



Friends of Camp Santanoni Newsletter

*Santanoni Gate Lodge
P.O. Box 113
Newcomb, NY 12852
(518) 582-5472 or (518) 834-9328*

Winter 2001



With the GateLodge in the background, Santanoni's many supporters gather to celebrate the creation of the Santanoni Historic Area, the adoption the Camp Santanoni Unit Management Plan, its dedication as a National Historic Landmark, and the publication of a new book about Santanoni. Photo by Lohr McKinstry.

On September 8th, a huge gathering took place at Camp Santanoni to celebrate three significant accomplishments of the summer. These accomplishments - the reclassification of Camp Santanoni as an historic area within the Adirondack Forest Preserve, the dedication of Camp Santanoni as a National Historic Landmark, and the publication of a major book about Camp Santanoni - are collectively a major milestone for Santanoni and represent years of efforts by Adirondack Architectural Heritage (AARCH), the Town of Newcomb, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), the *Friends of Camp Santanoni*, the Preservation League of New York State, and the thousands of other supporters who have sought to ensure Santanoni's preservation and appropriate public use.

Most AARCH and *Friends* members are fully aware that since New York State acquired the camp and its 12,900 acres in 1972, Santanoni's future has hung in the balance. Because of legal and constitutional questions, for more than twenty years Santanoni was allowed to deteriorate. The fate of Camp Santanoni was one of the issues around which AARCH was formed in 1991 and, over the past ten years, AARCH has played a major role in advocating for its preservation. The *Friends* were formed in 1998 to build additional volunteer and financial support for the preservation of the camp.

Reclassification and Unit Management Plan Approved

At the celebration, Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner John Cahill announced that Governor Pataki had approved the reclassification of 32.5 acres of the camp as "historic" under the Adirondack State Land Master Plan and had also approved a Unit Management Plan (UMP) for the Camp Santanoni Historic Area. The land reclassification now makes it legally possible to move ahead with the restoration of Santanoni and the adoption of the UMP is the blueprint for doing so. In making the announcement, Commissioner Cahill said "We are going to make sure that the place that hosted Teddy Roosevelt will host future generations to come." On a more personal note, he added, "I love coming here every year to camp with my children. One of the best experiences we've had is to come here." The UMP calls for spending about \$750,000 over the next five years for Santanoni's restoration. Cahill also announced a commitment of \$170,000 for the first year for building restoration and road repair there. The development of the UMP took nearly five years to complete and involved the participation of dozens of organizations, individuals, municipal officials, and representatives from state agencies.

Highlights of the reclassification and unit management plan include:

- ◆ a 32.5 acre *Camp Santanoni Historic Area* has now been created which includes the three building complexes at the camp, the five mile road which connects these complexes, and a small amount of old pasture land around the farm buildings. This area has been classified as "Historic" under the Adirondack State Land Master Plan, the same designation that the forts at Crown Point and John Brown's Farm have.
- ◆ all of the existing buildings at Camp Santanoni will be restored.
- ◆ interpretation at Camp Santanoni will be done through limited outdoor signage, some indoor exhibits, publications, and by seasonal interpreters. The majority of the interpretation will be done at the Gate Lodge complex.
- ◆ some limited tree cutting will be done to protect existing buildings and create a less obtrusive parking area near the Gate Lodge.
- ◆ several new trails will be developed which connect the carriage road at Santanoni to the nearby Adirondack Park Visitor Center and Lake Harris Public Campground. An improved equestrian staging area will be created, better public rest room facilities at the Maintenance Shop will be built, and accessibility to Santanoni's buildings will be provided for persons with disabilities.

Overall, the plan is an excellent blueprint for Camp Santanoni's future. It provides for the preservation of all of Santanoni's existing buildings, it allows a reasonable level of interpretation, public use and access and, perhaps most importantly, what is proscribed by the UMP is compatible with Santanoni's Forest Preserve setting. To all of you who have been a part of this effort and wrote letters in support of Santanoni's reclassification, thank you!

National Historic Landmark Designation Approved

Santanoni's official designation as a National Historic Landmark (NHL) also took place that day. Steven Beatty, a representative of the National Park Service, unveiled a National Historic Landmark plaque and observed "There are six criteria for selecting National Historic Landmarks and typically an NHL site will meet one or two of these criteria. What is truly unusual and remarkable about Camp Santanoni is that it meets four different NHL selection criteria." As the nation's highest historic sites designation, NHL status will help the state and its partners to make an even stronger case for funding its restoration. Santanoni's designation was part of a larger multiple property nomination, "Adirondack Camps National Historic Landmarks Theme Study," prepared by Wes Haynes. Camp Sagamore, near Raquette Lake, was also designated as an NHL and other large rustic camps will eventually be designated as well.

