

# *Friends of Camp Santanoni Newsletter*

*Santanoni Gate Lodge  
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*Winter/Spring 2005*

## **A Year of Great Tragedy and Progress**

On July 13, a fire of suspicious origin destroyed Camp Santanoni's Dairy Barn, one of the most visible and significant buildings at the camp. In many ways, for all of the Santanoni partners, it was our worst nightmare come true.

Santanoni's buildings are predominantly wood, highly flammable, and there is currently no fire detection or protection equipment on site. There is also little regular oversight and the remoteness of most of the camp make saving a building nearly impossible by conventional means.

Since this devastating loss and after a long internal discussion, Adirondack Architectural

Heritage (AARCH) has been urging the state to use the fire as a wake-up call to reaffirm its commitment to Santanoni and provide the resources needed for effective fire protection, conservation of all the buildings, and proper staffing. AARCH has also taken the position that the barn should be reconstructed.

The barn was the anchor structure of the Santanoni farm and the size and sophistication of the farm is one of the camp's most unique features. "Without the barn and without the open fields that once surrounded the farm, the remaining buildings are but cottages in the woods. The barn is essential to understanding why this is an important site and why it is a National Historic Landmark" said Steven Engelhart, AARCH's executive director. Adding to the tragedy is the fact that New York State "self-insures" its buildings and rebuilds them only when it sees fit. In this case, the state has not yet taken a position on rebuilding the structure.

Another critical need at Santanoni is for better overall site supervision and management. "A full-time, professional site manager is needed for a historic property of this scope and importance," stated Howie Kirschenbaum, AARCH's founding board president and co-author of *Santanoni*. "The Town of Newcomb and AARCH will continue to provide summer interpreters and volunteers, but this is a state-owned property, and the state needs to have a line in the Department of Environmental Conservation's annual budget to insure adequate staffing and conservation efforts there." Currently, one DEC person, Clive Friend, oversees Santanoni but his responsibilities extend over a huge territory well beyond the camp.



*By the time the Newcomb Fire Department got to the Camp Santanoni farm, all they could do was to keep the fire from spreading to other buildings and the nearby forest.*

*Photograph courtesy NYSDEC.*

## Conservation Work at Santanoni

There is plenty of good news. Thanks to a \$92,000 grant to AARCH from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund, work is well underway to restore the Boathouse and other outbuildings at the Main Camp. The grant has been matched with other funds from NYSDEC, the Town of Newcomb, and the *Friends of Camp Santanoni*.



The Boathouse was among the most seriously deteriorated of all Santanoni's remaining buildings. In the past ten years, most of the roof had collapsed, the floor system had completely deteriorated, and many of the building's log walls had begun to rot.

The work is being done by Tupper Lake builder and craftsman, Michael Frenette and crew. The crew included: Eric Buthman, Sean Dalton, Rik Flagg, Jonas Landes, and Joanne Perry. This was Michael's eighth season at Santanoni and, by far, the most challenging.



Over the summer, the crew reinstalled stone foundation blocks, built an entirely new floor and sill system, conserved existing logs, and installed new logs, as needed. In addition, several drainage trenches have been put in place in and around the building to allow for proper drainage. To accomplish all this, the existing log walls had to be stabilized and the whole building was raised, in order to replace the deteriorated components of the building underneath.

The setting of the Boathouse along the shore of Newcomb Lake also made it hard for Michael and crew to get materials from the road to the site. To accomplish this, they installed an overhead cable system that allowed the crew to deliver logs and other heavy materials to the site. They also used a small mobile crane, named "Max," to move boulders and to lift and place logs at the building site.



Work was also done on the Generator House, Gazebo, Ash House, and Pump House. The Generator House now has a new roof and door and its windows have been restored and painted. The Gazebo has a new floor and foundation. The Pump House has new roof and the Ash House work was completed by reinstalling its original door.

Thank you to Michael and his crew for their great work and passion for rescuing this building. Carl Stearns of Crawford & Stearns, Architects, the architect who is guiding this work, called the summer's accomplishments "nothing short of miraculous." The work will continue and be completed in 2005.

From top to bottom: Michael Frenette completes lap joint of floor beam; the crew sets floor joists for new floor; and "Max" helps to set a top course log.

## Big Plans for 2005

### Save America's Treasures Work

In the fall, we received the very good news that Adirondack Architectural Heritage was awarded a \$365,000 grant from the federal *Save America's Treasures* program. This program is extremely competitive. There were 390 applicants and only sixty grants were awarded nationwide. This funding, along with matching funds of at least an equal amount from New York State, the Town of Newcomb, and the *Friends of Camp Santanoni*, will allow the Santanoni partners to begin to address the widespread decay and deterioration that exists throughout the camp.

