

Ranger School Alumni Association

Spring– Summer 2026

RSAA Alumni President's Message

Good day!

I hope this finds you well and you have been enjoying this fine end of the winter season. Out my way we have had all four seasons in a single weekend. Neighbors were cutting grass on Saturday and then bundling up for hail/snow on Sunday. As I write this, it is good to see the buds on the trees and to know that spring is right around the corner!

I was thinking of all of the ways the alumni association works to help our members keep in touch. I wanted to share a few of them with you:

- This weekend (April 23 & 24) we will be opening the alumni house and making some major improvements to the house and the campground. Our property manager (J. Butler) and his crew are joined by alumni in preparing the site for summer use. We work hard to provide a nice place on the Oswegatchie for our alumni to use over the camping season. The opening and closing of the alumni house are a spring and fall event where alumni pitch in to complete some work around the house while winterizing it in the fall and preparing it for rental season in the spring. Announcements are made prior to each event. I hope you can make it in the future! It is a fun time, and more hands make the work go by quicker and easier.
- A couple weeks ago, we had the annual student/alumni hockey game at the Tenuity Ice Rink in Syracuse. Vavs and Mr. O'Mara spend a lot of time over the winter months organizing the students and planning the event. As a participant

on the alumni team, it is fun to see all of the recent grads, and some of us older ones lace it up and take on the students. The event has grown and I am glad to say, esp. as I am getting older, that the bench is getting longer on our side.

A Call for Auction Items

We're gearing up for the Ranger School Alumni Weekend on August 7th and 8th and we need *your* help to make it a success!

We're hosting an auction to raise funds for Student Legacy Scholarships, and we're looking for generous donations of items, experiences, and services to feature at the event.

What can you donate?

- **Unique items** — RS memorabilia, artwork, local gems
- **Crafty projects** — handmade furniture, unique wooden decor, custom carvings, and more
- **Outdoor adventures** — recreational trips, hiking excursions, kayaking experiences, and beyond

And a friendly reminder — this is an auction, not a garage sale. If it's been collecting dust in your attic since the '80s and even the squirrels have passed on it, please reconsider. Let's keep it classy!

Join us in August for a weekend full of fun, festivities, and great company — all while supporting a cause that truly matters. Every contribution goes directly toward helping deserving students pursue their academic journey at the Ranger School.

To donate or learn more about Alumni Weekend, visit us at www.nysrsaa.org.

- G. De La Fleur and the reunion committee are hard at work preparing for this year's Alumni Weekend. This is the big event where alumni from across the states gather together to Keep in Touch with old and new friends. This year it will be Friday August 7 and Saturday August 8. The alumni weekend is always on the first full weekend in August so do not be misled by the later dates. □ C. Westbrook and the Engagement committee have put together several successful events around New York. They have also held a Pop-up event in Montana for several alum out west. These are a fun way to meet with fellow alumni throughout the year.
- Several class years, I am thinking of '73 & '82 in particular, have an annual get together at the alumni house. They rent the house and spend a few days catching up with each other and fishing and enjoying the scenery. If you and your classmates, or family and friends, are looking for a scenic spot to vacation this summer, I would suggest calling our office manager Samantha MacDonald to see what dates are available for the house. The campsites are available on a first come, first served basis. We ask that you place a donation in the box by the garage. There is a QR code there as well for our members that like to pay electronically.

As you can see, there is much activity going on with the association. I invite you to visit our website at nysrsaa.org to see what is happening next.

I look forward to seeing you at the next reunion in August '26.

Be well and Keep in Touch!

-Mike Rozeski, '90

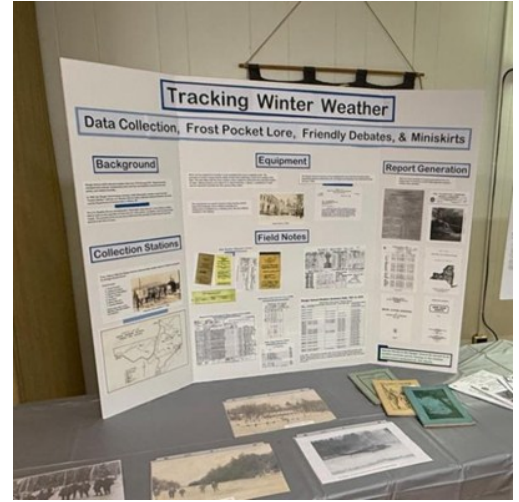
Wanakena Historical Association's 2026 Activities

At Adirondack White Out Weekend in February 2026, the WHA's outreach event at the Western Adirondack Presbyterian Church in Star Lake had two parts - a live storytelling event, "Winter Tales," and a winter-themed exhibit with historical winter weather data from the Ranger School.



