



# BERKSHIRE APPALACHIAN TRAIL NEWSLETTER

Issue 5: October 2019

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Appalachian Long Distance Hiker Association Gathering**

Friday October 11th-Sunday October 13th

Williams College

More info: [aldha.org/gathering](http://aldha.org/gathering)

### **Kay Wood Video Showing**

Tuesday October 15th 6:30 PM

400 Main Street

Dalton, MA 01226

*Join us to commemorate Kay Wood, an Appalachian Trail enthusiast and volunteer.*

### **ATC New England Regional Partnership Committee**

Saturday, October 26 9AM-5PM

White Mountain National Forest Headquarters

71 White Mountain Drive

Campton, NH 03223

*Contact Cosmo if you have an interest in attending at:*

[catalano.cosmo@gmail.com](mailto:catalano.cosmo@gmail.com)

# SHAYS REBELLION SIGN INSTALLATION

*By Cosmo Catalano*

On August 27th, a cool, pleasant morning greeted Mike, Steve, Don, Cosmo and Adam as we installed a new interpretive kiosk at the Shays' Rebellion monument.

Working in the middle of the Housatonic valley, digging was very easy, and we were quickly able to create a good foundation for the support posts. We fastened the sign board to the posts and did a quick check to make sure everything fit before putting the roof together. Once that was done, we stood it up and packed the dirt in tightly around the posts.

A temporary paper draft of the interpretive information was attached to the sign board and covered with clear vinyl. In a few weeks, a final version will be printed in color on weather resistant PVC, attached to the board and surrounded by wood trim.



*Left to Right: Steve Smith, Adam North, Mike Brick, and Don Fairbanks assisting to fill in the holes dug. Photo Credit: Cosmo Catalano*

# TREE FELLING AT HEMLOCK SHELTER

*By Cosmo Catalano*

On August 20th, Jim, Don, Charlie, Mike and Cosmo were joined by Joanne to address the hazard trees noted after our review of the Hemlocks site in May. Joanne and Don did some clipping and cleaning of both Hemlocks and Glen Brook while the remainder of the crew worked on rigging the trees so they could be pulled down in a controlled manner. The first step is getting a rope into the tree. We used a slingshot from ATC to launch weighted line into the tree and used it to pull up the stronger pulling rope.

Once the rope is secure, we make some weakening cuts in the trunk of the tree and then use a hand winch to pull the tree down in exactly the right direction. While the stump is considerably mangled by pulling the tree down rather than letting it fall, we are able to guide the tree so it misses the shelter and other healthy trees.

All in all, we felled 4 trees with no significant issues. We even entertained a hiker who shot some video of one of the trees going down. We ended the day moving the privy outhouse over the crib that Don spent the morning emptying of year old composted waste.

# HISTORY THROUGH STORIES- SHAKER CAMPSITE

The town of Tyringham was incorporated in 1762. Soon after, a few Shakers arrived and began worshipping in homes. Their lifestyle and worship involved dancing, celibacy, and living communally in dormitories. The early years were characterized by fierce persecution as mobs of the more “conventional” Christians resorted to whipping and beating their Shaker neighbors. Despite this, their numbers grew and, in 1792, they began to build a village of their own just a few hundred yards uphill of Shaker Campsite along Fernside Road.

Although farming was their chief occupation, maple sugar production was also an important activity of this early community. In 1846, over 5,000 trees were tapped for syrup and sugar. Craftsmen made ox yokes and ax handles from lumber produced by water- powered sawmills. Seeds were grown, packaged, and sold. A seed house five stories high was erected for this enterprise in 1854. Shaker women spun and wove their own wool into cloth for simple Shaker garments. Life was good as abundance flowed from the fields and forests. The population peaked in 1850 with 93 adults.

There was, however, trouble in paradise. Though the historical record does not reveal the exact cause for the decline, in 1858, 23 members of the Tyringham family of Shakers departed. It was a staggering blow to the already struggling community. Things began to decline more when in 1876, the last Shaker property in Tyringham was sold and the last few elderly Shakers moved away to Hancock Shaker Village.

