

BERKSHIRE EXCHANGE

APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB

BERKSHIRE CHAPTER NEWS & EVENTS



FROM *the* CHAIR Come Out and Play!

Why is it that so many folks join the AMC, but don't come out to participate in activities? Some people just want to support AMC's conservation efforts and aren't interested in or available for opportunities for outdoor recreation. However, in my case (and in the case of many with whom I've spoken) it was anxiety, mostly of the unknown. I didn't know what the activities would be like, or whether I'd like the people I'd meet, and I sometimes told myself that I didn't have time available for weekend hikes or paddling or whatever. I checked the activities in *AMC Outdoors*, and got busy with my highlighter, but actually getting outside with the AMC was a little more difficult for me.

Having been an active AMC member for a while, I now wonder why I didn't come out to play earlier! I've met some great people, and I'm having a blast. A lot of people tell me they've had the same experience: they've been members for some time, but haven't participated in AMC activities, and now they feel they missed out on some great times. We're finding that the great times just keep on coming!

If you're not already participating in AMC activities, I'd like to personally invite you to join us outdoors next weekend.

Check out the activities we offer on the calendar at amcberkshire.org, or in *AMC Outdoors*. We've scheduled monthly New Members activities and Monthly Trail Maintenance Days, and we're eager to give you a warm welcome. We've got weekend hiking, biking, paddling, and backpacking, Tuesday hikes, Thursday evening hikes, mountaineering, trail maintenance opportunities on the Appalachian Trail and the Metacomet-Monadnock Trails, social events, Young Member events, volunteer opportunities leading family-oriented programs and participating in Chapter Youth Programs, and service opportunities at Noble View Camp. If you have

continued on page 7

AMC Volunteers Document Air Quality

by Liz Gordon, Conservation Committee Chair

Last year, AMC volunteers collected air quality data during more than 100 hikes throughout the Appalachian region. Good air quality is vital for outdoor enthusiasts, who are vulnerable to elevated ozone levels and airborne particles that cause haze. Ground-level ozone (not to be confused with that in the stratospheric "ozone layer" which blocks harmful UV radiation) is formed when air pollutants from power plants and vehicle exhaust react with sunlight. Because of their oxygen requirements, physically active individuals are generally more sensitive to higher levels of ozone, which can cause temporary damage to lungs. Hikers are further affected because ozone levels are often higher on mountain peaks than at lower elevation. An additional pollution concern for hikers is haze, which is the visible effect of airborne particles. Not only does haze impede the view from our favorite mountaintops, it also decreases our lung capacity during outdoor activities—if you can see haze, you are breathing in the particles that cause it. Haze pollution is a serious concern throughout the Appalachian Mountain Range.

In an effort to increase its air quality database and educate its members about air quality concerns, the AMC launched its Visibility Volunteer (VizVol) program in 2003. The program, part of AMC's "citizen scientist" Mountain Watch program (www.outdoors.org/research/mountainwatch), is designed to collect ozone and haze data from the peaks that AMC members frequent. Participants record ozone levels using a simple, credit card-sized device and document visibility using a digital camera. AMC researchers will combine these measurements with weather data to track air quality trends in the Appalachian region.

It's easy to get involved in this effort! If you'd like to become a Visibility Volunteer and expand data coverage to the peaks that you most enjoy, contact Liz at 413-658-8088 or conservation@amcberkshire.org. Additional information on the VizVol program can be found on our website, amcberkshire.org.

In addition to your volunteer data-collection efforts, there are simple steps that you can take to improve air quality, given that ozone and haze result from power plants and vehicle exhaust:

Reduce energy consumption. Consider carpooling, public transit, and other means to decrease fuel emissions, and conserve electricity at home and at work. Encourage others to do the same.

Write to your elected officials to encourage their support of clean air legislation.

Join the AMC's Conservation Action Network (CAN) to stay informed about air quality and other important conservation issues that affect AMC members.

Become involved in the Chapter's conservation activities!

To find out more about the AMC's Mountain Watch program, air quality issues, or to check the air quality forecast before your next hike, visit amcberkshire.org.