Major Book on Santanoni Published

We also celebrated the publication of *Santanoni: From Japanese Temple to Life at an Adirondack Great Camp* by Robert Engel, Paul Malo, and Howie Kirschenbaum. This long-awaited book, three years in the making, is the first book to fully explore any of the region's Great Camps. Using more than 160 historic and contemporary photographs, fishing records, letters, and guestbooks that recall the visits and antics of notable guests such as Theodore Roosevelt, it provides an intimate view of Santanoni's fascinating history, architecture, and an extraordinary way of life. If you haven't yet ordered *Santanoni*, you can do so by calling AARCH at (518) 834-9328.

For all the advocates and supporters of Camp Santanoni, this was a tremendous day, one filled with a huge sense of accomplishment. Now at the beginning of a new century, Santanoni's future seems brighter than ever - New York State is solidly behind its restoration and use, Santanoni's historic and architectural importance has been clearly established through a major book and a new federal designation, and the camp now has thousands of friends from all walks of life. Its future looks so bright that Scott Heyl, President of the Preservation League of New York State, in making his remarks to the enthusiastic crowd, officially took Santanoni off the League's Seven to Save list.



Work on the Herdsman's Cottage at the Santanoni Farm is one of several ongoing restoration projects at Santanoni.

Big Plans for 2001

Now that there is a clear plan for preserving and interpreting Camp Santanoni, New York State and its partners can undertake more substantial restoration and interpretive work there. Planned for this year are:

◆ *Stabilization and Restoration Work*

Important stabilization and restoration work at Camp Santanoni will continue this summer and fall. Thanks to a commitment from New York State of about \$120,000, various urgent restoration and stabilization projects will be undertaken this year. These will include installing fire detection and protection equipment and replacing the deteriorated roofs on several buildings. The work will be done by private contractors. Thanks to continued funding from the Town of Newcomb, Tupper Lake builder Michael Frenette will spend part of another summer continuing to restore the deteriorated porches at the Main Lodge. More than half of the lodge's porches have now been rebuilt. Through funding from New York State's Environmental Protection Fund, a DEC crew will continue preservation work at the farm. Having nearly finished the stabilization of the "Herdsman's Cottage," the crew will now turn its attention to restoring a wing of the barn, to putting a new roof on the Creamery, and to other smaller projects there.

◆ *Volunteer Projects*

We are fortunate that Camp Santanoni has been chosen as a **Landmark Volunteers** site for 2001. Landmark Volunteers is a national non-profit summer service organization which places responsible and motivated high school students at historic sites, natural preserves, and other special places to undertake practical and meaningful projects. The group will be at Santanoni between July 8th and July 21st.

We will also get help again this year from the **Americorps** crew based near Tupper Lake. They will help out with a variety of projects. We are hoping to be able to accommodate other volunteers this year, as well. If you'd like to volunteer to work there, call us about volunteer opportunities.

◆ *Planning and Interpretation*

Given the amount of restoration work still to be done at Santanoni and given the high standards required for work on a National Historic Landmark, New York State and its partners expect to engage an architect this year to prepare **comprehensive preservation plans** for the camp. These plans will guide us through the next several years of work there.

We will also be printing a new full color **guide** to Santanoni this year. It will include historic and contemporary photographs, a map of the Santanoni Preserve, and information about its history, natural resources, and public use. The new guide will be available by summer.

This summer we will have three **summer staff people** at the camp. In addition to interpreting the camp to several thousand visitors, they will also develop some new interpretative materials, undertake small restoration projects, and help oversee other ongoing projects there.

Our 2001 Wish List

In order to make the Gate Lodge more comfortable and usable for our summer staff and volunteers, we're looking for the following donated items.

- (12) Twin beds or bunk beds**
- Kitchen items (dishes, cookware, and utensils)**
- A large kitchen table and (14) chairs**
- (6) Dressers**

Call us if you can provide any of these items!

Friends of Camp Santanoni Advisory Board

Stuart Buchanan

Director, Region 5
*New York State Department of
Environmental Conservation*

Sandra Bureau, Director
Adirondack Park Interpretive Centers

George Canon, Supervisor
Town of Newcomb

Susan Dineen
Adirondack Museum

Margaret Gibbs
Essex County Historian

Virginia Hall
Newcomb Historical Society

Scott Heyl, President
Preservation League of New York State

William Johnston
Essex County Planner

Susan Pruyn King
Long Lake

Howard Kirschenbaum
Adirondack Architectural Heritage

Hon. Elizabeth Little
New York State Assembly

Hon. Ronald B. Stafford
New York State Senate

The *Friends of Camp Santanoni* is a partnership of non-profit organizations, the Town of Newcomb, the NYSDEC, and the thousands of people who love this special place and believe in its preservation and use for public education, recreation, and inspiration.

For more information about joining the *Friends* or about volunteer opportunities, write to P.O. Box 113, Newcomb, N.Y. 12852 or call either (518) 582-4572 or (518) 834-9328.