

# Ranger School Alumni Association

Fall-2024

## RSAA Alumni President's Report

It is a beautiful fall day in the Adirondacks for the start of the white tailed deer archery season. I plan to be out this afternoon to enjoy being in the fall woods. What ever your fall pursuits are enjoy this special time of the year.

Your Board of Directors has been busy since I last updated you in the Spring news letter. The Executive Committee negotiated work hours and pay scale with our Office Manager Sam MacDonald for the coming year. Sam is and continues to be a valuable asset to our Association.

The Audit Committee, with Sam's assistance, has provided all the necessary files and information to our auditor for our 2023 fiscal year. We do not expect any issues or surprises from this review.

The Finance Committee has updated our Internal Controls document and they are currently working on updating our By-Laws and Constitution. This really is a thankless job but a necessary one. To

take advantage of the higher interest rates before the Fed lowered them some RSAA funds were deposited in two short term certificates of deposit.

The Properties and Projects Committee did an outstanding job this year with the Alumni House and Campground. There is a new ladder on the dock which makes it much easier for old guys like me to get out of the river after a swim. We expect rental fees for the house and campground to more than cover the costs of the property.

The Social Media committee has been working with a new company to update and redesign our web site. We expect problems of the past to be resolved. Stay tuned to the release sometime this fall.

The Engagement Committee held another reception in Batavia that was a success. Director Johnston has called these Pop Up Reunions and the name stuck. The committee is tentatively planning another Pop Up Reunion some time this fall. Stay

tuned for more details in the near future.

The Reunion Committee pulled off another amazing reunion. I believe every one who attended had a great time. There were three members from the class of 1953 in attendance celebrating their 71st reunion. The class of 1974 made a nice gift to the Ranger School and challenged other classes to do the same. My class, the class of 1976 was specifically charged to step it up. If you have never been to a Reunion I encourage you to put it on your schedule. The dates for next year are August 1 and 2.

As you can see the Officers and Board of Directors of the RSAA, your Officers and Board, all volunteers, do an outstanding job keeping the RSAA moving forward. When you see them, thank them for all they do.

As Garrison Keillor would say "Be well, do good work, and keep in touch".

-Tom Martin, '76-

## 2024 Reunion Report

A beautiful summer weekend was enjoyed at the 88th Annual Alumni Reunion Approximately 160 fellow alumni attended along with family and guests. Many familiar faces were present as well as quite a few first timers including a good showing from the class of '24. Welcome to the Alumni Association! Special recognition to the class of '74 with 16 members celebrating their 50th and an extra special recognition to the class of '53 with 4 members celebrating 71 years!

Saturday evening festivities began with the presentation of the Philip J. Haddock Award of Excellence.

Congratulations to this years recipient

Greg Vaverchak '02, a well deserved recognition of his hard work and dedication to the RSAA and the Ranger School.

The evening concluded in spectacular fashion with the live auction. Many unique and one of a kind items were auctioned off, including an original art piece created by the renowned Michael Webb '74.

The auction raised almost \$2000 for the Legacy Scholarship fund and we would like to thank all those that donated items because it is only with your support that this event is as successful as it is.

The reunion committee is

already hard at work preparing next years reunion and I would like to personally thank them for all of their efforts to provide an enjoyable and fun experience for everyone and we look forward to seeing everyone next year.

Greg De La Fleur '94



# Wanakena Historical Association: Repainting the Wanakena Footbridge

The WHA is near completing the repainting of our footbridge. Last year Ranger School Alumni and WHA Trustee Beth Daut stepped up to coordinate the scraping and repainting of the peeling paint on the footbridge. FYI: one of the major grants received to rebuild required it to look like the original that was destroyed in the ice jam., Over 20 volunteers stepped-up to scrape the



Scraping the bridge

volunteers were finally able to complete the priming over several weeks and the application of two coats of solid stain is almost complete at this writing. A representative of Sherwin Williams reviewed the project and recommended the products to be used. In addition, Sherwin Williams gave us a significant discount on the cost of the primer and solid stain. This is a true community effort that is bringing this project to fruition.