The exhibit, "Tracking Winter Weather: Data Collection, Frost Pocket Lore, Friendly Debates, & Miniskirts." featured a display about how the Ranger School collected weather data over nearly 100 years at eight weather stations on campus. Attendees could also watch videos of historical winter life, including a home movie of the ski

area behind Twin Lakes Motel, excerpts from a 1934 Ranger School promotional movie, and a collection of Clifton-Fine winter memories told through photos and readings.



Street, open Saturdays and Sundays, 11 am to 4 pm, June 13 - September 20, 2026:

- Concert and reception on opening day, June 13
- New 2026 exhibit – *Celebrating Time: Adirondack People and Place*
- Summer Special Programs (*see schedule on website*)
- Ranger School exhibit
- Attending *Quilt Fest* on Friday and Saturday, September 4 and 5, 2026
- Telling your Ranger School story for WHA's Two Towns Story Project by contacting Kathy Greenwald '79 at 301-928-7566

DID YOU KNOW?

"The lowest temperature at Wanakena was recorded February 9, 1934, a -52 degrees at approximately six feet above the ground. At one foot above the ground or snow level it was a bit cooler getting down to -60 degrees."

—DJ Klemann, Weather Observer
at the Ranger School, 1973



You can support the WHA by:

- Becoming a member and receiving an electronic copy of WHA's Bulletin twice a year (*see website at wanakena.com*)
- Taking the self-guided Wanakena Historic Walking Tour, mid-May through October, starting at the kiosk on the green
- Visiting the Wanakena History Center at 21 Second

Nominating Committee

We're always searching for alumni who may be interested in getting involved with the Board. Our quarterly meetings provide a chance for everyone to convene, in person or remotely, to catch up and review the business side of the Alumni Association. There are also ample opportunities for hands-on work. From organizing and setting up the annual Reunion in August, to planning and attending local pop-up

reunions, to sprucing up the Alumni House and campground at our work weekends, there are a lot of great ways to work within the Association to support your fellow alumni. Board members bring with them a wide range of experience and knowledge, coming together for the common goal of supporting Ranger School alumni and "keeping in touch." We would be delighted to welcome you to the team!

Are you current on your dues?

If you haven't paid your dues, you can do so on our website at 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 ALUMNI NEWS BOOK IT MUST BE RECEIVED IN TO THE ALUMNI OFFICE BY MAY 1.

From the Archives: 1926 - An Inspirational Year!

The year 1926 stands out in the Ranger School's history. The School and its reputation of excellence had grown, alumni expressed interest in organizing class reunions, and one of the Class of 1926 graduates left a legacy of contributions that is still celebrated 100 years later.

School's well-known reputation of excellence.

Forty students entered the Class of 1926 and 25 of them graduated, including P.J. Haddock.



P. J. Haddock returned to the Ranger School in 1929 and was on the faculty until his retirement in 1970. He was a founding member of the Ranger School Alumni Association (RSSA) and served as its secretary from 1929

until his death in 1979.

Haddock was editor of the *Alumni News* for over 40 years and his lifetime

coincided with the dedication of the new building in 1928. This issue included a greeting from faculty, news from classes, a directory of student names and addresses from 1913 - 1926, and a variety of articles written by alumni that illustrated the broad work experiences of graduates. A few examples are "Working for a Firm of Contracting Engineers" by Frank Murray '20, "Blister Rust Control Work" by George Stevens '21, and "Logging in a Southern Cypress Swamp" by Earl Porter, '18.



By 1926, the Ranger School had outgrown its original quarters. The administrative site had a series of wood frame buildings – faculty offices and classroom, dormitory, and dining hall – built within a few years of the founding of the School in 1912. A new large building was planned, and construction was supposed to be completed in 1927.

NY State had appropriated \$250,000 to construct the new building plus \$34,000 for equipment – a total expenditure of \$284,000 (equivalent to about \$5.25 million today) which was previously unheard of for a technical forestry school in the U.S. This substantial commitment from the State was attributed, in part, to the Ranger



(Picture of class members standing in front of the old dining hall, now the Director's residence)

commitment to the School and its alumni inspired the RSAA to establish the "P.J. Haddock Award for Excellence" in his memory. A selected nominee who has made an outstanding contribution (not monetary) to the School or the RSAA is awarded a plaque at the annual RSAA reunion and their name is added to a group plaque hanging in the foyer of the School.