METACOMET-MONADNOCK TRAIL GUIDE, 10TH EDITION – page 2

MASSACHUSETTS FOREST RESERVES – page 2

NEW MEMBERS – page 3

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES – page 4

Metacomet-Monadnock Trail Guide

by Chris Ryan, *M-M Trail Guide Editor, AMC Berkshire Trails Committee*

The Trails Committee is pleased to announce the publication of the long-awaited tenth edition of the *Metacomet-Monadnock Trail Guide*. After being out of print during almost two years' worth of research and updates, the Guide is once more available. The entire 114-mile corridor was wheeled and is accurate to 1/10 of a mile. The route was also field checked using GPS/GIS technology as part of the ongoing National Scenic Trail (NST) study.

Over the last two years, Chapter volunteers have relocated numerous sections of trail off of private property and onto public lands wherever feasible, in response to some landowner concerns resulting from the NST study. These necessary relocations have actually improved the trail corridor.

All profits from sales are solely dedicated to assisting local area land trusts in purchasing land on the trail for permanent protection. To date, the Berkshire Chapter has helped fund the protection of over two miles of the trail.

To order a copy, send a check for \$14.95 postage paid made out to: NEC, P.O. Box 9369, North Amherst, MA 01059. See additional ordering information at <http://amcberkshire.org/mmtrail>.

Massachusetts Proposes Designation of State Lands as Ecological Reserves

by Liz Gordon, *Conservation Committee Chair*

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, with research help from The Nature Conservancy, is proposing to designate eight large tracts of state-owned land, totaling 52,000 acres, as "ecological reserves." The reserves are part of a larger effort to achieve "green certification" for the lands under the Forest Stewardship Council, which would require the state to (1) develop and implement sustainable forestry management plans for those places where logging is practiced, and (2) create ecological reserves on state lands that are set aside from logging and managed for mature forest habitat. Existing recreational activities would continue on the reserves, but new motorized recreation and logging would not.

Beginning as early as June, the State will hold public meetings near each proposed reserve, six of which are located west of the Quabbin. Berkshire Chapter members are encouraged to learn more about the reserves and to attend these public meetings. As hearing dates are announced, they will be posted on the AMC Berkshire Chapter website. To find out more about the proposal, visit <http://www.mass.gov/envir/forest>.

Get Dirty! Have Fun! Get into the AMC's Chapter Trails Challenge!

Ever wonder what kind of people enjoy the work and dirt of fixing up trails? They are just like you! They love a good hike on a well-maintained trail. They enjoy meeting new people and learning new skills. They revel in a sense of accomplishment when they leave their mark on a trail that hundreds of other people can then experience. In honor of all those good feelings, the AMC is proud to present the Chapter Trails Challenge.

What is it? Each chapter is challenged to add five miles of AMC-maintained trails per year over the next five years. The AMC is looking for volunteers to adopt trails that are close to home or farther afield. As long as they are not already maintained by the AMC and are legal trails, they qualify. New adopters, new members, chapters, and current trail organizers and maintainers will be eligible for a range of rewards.

Don't have the skills? Don't worry. Most essential trail work is best learned on the job. If you can follow simple directions while getting to know your fellow crew members, you are qualified for trail work.

Don't have the time? Even one day a year devoted to trail maintenance goes a long way, especially on some of our more heavily used and well-loved trails. Berkshire Chapter members can get out every third Saturday and learn the tricks of the trade. To become an adopter, talk to your Chapter's trails chairs.

• Passages •

Walter J. Jurkowski, a member of the Berkshire Chapter since 1978, died August 2004.
Dr. James Hooper, a life member of the Berkshire Chapter since 1959, died April 2005.
Bernard Stevens, a life member of the Berkshire Chapter since 1970, has recently passed.

