

ADK Laurentian Chapter Executive Committee
Minutes, Meeting via Zoom, June 7, 2023

Action items are in bold.

Called to order: 7:00 pm

Attending: Marianne Hebert, Ellie Menz, Mary MacKinnon, Holly Woodworth, Tom Ortmeyer, Blair Madore, Tom Vande Water, David Katz

Minutes: Apr 12, 2023 minutes - adopted unanimously.

Chair report:

- Fred Hanss contacted Marianne to ask us to write a letter in support of a grant proposal to The Catalyst Program to upgrade the Pine Street Arena. Marianne wrote a letter on the chapter's behalf. Marianne's letter is appended below.
- Picnic July 16 – we will provide burgers, hot dogs, condiments. We will need charcoal, lighter fluid, matches. We will ask people to bring their own place setting but we will also have paper plates etc on hand for people who don't bring them. Gabby will help with setup. Greg is running a paddle(?) outing, Eileen Wheeler is running a birding outing. **We need a barbecue chef. (Tom O?)** Drinks: water, lemonade. How many people should we plan for – 20? 30? We're guessing 30. **Marianne is putting together a shopping list.** People should bring folding chairs, plus sides and/or salads and/or desserts. **David will send an email about the picnic (or an outings email with the picnic featured prominently).**
- Stone Valley Interpretive Signs – Jeff Chiaranzelli, Tom O, and Angie Watson have made much progress on content.
- Racquette River and West Branch St Regis River Advisory Council meetings – Blair's reports are appended below.

New business:

- Outings Guidelines – issues: the wording does not clarify what adults would be supervising kids – i.e., can parents sign the waiver and then just drop off their kids (as seems to be suggested in the club's waiver form)? Discussion of whether the chapter's outing leaders should allow unaccompanied minors. Holly sees problems with certifying level 2 & 3 hikes and leaders – how do you determine definitively what level a hike is? Holly is not comfortable with her possible level of liability. She will probably not be willing to certify that a hike is a 1 or a 2 or a 3. Also the workload for the outing leader is going up – she will have to keep track of who is certified to lead what. Also the sexual harassment training is okay to take once but boring to sit through year after year. The Volunteer Protection Act requires the club to have guidelines but theoretically protects volunteer trip leaders in case of lawsuits. We seem to be stuck with the rules and need to come up the chapter's implementation plan. Implementation plan for level 1 needs to be implemented by Dec 31, 2023. We will implement the new trip ratings on Jan 1 2024.

- Should we offer some of the trainings locally? E.g. Blair could offer map & compass training every year. **Our chapter budget should include Red Cross first aid training.** Can we get the club to offer trainings here? Marianne: let's focus on getting people certified for level 1 and get those leaders who are interested pointed at level 2 & 3 training in time for 2025. Can we partner with SUNY Potsdam wilderness ed? Adam Wheeler perhaps teaches this. **Blair will look into this.**
- Do we need something on the website about outings guidelines and certifications?

Officer reports:

- **Membership** – Mary reports that we have 304 memberships including 46 family memberships, 4 student memberships, 215 households and 89 family members. There are 3 new members since March and 10 memberships are overdue.
- **Outings** – need more outings for summer!
- **Education** – What about a trailwork intern? RRAC might fund some of it. Blair will continue to contemplate how this might work. **Add a budget item for next year?**

Next meeting – Wed Aug 2 6pm at Holly's, 53C Hazelton Rd, Wanakena (cross the bridge, turn left, turn left again. Come early for hiking and paddling.

Adjourned – 7:29 pm

Report from Meeting of Racquette River Advisory Council (RRAC) May 25, 2023

RRAC is an organization created by an agreement between NYS, Brookfield and various signatories (ADK is one) as part of the relicensing of areas of the Racquette River for hydropower generation. I (Blair Madore) attend as the official representative of the ADK Laurentian Chapter. The RRAC provides a forum to discuss issues regarding the Racquette and the facilities and properties Brookfield owns along the river. It also provides a fund that can be used for projects meeting certain criteria within one mile of the river in the licensed areas.

The RRAC fund currently has about \$40K available to fund projects.