1926 was the first year of the *Alumni News* in booklet form which replaced mimeograph sheets of paper previously sent out. These early mailings were done by Ranger School faculty and pre-date the founding of the RSAA, which

The 1926 *Alumni News* reported Forrest Currie '16, was organizing a 10th anniversary reunion with his classmates on October 25, 1926, at the School, and that the faculty hoped other classes would do the same. Perhaps inspired by Currie's idea, P.J. Haddock was the driving force behind establishing the special tradition of an annual RSAA meeting and reunion open to all alumni.

The RSAA's 2026 reunion weekend is Friday, August 7th and Saturday, August 8th - save the date, encourage your classmates to come, and BE THERE!

- Kathy Greenwald, '79



The Future Generation of Students: *A message from a current student*

The Ranger School's history precedes me, its halls filled with a century of students and stories. I am fortunate enough to write my own story on these same walls. Nonetheless, coming here, I couldn't imagine a place for myself. As a black student, watching picture frames filled with people who looked nothing like me only made this already grueling task that much more difficult. Now, a few months into my journey, I see it as my responsibility to fill these walls with pictures of people of all different colors, shapes, and backgrounds. I wish to create opportunities for a broader body of students to leave their own mark on this place.

My journey at the Ranger School started before I even set foot in the Adirondacks; it started with first-hand accounts from previous students. Yes... I was told of the unique dining options and demanding workload, but I never found a student who could calm the rising anxieties of stepping into an unknown social climate. And yes, I was beyond aware that I was not the traditional Ranger School student, but this would not deter me. But the same



My place at the Ranger School

cannot be said for many of my peers, who cited the lack of diversity as the primary reason for their reluctance to attend.

So, I turn to you—the alumni, the predecessors who paved the path for students who didn't know it was possible—to close the gap between reluctant students and students who will walk the stage at graduation. It is easy to view this institution in its uniquely isolating bubble, but down Ranger School Road is an entire world filled with passionate people from a plethora of backgrounds. The Ranger School preaches the importance of adaptability, so it is only fitting that it,

too, embraces change. With recent changes to funding, it is evermore significant that the Ranger School demonstrates its resilience and undeniable worth.

Recently, I have been working with ESF's main campus organizations to encourage attendance among minority students. Who else better to convince incoming students than past alumni? Whether you belong to an underrepresented community or are passionate about making a change, I would love to put you in contact with the next generation of students.

If you are interested in connecting with future students or simply want to continue this conversation, please contact me at amendez4@esf.edu or text me (+1 (240) 682-9977).

About Me

I grew up along the Potomac River, living in both rural Maryland and the bustling city of Washington, D.C. I've always found solace in both urban and rural environments, and hope to use my career to bridge the gap. I am pursuing forestry at the Ranger School and main campus ESF. I enjoy cooking and playing guitar, two things I cannot live without.

-Aaron Mendez— 2026

Properties Report

Happy Spring Alumni!

The snow banks have finally disappeared, thankfully! A long cold winter in the north country.

The alumni house is undergoing several improvements this spring.

- A staircase to the docks should be completed soon.
- New garage doors.
- Updated living room. T&G ceiling, paint on walls and floor.
- Looking at upgrading the beds.

Spring cleanup weekend is scheduled and could not happen without much help from alumni. There is a core group that always shows up and I think they would be happy to share the experience with new alumni. These are the typical

items.

- Danger trees removed and processed.
- Dock installed.
- Campground cleanup.
- Water turned on.
- Kitchen put back in place.
- Porch returned to summer mode.
- Fire wood placed at campsites.
- Picnic table repair.
- Enjoy a camp fire and a RS story or two.

If you use the campgrounds or the alumni house this season, please adhere to the rules so the next user has an enjoyable experience.

Jerry Butler '05
RSAA Properties Manager

RSAA Engagement Committee



Attendees At the Pop-Up Reunion in Lowville, NY on November 7, 2025. Photo by J. Dubis '89

We held our 5th Ranger School Pop-Up Reunion in Lowville on November 7th at the Tug Hill Estate and it was a huge success. A very large group of 50+ alumni were present at this event, and everyone seemed to have an enjoyable time



From left to right – Pop-Reunion attendees Ryan Clark '22, Aiden Ahrens '22, Adam Stark '22, Joe Glaser '22, and Rachell Hillegas '12. Photo by J. Dubis '89

connecting with classmates and fellow alumni. Although the weather was miserable, it did not seem to deter alumni from attending. It was nice to see many recent graduates in attendance! Director Johnston, Tom Martin, Past RSAA President and Chris Westbrook gave updates on the Ranger School, the

RSAA and the 2026 Annual Appeal.