Barge to catch scrapings

bridge last fall with priming and painting done in the summer of 2024.

Unfortunately, it was difficult to start priming the bridge as there never were 3 days in a row of dry sunny weather to apply the primer. In mid-August,



Sept 2024 – First coat almost done

## Properties and Projects

### Greetings Alumni

Another summer season has come and passed. The alumni house was occupied most of the summer! The alumni house was rented beginning on 11 May until 14 October and the campgrounds had regular visitors. It is a beautiful spot to spend some time in the summer.



The alumni house was closed up for the year on 26 October. Please feel free to join alumni for the opening and closing of the property. The weekend is a chance to see alum and help with the chores that are necessary to winterize and prepare for summer use.

Some changes you may have noticed is the increased signage entering the property. These signs will be a reminder for alumni using the campgrounds to deposit the user fee in the slot on the garage. The other signs are a reminder that the property use is for dues paid alumni

only.

If you have any suggestions for updates or repairs, please contact me or the board.

The process for renting the alumni house remains the same. Also, you must have paid your yearly alumni dues if you plan on using the house or campgrounds.

One alumni house project coming up is to replace/upgrade the steps to the dock. Because of the scope of this project, it will be contracted out. The remnants of the existing steps will be removed and new steps fabricated. If there are any alumni that would be interested in this job, please contact the board or myself. We would like this completed by the opening of the rental season in early May 2025.

As we look forward, the opening of the alumni house and campgrounds will be in late April 2024. We welcome any alumni to help with this process. There's always a campfire going and lots to do.

Enjoy the winter!

Jerry Butler '05



# From the Archives: World Recognition in 1915

On September 6<sup>th</sup>, I visited the Ranger School like I've done so many times before. The main hallway still looks, smells, and sounds (click of your shoes on the smooth linoleum floor) as it did in 1979. The same photos and prints hang from the dark wooden picture rail on the walls. For the first time, I looked at each one closely and discovered something amazing – a “Diploma of Honorable Mention” award from the 1915 San Francisco Panama-Pacific Exposition recognizing the New York State Ranger School just three years after its founding!



World fairs and expositions began in the mid-1800s and showcased new innovations and achievements in science, technology, and the arts, and resulted in the exchange of knowledge. They were very extravagant, multi-cultural, and attended by large crowds. The first world fair was held in Paris, France in 1851. The first U.S. World's Fair (“Centennial Exhibition”) was held in Philadelphia in 1876 to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, and showcased new inventions such as



sewing machines, typewriters, the telephone, popcorn, and root beer.

San Francisco hosted the World's Fair, “Panama-Pacific International Exposition,” in 1915. Covering 600+ acres, it stretched along the waterfront and highlighted San Francisco's grandeur. It celebrated two big American achievements - the successful completion of the Panama Canal and the City's recovery from a terrible earthquake and fire in 1906. Over 18 million people came to see technological and motor advancements such as transcontinental telephone call, wireless telegraphy, and the automobile. This grand International Exposition also celebrated a unique technical forestry school located 3,000 miles away in Wanakena!

Next time you walk down the main hallway, take a closer look at the history hanging on the walls.

Kathy Smith Greenwald '79-

## Congratulations to President Dan Kelting!

Dr. Dan Kelting was recently appointed President of Paul Smith's College. Dan attended the Ranger School from 1986-1987. He went on to earn his BS in Resources Management from ESF, followed by a MS in Forest Soils from Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University. He stayed on at Virginia Tech to finish his PhD in Forestry and Forest Products.

While at ESF, Dan spent a summer working as a forest technician at the Huntington Forest in Newcomb, NY. He has worked in administrative roles at Paul Smith's College since 2003, having most



recently served as Interim President beginning in 2022. Prior to 2022, there were several shifts in leadership at the college.

