



BERKSHIRE APPALACHIAN TRAIL NEWSLETTER

Issue 9: June 2020

COVID- 19 UPDATE

Massachusetts is beginning into Phase 1 of reopening. What does that mean for the Appalachian Trail and trail use? Below is the general overview:

- Tenting or non-self contained campers are not permitted at this time.
- Those who will be in open spaces should still comply to Covid-19 Order: to wear face mask or covering when social distancing cannot be obtained
- Group sizes must be less than 10 people and equipment should not be shared.
- You should be adhering to the 6 foot distance rule when possible and adhere to site specific rules
- After visiting a public space you should wash your hands and sanitize thoroughly.

You can see the literature on Phase 1 [here](#), subsequent reopenings can be found [here](#).

The **Appalachian Mountain Club** is beginning to allow trail work to resume. Below is an overview of what to expect in the oncoming phases in regards to trail maintenance:

Phase 1:

- Trail adopters, section maintainers and small parties will be allowed to resume work
- Group size will be limited to four people
- Social distancing and face covering are required
- Cleanliness and hygiene is required for food, gear, and tools
- You will be required to participate in an online training to understand the risks

Phase 2:

- Small groups will be allowed to do trail maintenance including overnight management
- Group size will be limited to 10 people including leaders
- You will be required to pre-register for every trip including a Risk agreement release
- Phase two is inclusive of all the points in Phase one as well.

Because we share management of the AT with many partners, we'll need to attempt to synthesize requirements from all of them. Once we are "released" to engage in our duties by the National Park Service, individual volunteers will be able to engage in their duties pretty much as before--with the likely exception of work in shelters and privies--more protocols for the safety of volunteers performing these tasks will likely take more time to develop.

Work projects with multiple participants will be limited in size as per the AMC Phases above. The AT Committee will develop a new project schedule as soon as our management partners issue the official guidance--it's anticipated this will be in mid-June.

In the meantime, volunteers may take "recreational" hikes like everyone else, following the state's social distancing precautions. Any needed work noted on your hike should be reported to your coordinator or at@amcberkshire.org

CORRIDOR MONITORING COORDINATOR

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.

STAY INVOLVED REMOTELY

Even though we are not working on the trails, there are still ways to stay engaged remotely!

The Appalachian Mountain Club is hosting a Trail Work Webinar on **June 10th** from **7:00-8:00PM**. They will discuss the balance between human usage and preserving the ecosystem. Additionally, tool usage, safety, and maintenance will be discussed. Whether you are new to trail maintenance or a veteran, this will be a good refresher and you may get a new perspective out of it.

For more information and to register follow this [link](#). This meeting will be via Zoom.

Additionally, The Appalachian Trail Conservancy is hosting their third A.T. Maintainer Roundtable event on **Tuesday, June 16th at 5:15PM**. This is an amazing opportunity to connect with trail volunteers throughout the entire length of the trail. It is very informal and a bring your own beverage event.

You can register to attend [here](#). This meeting will also be via Zoom.

HISTORY THROUGH STORIES

Upon perusing the archives, I stumbled upon meeting notes from January 16, 1933 in Holyoke Massachusetts. At the time, the Chairman was Payson Newton Enclosed in the minutes, is discussion of improving signage and blazes along the Sages Ravine section of the Massachusetts Appalachian Trail.

It seems like the reason for this decision is because Mr. [Myron] Avery, Chairman of the Appalachian Trail Conference, mentions the lack of panache once crossing the Connecticut-Massachusetts border. Mr. Avery states, "What a trail... some decidedly intensive marking is needed between Race Summit and Sage's Ravine. The Connecticut Chapter paint blazes and mileage signs come down to Sage's Ravine; the signless overgrown road starting in the Mass. section is rather thrown into contrast..."

The committee agreed that Sage's Ravine is a striking region and deserved a little more care along the trail. Their solution was to do a trail inspection at the earliest available date. They sought to work with Mr. Eaton and members of the Berkshire County to aid in carrying supplies.

It seems like adequate signage might have been one of our weaknesses between 1932 and 1933. In another meetings' note from December 13, 1932, the Committee discusses the need for better signage from Jones' Nose to Cheshire, Cheshire to Dalton, and Tyringham to South Egremont.

It seems that this group was involved with more than just the Appalachian Trail, because they go on to discuss managing ski paths, Bellows Pipe Trail, as well as installing fireplaces in the Washington and Finerty town hall.

Our lack of signage has improved since the 1930's, we have nearly 100 trail signs (including campsites and side trails) on the Mass AT now.



Some examples of our improved signage and blazing along the Massachusetts section of trail. Photo Credit: Monica Aguilar.



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Adam Brown is formerly the Regional Manager for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) for the states of NY (north of the Hudson River), CT, MA, and VT to Rt. 140 in Wallingford. He recently stepped down from that position to pursue a career as an independent forester. We'll miss his insights, experience and assistance with the somewhat arcane world of NPS administration.

Originally from the town of Texarkana in east Texas, he first stepped foot on the AT in the summer of 2004. It started out as one summer job with AMC in the White Mountains as a backcountry caretaker at Garfield Ridge campsite. Afterwards, that summer job led into many more working with AMC for two more years on the construction crew and as winter caretaker at Zealand Falls and Carter Notch huts.

Adam started working for ATC in 2007 as Conservation Stewardship Manager, serving as a liaison between the volunteers and the National Park Service. He jokes that if it is happening on his section of the Appalachian Trail, he at least knows about it. His position is all encompassing including boundary management, trail management, overnight sites, easement properties, and much more. He notes that ATC field staff are typically a jack-of-all-trades and have the luxury of being knowledgeable of many things but perhaps only master of a few.

In his free time, he is out running on the trails, skiing, bow hunting for deer, or splitting firewood.



Adam Brown on top of the Saddleback Mountains in Maine. *Photo Credit: Adam Brown.*

ATC SURVEY

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy has requested us all to fill out this survey to help clubs have a better understanding; of trail volunteers, what kind of trainings may be needed to offered, and perceived confidence versus skills in members. This is highly relevant because we will be getting the information back on our club specific improvements as well as a general understanding of the A.T. clubs as a whole.

Each survey participant will also be entered in a raffle to win one of several daypacks, perfect for a day on the Trail. Clubs with the highest percentage of survey participants (based on tiers of small, medium and large clubs) will then have their members entered into the raffle twice, doubling chances of winning!

The Survey takes about 30 minutes to complete. You can follow this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AllVolsAT>

UPCOMING EVENTS

Currently, much of our volunteer work is halted or tentatively postponed until the Covid-19 pandemic settles down a bit more. Once we are actively volunteering we'll have a link to our project schedule.

HOURS REPORT

After volunteering please enter your own hours regularly. You can use this link to easily input them yourself:

<http://bit.ly/MassATHours>

CONTACT US

Email us at:

at@amcberkshire.org

Like us on Facebook at:

[Massachusetts Appalachian Trail Management Committee](#)

Check us out at:

<https://amcberkshire.org/getting-involved>