Berkshire Chapter Executive Committee - 2005 -

CHAPTER OFFICERS

Chair: Rob Robertson
Vice Chair: Erica Gees
Treasurer: Kelly Druzisky
Secretary: Mary Norton

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Appalachian Trail Committee:

Cosmo Catalano

Berkshire County Representative: vacant

Canoe and Kayak Committee:

Connie Peterson

Conservation Committee: Liz Gordon

Leadership Training: Cathy Wickens

Membership Committee:

Deborah Levine and Chris Mangano

Mountaineering Committee:

Jim VanNatta and Alice Hodgdon

Noble View Committee: Gary Forish

Nominating Committee: Gary Forish

Outings Committee:

Dave Koerber and Bob Napolitano

Programs Committee: vacant

Trails Committee: Pat Fletcher

Webmaster: Ian Beatty

Young Members Committee:

Kelly Druzisky

BERKSHIRE EXCHANGE

- June 2005 -

newsletter@amcberkshire.org

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Title photo:

Springtime atop Shatterack Mountain

CONTACT INFORMATION

on all Executive Committee members
can be found at amcberkshire.org.

ADDRESS CHANGES

AMC, 5 Joy St., Boston, MA 02108
or e-mail information@outdoors.org

THE BERKSHIRE CHAPTER ANNOUNCES

Cardigan Lodge Labor Day Weekend

SAT.-MON., SEPT. 3-5, 2005. The Chapter hosts a fabulous weekend of walks, hiking, biking, paddling, swimming, walking, meditation, fiddle music and dancing, and programs at (and near) newly-renovated Cardigan Lodge in Alexandria, NH. For complete details, including how to register (by July 15 please), visit amcberkshire.org. Or, contact Donna Walters at 413-498-5696.

New Members Especially Welcome

In the months ahead you will be seeing more outings and activities with invitations like “new members especially welcome” or “new member hikes.” The Berkshire Chapter is reaching out to all of you who have recently joined the AMC, or may have been members for a while but never quite made it into the woods, out on the water, or up that mountain. Whether you are a member of five days or five years, or have infrequently or never been on an AMC hike, these programs are for you.

New member hikes are designed as an introduction to the AMC’s outings and an opportunity for everyone to join in and experience the camaraderie that develops on an AMC trip. Spend time with folks who have belonged for a while and who can share their stories about adventures with the AMC. Now is the time to be with like-minded AMC members who have made a choice to get outdoors, get exercise, do something for the environment, and above all have fun! There is also the opportunity to participate in trail maintenance days, a great way to meet other club members and take an active part in making sure that the trails we use are kept in a condition for us all to continue enjoying.

There are a number of items you will need on a hike with the AMC.

Don’t hesitate to contact the trip leader for recommendations on clothing, gear, food and water. These items are necessities!

For additional information on hiking with the Berkshire Chapter, see *Experience the Wilds of Western Massachusetts*. You may request a copy by sending an e-mail to newsletter@amcberkshire.org or calling 413-568-0990. Be sure to provide your e-mail address (for PDF version) or US Mail address (for printed version).

The AMC Berkshire Chapter Chairs are available to answer your questions about different activities, and trip leaders are always on hand to answer any specific program questions you may have. We welcome your input and are here to offer our support. New members are encouraged to join any program the AMC offers, but if you aren’t sure how to get started, a new member hike might be the way to begin.

Don’t be shy! Join in, have fun and make new friends. Start with a new member hike and take off from there. We’ll look forward to seeing you on the trail.

Deborah Levine and Chris Mangano
Membership Committee

Earth Day at Noble View *by Gary Forish, Noble View Chair*

In the spirit of Earth Day and in the continuing awareness of conservation, Noble View hosted seven days of trail maintenance beginning April 23. Water bars, bog bridges, and turnpikes were built and volunteer spirit was abundant.

Trail maintenance is a key element in the conservation of our natural resources. It aids in erosion control, which can help prevent water turbidity and result in clean water. This is important at Noble View, which is located within the Cobble Mountain watershed, a drinking water resource for the city of Springfield.

Saturday and Sunday, April 23–24, an AMC Trails Maintenance Workshop was attended by eight volunteers from several chapters. In the pouring rain they successfully built water bars and ditches to divert water running downhill at a wet area along the Pitcher Brook Trail in the vicinity of Snow Place. The Noble View Committee expresses our deepest thanks to all of you for jobs well done.