Dan's leadership has brought stability to the college and a growing optimism for its future as it realigns itself to become “The College for the Adirondacks.”

Congratulations and best of luck to President Dan Kelting!

Jamie Savage, Professor



# 46 Climbs—Success!

As reported in the previous newsletter, the alumni



association along with the class of 2025 joined forces to establish “Team Ranger School” for participation in an event called 46Climbs.

This hiking and mountain climbing event was created in 2014 to help raise mental health awareness and funds to help conquer suicide. Participants were encouraged to hike a local trail and share their experience.



The class of 2025 dedicated 3 different hikes to the cause. Our team was comprised of 24 enthusiastic individuals who helped raise over \$1000 for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

Thank you everyone who sponsored a student, donated



funds and participated to help make this a success, especially our hike leaders; Caren (RS '99) and Brian Donovan (RS '87), Dan Zajac (RS 2023), Vanessa Rojas and Tim O'Mara. A special thank you goes out to Caren Donovan for spearheading our participation in this important fundraiser as well. We couldn't have pulled this off without her hard work.

Following the success of this year's event, we are already planning for next year. Be on the lookout for more information in how you can join in the cause

Greg Vaverchak, '02.

## The Cultural Arts Committee of The Clifton-Fine Economic Development Corporation

Happy Autumn, Everyone!

Here to report another successful Clifton-Fine Summer Concert Series in the books! This donation-funded annual concert series is held bi-weekly down by the footbridge in ZPark across the street from Otto's Abode and the Post Office.

The 24th season kicked off this past July with the Galactic Cowboy Orchestra from Minnesota who delivered an amazing powerhouse of intricate jazz-rock soundscapes and supreme talent. Fun fact: John Wright (RS '83) is the bass player in the band!

Next-up in-conjunction with the Cranberry Lake Boat Club's Poker Paddle for the Clifton Community Library in Cranberry Lake. The paddling portion of the event saw record registration and participation

and the robust crowd was entertained and delighted by Fritz's Polka Band for three hours!

Scheduled for the Friday night of Alumni Weekend was The Makers, a duo from Ithaca, NY who delivered heartfelt Appalachian inspired originals. Followed by one of the most requested-to-return bands: The high-energy and upbeat Bella's Bartok from Western Mass who returned this past August after seven years!

The final concert of the series of the summer was held on the Saturday of Labor Day weekend and featured the Atkinson Family Band from Harrisville, NY who rocked the house with their recipes for hometown Adirondack Bluegrass. Come see why folks call these events the

highlights of the summer!

Summer 2025 will be the 25th season! The search for bands is under-way. Your kind donations keep this 100% people-powered concert series alive and free and open to all. For more information visit the website at: <https://cliftonfinearts.blogspot.com/>

- Dave Ziemba, '89





# Recreation Update: New CL50 Map and New Roof for Hayes Brook Lean-to

Thanks to the continuing efforts of faculty, staff, students, and alumni, the forest/nature recreation resources on the James F. Dubuar Memorial Forest continue to expand and improve. For this update, I'd like to highlight two recent accomplishments.



October 2024 marks the release of a brand new, third edition of the Cranberry Lake 50 Hiker's Map. The map/brochure is published by the Five Ponds Partners (FPP) in partnership with the ESF Ranger School. FPP is an organization of volunteers dedicated to economic development in

the Towns of Clifton and Fine. They work to create, enhance, and promote outdoor recreational resources and opportunities in the local area, opportunities like the Cranberry Lake 50. Professor Savage is a founding member of the FPP and has been spearheading the development of the CL50 map since its inception back in 2009.

The map has continued to evolve and improve over the years. The first edition of the modern map—a full color, waterproof, tear proof map—was produced with assistance from students Samantha Oliveras- Rivera and Nate Morey, RS Class of 2015. Over 2,500 copies of the first and second editions of the map have been sold, benefiting local vendors, the FPP, and users alike!