Sponsors of this Pop-Up Reunion were MJ Engineering and LS. (Joe Malinowski '79), and Storino Geomatics (Adam Storino '03 & Tom Storino '71). A huge thanks to our sponsors for funding this event. Their

generous support helps us bring these events to RS Alumni.

The 6th Pop-up Reunion was scheduled for April 11th in Binghamton, NY. Unfortunately,

registration for this event was very low and it was decided to cancel the event. A special thanks to Walt Savichky and Sue Westbrook for their efforts in choosing a venue and making the necessary arrangements for the event. The Sponsors for this event were Williams and Edsall Land Surveyors, PC (Ed Ripic '91), Ron Higgins '72 and Bruce Williams '76. These Sponsors have requested that their donations be used for future Pop-up Reunions. We thank these Sponsors for their generosity.

We would appreciate any thoughts, reviews and/or comments regarding Pop-up Reunions that you may have. Feel free to comment to me at: westbrook@esf.edu. Suggestions from attendees have helped us to make changes to improve the event.

Chris Westbrook '73, Chair, RSAA Engagement Committee

Keep in touch with your fellow Alumni!

NYS Ranger School Alumni Association, Inc.:
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/

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/collections>

RSAA LinkedIn
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/ranger-school-alumni-association>

flickr



LinkedIn

Ranger School Alumni Hockey Game

On Saturday, April 11th, the class of 2026 faced off against the alumni for the annual hockey battle at Tenny Ice Pavilion on Syracuse University's south campus. The event began with a ceremonial faceoff between Matt Castrello, representing the alumni, and team captains Elyza Minicozzi and Tristan Cook. After Dr. Bridgen dropped the puck, the teams competed in a series of five 15-minute mini-games. After each game the score reset for a fresh start. Wins were awarded two points, ties one and zero points awarded for a loss.

The class pushed hard and made a valiant effort, but it wasn't enough to overcome the alumni's might. Seeing the alumni starting to slow about

halfway through (third game) the Class of 2026 took control with goals scored by Jay Gagnon and Ben Thompson. Despite the momentum, the alumni responded and won the game. Ultimately, for all the mini-games, victory was claimed by the alumni.

As is usual, the class had an over full bench, two goalies to rotate through, and an exuberant crowd. On the opposing side, there were just as many; 24 alumni players in total and many more in the bleachers, all making their presence known in typical alumni fashion. Alumni goals were racked up by the following: Conor Henrie 2016, Matt Tuohy 2025, Sean Van Riper 2025, Nick Stein 2025, Matt Castrello 2020, Matt Manning '05, Dave Bardoun

'91, Lance Bardoun 2025, Jake Avery 2022, Greg Vaverchak '02, Karl "Sure Shot" Hunter 2015, Vinny Iacovitti 2023, Jack Beattie 2023 and even Jeremy Thompson '97.

A special thank you goes out to the following: Dr. Johnston and Dr. Bridgen for running the scoreboard and their overall support of the hockey program, Tim O'Mara and Dr. Bevilacqua for refereeing, Tim O'Mara and Jeremy Thompson for their help throughout the season and this year's boosters- Amy Thompson, Eric Marsland, Matt Castrello and Denkenberger Surveying. All your contributions made for another successful season.



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 for more information.

Have an Idea for RSAA merchandise? Let us know!



Recreation Update: New Bike Trail Opens and Arboretum Gets a Facelift

The Ranger School Arboretum has seen several improvements over the last few years. The Arboretum is a huge asset to the school, used for both recreation and education. We have been working to make it more accessible and user-friendly. Invasive and hazard trees have been removed, trails are being widened and smoothed, and a couple of new connecting trails have been built. New trees have been planted, increasing the species diversity and education value of the tree collection. And by the time the alumni reunion rolls around in August of 2026, you will see a new walk-through main entrance built from cedar logs and stone. Clearing and construction started in 2025. Several other entrances will be marked with smaller, cedar log structures that each



Pheobe Weinberg, Class of 2025, test rides the new "MUTT" trail

support an informational sign and map. A huge shout out to Eric Wixon of Facilities for helping the academic staff and students with the new entryway structures.