The following Monday brought the Student Conservation Association (SCA) back to Noble View for a second year. The SCA held a five

day Trail Maintenance Skill Workshop for its members. In attendance were 23 members and 4 staff who worked from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. every day. Turnpikes and bog bridges were successfully completed—four days of rain and one day of sun did not slow them down. Dirty, muddy clothes and boots along with tired backs and smiles of accomplishment were the results.

The SCA works in partnership with AmeriCorps and its parent organization, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). It is the nation’s leading provider of conservation service opportunities, outdoor skills, and leadership training for young people. The SCA’s members provide more than 1.3 million hours of service annually in national parks, forests, and urban green spaces in all 50 states.

The SCA addresses urgent environmental challenges across the US. Working in collaboration with public and/or nonprofit partners, these “special project” teams, who are supervised by SCA staff, receive precise training and demonstrate great initiative to meet their objectives.

Members of the SCA were present from as far away as Puerto Rico, Colorado, Florida, Missouri, Wisconsin, Utah, and Minnesota. The members’ main interests lie in the outdoors and the environment.

Amy of Illinois is certified in K–12 education and is “hoping to help others and really make an impact.” Craig, who will someday teach in a non-traditional school, wishes to “fulfill his responsibilities on important issues such as the environment.” Jean is excited about “preserving the environment through education and example.” Tonya, with a degree in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, believes in putting her “passions into action.” Chelsea of Kansas wants a career in conservation and feels that the work of SCA members is important for “themselves, society, and the earth.” Dan served as an intern on the US House of Representatives’ Science Subcommittee on Environment, Technology, and Standards and is excited about making “environmental protection the main focus of his life.”

Visit Noble View and hike the trails that reflect the love of the environment and commitment to conservation of our many volunteers. Become passionate about this earth. Take part in the next Noble View Trail Maintenance Workshop and volunteer for a conservation project.

Noble View thanks all of the volunteers—past, present, and future—who give so much to their environmental passions.



Photo by Jill Baum

Berkshire Chapter

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Chair—Trails Committee

In accordance with the AMC's mission to promote the protection, enjoyment, and wise use of the trails in our region, the Trails Committee makes trails available for the use of AMC members and the general public.

Pat Fletcher recently announced his intention, after years of service, to rotate out of his position as Chair of the Trails Committee, effective December 31, 2005. Pat said, "My love of trail work and the experience of chairing the Committee have been greater than any other except for my marriage to a wonderful and understanding wife. I feel that it is time for new blood, and hope someone can be found who will exceed what I have done for trails."

We're most grateful for Pat's past efforts and are delighted that he will continue to do trail maintenance work. Pat has made it clear that he stands ready to assist the new Chair in any way possible.

Exceeding Pat's accomplishments will be a challenge, but we have some very talented people in the Berkshire Chapter. We're now looking for someone to assume the Trails Chair's duties, which include:

- Becoming familiar with the trails in our area
- Soliciting volunteers for trail maintenance work parties (third Saturdays, April through November)
- Recruiting a Vice Chair and attracting additional Committee members
- Organizing, performing, and supervising trail building and trail maintenance work on all trails for which the Berkshire Chapter has responsibility, except the Appalachian Trail (for which the Chapter's AT Committee has responsibility)
- Organizing the annual Trail-Busters' Hike and Dinner (usually held in January)
- Monitoring the status of the National Scenic Trails Study process on the Metacomet-Monadnock (M-M) Trail
- Communicating with local landowners, as needed
- Attending Club-wide meetings of the Trails Committee at the Annual Meeting, and at Spring and Fall Gathering
- Preparing the annual budget and Annual Report
- Continuing to develop a system of shelters a day's hike apart along the entire length of the M-M Trail
- Organizing volunteer worker recognition functions (barbecues, pizza parties, etc.)

It certainly seems like an intimidating amount of work, but Pat and Chris Ryan, who has also been involved in Trails work for years, stand ready to assist. Many hands make light work, and you won't be left out there on your own!

