. A proposal to consolidate the various committees will be considered by the board.

Publications staff are working on reprints of the High Peaks and Catskill guides. Planning is underway for the John's Brook Lodge Centennial celebration to be held at the lodge on July 4<sup>th</sup>. There will be a fall date set at Cascade for those who can't get into JBL.

If you have any questions about the club, you can email me at [hackerks@gmail.com](mailto:hackerks@gmail.com).

*Kate Hacker, Advisory Committee Trustee for the NFC, ADK Board member*



John's Brook Lodge  
image: adk.org



## Trip Reports and Outings

### Conservation Trail, Feb 16<sup>th</sup>

The first hike for the Conservation Trail series that Jonathan Coupal is leading was cancelled due to inclement weather, primarily the freezing rain.



Anyone interested in making up this hike can simply walk from the US border (at the Rainbow Bridge) to the LaSalle Waterfront Park, next to the North Grand Island Bridge.



If you haven't joined Meetup please do so as the next **Conservation Trail Hike** has been posted there for RSVP's.

### Cross Country Skiing at Grover Cleveland Golf Course, Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>

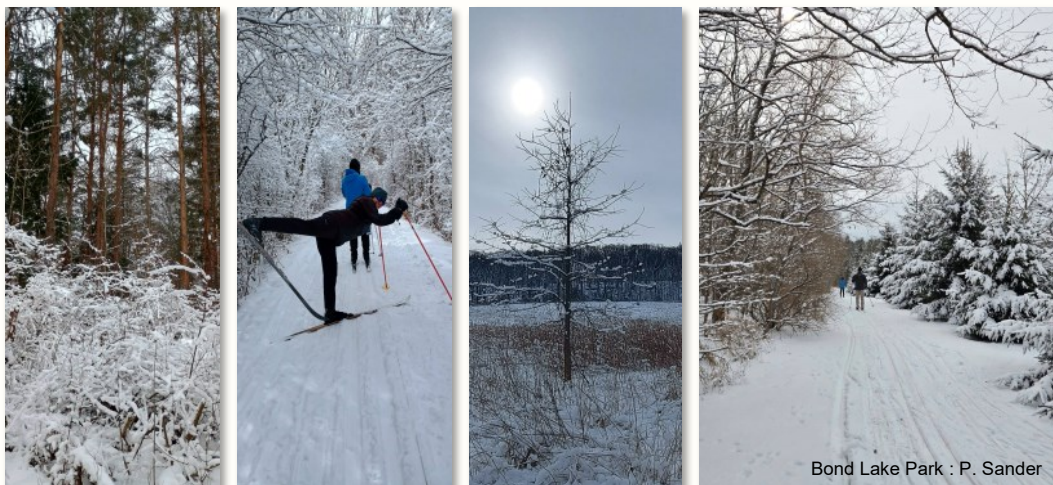
Lee Clukey was joined by 4 other ADK members skiing this area with excellent weather and snow conditions.

Typical of most golf courses it is very open and flat but has the advantages of being close to town, the ski track is groomed and the clubhouse offers several tables and restrooms. You do need to provide your own equipment.



I prefer some hills and woods but this area is very convenient for a quick workout and excellent for folks new to the game. We skied a mile, checked out the clubhouse and then skied another mile. A mild breeze did add a little challenge but provided an advantage going with the wind and slightly downhill. I skied the area the previous day when there were fairly strong gusts. At one point the wind stopped me and blew me back a few inches. I was glad to have brought some extra gear.

Note: this last minute outing was posted on Meetup



Bond Lake Park : P. Sander

Before joining any Meetup Groups, you'll need to create a Meetup account.

[Join Meetup](#)

This is a pretty simple process, and the site guides you through each of the steps.

Go to [meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com) and click Join Meetup.

## Trip Reports and Outings (con't)

### Hike the Conservation Trail!

The [Conservation Trail](#) is a footpath that extends from the PA border in Allegany State Park and proceeds northward for 177 miles to end at the Rainbow Bridge in Niagara Falls. Our current Chair, Jonathan Coupal, is leading a set of group section hikes of the Conservation Trail in 2025 and 2026. Jonathan has put a lot of thought and planning into this endeavor. By the end you will have completed the entire Conservation Trail to the PA line.

### Section 2 Hike

**Sunday, March 30, 2025**  
**8:30 AM to 4:00 PM EDT**

#### [Darien Lake State Park](#)

We're going to meet at the "end point" at the Parking for the Trail at the North Section of Darien Lakes State Park and then shuttle back to Akron Falls Park, walking 12.1 miles to Darien Lakes. Let me know if you're interested in a shorter hike, and I'll coordinate an in-between pickup for anyone who has expressed interest in that option. As it's the end of winter, dress for the weather (chilly, maybe muddy) and bring lunch, snacks and water for yourself. This hike will be a mix of road and trail walking.

We'll leave most of the cars at the end point and carpool to the beginning, hiking back to the cars. Final details including map and specific parking coordinates will be supplied to those who [RSVP in Meetup](#)

### SEND ME YOUR OUTINGS!

**Frank Meyer**  
Outings Chair &  
Editor Weekly

Newsletter

Ph: 716-982-3086

Email:  
[edendds@gmail.com](mailto:edendds@gmail.com)

Looking to get outdoors? Too cold, you say?

Bundle up (you know how to dress)  
and head to our Erie County Parks!

