



BERKSHIRE APPALACHIAN TRAIL NEWSLETTER

Issue 2: April 2019

AT Volunteer Gathering

By Andrea Minoff

More than 75 current, former and prospective Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) Berkshire Chapter volunteers, spouses and friends, Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) and Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) staff met recently in Great Barrington at the 17th Annual Appalachian Trail (A.T.) Volunteer Gathering to share information and find out more about volunteering. The meeting was organized by Christine Ward from the Great Barrington Trails and Greenways.

Jim Pelletier, A.T. Management Committee Chair, welcomed the participants and shared some 2018 stats - 4,000 hikers at October Mountain Shelter, 900 overnight stays at Kay Wood Shelter. Additionally, more than 200 organized groups made use of the Trail and its campsites last season. Pelletier introduced some new members of the leadership team - Nancy Weld, group outreach coordinator; Monica Aguilar, public communications coordinator; and Nicole Dewberry, young members chair and recognized long time volunteers John Shuttleworth and Earl McWhorter.

Several breakout sessions provided attendees with the opportunity to dig into the details of specific A.T. trail management volunteer opportunities. These included: trail maintenance, trail corridor and boundary monitoring, overnight facility maintenance, natural and cultural heritage monitoring and caretaking at overnight sites and at Upper Goose Pond Cabin.

Some A.T. Committee leadership changes will go into effect this March. Pelletier will take over as Natural Resources coordinator from Steve Smith and Cosmo Catalano will take up the mantle of A.T. Management Committee Chair until March 2021, to be succeeded by Deb Weisenstein in 2021.

Volunteer Recognition

During our annual volunteer gathering, numerous members received recognition for their hours spent on maintaining the trail and helping our club! Thank you all for your hardwork and dedication!

>100 Hours

Margaret Cahill
Cathy Green
Andrea Lassar
Joe Masery
Charlie Moore
Mike O'Brien
Julianna Vanderweilen
Liz Young
Wayne Young

>500 Hours

John Purbrick

>1000 Hours

Claudia Longmore
John Longmore
Peg Werns
Kevin Matthei

25 Years of Service

Rob Bristow
Mary Berryhill
Nancy Eaton
Debra Klaber
Joanne Sheron

Retirees

Bob Fowler
Hank Barton
John Sullivan

Pychowaska Award (>96 Hours in 2018)

Cathy Green: 126 Hours
Barbara King: 126 Hours
Joanne Sheron: 107 Hours

Hart Award (>224 Hours in 2018)

Jim Pelletier: 964 Hours
Cosmo Catalano: 491 Hours
Mike Brick: 242 Hours
Don Fairbanks: 231 Hours
Peter Rentz: 224 Hours
David Pirog: 292 Hours

Below: Deb Weisenstein (second from left) with 100 hour patch awardees Joe Masery, Margaret Cahill, Andrea Lassar, Charlie Moore, Liz and Wayne Young. Photo Credit: Andrea Minoff



Right: Deb Weisenstein (on left) with 25-year awardees Mary Berryhill, Joanne Sheron and Debra Klaber, Jim Pelletier in back. Photo Credit: Andrea Minoff



Volunteer Spotlight

The Appalachian Trail (AT) in Massachusetts stretches across the hills of Berkshire County for approximately 92 miles from Salisbury, CT to Stamford, VT. Over the years, the federal government, via the National Park Service (NPS) and state lands via the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has obtained parcels of land on both sides of the AT which act as a protective buffer against encroachment; ensuring the trail will remain 'unspoiled', and that each hiker's experience be pleasant, scenic, memorable, and as close to the natural world as possible. Volunteers of the Appalachian Mountain Club's Berkshire Chapter routinely patrol these corridor lands and monitor for signs of unauthorized activity. The goal is to identify and either mitigate or remove anything that may negatively impact the trail and its surroundings.

Bill and Ryan Gregory are a father and son duo who reside in Copake, NY just over the Massachusetts-New York border. They started in 2010 as Appalachian Trail Corridor Monitors and have continued ever since. Ryan started when he was just eleven years old with his father, now he is still involved at age 21 and maintains his own section in Sheffield, MA.