The current third edition is a complete re-build from scratch; it incorporates newer, more accurate data layers along with trail/campsite updates. The latter map was created by Rachel Graham, Instructional Support Associate, and Jamie Savage using ArcGIS Pro software. By the time you read this, the new map should be available from several vendors across northern New York. Some vendors enable you to order the map online. The map retails for



\$9.95. Visit [www.cranberrylake50.org](http://www.cranberrylake50.org) for more information about the map and where it's sold.

Secondly, I want to follow up on a project mentioned in my 2023 Recreation Update, the Hayes Brook lean-to. Thanks to the enthusiastic efforts of Eric Wixon, Director of Facilities, and summer technicians Giovanna D'Angelo (RS'24) and Jacob "Wiz" Glum (RS '22), the Hayes Brook lean-to has a new roof. The entire roof was replaced, wood sheathing, shingles, and all, and it was nothing short of a professional job with Eric as our fearless project director. We also finished chinking the logs. After a fresh coat of stain later this fall, the lean-to will be good as new.

Stay tuned for more recreation updates in the spring.

Jamie Savage, Professor

## Are you current on your dues?

If you haven't paid your dues, you can do so on our website at [www.nysrsaa.org](http://www.nysrsaa.org) or by filling out the enclosed Information Sheet.

Even if you are a life member, we appreciate you taking the time to fill out the information sheet. This lets us be sure we have the most current contact information for you.

Dues paying members receive the annual Alumni News, can make reservations for the Spaulding Memorial Alumni House, and pay lower Alumni Reunion registration fees!

AND REMEMBER— IF YOU WANT YOUR NEWS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE 2024 ALUMNI NEWS BOOK IT MUST BE RECEIVED IN TO THE ALUMNI OFFICE BY MAY 1.



# Engagement Committee Report

The Ranger School Alumni Engagement Committee organized a third Alumni Reception (now known as “Pop-Up Reunion”) at Batavia Downs Casino and Hotel. It was great to see Alumni from the Rochester and Buffalo areas attending this event. Approximately 35 alumni were in attendance for this evening of renewing friendships with classmates and other alums. Alumni were given an update on the Ranger School by Director Mariann Johnston and RSAA President Tom Martin '76 outlined the activities of the Alumni Association over the past year.

allows us to present these events without cost to our alumni.

We are in the process of planning our next “Pop-Up Reunion” and it will most likely be scheduled in early Spring 2025. As plans are developed, we will announce the event via e-mail



Members of the Class of 2024 in attendance at the Alumni Reunion.



RS Alumni attending “Pop-Up Reunion” at Batavia Downs Casino & Hotel in June 2024.

A very special thanks to Dan Cooke '55, Creekside Boundary (Michele and Aaron '89 Clark), MDR Land Surveying (Mike Rozeski '90), Bruce Williams, '76, Future Forest, Inc. (Corey Figueiredo '96), and Anonymous from the Class of 1981 for sponsoring the Batavia “Pop-Up Reunion”. This financial support

correspondence and via the RSAA Facebook page.

The Engagement Committee congratulates the Alumni Reunion Committee for their efforts in putting on a great Alumni Reunion this past August. It was nice to see so many families with their children in

attendance. The class of 1974 celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> and presented a significant financial gift to the Ranger School. The most recent Class of 2024 was in attendance in force with 20+ classmates attending! The Ranger School Engagement Committee encourages you to become an active member of the RSAA by filling out the Information Sheet and paying your annual dues. This support helps to keep both the RSAA and the Ranger School thriving.

The members of the Ranger School Alumni Engagement Committee include: Chuck Carline '19, Mariann Johnston, RS Director, Samantha MacDonald, RSAA Office Mgr., Tim O'Mara, Arianne Tanski '09, Greg Vaverchak '02, Chris Westbrook '73, Sue Westbrook '82, Emily Reichert '21, and Bruce Williams '76.

