

So you're headed for Alder Lake-----

R. M. Foster

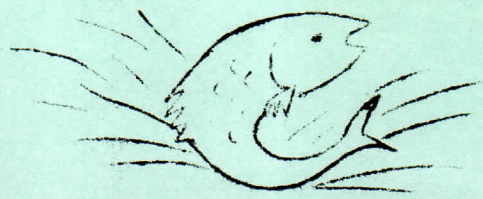
Alder Lake was developed in the late 1800's by a millionaire railroadman Coykendall as a summer home. He brought in immigrant Italian stone masons from his railroad The Ulster & Delaware to do the lower part of the house and to do the work on the roads which he developed to the property. Their stone work--which is known as "dry wall (the stone was put together without cement to hold it) still stands today--an excellent example of which is the bridge by the spring over which you crossed as you entered the property.

A large 2 story, 4 stall boat house into which 18 foot boats could be driven directly from the lake was built near the South corner of the present dam. After being renovated for use as Alder Lake headquarters, it burned down in a period of minutes one night in a fire of mysterious origin of 1962.

Mr. Coykendall was a trout fisherman and spent considerable money and effort in improving Alder Lake for trout fishing. Below the present dam is still standing the building in which your trout were hatched. In the streams emptying into the lake, dams of wood and stone were built to form trout pools. Some of these still stand today, the most interesting of which is the large stone dam at the head of the stream which enters the lake in the far north-eastern corner. Beaver, not caring for man's handiwork, have built their own dam in a curve upstream in such a manner as to completely cut out the manmade stone dam. You can stand on the stone dam and see the space between it and the beaver dam with the beaver dam holding all the water back.

Mr. Coykendall had the lake lowered and thousands of wagon loads of stone, pulled by oxen, were brought in and dumped along the edges to form cover for the young of water insects upon which trout feed. When the water was lowered in 1962 to put in the new dam at a cost of about \$10,000, the stones were clearly visible for an area of about 20 yards all the way around the lake. An interesting note here too is that an old stone wall uncovered, sections of which remain, in almost perfect condition running East and West for some distance slightly to the South center of the lake; and near the North corner of the present dam, Scouts recovered quite a few arrowheads and flint chips around a large rock that had obviously been used by the Indians for arrowhead making. Scouts swimming in this area can still stand on the remains of this rock.

Alder Lake today is operated by the Nassau



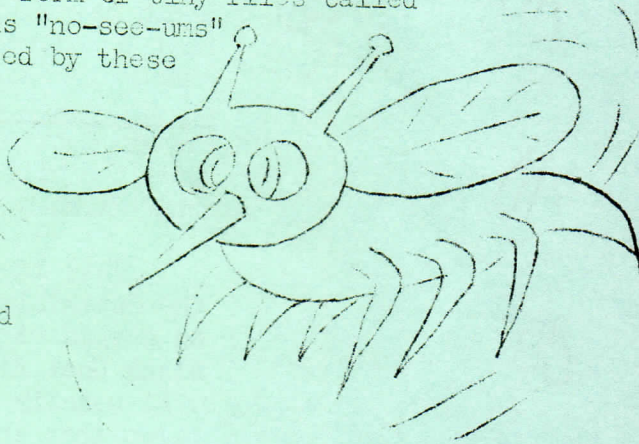
asleep on a moonless night watching for shooting stars is one of the truly great experiences of camping & if it happens to be one of those nights when the earth passes through one of the regions is space of meteor showers it will be an awe inspiring experience that no one will ever forget. A bright moonlit night is another experience, the boys may have to cover their eyes to get to sleep. However a word of caution on sleeping under the stars, tentage must be available in the site in case of rain---thunder storms and "fronts" h roll in fast over the mountains. Too, if sleeping in the open, sleeping bags must be covered since really heavy dew usually settles during the night.

A word of caution, tents should not be pitched near big trees in the open fields or near the tallest tree in the forest. Alder Lake has the type of thunderstorms that the catskills are famous for---the rumbling thunder caused by the bowling dwarfs of Rip Van Winkle fame. The layer lightening displays and the many strikes on top of the Millbrook Range during a storm are awe inspiring at times. The highest points in an area are excellent lightening attractors and the tallest trees fit this description.

To put up tents in open fields, poles are needed. The Canadian Canoe Country system of never destroying tent poles should be used here to help units in saving the time take up in pole cutting and trimming. To do this, tent poles when taken down, should be collected and leaned up in the campsite, in a tree. No one should ever take poles so placed for firewood.

When a unit is ready to leave, it should have a staff man check out the the site and return the tents to the staff building.

Insect nuisance in the Catskills as in the Adirondacks takes the form of some mosquitoes but more often it is in the form of tiny flies called variously "gnats," "punkies", or by the Indians "no-see-ums". On a still calm night, the mental anguish caused by these tiny "critters" can be severe. Although some people get some satisfaction from insect repellents, even to "bug bombs", the only sure defense is to cover up with long sleeves and pants, perhaps even by crawling into your sleeping bag. The heat from a campfire will also disperse them. Of course both of these methods has the problem of your having to stand the heat also. Any slight breeze blowing seems to disperse them. Just at dawn and dusk you may have a short siege of them when the barometric pressure of the day's warmth is balanced by the barometric pressure caused by the coolness of night. These are the times when there "isn't a ripple on the lake."