Bill started introducing Ryan to the outdoors early in life and recalls hiking with Ryan since birth. Bill would often take Ryan out for hikes in the backpack carrier at a young age. Once Ryan was learning to walk, he would do short stints walking on the trail on his own until he was too tired and would then be carried for the rest of the hike. The outdoors has always been a large part of their lives, so it was a natural progression to volunteer with the club. While at work, Bill would often see the AT thru-hikers walking on the road which sparked his interest in the AT. Ryan reminisces that when he was young and describing the Trail and volunteering to his peers, "none of the other kids would know what I was talking about, I would try to describe what I was doing and they couldn't understand." During a 5th grade show-and-tell project, Ryan was the showstopper--instead of showing off his favorite toy or pet he brought in his tent to set up and his water filtration system. *Continue to next page...*



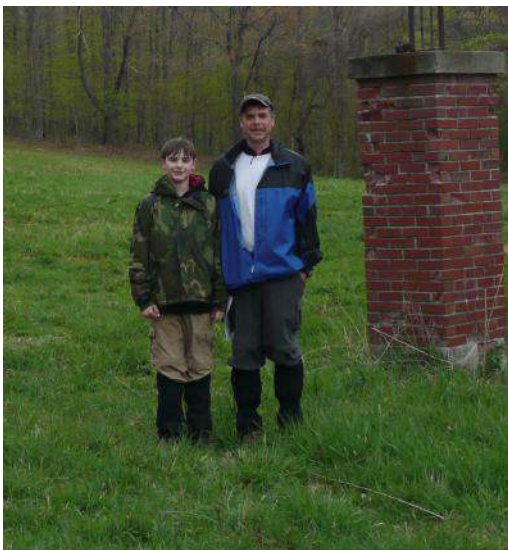
*Bill (left) and Ryan (right) working on tagging AT boundary monuments while monitoring their section of the trail.
Photo Credit: Dave Pirog*

Volunteer Spotlight

Bill and Ryan enjoy their monitoring since they can spend time together. Although they have different sections, they will always walk their sections on the same day. Sometimes they will walk the sections together. The event usually results in a break for a mid-afternoon lunch and then back to monitoring, or a late lunch to end the day. Monitoring off-trail is unique because monitors see things that are very different from the groomed trail. It can be more rugged and contain uncommon features such as cellar holes, large trees and unique habitats that are not normally seen by hikers on the footpath. In Ryans' section he has a swamp, rare plant Natural Heritage sites, historical sites, as well as a junkyard that abuts NPS land.

Bill has finished 585 miles of the AT and is hoping to chip away at the rest of the trail and finish it by the time he retires in 9 years. Ryan recently graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting and is now working as an auditor for the New York State Comptroller's Office. When asked if they plan to continue, they responded with a resounding 'yes.' Bill says, "It's been great watching him grow up and to see him now." You can see that Bill is proud of Ryan when he talks about him, he describes him as a hardworking young man academically and personally. In turn, Ryan notes how lucky he is to have a dad like Bill, "growing up doing this has made me a different person and has given me a different perspective."

There are several sections of A.T. Corridor that are awaiting new volunteer Monitors. If you are interested, contact the AMC Berkshire Chapter A.T. Management Committee: at@amcberkshire.org



Left: First day of Corridor Monitoring in 2010. Left to right Ryan and Bill Gregory. Photo Credit: Dave Pirog

Right: Ryan and Bill Gregory Corridor Monitoring in 2019 Photo Credit: Dave Pirog



MONITORING COORDINATOR POSITION OPEN

The Berkshire Chapter's A.T. Management Committee is seeking a Corridor Monitoring Program Coordinator. The Corridor Monitoring Program Coordinator is responsible for oversight of the regular monitoring of Appalachian Trail lands by the assigned Corridor Monitors, reporting on the results of Corridor Monitoring, overseeing implementation of the Corridor Boundary Maintenance program and follow up on Encroachment Reports.

A member of the A.T. Committee, the position requires good communication skills with staff and volunteers through email and phone, an organized work style and attention to details. Primary duties involve managing a 20 person volunteer Corridor Monitor corps, planning work schedules, and connecting regularly with staff from ATC and NPS regarding Corridor Boundary issues and policies. Although this is primarily an "office" position, 4-5 field visits to projects near the A.T. are likely between April and November. Experience with land surveys, property deeds and maps is helpful but not required. An extensive and experienced mentoring system exists to assist new Coordinators.

Attendance at six bi-monthly A.T. Committee meetings in Lanesborough, MA per year is important. Occasional absences can be supplemented by written updates. Average estimated weekly time commitment is 2 hours, with short periods of 10 hours per week.

Contact Cosmo Catalano, at@amcberkshire.org for more info

UPCOMING EVENTS

We have finalized the project schedule for this year! Anything from cleaning up blowdowns, privy maintenance, boardwalk repairs, and much more.

Come join us for a few hours or every weekend. Be sure to always contact the project leader before attending.

Check out the list at:

<https://tinyurl.com/2019MassATProjects>

HOURS REPORT

After volunteering we encourage you to input your own hours regularly. You can use this link to easily input them yourself.

tinyurl.com/2019-ATHOURS



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