This is a great opportunity to provide service to the AMC, the public, and to our environment. Please contact Pat or me if you're interested, or have any questions.

Chair/Coordinator—Chapter Youth Programs Committee

Chapter Youth Programs are designed to serve youth, ages 6–18, who are participants in organizations such as Boy and Girl Scouts, the YMCA, and the like. Essentially, Chapter Youth Programs are envisioned as collaborations between these sponsoring youth group agencies and the AMC, by virtue of which AMC volunteers share their outdoor and trail maintenance skills with youth agency participants and attendant staff. These programs are distinct from family group programs or situations where minors attend an AMC event with their parents or guardian, or the parents or guardian of their friends.

Properly managed and safely conducted Chapter Youth Programs will minimize risk to youths, volunteers, and the AMC, and will afford the benefits of:

- Reaching out to young people

- Providing an opportunity for AMC volunteer leaders to do what they want to do (and what they do best), and to actively support the Club's mission while working with kids
- Encouraging diversity in AMC membership
- Bringing a strong conservation message to youth at a receptive time
- Developing relationships with other organizations and agencies in our communities
- Increasing AMC staff exposure to AMC volunteers and building bridges between the volunteer community and staff in terms of program development
- Promoting the AMC mission in the community at large

While working with youth involves certain risks, they are far outweighed by potential benefits. The AMC Chapter Youth Program Task Force has developed principles and Club-wide standards to promote the safe conduct of chapter youth programs.

Typically, the youth agency is responsible for transporting participants to the activity site, ensuring that participants have the proper equipment and clothing, and supervising participants through a staff-to-participant ratio of 1:8 or better.

The AMC will provide training to volunteer AMC CYP leaders in the following areas: risk management skills, general leadership skills, special skills needed to work with youth, and any activity-specific skills which might be required considering the age and maturity level of the participants.

Links to the Program Plan for the Chapter Youth Program and the Chapter Youth Program Sponsorship Agreement are posted at the bottom of this web page: <http://www.outdoors.org/volunteers/forms/index.cfm>.

We're looking for someone to get the Chapter Youth Program up and running in the Berkshire Chapter. No doubt about it—this is a huge job. However, the benefits to kids and their families, to the AMC, and to our environment could be significant and far-reaching.

The Chapter Youth Program Coordinator's responsibilities include:

- Determining the type(s) of programs that might be of interest to agencies, their consumers, and potential AMC CYP volunteer leaders
- Initially, identifying and contacting youth service agencies to ascertain their interest
- Identifying, recruiting, and supporting potential AMC CYP volunteer leaders
- Arranging for background checks for volunteer leaders
- Reviewing and approving all Chapter CYP outing proposals
- Reviewing and finalizing Sponsorship Agreements
- Serving on the Club-wide CYP team
- Acting as initial point of contact for incident resolution

Leaders—Chapter Youth Programs Committee

We're obviously also looking for folks who'd like to serve as volunteer CYP leaders. Responsibilities include:

- Participating in training to meet CYP leader requirements
- Planning trips
- Obtaining executed Sponsorship Agreements from approved youth agencies
- Arranging and attending pre-trip meetings with approved youth agencies
- Ensuring that properly completed waivers are provided by the sponsoring agency for each attending participant
- Running trips
- Reporting any incidents to the CYP Coordinator

continued on next page

Admittedly, the roles of CYP Coordinator and CYP Leader appear complex and demanding. However, I feel that the personal satisfaction that the coordinator and the leaders will enjoy as the result of their commitment to youth programs will greatly outweigh the energy and effort invested.

I'm hopeful that this challenge will really appeal to some Chapter members who want to be of service to kids and community! Please give me a call if you're interested, or would like to learn more.

Leaders—Family-Oriented Programs and Activities

We're looking for folks who are interested in developing and leading family-oriented programs. Several leaders regularly lead kid-friendly hikes. Surely there are a lot more opportunities for recreational, educational and conservation activities that appeal to families. Got ideas? Bring 'em on!

