



# BERKSHIRE APPALACHIAN TRAIL NEWSLETTER

Issu 3: June 2019

## HOP BROOK PROJECT

*By Cosmo Catalano*

We had a super sized crew on Tuesday, May 7th and were able to accomplish two tasks on our list of projects in the Tyringham valley. We moved the boardwalk to accommodate (temporarily, I'm sure) a growing meander in Hop Brook near the parking area, and were also able to install three large bog bridges at the end of the boardwalk where it enters the woods.

Pete, Jim, Don, Mike, Juliana, Matt, Cosmo and new volunteer Geoff pretty much filled up the parking at Main Road, and soon had the materials hauled in. We split into two crews, with one group disassembling two segments of the boardwalk, reconfiguring them further from the stream and adding a new segment to bridge the gap (the A.T. is now approximately 8ft (~0.0015) miles longer than it was on Monday).

Group two played in the mud at the far end of the boardwalk and installed two new 10ft bog bridges, replacing a collection of rocks, tree branches and logs (mostly underwater) that had been used to span a section of wet meadow. *Continue on next page...*

## AT COMMUNITY DAYS

### Cheshire AT Day

**June 8th, Saturday 9AM-2PM**

Outside Diane's Twist Ice Cream Shop

Activity choices: Hike to Cheshire

Cobbles or Reynolds Rock or

Community service project at Reynolds Rock followed by a picnic lunch

*To register or more info:*

[emdquinn@gmail.com](mailto:emdquinn@gmail.com)

### Great Barrington AT Community Day

**July 20th, Saturday 2pm-7pm**

Beartown State Forest

Free and open to all! Volunteer, Hike, and potluck picnic with live music

*To register:* [info@GBTrails.org](mailto:info@GBTrails.org)

*For more details:*

<https://www.gbland.org/calendar>

## HOP BROOK

This crew then moved into the woods and added rocks to gaps between existing bog bridges, and adding a third bog bridge. There is a need for 2-3 more bog bridges in this area, replacing some damaged ones and extending coverage of this wet area. This time of year, it's difficult to tell if wet areas will continue to be so once we get into the middle of the hiking season. Due to the wet conditions of this section and the continually expanding brook we are hopeful to create a more modern, permanent boardwalk in the near but distant future.



Cosmo Catalano (left) and Mike Brick (right) having some fun in the mud putting boardwalks in place.  
Photo Credit: Juliana Vanderwielen



## BLOWDOWN BLITZ

With the turning of spring, the club was in full swing with our Blowdown Blitz's to clear the trails for hikers. The Southern Blowdown Blitz was cancelled due to weather but the Northern and Central sections of the AT were taken care of despite the rainy days.

On the Central Blowdown Blitz, the skies cleared out in the afternoon while they tackled South of Pittsfield Road, North of County Road, and North of Tyne Road. Tyne Road area had a total of 12 blowdowns to clear. Afterwards, Deb Weisenstein and Cosmo Catalano went up to take care of Upper Goose Pond area which had quite a few blowdowns.

In the end, the team cleared 28 blowdowns to clear the central region. Volunteers for the Central Blowdown Blitz included; Pete Rentz, Deb Weisenstein, Cosmo Catalano, Jack Platt, Mike Brick, Heather Wyman, and Keith David.

The Northern Blowdown Blitz had a great turnout of volunteers despite the rainy day! Jack Platt, Jim Niedbalski, Ray Girard, Josh Weeks, John Gadbois, Jenny Gadbois, Jeanne Camin, Jim Anderson and Cosmo Catalano assisted with clearing the blowdowns surrounding the Mt. Greylock region. Jack, Jim N, and Ray tackled a few particularly difficult section of trees near Jones' Nose while the rest went towards Old Adams Road area.

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Lunch break with the crew Left to Right is Pete Rentz, Matt Marsh, Jim Pelletier, Don Fairbanks, Geoff Pingree, and Mike Brick. Photo Credit; Cosmo Catalano.



# BLOWDOWN BLITZ

The rainy weather made for some muddy travel to the blowdowns but once they got there, everyone was all in with clearing the downed trees. Once they cleared the trail, the crew used the branches along the sides of the trail where hikers had been bypassing to encourage hikers to travel back on the trail. Eventually, the sun came out for the end of the day. The crew was also able to carry up lumber to be used for some repairs at Noepel Shelter a couple weeks later.

Dave Pirog at the AT boundary line. Photo Credit; Monica Aguilar.



## Volunteer Spotlight

Dave Pirog is 'retired' but now works over full time as a volunteer. Dave has been volunteering with the Massachusetts Appalachian Trail Maintainers Club since 2016. He is in charge of maintaining our AT corridor where he will hike 26 miles a year to do line clearing and full maintenance so that the corridor is visible and accessible for monitors and maintainers to come. This equates to A LOT of work, oftentimes line clearing is slow going depending on how much shrubbery and branches have grown over the years. Additionally, he maintains four sections of the M-M trail and has volunteered on the New England Trail. With all this working and hiking he has logged almost 10,000 miles of hiking on trail, he is about 240 miles away!

Aside from volunteering with us, he is a softball coach to three different teams including Chicopee Schools and Westfield Technical Academy. Additionally, Dave volunteers at Baystate Hospital where he volunteers in a gamut of things from the healing garden, training new volunteers, and escorting visitors throughout the hospital.

For 30 years, Dave has been volunteering as an assistant in a second grade classroom. There, he helps with correcting papers and setting up art projects for the students. He even gets to use the child safety scissors while he is there, which seems to be much to his dismay! When he isn't with other people's children, he is often spending time with his granddaughter as well as his daughter who live in the area.

When talking with Dave, you can tell that he loves to pour his heart and soul into each volunteer group he works with. Despite the long hours, and over full time job all this volunteering is, he says that he would not change any of it and that all of the work makes him incredibly happy. If you see Dave out on the trail, thank him for all his hard work!

# CORRIDOR MONITORING

The Berkshire Chapter's A.T. Management Committee is looking for more volunteers to monitor our A.T. Corridors. A.T. Corridor monitors are responsible for checking the boundary on either side of the trail on an annual basis, and keeping eyes and ears open for any illegal use of Trail lands, such as ATV's timber cutting and hunting. You would be responsible for reporting your findings to the Corridor Monitoring Program Coordinator in regards to encroachment issues and the status of the boundary.

Corridor Monitoring is a unique job where you get to see a whole new side of the A.T. which most people never see. Most of the sections are 1.5- 3 miles in length with generally moderate terrain, but there are more challenging sections for those interested in a harder section. Currently, there are positions open in Dalton, Hinsdale, Great Barrington, Sheffield and South Egremont area. Ideally, a duo is preferred for safety but you can also monitor a section singularly as well.

If you are interested in monitoring your own section or want more information contact Deb Weisenstein at [dkweis@gmail.com](mailto:dkweis@gmail.com)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

June and July are the months of AT Community Events, shelter and privy rehabs, and Natural Heritage Monitoring.

Enjoy some food and hiking with fellow community members or hit the trail with us for some maintenance. 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](https://tinyurl.com/2019-ATHOURS)



## CONTACT US

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