Chris Westbrook '73, Chair

## What's Happening in 2025?

**January 1**– Happy New Year!  
Beginning of 2025 RSAA Dues

**March 1st**—Student vs Alumni Hockey Game at the Tenny Ice Pavillion in Syracuse

**March 28h**—Alumni House Reservation Sheets MUST Be In  
**April 1st**—RSAA Award Nominations Must Be In

**April 2nd—5th**– Alumni House Reservation Notifications Go Out  
**After April 15th**—Contact RSAA

Office About Alumni House Availability.

**April 26th and 27th**—Spring Clean Up At The Alumni House

**May 1st**—Alumni Information Sheets Due

**May 12th**– Ranger School Graduation

**August 2nd and 3rd**—Alumni Reunion Weekend!



# Director's Report

The Class of 2025 arrived on August 18, with just one departure during the first week, leaving us at a strong 57 students. Our initial numbers included 26 in the Environmental and Natural Resources Conservation program (ENRC), 18 in the Forest Technology program (FT), and 13 in the Land Surveying Technology program (LST). Students have been busy in their dendrology, surveying, ecology, measurements, first aid & safety, and GIS classes. As we move into October, we will be splitting up into program-specific classes for the first time. Over the last two years, we've piloted a 'professional development' series of presentations from a variety of folks in different career pathways early in the semester, to help students learn more about the options offered by the different programs. This has been successful enough that this year, we formally incorporated it into a course taught by Greg Vaverchak. As a result, the program changes started to trickle in about two weeks ago, and as of today (Oct 4), we stand at 18 ENRC (down from 26), 28 in FT (up from 18), and 12 in LST (down from 13). This is a pattern we have seen fairly

regularly now, that once students learn more about career options, a significant number transfer from the ENRC program to another, more specific pathway. The week the chainsaws come out is usually a big one for transfers into the Forest Technology program!

Our students have also been actively involved in service activities this year. During the first week of classes, 10 students participated in Clifton-Fine Central School's back to school night, doing craft projects and visiting with local residents. Later in August, we attended the New York State Fair and covered the SUNY-ESF booth, again doing crafts, but also with tree species ID based on leaf samples, and tree ring counting using a cookie from a big red oak that had just fallen in the Arboretum following a wind event. Around 20 students attended this event and interacted with over 500 fair goers! We also had 11 students participate in a suicide awareness and fundraising event called 46Climbs in early September, with our Ranger School Team being led by alumni Greg Vaverchak and

Caren Donovan. Our students and alumni completed three hikes over the course of this event, and raised just over \$1,000 for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. We hope to participate in this annual event in the future, so please consider ways you can contribute, either through sponsorship or hiking with us!

The extracurricular activities are picking up now as well. Hockey begins this weekend in Canton, our first timber sports event is also this weekend at Paul Smiths. Students have several Outing Club hikes under their belts, and our first Bird Nerds birding event will be in mid-October. Forestry Club has already had three events with invited speakers on a variety of topics ranging from wildland firefighting to forest management. A group of Forestry Club students also went to Pack Forest in Warrensburg on their own this past weekend, to help collect seeds and cones for the Saratoga nursery. In the upcoming week, we will hold class elections and get student government underway. All in all, a great fall so far!

Mariann Johnston, Director

## Keep in touch with your fellow Alumni!

NYS Ranger School Alumni Association, Inc.  
[nysrsaa.org](http://nysrsaa.org)

RSAA website through SUNY ESF:  
<https://www.esf.edu/rangerschool/alumni/>

RSAA Facebook:  
<https://www.facebook.com/RSAAinc/>

RSAA Instagram  
[https://www.instagram.com/nys\\_ranger\\_school\\_alumni/](https://www.instagram.com/nys_ranger_school_alumni/)  
Ranger School:  
<https://www.esf.edu/rangerschool/>

Main Campus SUNY ESF Alumni:  
<https://www.esf.edu/alumni/>

Ranger School Flickr:  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/rangerschool/>



## Looking for Alumni Merchandise?

You can get everything from t-shirts, hats, hoodies, even water tumblers and coffee mugs. At our online [Spreadshirt](https://www.spreadshirt.com/shop/user/ranger+school+alumni+association/) store:

<https://www.spreadshirt.com/shop/user/ranger+school+alumni+association/>  
Or find the link on our Alumni webpage.