A Shaker member, Sister Elizabeth Thornber wrote in 1905:

*“I wish it was in my power to give you the history of the many beautiful, sweet, noble lives that have lived and died at dear old Fernside. Souls that lived as pure, holy, consecrated lives as I believe it is in the power of mortals to live in this world-- I can only say that, as I look back on my childhood days, I feel they were spent with saints, although I did not sense it then, as I have since, in my advanced years.”*

The Shaker Settlement endured less than a century; long compared to the record of utopian communities in general, but short by Shaker standards. Today, only a few physical vestiges remain of what was once a vibrant community of faith and industry. A Shaker ruin is adjacent to the Shaker Campsite. If you go in search of these relics, please to not disturb any stone structures or dig for artifacts.

# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Deb Phillips is a passionate woman who has a deep love and devotion to the outdoors and her community. Deb began working on trail stewardship in South Berkshire County with Christine Ward when they started the Great Barrington Trails and Greenways about 10 years ago; this quickly led to her work with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy as Great Barrington earned its designation as an Appalachian Trail Community. Deb has always been someone who loved the outdoors; she reminisced on taking her children up north for a week annually to go hiking and camping for most of their childhood, as well as hiking on her own time.

Currently, she is a Great Barrington AT Community Member. When you speak with her, you can tell she is passionate about the relationship of people and our natural resources. As an AT Community Member, she enjoys building the connection of trail to town and well as engaging the community in the hopes that if the community loves the trail, they will be willing to help preserve it and its natural resources. Her goal is to create a link that flows both ways for the trail to town and the town to aid with the trail as well as getting people in the great outdoors. Many trail towns use the trail as an economic driver for their community, however, Great Barrington's work as a Trail Community is focussed on being a support system for the trail.

When Deb is not helping out on the trail she is a Nutritionist with her own private practice as well as gives back to her community by creating a healthy infrastructure through connections and services as well as being a board member for Greenagers, a youth environmental group. Additionally, she hikes when she can, gardens and enjoys reading.

Currently, she has a mission to step foot on the Appalachian Trail in every state it goes through. So far she has completed 5 of the 14! During our interview, as parting words, Deb explains; "I am hopeful that the A.T. is inspirational for people and it builds links not just to the A.T. but to stewardship of all our natural resources." Deb, Thank you for all your hard work in your community and helping to build that link between people and their environment!

# TREASURER POSITION OPEN

The Treasurer monitors and manages funds in several accounts to support the work of the AMC Berkshire Chapter AT Management Committee. Receive payments from individuals, private organizations and public agencies and disburse funds for payment of invoices and volunteer reimbursement requests. Advises Committee on its fiscal condition and monitors balances of several accounts. Attention to detail and basic accounting skills are required to successfully perform the Treasurer's duties. AMC provides basic instruction and accounting procedures.

## Typical tasks and duties:

- Manages AT Committee accounts in local banks
- Tracks AT Committee AMC-invested funds. Requests payment from these funds as directed by AT Committee.
- Receives reimbursement requests from volunteers for trail management expenses and processes payments.
- Processes payments from vendor invoices.
- Processes deposits from private and government sources, including individual donations to the AT Committee.
- Tracks and reimburses Caretaker expenses for Upper Goose Pond Cabin. Forwards visitor counts to the AT Committee.
- Maintains and updates budget and accounts using AMC-required software and procedures, communicates with AMC staff as needed. Software is purchased and maintained by the AT Committee.
- Prepares annual audit as required by AMC.
- Assists Committee Chair in preparing annual budget for Committee approval.
- Updates Committee on current status of budget and AMC funds via bi-monthly email reports for AT Committee meetings. Physical or telepresence attendance at AT Committee meetings desirable, but not required.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

We are beginning to wind down for the season. We have a few tidying up projects, felling trees, and closing the cabin for the season.

Check out the list at:

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

## HOURS REPORT

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

<https://airtable.com/shrKYIfaKLEExtJrc>



## CONTACT US

Email us at:

[at@amcberkshire.org](mailto:at@amcberkshire.org)

Like us on Facebook at:  
Massachusetts Appalachian Trail Management Committee

Check us out at:

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