It is also exciting to report that "The MUTT" is now complete and ready for riders. The Multiple Use

Tower Trail (MUTT) can be used for hiking and trail running, but it is the first trail on the Dubuar Forest specifically designed and optimized for mountain biking. The mile-long "flow trail" starts at the fire tower and connects to the Hayes Brook Road. It is

designed for intermediate level bikers and includes some optional technical features. Layout and clearing of the trail began in the spring of 2016. Nearly every class since then has had an opportunity to work on the trail during the spring semester's Forest Recreation labs. The Class of 2025 worked especially hard to finish the trail and do some test riding (see photo). Continued test rides and trail refinement will take place this spring.

Several other projects are in the works, and efforts to acquire more modern and specialized trail-building tools are under way. Thanks to the regular efforts of faculty, staff, and students, the forest recreation resources on the James F. Dubuar Memorial Forest continue to expand and improve. Get out and enjoy them and let us know what you think!

-Jamie Savage, Professor,

Celebrating Mr. Jamie Savage: A Lasting Legacy at the Ranger School

As Mr. James "Jamie" Savage approaches retirement on May 20, 2026, the SUNY ESF Ranger School community is proud to celebrate a career marked by dedication, mentorship, and wide ranging service. For countless students, Mr. Savage has been more than a faculty member—he has been a steady guide, a patient teacher, and a passionate advocate for hands-on education that prepares graduates for meaningful, real-world careers.



Throughout his tenure, Mr. Savage helped strengthen the Ranger School's tradition of rigorous, practical instruction. His depth of knowledge, high standards, and genuine investment in student success have left a lasting impact on generations of alumni who carry his lessons into the field and beyond.

Mr. Savage's contributions also extend well beyond the classroom. He has been an engaged partner in regional collaboratives such as Five Ponds Partners and initiatives such as Hamlets to Huts, supporting efforts that connect conservation, community vitality, and outdoor recreation across the North Country. Through this work, he helped reinforce the Ranger School's

role as both an educational institution and a committed community partner.

In addition, Mr. Savage's professional musical career has enriched the cultural life of the region, reflecting his belief in creativity, balance, and lifelong learning. His ability to bridge technical expertise, community engagement, and the arts has made him a uniquely influential presence. And the countless Open Mic nights at the Ranger School? Priceless.

As he begins this well earned next chapter, we extend our heartfelt thanks to Mr. Savage for his many contributions to the Ranger School and the broader community. His legacy will continue in the students he inspired, the partnerships he fostered, and the values he modeled throughout his career. Thank you Jamie!!!

Habitat Restoration Project Planned for Summer 2026

With support from the Ruffed Grouse Society and Audubon NY, approximately 21 acres of declining plantation will be restored to the site's natural community. A slash wall, perhaps the first one within the Adirondack Park, will also be constructed on approximately 5 to 6 acres to keep deer from interfering with natural regeneration for up to ten years.

This project is centered on habitat restoration of an 80–90-year-old plantation within stand 0206. The plantation is dominated by poor quality Scotch pine, off site red pine, and poor-quality Norway Spruce. The understory is dominated by ferns. Pockets of hardwood poletimber are present. In its current state, this stand offers very little species diversity or habitat value. Scotch pine comprises half of the basal area of this stand. Current opportunities to harvest and sell Scotch pine in this area are extremely limited with markets paying less than the cost of production and transportation. With support from the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS), this project will allow for the successful removal of all Scotch pine from the site, and the construction of a 5-to-6-acre slash wall that will prevent impacts from deer to understory development for up to 10 years in the respective area. All red pine and Norway spruce will also be removed from the project area. Fern treatment will occur throughout most of the project area with support from Audubon NY to contract out pre-harvest treatment. Public outreach opportunities will also be utilized with the addition of educational signage describing the project and its benefits.

Fern treatment is scheduled for July of 2026. Timber harvesting and slash wall construction are scheduled for August/September of 2026. There will be a brief period in which the Latham Trail will need to be closed to visitors. Other trails within the project area will need to be closed during timber harvesting, slash wall construction and fern treatment.

Mike Federice-
Adirondack Forest Properties Manager

Reunion 2026!

