

# BERKSHIRE APPALACHIAN TRAIL NEWSLETTER

Issue 13: February 2021

## VOLUNTEER GATHERING

The volunteer gathering was a little different this year but we had an amazing turnout despite the circumstances! On January 30th, Massachusetts Appalachian Trail volunteers logged on all across New England to tune in over Zoom for our abridged volunteer gathering. We saw many familiar faces (digitally) that we have not seen in a while. There were a little over 30 people who joined us.

In the beginning, we had a little social time as a large group catching up on the happenings in everyone's life. Afterwards, we started with a nod to all of the committee members, partners, and communities. We took a look back on 2020, it was a challenging year due to restrictions. However, there were still projects that were completed and continued including the building of the Cheshire Community campsite and the installation of the Knox Trail Kiosk. Additionally, trailheads were busier than ever this year despite shelters and privies being closed. Despite the pandemic, we still logged over 4700 volunteer hours.

Jim Pelletier showed us a few of his wildlife sightings in Massachusetts (see videos on last page) that are not often seen. In addition, we remembered a volunteer who recently passed; John Sullivan who was an AT Committee North Maintainer Coordinator.

In looking ahead, we are hopeful for a brighter future this coming season. It seems that overnight sites on state lands will continue to be posted as closed, while tenting is still permitted on Federal lands (Upper Goose Pond and Shaker Campsites). ATC and NPS are still encouraging individuals to keep their hiking excursions local and day use. However, there will still be trail work to be done including trail and waterbar clearing, installing site maps, relocating Mt. Prospect section, and fixing a particularly muddy section north of Gore Pond.

Thank you to everyone that attended and we hope to see you all in the coming months once the snow thaws and trail work is underway!



*A masked up trail crew helping to install the Father Tom Campsite hammock posts in Cheshire, MA.*

# VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

Due to Covid-19 we have a smaller number of Volunteers to Recognize this year! However, a huge congratulations and thank you to all that volunteered on the trail!

## NPS AWARDS

### 100 Hour

Jim Anderson  
Bill Boyer  
Penny Staples

### 500 Hour

Josh Weeks

### 1000 Hour

Mike Brick

### 25 Year Award

Linda Cysz

## AMC AWARDS

### Pychowaska Award >96 Hours

Don Fairbanks  
Pete Rentz  
Josh Weeks  
Deb Weisenstein

### Hart Award >224 Hours

Mike Brick  
Cosmo Catalano  
Jim Pelletier  
Dave Pirog



*A few of our volunteers recognized during our awards ceremony. In order of Left to Right; Pete Rentz, Don Fairbanks, Josh Weeks, Mike Brick.*

# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Steve Smith developed his love for the outdoors and trails when he completed his peak bagging goal in 1979 on New England's 100 highest peaks. After completion, he converted to working on trails through training programs in the White Mountains and the Adopt-a-Trail program with the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC). It seems that Steve has been a professional volunteer for many decades, because that volunteer work led to other volunteering including becoming the Chair of the AMC Clubwide Trails committee in 1986 until 1992. While Chair, with the help of Berkshire AMC, and Connecticut Chapter AMC, he helped to host the Appalachian Trail Conservancy Biennial event in 1991 at Williams College.

Eventually, in 1995 he moved away from volunteering in the White Mountains to volunteer with us at the Berkshire Chapter Appalachian Trail Committee. He started off as a maintainer in South County, then monitor coordinator in the North section of the Mass corridor, then a trail maintenance coordinator for Mid County, then Corridor Monitor Coordinator and Natural Resources Coordinator for all of MA, and since 2016 has been our Cultural Resources Coordinator.

Steve has a unique job with us. Not many trail groups have someone who stewards over their cultural resources and Steve is the first person to hold this position in our club. The creation of this position was purely accidental. An anonymous donor offered to contribute money if it would go towards the straightening of Shay's Monument. For a few years, the donor offered this agreement until we finally accepted. One thing led to the next and the position was created and the monument underwent a full restoration!

Since then, Steve is involved with the archaeology department at the National Park office to help aid in his efforts to learn more about our cultural resources along the trail. Currently, we have three locations; Shays Rebellion Monument, the Sheffield Lime Kiln, and Shaker Campsite. Steve is hoping to expand the program through Rob Bristow's documentation of the ruins of two Tyringham farm sites.

In Steve's free time, he volunteers on more trails around his town with the Westford Trail system and also stewards a section of the Midstate Trail in Ashburnham and a Conservation Restriction on his family's farm in Ayer. He volunteers as well as at his church. We are so grateful to have Steve working with us for so many years, his knowledge and passion is invaluable to the work we do.

*Steve Smith standing with the new Knox Trail Kiosk.*





# TRAIL CAM VIDEOS



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*Bobcat video and bear video both taken at Shaker campsite! These trail cameras are maintained by Jim Pelletier.*

# NEW COMMITTEE MEMBER ROLES

Starting in March, Cosmo Catalano will be stepping down as AT Committee chair to make way for Deb Weisenstein. Cosmo has been Committee chair for the past two years and previous to that alternating with Jim Pelletier for about 10 years. Cosmo will be playing the role as past chair to assist the transition in any way possible, while he continues as the Committee's Volunteer Coordinator (you will still hear plenty from him!). Deb has been a volunteer with us for many years, including as Central Maintainer Coordinator and will continue to serve as our Corridor Monitor coordinator.

Josh Weeks will be stepping into the Vice-Chair position. Josh has recently retired and is looking forward to taking on a larger role in the committee. Josh will continue to serve as Northern Maintainer Coordinator, until a replacement steps up--if you are interested, let Cosmo know.

These positions will be on a 2 year rotation. Josh Weeks will move up to committee chair in 2023 while Deb will move into the past chair position. If you are looking to be more involved in the club there are always positions open and room to move up into future positions. You can contact us at [at@amcberkshire.org](mailto:at@amcberkshire.org) to inquire about open leadership positions and more ways to be involved.

## HOURS REPORT

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

[2020/2021 Hours Report](#)



## 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>