Erik Bergman – Boralex Hydro Operations, Inc, presented a DNA study to determine presence of American Eel at various points in the river. He would be willing to share with anyone. The DEC has an additional study. This is partly about determining if Eel ladders installed at the dams are working. **A good topic for Conservation to look into?**

DEC/USFW would like to see further studies done. I promised to reach out to Biology and Environmental Studies at Potsdam.

A final report about funding for Stone Valley Trail (tools purchase) is needed. I will contact Mark to see if we can get this done.

SLC Trails – received some funding from RRAC to improve information about paddling available. We saw an interim report of what they have done. They would welcome all eyes to look at and suggest improvements. <https://www.stlctrails.com/>

The proposal from ADK Laurentian (Marianne Hebert) for funding to support new signs at Stone Valley was approved unanimously. Funding of \$1000 (out of the \$2000 budget). RRAC expects to see pdfs of signs before creation (as offered) and a midterm or final report at Fall 2023 meeting.

Brookfield agreed to carry out a Dark Sky Compliance inventory at Parmenter and McNeil campsites, make changes as needed and report back in fall of 2023.

I asked if Brookfield would do an open house at their facilities along the RSST to teach about hydropower. They said no to an open house but are willing (and regularly do) open their doors to scheduled tours by college classes or other groups.

**Report from Meeting of West Branch of the
St. Regis River Advisory Council (RRAC) May 25, 2023**

SRRAC is an organization created by an agreement between NYS, Brookfield and various signatories (ADK is one) as part of the relicensing of areas of the West Branch of the St. Regis River for hydropower generation – primarily in Parishville. I (Blair Madore) attend as the official representative of the ADK Laurentian Chapter. The SRRAC provides a forum to discuss issues regarding the West Branch of the St. Regis River and the facilities and properties Brookfield owns along the river. It also provides a small fund that can be used for projects meeting certain criteria within one mile of the river in the licensed areas.

The SRRAC fund currently has about \$6K available to fund projects.

Need someone with expertise to provide wording for a pamphlet about the Parishville Nature Trail. Glenn Johnson (Biology, SUNY Potsdam) had offered to do so but was forced to withdraw from the project. Anyone have contacts?

There was discussion about the fencing in Parishville along the penstock and gorge. The Town of Parishville may put in a future proposal to build an improved trail along the fence giving easier access to the river, especially downstream of the Penstock bridge.

Marianne's letter in support of grant proposal

May 30, 2023

The Hon. Reinhold J. Tischler, Mayor
Village of Potsdam
P.O. Box 5168, Civic Center
Potsdam, New York 13676

RE: Letter of Support for the Village of Potsdam 2023 Catalyst Program, Sandstoner Park Recreation Center Design Project

Dear Mayor Tischler:

I am writing on behalf of the Laurentian Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club to support the Village of Potsdam's application for grant funding through the Northern Border Regional Commission's 2023 Catalyst Program to renovate the Pine Street Arena.

The Laurentian Chapter has ~350 members, mostly from Saint Lawrence County and Ottawa, Canada. The Pine Street Arena and Sandstoner Park has recently been the venue for our annual summer picnic and outing. While we generally use the outdoor pavilion and the beach for our events, the building serves as our alternate rain location and our participants make use of the kayaks and paddle boards for our river outings. We also make use of the kitchens and bathrooms during our events.

While we are grateful for the affordability and availability of the Pine Street Arena, the aging facility needs renovation. It requires masonry repair work, it lacks appropriate climate controls, and it has antiquated mechanical systems. There are accessibility issues that need to be addressed to bring the building into ADA compliance and to make the spaces welcoming to all.

Our local members would appreciate the new facility plans for yoga, fitness training, and wellness programming, including an 8,900 square foot addition to enable a modern, ADA-compliant facility that includes a community room with a kitchenette, large locker rooms that are designed to be used for multiple recreational purposes, skate/kayak rental office, snack bar, and accessible restroom facilities.

The Laurentian Chapter enthusiastically supports the Village of Potsdam's application for grant funding through the Northern Border Regional Commission's 2023 Catalyst Program. A revitalized Pine Street Arena would be an asset to the Village of Potsdam and its residents. Best wishes for a successful application!

Sincerely,

Marianne Hebert
Chair, Laurentian Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club

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