Food supply at Alder Lake is a real problem for camp. It is to be remembered that it is 25 miles by road and therefore a 3 hour round trip by Truck to Alder Lake from camp with supplies. This means that a truck and driver, both of which are in premium demand must be pulled out of the main camp for half a day in this operation. the camp guarantees units going there a bellyfull of good substantial food and asks the scoutmaster's indulgence if perhaps the choice is not too great. This means, too, that fresh commodities cannot always be guaranteed. When fresh milk is in,

it is dispensed on a first come, first served basis upon request. Of course troops do all their own cooking.

Swimming at Alder Lake can be for as long and as often as a unit desires providing only that the unit notifies a staff man, that a responsible member of the unit serves as a lifeguard in the boat, and that an adult is in attendance all the time that even one person is in the water. In keeping with the trail camp concept, the 8 Defense Swim is used. A staff man may look in on the swim from time to time to see that all is going well. The unit scouters need not participate in the swim, if he wishes he can stretch out on the grass and "watch the clouds roll by;" his mere presence there is the needed safety factor for youngsters participating in a loosely organized swim such as the 8-D. Some conditions and situations to be kept in mind are: do not swim for one hour after meals; at the first sign of lightning clear the water; the water tends to be cold; the bottom is rocky (clay near the dam); and the bottom drops off fast.

For units who like to wander and explore, Alder lake is the place--1800 acres with an 85 acre lake (the lake is 10 acres larger than Orchard Lake at Onteora). The property extends roughly to the top of the mountains on the east and west, to reach which a climb of 900 feet from the lake is necessary. From the black top road to the West on which the troops hike in, the camp extends half way to the mountain top to the East. The sides of these mountains, both the Hill Brook Ridge to the north and east and the big woods to the South have cliffs and ledges near the top and extreme care must be exercised in exploring. Getting lost at Alder Lake is almost impossible providing the hikers do not go over the top of any mountain. The lake sits in a natural basin so that anyone getting mixed up in their directions need simply to go down the hill. Eventually he will "fall in the lake" and thus know where he is.

This lake has been called the "best trout lake left in the Catskills" and for trout fishermen it is. Small spinners on a spin rig, a gob of earth worms, or for fly casters--a Black Gnat fly in spring or a Grey Cahill fly in late summer will usually produce the desired results. It should be remembered that in hot weather, trout feeding slows down and they go deep.

Transportation to Alder Lake of course is by "shanks mare"--on some days over 400 boys cross the trail--200 going each way. When it is realized that this is more than 3 times the number of taxpayers for the entire township of Hardenburg in which Alder Lake is located, it can be understood that this movement alone can create some problems. Along the trails and roads, courtesy is extremely important.

Paper, tins, cans, etc. from lunches and snacks must be placed in knapsacks and carried to the end of the trail. Many units in the past have made a habit of eating lunch at Shin Creek while cooling their "tired dogs" in the cold water.

However when leaving this restful place they have piled garbage and paper and tin cans in a big heap near the creek or under rocks. Since the Scouts of Nassau County are 99% of the people using this spot, it has not helped our reputation any. At high water in the spring, this trash washes down stream to homes and farms below.

Fires should not be built since the trail is either on private or Catskill Forest Preserve Land.

The canteen of water that a boy leaves Onteora with must last him to Alder Lake including that which he uses for lunch. The Annapolis text book on survival states that "water for drinking should never be taken directly from a stream" due to possible impurities caused by contamination further upstream. The camp will assume no responsibility for ignoring this rule.

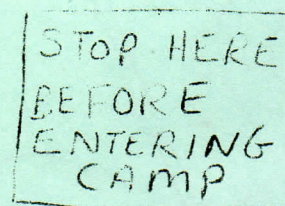
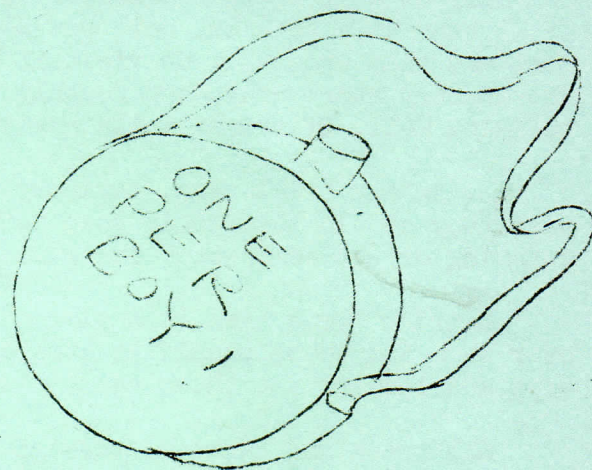
Units on occasion have stopped at houses or farms along the way for water. This again deserves a second thought. If one unit does this, all should be able to benefit from the same privilege. If even a small number of our units did this we would quickly become a nuisance to the people along the way.