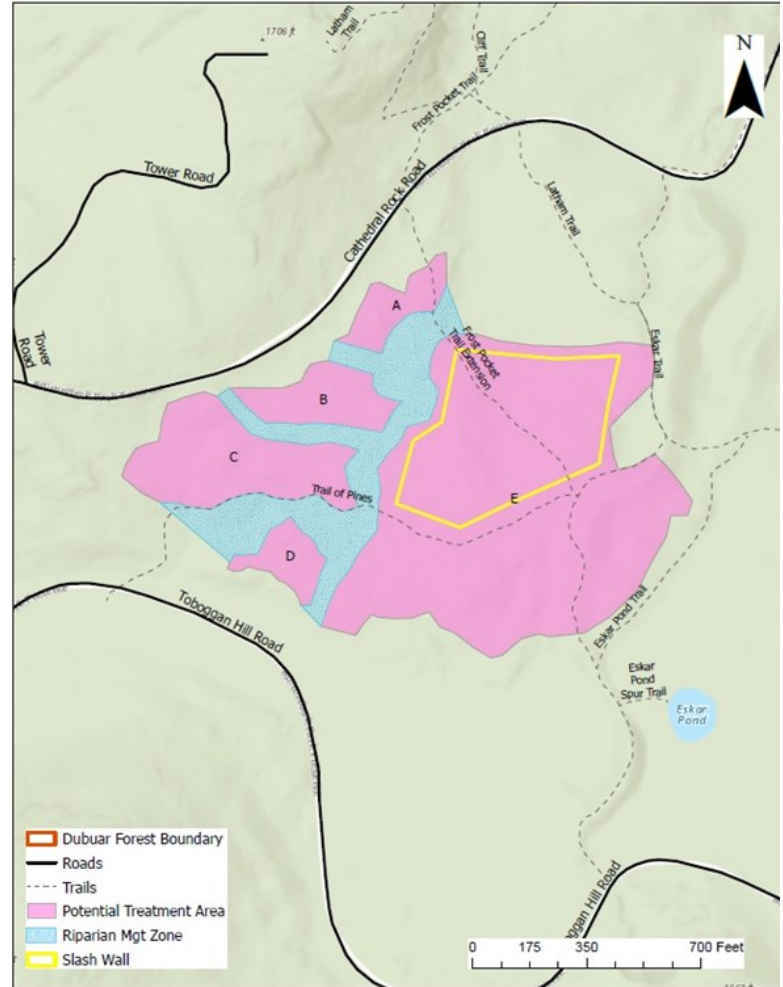
Make your plans now for the 90th Annual Ranger School Alumni Reunion August 7 & 8, 2026. Enclosed is the registration form and schedule for a weekend of fun and merriment.

Saturday night will feature sports night! Rock your favorite team's gear and celebrate with fellow fans.

We highly encourage all alumni who attend to pay the registration fee as it helps to offset the costs of the tent, tables, chairs, porta potties, etc.

Registration forms **MUST** be submitted by July 20th to ensure enough meals are provided from our vendors.

As a reminder, pontoon boat trips and van trips fill up quickly and have limited seating. They will be granted on a first-come-first-served basis.



- Unit A +/- 1 acre - Uncut control with fern treatment*
- Unit B +/- 1.5 acres - Cut, no fern treatment*
- Unit C +/- 3.5 acres - Cut, no fern treatment*
- Unit D +/- 1 acre - Uncut control, no fern treatment*
- Unit E +/- 16.5 acres - Cut, 5.5 acres within slash wall (treat ferns on 4 of those acres), treat ferns in all areas outside of the slash wall*

Calling All RS Alumni, Students, Families, and Friends

For the third year in a row, the Ranger School Alumni Association is gearing up to participate in the annual 46Climbs Event. RS Alumni, Class of 2027 incoming students, family members, and friends are all invited to join the join team 'THE RANGER SCHOOL' as we participate in the 46CLIMBS event taking place between September 4th – September 13th, 2026. 46Climbs is an annual event that encourages individuals across the US/World to take on the challenge of conquering suicide through the physical challenge of climbing and hiking. You can climb and/or hike ANYWHERE!

For info & registration:
www.46Climbs.com



Not a climber/hiker?
Please help by donating



Climb to Conquer Suicide

National Event

Sept 4 - Sept 13

Hike ANY Mountain/Trail!

- Choose 1 or more days
- Choose 1 or more mountains/trails
- Hike/climb as an individual or team

All funds raised go to:



American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention

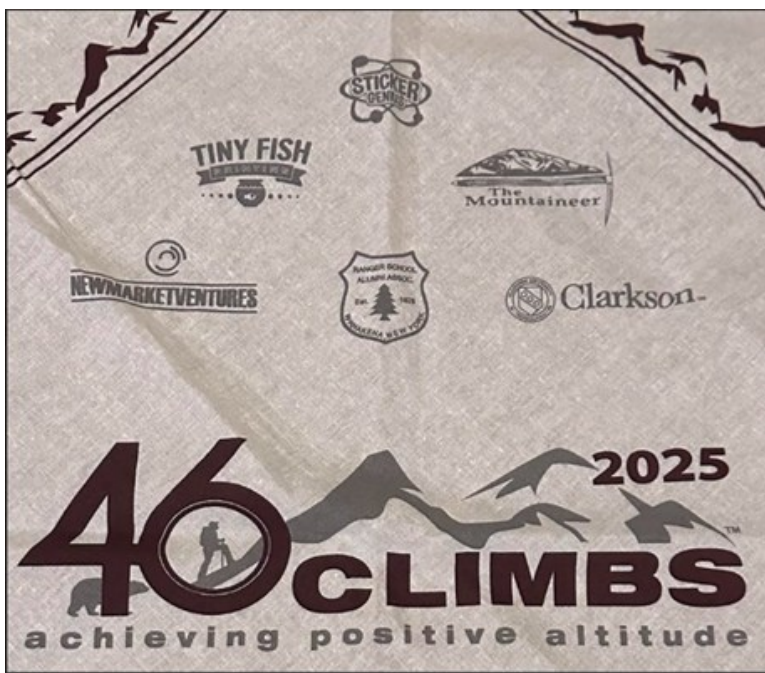
This is our third year participating and our second year sponsoring this event. Please join us in raising awareness for suicide prevention and mental illness.

TO JOIN OUR TEAM, DONATE, OR LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS EVENT, VISIT: www.46climbs.com

How to join our Team?

Sign up at the 46Climbs website. Our team name is 'THE RANGER SCHOOL'

You will receive a 46Climbs dry-fit t-shirt and other swag



2025 Bandana each participant receives upon registration ~ note the RSAA shield in the center

Hike any mountain/trail between September 4th and September 13th, 2026

*Alumni will be leading hikes with the Class of 2027 students around Wanakena and the surrounding area both weekends of the event if you would like to join us. Or, hike your favorite trail wherever that may be

Take a picture at the summit or trail end wearing your t-shirt and post it to social media with the hashtags #46Climbs and #rangerschoolalumni

If you are unable to hike and would like to participate, please consider SPONSORING a Class of 2027 student or DONATING to our team. For more information contact the RSAA Office Manager, Sam MacDonald at: rangerschoolalumni@gmail.com or Caren Donovan at donova24@gmail.com.

This is a great opportunity for the Ranger School Alumni to join forces with other RS Alumni, incoming students of the Class of 2027, family members, and friends to get outside and hike to raise awareness for Suicide Prevention and Mental Illness. Let's hit the trails together!!!



Director's Report

Greetings from Wanakena!

We are starting our 15th week of the Spring semester, with graduation just over 4 weeks away. From our starting number of 60 students, the Class of 2026 remains strong at 53 students. Program numbers as we move towards graduation are:

- Environmental and Natural Resources Conservation (ENRC): 19
- Forest Technology: 17
- Land Surveying Technology: 17

Class of 2027: Enrollment numbers for next year are still coming in. We have around 27 students internally transferring from the main campus, and another 45 external students have been admitted. Of those, 11 have deposited so far – that is really the number we pay attention to. Our Spring Open House is coming up on April 25, so we'll be able to show our campus to more prospective students.

Student Activities: Clubs have been active this year, with our second year of skating on the 1980's 'Miracle' rink in Lake Placid, Audubon workshops, Timber Sports events, and more. Our students have participated in community events as well, including the 2026 White Out Weekend around the local community. We have around 30 students signed up for the annual Spring Rafting on the Hudson in early May.

Forest Properties: We've been getting the cut out on the Dubuar! We had a couple of successful timber harvests in the last year, including a series of silvicultural treatments last summer on the north side of the property along Sugarbush Road, and a winter harvest in Compartment XII, on the south side of Route 3. We are presently working with the Ruffed Grouse Society on a project to remove some of the planted Scotch pine and Norway spruce along the Latham Trail just south of Cathedral Rock Road – see Mike Federice's article on that activity, in this same issue.

Capital Projects: We continue to improve our student spaces, with our next big project being a flooring project, in which we will update flooring around the building, along with removal of the last of the old asbestos floor tiles (but boy, that stuff sure has held up well!). Our corridors will look much nicer with new and consistent flooring throughout. Most of the office spaces will have LVT flooring installed in place of carpet. We'll finally be able to finish our library overhaul, with new flooring finishing off the look.

Green Wall: The next time you are in the library, please also check out the 'green wall' which is really a multi-level plant stand that provides a nice screen between the zen booths (small sound-proof booths with clear doors on the front and not much privacy) and the rest of the library. Staff members Rachel Graham, Julie Fogden, and Eric Wixon have been instrumental in that project.