Belt buckles, stickers, lapel pins are available through the RSAA office.

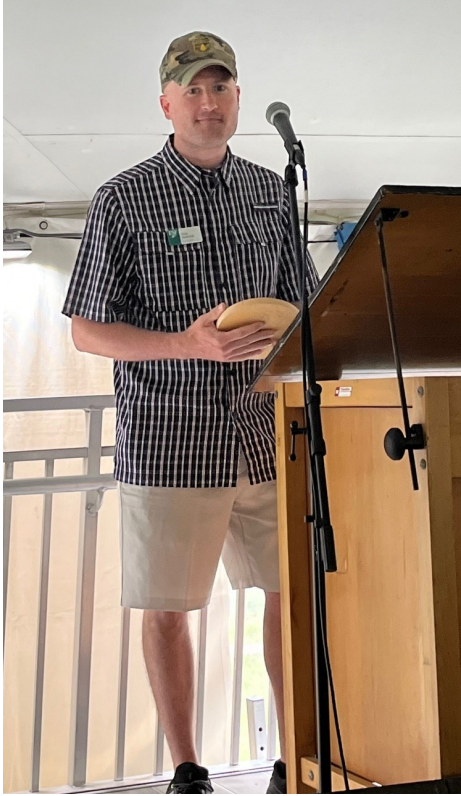
Email [rangerschoolalumni@gmail.com](mailto:rangerschoolalumni@gmail.com) for more information.

Have an idea for RSAA merchandise? Let us know!



# RSAA Awards

*Please take a minute to fill in your nominations and reasons for choices for both these awards on page 3 of the 2024 information sheet.*



“The person selected does not have to be (or have been) an officer of the RSAA or a member of the Executive Committee, but neither should such persons be excluded. The person selected should be one who has made an outstanding contribution of some kind (not monetary). This contribution may be in the nature of a single, noteworthy act or a lower-keyed, but long-term commitment to the School and/or the RSAA or for alumni in general.”

It is with great pleasure that we announce Gregory Vaverchak, '02 as the recipient of the 2024 Haddock Award.

Greg is the glue that holds this association together. He is a constant go-getter and is always willing to assist in getting things accomplished. Whether he is spearheading a project or working behind the scenes, the RSAA has complete confidence that it will be a great success. “...Greg Vaverchak gets my vote. If you don't understand my reasoning, you haven't met the man.”

## Past Recipients

2023— Sue Westbrook, '82

2022—Dr. David Newman

2021—Ariane Tanski '09

2020—Debbie Caviness

2019—Michael Webb '74

## 2025 Alumni News Book

This is the beginning of the 2025 ALUMNI NEWS. Please feel free to contribute articles, stories, artwork, photos, poetry, news etc. that are informative, entertaining and interesting to other alumni. These articles may not necessarily be the views or opinions of the RSAA Board of Directors, or the editor, but this is YOUR book.

Boosters are again available. This helps defray the costs of publishing and it is a good place to advertise. Wouldn't you or your company like to be included?

If interested fill out the order form below and email [rangerschoolalumni@gmail.com](mailto:rangerschoolalumni@gmail.com) with your ad. Or print and mail to RSAA, PO Box 48, Wanakena, NY 13695

Donations can be made via check payable to “RSAA” or via PayPal at <https://bit.ly/36w2CxH> If paying with PayPal please write “BOOSTERS” in the comment box.

\_\_\_\_\_ Whole page \$75 \_\_\_\_\_ 1/2 page \$40 \_\_\_\_\_ 1/4 page \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ one line listing \$15

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