Troops hiking should travel as a tight unit with the weakest scout in front to set the pace and adult supervision present. Minor cases of vandalism have begun to occur and in every case it has resulted from units hiking without adult supervision or because a unit strung out so far that no supervision was possible or because a "fast half" took off without mature judgment leading it.

Units must stick carefully to the road when hiking North of Shin Creek where the road comes out of the woods into the farm lands. Nice grassy fields to stretch out and rest in are hay fields and cannot be mowed once the hay has been pressed down. Salt blocks in pastures, rock walls and lumber along the road, tools and machinery beside the road, and no trespassing signs on trees are private property and represent a monetary loss to a farmer when disturbed or destroyed. The same as we would not want people to destroy our Alder Lake Trail markers we must not touch "No Trespassing" signs which were placed there in the first place because of outsiders who misused the private land. The Beaverkill is owned and clearly marked by various trout clubs who jealously guard their trout waters from any possible contamination. Since it is clearly marked, units should cross it on the highway bridge and keep right on going.

When one comes out of the woods at Alder Lake he is greeted by a sign which begins "Stop Here." This old road dropping down the hill to the right is the way to the camping grounds. Leaders driving cars to Alder Lake are to park them here by the road. Since this is a trail camp, Onteora car passes are not honored and cars proceeding further will be turned back by the permanent ranger who lives in the Manor House at the end of the road. the only vehicles allowed on the property are those of camp maintenance and supply.

As the unit comes to the bridge at the bottom of the hill, water will be noticed coming from a pipe to the left of the bridge. This and 3 more faucets up in the camp



ground represent the entire water supply for the camp and should be treated with respect. Dishes should not be washed near them but rather the water should be carried to the campsite and dishes washed there. Be sure to sterilize all dishes with boiling water.

A few yards after crossing the bridge the trail again comes out of the woods and the troop is greeted with another sign "Assembly Area." Here the guys can flop while the SPL rounds up a staff man to issue tents. The staff men live in the building on the hill as well as operating the country store and small trading post located there. It is suggested that the unit get settled in its campsite before visiting the trading post and that when they do visit it for the first time, that the SM come with them. The country store hours are roughly the same as at Ontonagon and are posted on the building wall. Of course units arriving at late hours will be given a helping hand.

As in any trail camp, sanitary facilities are limited. If the fellows wish to wash they should take their soap and washcloth to the lake with them when they go swimming or get some water and wash in their campsite.

Latrine boxes have been placed in several places in camp ground area with tents over them and these should be used as toilet facilities. Remember that over 1500 boys and leaders use these campsites during July and August.

All trash and garbage possible should be burned in the campsite. That which remains including burned out and smashed cans should be placed in the garbage cans behind the staff building.

Of the 1800 acres, two areas composing about 1 acre are to be considered out of bounds - the Manor House and the Main Dam to the lake. The dam is a dangerous area which acts as a magnet to boys because of its height and the falling water. It is crucial in controlling the lake water with its gates and spillway. It should be crossed when necessary, but not used as a loitering spot. The manor house which has been renovated as a training center is the home of the Alder Lake ranger. The building itself is quite valuable and because of its age, quite difficult and sometimes impossible to repair---for example, the old hand poured glass windows when broken must be replaced with modern glass of odd size, ordered and brought up from Nassau County. A visit to the area of the house is to be done only upon the invitation of the ranger or his wife.

When leaving Alder Lake, have a staff man check out your campsite and have a good hike back.



AGOOD SCOUT
LEAVES HIS CAMP
AND TRAILS BETTER
THAN HE FOUND
THEM -

Good Hiking!

ALDER LAKE TRAIL CAMP

I. Tents

- A. May be drawn at Alder Lake from staff member.
- B. Unit chooses own campsite in camp ground.
- C. Each unit pitches its own.
- D. Return tents to staff when leaving.

II. Food

- A. Staples kept at Alder Lake - fresh commodities available when practical.

III. Swim

- A. SD used.
- B. S.M. must be with unit.
- C. Responsible Junior Leader or S.M. in boat while unit swims.

IV. Trail conduct

- A. Carry your own drinking water.
- B. Leave no trash behind you.
- C. Do not stop at houses unless it's an emergency.
- D. Unit travels together. Do not string out along the trail.
- E. Stay on the trail.
- F. Do not disturb other peoples' property in any way.
- G. Obey "No Trapsing" signs.

V. Entering Alder Lake Property

- A. Use the proper campground entrance.
- B. Enter only with entire unit and leaders together.
- C. From assembly area, send SPL to report to staff men.

VI. Camping at Alder Lake

- A. Use latrine boxes.
- B. Burn all possible trash and put unburnables in proper cans.
- C. Leave tent poles leaning on a tree.
- D. Manor House and dam are out of bounds.
- E. Have a staff man check you out when ready to leave.

