

Troop 880 Appalachian Trail Hike

By Ethan Gasta

On March 26th, 2010, thirteen scouts and six adults drove to New York State to go camping and hiking. Once we got to our first campsite, it was about 8pm and it was dark. We quickly set up our tents and got a fire going. We hung out until we had to go to bed.

The next morning when we woke up, it was a great 19 degrees. Trying to get the cold out of our minds, we repacked our tents and ate our breakfast slowly. Actually, a little bit too slowly for Mr. George's standards! We finally got in the cars and loved the heat for ten minutes until we had to get out again and start our hike. We hiked for about a mile and then took a quick break to eat some snacks and to drink. After that, we had some of the younger scouts lead the group so they could get some requirements checked off. Bobby, J, and Jordan did a very good job.

About a half of the way through our hike, one scout asked where the next mark for our trail was. We had gotten off track! So we all stayed together except for two scouts who went to look for the trail, but not so far that the group could not see them. It took us a while, but thankfully, Mr. George and Mr. Gilbert retraced our steps and found our trail. We realized that no one was paying attention to notice we had gotten off track. We discussed that we must pay more attention to where we were going. However the trail markers were marked incorrectly. After that dramatic event we hiked on for another mile or so and we got to a big hill. I don't just mean one that you could skip over, I mean a **BIG** hill. We all were starving and we wanted to eat lunch really badly. But the leaders made us hike up the hill first and then we could eat our lunch. I have to admit, lunch tasted even greater after we tackled that hill.

After lunch we continued on the hike and we next had to climb a mountain. Once we reached the top the view was great. It was so clear and sunny we could see for miles. We then hiked down the steep back side of the mountain until we reached our next shelter. However someone was already using the shelter so we set up camp behind the shelter. The cool thing was the shelter and our campsite was on the side of a steep hill and just a short way down there was a 20 foot drop! After a dinner of mainly freeze-

dried meals, we gather around the camp fire for stories, jokes and skits. It was what camping is all about.

Sunday morning we broke down our tents and enjoyed patrol cooking breakfasts of oatmeal, eggs and bacon. With the mountain behind us, we traveled on pretty level terrain for about 2 miles until we hit the last part of the hike. The Marsh! With wooden planks to walk on, we passed through 15 foot high cattails. Most people stayed dry but a few managed to sample the swamp.

Overall, it was a great trip. It was everything a Boy Scout campout should be. People learned about following trails, we cooked our own food and slept on the ground and we spent many hours laughing, joking and getting to know each other better.