

Director's Report: Sagamore Perspectives

Here at Sagamore, four and a half miles up an unpaved road from the hamlet of Raquette Lake in the center of the Adirondacks, we like to think of ourselves as sheltered from the outside world. It is easy to think so when looking over the lake with a sweeping vista of woods and hearing the call of a loon. It is also one of the rare places in our overdeveloped world where you see a full range of stars, planets, and constellations; and where moose and bear are more common than human beings. The Sagamore Institute of the Adirondacks is dedicated to sharing this special place with people from all walks of life who can take their experiences back to their homes across the country.

Looking to the future, the board and supporters engaged in significant planning and projects to improve the experience in camp. A second goal is to promote the surrounding Adirondack preserve lands in the Historic Great Camps Special Management Area for hiking, cross-country skiing, and mountain biking. Part of this motivation is the desire to attract people to the Central Adirondacks while avoiding overuse problems experienced in the High Peaks region, including erosion, pollution and trail closures. Sagamore board, staff, and supporters along with Alta Planning+Design, a professional trail planning firm, created a new blueprint for future use. It meshes with efforts to attract people to the central and western portions of the park to build awareness of the beauty of this region.

This three-part planning process was supported by the Nordlys Foundation and began with reviewing the current status of all the trails surrounding Sagamore and its neighbor, Camp Uncas. This entailed having a former Sagamore staffer and a small group of volunteers walk every mile of trails to document (through photography and GPS coordinates) sections needing work and to perform basic maintenance. The Alta group created a comprehensive first draft that inventoried the different types of trails and recommended improvements and next steps for building programs and connections to regional planning efforts. The final part of this planning process was to review drafts with New York State DEC,

Adirondack Park Agency, and others who are working to develop policies.

For Sagamore, this effort represents a chance to shape the future use of the forest preserve land that immediately surrounds us. We are creating a vision of preserving the pastoral beauty of the forested landscape while encouraging others to enjoy it. We believe that through accessing the forest by foot, skis, or mountain bike, one can take in all that the natural world has to offer. The plan will also open doors for groups that are planning new ways of bringing visitors to the Adirondacks. Copies of the plan will be available to the public at Sagamore's offices and online during the 2017 program season.

Sagamore staff and board also worked to improve the accommodations and the visitor experience at camp. The rehabilitation of the Conference Building included public areas on the first floor and guest rooms on the second floor. The offices and Reading Room were painted and relit and refurnished with period-appropriate fixtures and furniture. Highlights include rustic Adirondack cabinets in the entryway, historic images of Sagamore and the region in guest rooms, and new audio visual equipment for workshops and classes. Longtime visitors commented on the new look and on the comfort of the new beds.

Meals at Sagamore are a central part of a stay at camp. Our new chefs and kitchen staff are creating menus of dishes made "from scratch" and locally-sourced ingredients. The chefs spent the season researching authentic recipes from the Vanderbilt and other gilded age families and restaurants and preparing them in our kitchen. They will implement a complete overhaul of the menus for the upcoming season.

As part of its mission, Sagamore works to conserve Adirondack culture. In June, we hosted the first Roots & Branches traditional music internship, bringing emerging musicians together with prominent folk musicians Dan Berggren, Peggy Lynn, Dan Duggan, Trish Miller, John Kirk, and Sara Milonovich. Nine aspiring musicians attended the inaugural year, supported by Sagamore's Music & Trails Fund made possible by longtime members. ■

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We have tried to be accurate, but welcome your additions/ corrections. Thank you.

Facilities staff and volunteers kept very busy during 2016 on both projects in camp and on the surrounding trails. One of the most visible improvements are the boat dock renovations made during the Spring volunteer work weekend. The 700 square foot dock was rebuilt using new materials to match the old by a very dedicated crew of volunteers who braved the cold water of Sagamore Lake in May to complete this project over the course of a weekend. The new dock serves our visitors, intergenerational camps, and staff boats and is projected to last for at least 20 years.

