

Sackett Trail is safer to travel after Eagle Scout project

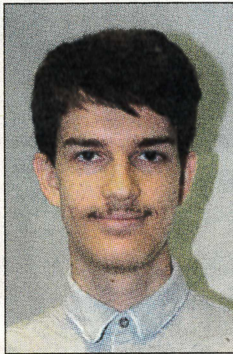
By JASON KAPLAN

Andrey Kirienko started Cub Scouts at the very beginning as a tiger and now he's achieved the highest rank of Eagle Scout. The experience of working on merit badges taught the Scout how to manage time and other life experiences such as becoming a leader and being able to instruct others to complete a task.

The journey was long, but well worth the results when he finally received his award during a June 9 ceremony.

"It feels really great," Kirienko said. "It's such a big achievement that required a lot of work and dedication to complete, so I'm very happy I was able to make it to this stage, especially with the support of my friends and family."

Wanting to give back to Black Rock Forest, Krienko began talking to forest manager Matt Brady around June of last year. He mentioned a specific portion of the Sackett Trail which requires a very steep climb over slippery rocks in the winter and spring due to ice, snow, and water. The trail also wasn't very well marked leading



Andrey Krienko



to multiple accounts of hikers getting lost when they wandered off the trail onto another path. Kirienko removed about 100 feet of the old trail and added another 250 feet alongside it, creating a safer trek for hikers.

The project also entailed rehabilitating a small parking lot by the start of the Mine Hill Trail leading up to the Sackett Trail. Rain had destroyed the asphalt, so Kirienko offered to renovate it.

The original plan was to start the project last July, but a heavy rainstorm caused delays.

Kirienko postponed until August, but it rained every weekend forcing him to wait until volunteers were available

in October. Scheduling proved to be the biggest challenge throughout the course of the project.

Kirienko and nine other volunteers spent about six hours each during the course of three work sessions working on the trail. He met with Brady beforehand to mark the new trail's outline with stones. Leaves were raked and bushes removed. Kirienko

was instructed to make the trail wide enough for one person to traverse, otherwise it would erode more easily. Existing grass was merely trimmed to maintain stability of the soil. Water bars were added to divert water off the trail. Finally, large protruding rocks were removed to eliminate trip hazards.

The old trail was blocked from both directions and markers removed from trees. Yellow paint was used to create new trail markers. The new trail offers a gentler climb.

To repair the parking lot, the Scout and his volunteers used gravel to fill holes in the asphalt and 20 saplings were planted to promote native tree growth.

Taking on a leadership role to see the project to completion proved to be difficult at first, but Kirienko split his volunteers into groups and monitored each to make sure they focused on that particular task.

Kirienko will be attending Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts, but said he will attempt to give back to the community either as a volunteer or instructor for a local troop. After college he'd like to continue that trend and perhaps visit Troop 118 where his brother is still a Scout.