Registrar—Noble View Camp

Noble View Camp, located in Russell, MA, is one of the AMC's Volunteer-Managed Facilities. Often used for new member events, workshops, SOLO Wilderness First Aid training, and Leader Training, Noble View is also a low-cost self-service AMC destination.

Noble View Camp seeks a Registrar to handle the following responsibilities:

- Responding to phone messages and e-mail requests for information about Noble View facilities and amenities
- Accepting and maintaining reservations, and scheduling use of the facility using an Excel spreadsheet
- Receiving key deposits, mailing keys out to guests, and receiving returned keys
- Collecting lodging and user fees by mail and forwarding to Noble View Treasurer

These duties will take about two hours per week, according to Gary Forish. Toll phone calls will be reimbursed by Noble View Camp. If you enjoy working with the public, but would like to do so from the comfort of home, this is a great opportunity.

Other Noble View Opportunities

Noble View seeks Committee and Sub-Committee members to at-

tend meetings four times per year and to work in the areas of:

- Programs—responsible for developing education, conservation, and outdoor activities
- Trails/Recreation—responsible for trail maintenance and traditional events
- Property—responsible for buildings and ground maintenance
- Marketing and Public Relations

Gary, and many others, have been working very hard for several years to transform and renovate the Noble View property, maximizing its value as a training facility and a low-cost destination for AMC members Club-wide. The Berkshire Chapter has a special relationship with Noble View. Please consider how your efforts might contribute to this worthwhile ongoing project, and contact Gary Forish at 413-562-6792 to discuss your interests and abilities.

Chair—Leadership Training and Education Committee

We're grateful for Cathy Wickens' service in this position for several years. Cathy has worked with Noble View to schedule Leader Training and SOLO Wilderness First Aid trainings. Cathy advises that, to date, this position has involved:

- Sending announcements of scheduled trainings to the AMC, press, and outside entities
- Responding to telephone and e-mail inquiries
- Registering participants and preparing rosters
- Collecting registration fees and forwarding them to the Treasurer

This role could expand to identifying, organizing, scheduling, and promoting workshops of interest to AMC members and the general public. Additionally, the LT&E Chair could work with the Outings and Membership Committees to arrange for event-oriented trainings and workshops.

The sky's the limit here—volunteer work will absorb as much enthusiasm and energy as you're willing to give!

Rob Robertson
413-549-4963

MOUNTAIN LEADERSHIP SCHOOL

at the Highland Center, Crawford Notch

47th Annual Mountain Leadership Schools • August 17–21

Mountain Leadership School (MLS) is the AMC's premier outdoor leadership training program. After the success of last year's trainings, we will again hold two sessions at the Highland Center at Crawford Notch. This program is designed to teach the skills needed to lead groups safely in the mountains of the Northeast. There is rolling admission for all programs. To receive a full program description, contact the Leadership Training and Risk Management Manager at 603-278-4453 x2010 or leadership@amcinfo.org. To reserve a space today, call the Reservations Office at 603-466-2727.

After a day of instruction at the Highland Center at Crawford Notch, each group of student leaders and facilitators undertakes a rigorous four-day experiential backpacking adventure. Trip planning, group leadership skills, safety management, navigation, low-impact travel, clothing, and equipment are all covered. Students take turns leading the group through scenarios involving judgment and safety awareness. This program is intended for participants who already have at least basic backpacking skills. Facilitators are senior AMC volunteers. WFA course (see below) is recommended. Fee: \$330 (nonmembers \$367). Includes instruction, materials, and meals from Wed. lunch through Sun. breakfast, excluding trail lunches. The first night (6/15) at the Highland Center is included.

Mountain Leadership School/Wilderness First Aid Package • August 15–21

Offered at the Highland Center as a recommended precursor to the AMC's Mountain Leadership School, the two-day WFA course covers the hands-on basics of wilderness first aid. Emphasizes responding to backcountry emergencies using available supplies and equipment. Instruction by SOLO, a leader in wilderness emergency medicine instruction. Fee for MLS/WFA package: \$537 (nonmembers \$610). Includes instruction, materials, lodging, and meals Mon. lunch through Sun. breakfast.