Budget Environment: The College continues to operate on an austerity budget under heavy pressure from SUNY to continue to reduce costs. Our 2025-26 fundraising appeal was tremendously helpful in providing needed funding to cover costs that the College is either slow-walking or downright declining. Our Foundation accounts provide critical support for the Ranger School to continue providing a positive student experience, and your financial support is always greatly appreciated. So, thank you to all our past, present, and future financial supporters!!

Retirement Buyout: The College instituted a 'voluntary separation program' as a cost saving measure in response to SUNY's demand to cut costs. Ranger School impacts are retirement of custodian Anne Pickering, program aide Dianne Chappell, and faculty member James Savage. Please join us in thanking all of these folks for their years of service to the Ranger School!

Mariann Johnston– Ranger School Director

Another Trip to the NYSAPLS Conference

This year the New York State Association of Land Surveyors (NYSAPLS) Annual Conference was held in Saratoga Springs, NY which is about a 15-minute drive from our home in Ballston Spa, NY. Knowing that the Ranger School has had a booth at the NYSAPLS Conference since 1990, I contacted RS Director Mariann Johnston asking her if I could “hang” out at the RS Booth during the conference freeing up RS Surveying Instructor Jeremy Thompson and Instructional Support Assistant Rob Fleming so that they could attend and participate in the educational sessions. Dr. Johnston agreed to my request and offered to cover admission to the Exhibit Hall for me and my wife, Sue.

I arrived at the booth around 9 a.m. on the first full day of the conference. There was no one around at the booth although scattered along the back of the booth were books, coats, swag, and personal items of the 17 Ranger School surveying students in attendance. This is the largest class of surveying students in the history of the Ranger School.

Last year I wrote about my impressions of a several hour visit to the conference after not attending the conference since 2016. Being there for 3 days in a row this year, I was able to see many positive things happening at the Conference including the impact of the student’s attendance at the event.



Ranger School Surveying Class of 2026 with Jeremy Thompson and Rob Fleming at the NYSAPLS Annual Dinner.

The Ranger School Surveying class of 2026 stood out among conference attendees. As always, the RS students were professionally dressed and appeared to easily interact with the other conference attendees. As I sat at the RS Booth numerous attendees representing a variety of land surveying companies stopped by for a visit. Many were looking for employees and given the reputation of RS graduates, they were hoping to find students who would be interested in working for their company. Given that there are now only two NY colleges offering land surveying degree programs – SUNY Alfred and the Ranger School, employers have a smaller pool of land surveying graduates to choose from. Paul Smith’s College and Mohawk Valley Community

College eliminated their surveying programs over the last several years and this has had a positive impact on the job outlook for RS students.

Again this year, many students received a variety of scholarships during the conference. It was great to see that the number and amount of scholarships continues to increase. This helps the students through their educational experience at the Ranger School.

Each year at the booth there is a sign-up sheet for Ranger School Alumni. This year 42 Alumni signed in. Louis Gnip ’65 represented the earliest RS class year and William Brewer, Jack Grant, and Haley Marsh were our most recent Alums in attendance from the Class of 2025



Jon Thompson ’82, Ken Helligas ’95, Chris Westbrook ’73, Jeremy Thompson ’97. Photo by Jill Thompson

The first class to attend the NYSAPLS Annual Conference was the Class of 1996 when the conference was held in Lake Placid. At that time, the surveying students were the only RS students who were able to attend a professional conference. Shortly after that, all Forest Technology students began attending the SAF Winter Meeting. Now Environmental and Natural Resources Conservation are attending the Water Quality Symposium. As you can imagine, it costs a significant amount of money for conference registration, hotel, meals and travel. To help absorb the amount of these expenditures, Director Mariann Johnston has started a new fund within the College Foundation. **The Ranger School Professional Development Fund** is an expendable account that “provides funding for student and faculty attendance at professional conferences and trainings. Over the past several years many alumni and surveying companies have contributed to this fund. I urge you to consider supporting this fund that supports students in all three programs attending professional conferences.

I am already looking forward to next year's conference which will be held in January 2027 in Saratoga Springs.

Chris Westbrook ’73, Director & Professor Emeritus

Knotty Paddy

Celtic Rock + Speed Folk

Friday, August 7, 2026
7 PM

Rick Kovacs (RS '76), Jamie Savage (RS Prof),
Riczi Kovacs, Doug Riley, & Mike McBride



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