Go to: <https://www3.erie.gov/parks/events>



Erie County Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department

**ERIE COUNTY PARKS DEPT. NY**

## Park Ranger Program

**Chestnut Ridge Park**  
Saturday, March 1, 2025

**Event Title:**  
Coffee with a Ranger

**Event Description:**  
Description: Join Erie County Park Ranger Nikki for a meet and greet at the Chestnut Ridge Casino! Ranger Nikki will be hanging out by the fireplace discussing the ranger program, the history of our parks and answering any curious questions you may have about life in the parks department! Join her for a couple hours of conversation with coffee and donuts provided!

**Pre-Register at:**  
[www3.ErieGov/Parks/Events](http://www3.ErieGov/Parks/Events)



## 2025 Maple Syrup Programs!

Join Erie County Parks Rangers and Forestry staff to learn how maple syrup is produced from trees in #YourErieCountyParks! Demonstrations at the Sugar Shack and tours of the sugar bush will be available for all programs. All programs are free of charge and take place at the Forestry Bureau mapling facility in East Concord, NY.

**Group Tours!**  
**Open House!**  
**Special Events!**

**ERIE COUNTY PARKS DEPT. NY**

[www.erie.gov/parks/events](http://www.erie.gov/parks/events)



### Mark Your Calendars!

### ADK Niagara Frontier Chapter Annual Picnic

**Saturday, June 14, 2025**

Akron Falls Park

*Keep an eye out for more details in future newsletters.*



# VOLUNTEER



**Get Involved!**

## Can You Lend a Hand?

**ADK NFC is Looking to  
Fill 2 Executive Committee Positions**

### Membership Chair

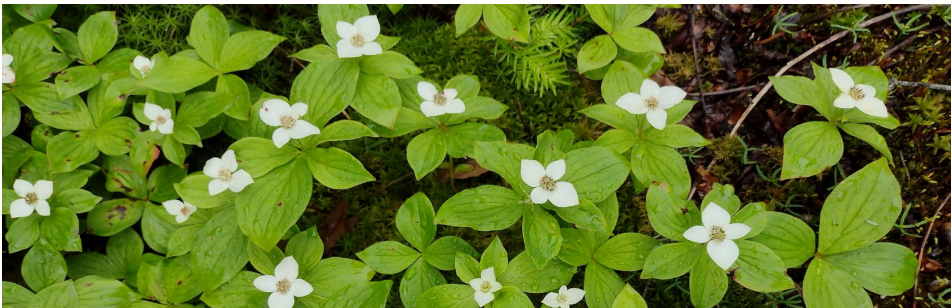
provides continuous outreach and social efforts to recruit new members

### Education Chair

provides education programs that support outdoor skills, trip leadership and safe enjoyable outings

### Interested?

Contact Jonathan Coupal at [jonathan@coupal.us](mailto:jonathan@coupal.us) for more information



If you have signed out a book from the library cart and are done with it, please remember to return it to the cart and indicate so on the sign-in/out sheet. Thank you!

- Karen, Librarian

## ADK Niagara Frontier Chapter Executive Committee

<p><b>Chair</b> Jonathan Coupal <a href="mailto:jonathan@coupal.us">jonathan@coupal.us</a></p>	<p><b>Advisory Council Trustee</b> Kate Hacker <a href="mailto:hackerks@gmail.com">hackerks@gmail.com</a></p>	<p><b>Archivist/Historian</b> Lynn Rehfeld-Kenney <a href="mailto:woodthrush3@hotmail.com">woodthrush3@hotmail.com</a></p>
<p><b>Outings Chair</b> Frank Meyer <a href="mailto:edendds@gmail.com">edendds@gmail.com</a></p>	<p><b>Webmaster</b> Jonathan Coupal <a href="mailto:jonathan@coupal.us">jonathan@coupal.us</a></p>	<p><b>Outings Co-chair: Waterways</b> Bob Van Hise <a href="mailto:adkpaddles.bvh@gmail.com">adkpaddles.bvh@gmail.com</a></p>
<p><b>Conservation Chair</b> Lynn Rehfeld-Kenney <a href="mailto:woodthrush3@hotmail.com">woodthrush3@hotmail.com</a></p>	<p><b>Treasurer</b> Brian Monckton <a href="mailto:bkmonckton@gmail.com">bkmonckton@gmail.com</a></p>	<p><b>Outings Co-chair: Biking</b> Vacant</p>
<p><b>Programs Co-chairs</b> Pamela Sander <a href="mailto:sanderpamela88@gmail.com">sanderpamela88@gmail.com</a></p> <p>Larry Moses <a href="mailto:Elmo69254@gmail.com">Elmo69254@gmail.com</a></p>	<p><b>Newsletter Editor</b> Laura Liebel <a href="mailto:laura.a.liebel@gmail.com">laura.a.liebel@gmail.com</a></p>	<p><b>Outings Co-chair: Hiking &amp; Winter</b> Leslie Salathe <a href="mailto:lesliesalathe@live.com">lesliesalathe@live.com</a></p>
<p><b>Education Chair</b> Vacant</p>	<p><b>Secretary</b> Larry Beahan <a href="mailto:larry_beahan@roadrunner.com">larry_beahan@roadrunner.com</a></p>	<p><b>Librarian</b> Karen Coupal</p>
<p><b>Membership Chair</b> Vacant</p>	<p><b>Hospitality</b> Sandy McCreedy Pauline Bartl</p>	<p><b>Digital Communications</b> Emma Piascik</p>