Outings E-mail List for Chapter Leaders

The Berkshire Chapter Outings Committee has initiated an e-mail mailing list to keep members informed about scheduled outings. The mailing list will supplement *AMC Outdoors* and the Berkshire Chapter website listings.

If you wish to subscribe to the list-serv, please send an e-mail to outings-announce-subscribe@amcberkshire.org. To unsubscribe, send an e-mail to outings-announce-unsubscribe@amcberkshire.org. You do not need anything in the body of the message, simply send an e-mail to the location specified.

If you would like to post a hike on the list, e-mail a description of the hike to outings-announce@amcberkshire.org. Your e-mail must include a hike description and location, date, difficulty rating, and how to sign up (or if a “show & go,” where to meet and what time). You must be an active AMC member and qualified trip leader to lead a trip.

The list will be moderated by the Outings Co-Chairs to ensure that members listing outings are qualified leaders and that the activities don't duplicate or conflict with activities already posted (i.e., third Saturday

maintenance activity, Chapter Annual Meeting, etc.). You may list hikes, backpacks, bike outings, flat water boating, bird watching or any other outdoor activity permitted by the Outings Committee.

Please feel free to sign on immediately to become informed of short notice activities.

If you have activities that you would like to lead and have planned in advance, please contact our Monthly Coordinators for the relevant month:

- **September:** Ann Wood, awood@library.umass.edu or 413-256-6094.
- **October:** Wayne Rodrigues, wrodrigues@spfldcol.edu or 413-572-2511.
- **November:** Kevin Maroney, kevin@maroneymail.com or 413-337-4801.
- **December:** Open, contact Outings Chair.

If you have any questions, please contact Outings Co-Chairs Dave or Bob at outings@amcberkshire.org.

The Best Winter for Cross-Country Skiing in Years

by Patrick Fletcher, Trails Committee Chair

If you did not get out this winter, you missed the best snow I have seen in many years. As I sit here writing this, it is raining and looks like the snow will be gone here in Massachusetts, at least for this season. But I have been wrong once this year and I could always get the bug if we get a big snow in New Hampshire.

I am not a skilled cross-country skier and don't have very expensive skis. Due to various reasons, my equipment has sat unused in the closet for several years.

The first part of the season was warm and did not look very promising. But this year a friend had retired and talked me into going out so we made our first outing into Upper Goose Pond over the ice. Although I can kick and glide all right, I am not good at going downhill, so this was a really good first trip and a blue bird day.

The next outing was on a return from an AT meeting at Mt. Greylock, when we stopped in Savoy to ski the Busby Trail. It was a nice, gradual uphill through the woods, and the snow was excellent. I was hooked. I was getting in shape and each trip got better. My friend always points out that cross-country skis are the best way to travel in the winter, and he is right.

After a call to another skier friend we did one of the areas I fell in love with, Shutesbury State Forest. This nine-mile loop can be done up and back on either side of the loop or down the middle on a third trail. The west side is New Boston Rd. and is used by snowmobiles, but they also have a groomer and it had been through just before we skied. Starting from the south, it is a very gentle uphill for about four miles with a scenic beaver pond just before the end, and then a glide back to the start. It was another great day and I visited the area twice more this year, skiing different routes in new snow each time. The two east sides of this area are a little more challenging, but great skiing if conditions are right.

A heavy rain that turned to ice changed the conditions and it looked like the New England weather had doomed the rest of the year. Fortunately, more snow and great conditions returned.

The next outing was to Erving State Forest where we skied around the lake, missing a turn. We finally arrived back at the vehicle we had spotted on Route 2.

