

Wildpaths Volunteer Program Enjoyed

Forty people participated in two free workshops held in Forestport and Woodgate to learn how to track wildlife. The Black River Outdoor Education Program (BROEP) hosted a workshop on Sunday, December 8. The White Otter Fish and Game Club in Woodgate hosted the program on Saturday, December 7.

Workshop participants learned the basics of interpreting wildlife tracks, including gait patterns, tracks, and how to read and interpret tracks, through classroom instruction and a variety of indoor and outdoor tracking exercises. No previ-

ous experience in tracking wildlife was necessary. The workshops were taught by an expert from Leoniak Tracking Services out of Marlboro, Vermont.

Both workshops were organized by the Wildlife Conservancy Society (WCS) as part of an initiative called Staying Connected. The goal of Staying Connected is to maintain and enhance ecological connectivity between the Adirondacks and the Tug Hill.

Many of the Black River Outdoor Education Program staff attended Sunday's workshop and will apply the learned techniques of animal

track identification to their curriculum. Winter provides students with a clear opportunity to observe animal tracks while they snowshoe or cross-country ski on campus trails.

At the workshops, the Wildlife Conservation Society launched WildPaths, a new volunteer effort to survey roadsides in the Black River Valley during the winter of 2013-2014. Through the program, citizen scientists will collect snow-tracking data to provide important information about where wildlife are crossing roads in several towns in the Black River Valley. The results will

help guide conservation actions and local and regional planning efforts.

The WildPaths volunteer citizen science program is open to anyone in the community; volunteers will survey a mile-long stretch of road in the towns of Steuben, Remsen, Boonville, Forestport, Ava, or Western, and will report on the wildlife tracks and signs that they observe during their surveys.

Anyone interested in more information about the Wildpaths program can call WCS at 518-891-8872 or e-mail accp@wcs.org.



Participants in Sunday's wildlife tracking workshop at the Black River Outdoor Education Program's Black River Forest Campus receive instruction on how to distinguish common tracks that are likely to be seen in the region.

Boonville Herald (Photo by Leslie Karasin/WCS)
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