It will be used for foundation and structural repairs, new roofs, other exterior restoration work, installation of much needed fire detection and protection equipment, and repairs to the camp's historic bridges and culverts. This work will commence in 2005 and will extend over three years. In 2005, the tentative plans are:

- At the Gate Lodge, install a new roof, make repairs to the foundation and correct drainage problems, and do other exterior restoration work.
- At the West Cottage, to conserve and restore the exterior of the building, including its roof, shingled siding, exterior trim, and other exterior features.
- To develop a fire protection plan, to be implemented in 2006.

To guide this first phase of the conservation work, AARCH has engaged Argus Architecture & Preservation of Troy. Janet Null of Argus, along with Crawford & Stearns, Architects of Syracuse, was the principal author of the *Conservation Plan* for Camp Santanoni. This study was completed several years ago and it includes measured drawings, photographs, conditions assessments and conservation recommendations, budgets, and a overall conservation philosophy for the site. It is the document that guides many of the decisions about conservation, interpretation, and public use of the site.

### *Other Building Conservation*

A DEC crew will continue conservation work at the farm. Still to complete in 2005 are the restoration of a small addition on the Herdsman's Cottage and the completion of exterior conservation of the Gardener's Cottage.

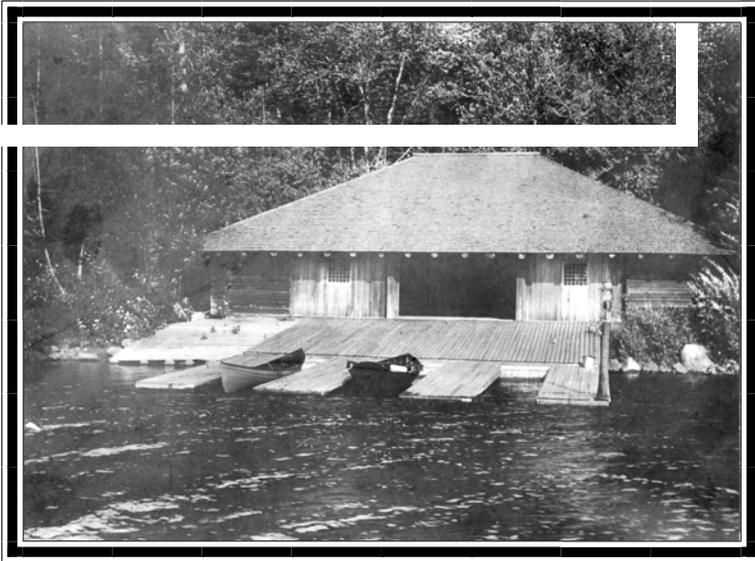
### *Summer Staff*

This summer we will have two staff people at the camp. In addition to interpreting the site to several thousand visitors, they will develop additional interpretative materials, oversee volunteers, and undertake small restoration projects.

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Sue Halka, a DEC mason rebuilt the chimney of the Gardener's Cottage during the summer of 2004.



At one time, the boathouse on Newcomb Lake held eleven guide boats, seven canoes, and two magnificent sailing canoes, the "Wanderer" and the "Idler," both of which are now at the Adirondack Museum. The fleet also included two unsinkable flat-bottom rowboats.  
Photograph courtesy of the Adirondack Museum

### ***New Funding***

We will apply for new funding from state and private sources, including a new application to the Environmental Protection Fund and the Getty Grant Program. We will also continue to press New York State to increase its financial and personnel commitments. The \$200,000 committed to Santanoni in 2000, at the time its unit management plan was adopted, has been largely spent or obligated for conservation planning, improvements to the Newcomb Lake Road, and the boathouse restoration.

**We need all of Santanoni's friends to be generous in their support of our work at the camp this year.**

### **Your 2005 donations will go toward:**

- Completing the Boathouse restoration.
- Meeting our commitment of \$25,000 in matching funds for the *Save America's Treasures* funded work.
- Meeting our goal of raising \$50,000 in matching funds for future conservation projects.

## ***Friends of Camp Santanoni Advisory Board***

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The *Friends of Camp Santanoni* is a partnership of non-profit organizations, the Town of Newcomb, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, 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, NY 12852 or call either (518) 582-4572 or (518) 834-9328.