Planning for Chalet renovations by Janet Null, our Historic Preservation architect, and a staff and board committee was completed and approved by New York State late in 2015. The project will add accessible bathrooms and open up the front part of the first floor for a consolidated store and cafe space. The project is funded by a grant from a New York State Council on Economic Development and will be completed in the Fall of 2017.

Extensive trail work, including a conditions survey, mapping, and clearing overgrowth was worked on by members of the Adirondack Mountain Club and the new trails committee of the Sagamore board and our Camp Uncas neighbors. Improvements focussed on the Lake, Powerhouse, and Uncas Farm Meadow trails. Sagamore successfully lobbied to expand our stewardship agreement to include the lands of the Moose River Plains Wild Forest that are on the north side of the Sagamore Road.

Other needed repairs and renovations accomplished in 2016 included the completion of Phase 2 of our water system upgrade including new valves, pressure tanks, and distribution piping between the upper and lower camps. A septic system blockage required replacement of the original 1.5" septic piping between lower and upper camps.

Volunteer hours amounted to more than 1,222 which is valued at \$33,715. ■

The following award was given for service:

- **Red Chair Award:**
Mike Herman
- **Work Weekend Hosts:**
Donia Conn and Kyle Kelliher ■

Each summer for more than twenty years, Great Camp Sagamore has hosted a variety of traditional folk artisans from throughout the North Country to demonstrate the arts and crafts that make Sagamore a unique place. In 2016 we hosted the following demonstrations supported by New York State Council for the Arts:

- **Bill Smith** Rustic Carvings
- **Helen Condon** Rug Braider
- **David Woodward** Blacksmith
- **Chris Hubbard** Chair Caning
- **Jane Desotelle** Herbalist
- **Pat Smith** Cedar Canvas Canoe Builder
- **Chris Woodward** Guide Boat Builder ■



Road Scholars who registered for Sagamore programs commented:

"The atmosphere was great. Outstanding instructors. The two main leaders were passionate about both the Sagamore Camp and the Adirondacks. All instructors and camp staff were outstanding."

"Every aspect of the program was exceptional to me: the accommodation, the dining facility and food quality, the interactive programming with instructors and participants, the small (25) size of the group participating, the duration, the incentives to try new instruments, the warm, friendly and supportive instructors, the setting, the remote location, the beautiful weather."

"Sagamore is such a special place. It is the perfect setting for this workshop. The accommodations are so unique and the staff goes out of their way to make it a lifetime experience."

"Everything about it was fantastic. Wes Sherman is an amazing instructor, the setting is magical, the camaraderie that formed within our group was heart-warming, the food and accommodations were great."

Bequests To ensure the future of Sagamore, please remember us in your will and trusts. Speak to your attorney or accountant for more information on planned giving that benefits you and Sagamore. ■

Guided Tours throughout the season

Summer Tours • 10:00 am & 1:30 pm

Spring/Fall Tours • 1:30 pm

New Tour Themes and Options for 2017—

Check GreatCampSagamore.org for availability and times



4,061 people toured Sagamore in 2016



Great Camp Sagamore NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

Sagamore Institute of the Adirondacks

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GreatCampSagamore.org



2017 Annual Benefit

August 5 • Patty Lane, Chair

The best part of the summer season will be Sagamore's Annual Benefit for Historic Preservation on August 5. The theme this year is *Upstairs/Downstairs at Sagamore* which recognizes the contributions of the many caretakers and workers at Sagamore through the years. There will be a wonderful auction of art, travel opportunities and Adirondack products as well as food by L.M. Townsend Catering of Cooperstown, live music and more. Come for the event or weekend and feel great about contributing to Sagamore!

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Samantha Smithson *Tour Supervisor*

Megan Steely *Event Intern*

Robert Clark *Intergenerational Program Supervisor*

Julia Shea *Children's and Family Programs Intern*

Joshua White *Children's and Family Programs Intern*

Sagamore Institute of the Adirondacks is the steward of Great Camp Sagamore and is dedicated to its use for education and interpretation. Our mission is to foster understanding, care, and respect for nature, people and their critical interdependence.