

ROAD TRIP

Robert Laford

The spring of 2006 saw the Northeast stuck in a wet weather pattern with record rain levels and cool temperatures. Many areas were experiencing high water and flooding of rivers and streams. The best motorcycle roads run along the rivers and offer riders the banks and curves near the water's edge. With high water in place, these routes offer some exceptional scenery that includes the bright green growth that is flourishing this spring as well as the water vistas.

Enroute to Lake George for Americade the secondary roads offer some of the best examples of this cooperative scenery between the fast-moving waters and their lush green shorelines. Checking into our accommodations at Lake George the spring's rains were evident as the small trickling brook, normally heard but not seen, behind the cabin was a fast moving river with white water caps showing its strength as the water made it's way to Lake George's shore below.

Monday's forecast was for improving weather as the clouds were wringing out the last of the rain from that passing front. The outlook was for broken clouds continuing to improve throughout the day. So instead of heading to the Holiday Inn to pick up our Americade packets at the opening of registration, we



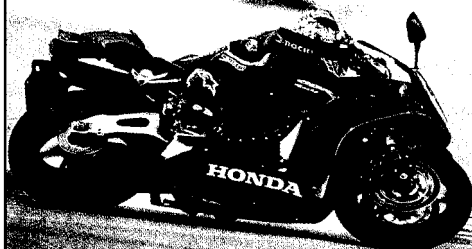
decide to head north on the bikes to enjoy the pending sunshine and leave the registering for later in the day. With the spring rains on our minds we plan to head to the  
*(Continued on Page 42)*

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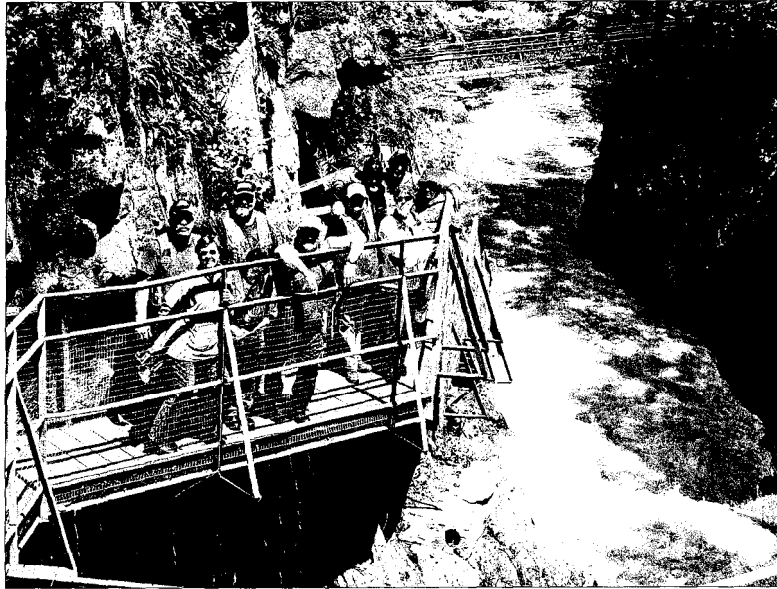
## GORGE-OUS AMERICADE

(Continued from Page 16)

High Falls Gorge in Wilmington, NY. Our expectations are that the water level running through the gorge should be a remarkable sight. The ride and the destination did not disappoint us.

We pick up Route 9N north of Lake George Village and follow its route hugging the shores of this Queen of America's Lakes, enjoying the peaceful ride sweeping in and out of the curves and hills. When we reach Ticonderoga the clouds broke, the showers ended, and blue skies and sunshine greet us.

We continue north on Route 9N and merge with Route 22 to follow the shores of Lake Champlain. We travel through Port Henry and into Westport



where we see a handful of pleasure craft and sail boats waiting patiently in the marina for the weather to warm and their season to begin.

Route 9N bears away from Lake Champlain in Westport and the views change from the shoreline to the open tracts of green fields with freshly planted crops and the peaceful scenes of grazing horses, cows, and the occasional deer. As we ride deeper into the Adirondack Mountains each turn is a new and more beautiful view of nature's majesty. The road cuts a swath between the mountains that grow tall from the road's edge.

The AuSable River becomes our riding companion as the road weaves in and out

around the banks of the fast-moving river, swelled by the spring rains. We pick up Route 73 and enter the town of Keene. The sign that greets us states "Keene, Home of the High Peaks." The statement is no exaggeration as the Adirondack Mountains tower over us as we make our way through town and towards our destination. In Jay, NY we turn onto Route 86 which brings us into Wilmington and to the High Falls Gorge ([www.highfallsgorge.com](http://www.highfallsgorge.com)).

The parking lot and visitor's center sit on the shore of the nearby AuSable River just ahead of the river's entrance into the Gorge in the shadow of nearby Whiteface Mountain. Crossing the footbridge that spans the fast moving water below, we take advantage of the picnic area available at the river's edge before starting on our foot tour of the gorge and water falls over these ancient granite cliffs.

The AuSable River explodes deep into crevices in its 700-foot journey through the cliffs formed over a billion years ago by the forces of ice, water and wind. This year's additional rainfall has made these sights and sounds even more amazing. It is interesting to consider that Native Americans, explorers, and early settlers all stood on these cliffs equally in awe of the sights centuries ago as we do today.

Throughout the walk there are wildflowers and lush green vegetation that thrives in the climate of the gorge along the walkways, bridges, and groomed paths. This awesome force of nature with its rock formations and cascading water are both exciting and relaxing at the same time.

After a spectacular walk through the gorge, it is time to head back towards Lake George and the Americade fun still ahead. Pulling back into Lake George we realize that we have investigated only about 180 miles of the many thousands of miles of great roads available in the Adirondack Park. There are still so many more miles, sites, and stops yet to enjoy!

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