Areas where we skied included Wendell, Mt. Greylock, H.O. Cook, Mt. Tom State Reservation, Cherry Hill Golf Course and Puffer's Pond, and Beartown State Forest on the power line and Airplane trails. It never ceases to amaze me how much snow there can be just minutes to the west of us in the Berkshires when we have bare ground here in West-

field. I missed out on three trips my friends made to Colrain, October Mtn. State Forest and Pisgah State Park in southern New Hampshire. We also made three trips up to southern Vermont, just to the south of Mt. Stratton, and skied into and over Stratton Pond, Grout Ponds, and almost to Sumerset Reservoir over Blueberry Swamp. This area on the Catamount Ski Trail is not to be missed when the conditions are less than favorable down here. It is only about a two hour drive and well worth the trip. When doing this kind of ski trip you have to be prepared for any emergency and always ski with at least one other person. Up here, an equipment failure could get you in trouble—especially if you have not left your itinerary with someone.

Most of the ski trips we made are in the *Skiing the Pioneer Valley* cross-country ski book published and sold by Chris Ryan of New England Cartographics.

Now, with the end of ski season, I'm wondering if I can find the right deal to upgrade my ski equipment for next year!



AMC members climb above treeline on a Berkshire Chapter day hike of Mt. Moosilauke—New England's eleventh-highest mountain at 4,802 feet. Watch *AMC Outdoors* for another Chapter hike up Mt. Moosilauke in September or October.

Photos: Tom Eaton

From the Chair, *continued from page 1*

an idea for an activity, we'd like to hear about it.

Leader Training

If you'd like to lead an activity, so much the better – and we'd be delighted to provide leader training.

Thirteen Berkshire Chapter members, some of whom are already experienced leaders, recently participated in a Leader Training weekend at Noble View Camp. Jim Walsh, Worcester Chapter Chair; Steve Circas, Worcester Chapter Hiking Chair; Alan Doty of the Berkshire Chapter; and Aaron Gorban, AMC Leadership Training and Risk Management Manager provided a great experience for 17 participants. Many thanks to these facilitators for their time, energy and enthusiasm.

I've already (as of this writing) received some compliments about the quality of the training, and especially about the role-playing scenarios. One experienced leader praised the scenarios, saying that they made him re-think his decisions as leader and gave him a valuable perception while playing an embarrassed hiker who just wanted to return to his car!

Train-the-Trainer

The New Hampshire Chapter has graciously agreed to come to Noble View on September 24th and 25th in order to help the Berkshire, Worcester and Southeastern Massachusetts Chapters develop a skilled cadre of leader trainers. With a larger group of training facilitators, we'll be able to support each other in offering more frequent leader training opportunities, and we'll have an invaluable opportunity for inter-Chapter communication and cooperation. If you're interested in participating in Leader Training as a facilitator, please let me know.

Other Volunteer Opportunities

We're always encouraging people to become leaders and we have some additional openings as well:

- Chair of the Trails Committee
- Chair of the Leadership Training & Education Committee
- Coordinator of the Chapter Youth Program
- Leaders for the Chapter Youth Program
- Leaders for family-oriented activities
- Registrar for Noble View Camp and other opportunities at Noble View.
- Chair of the Leadership Training and Education Committee (LT&E)
- Committee members for the Conservation, Membership, Trails and LT&E Committees

You'll find more information about these opportunities elsewhere in this edition.

Monthly Trail Maintenance Days—Get Dirty! Have Fun!

Please support the excellent work being done by the Appalachian Trail and Trails

Committees—come out for trail maintenance days on the third Saturday of each month!

We've scheduled monthly trail maintenance days on third Saturdays from April through November. New members are especially welcome! No experience is required, and any necessary training will be provided. People should bring sturdy boots and gloves, lunch, sunscreen, insect repellent, and two to three liters of water.

May's Monthly Trail Maintenance involved opening Upper Goose Pond Cabin on the Appalachian Trail in Lee, MA. We removed and stored the shutters, cleared the gutters, cleaned the cabin's inside and raked pine needles away from its outside, removed brush, and unearthed and disposed of glass and metal debris left on site from the bad old days of "Leave Many Traces" camping. We had a great time, and felt as if we had achieved something worthwhile.

I encourage everyone to "give back" by helping out with trail maintenance. It's an excellent opportunity to get to know other Chapter members. There's huge satisfaction in shared accomplishments and in hard work well done. Come on out, get dirty and sweaty, meet new people, do good work, and have fun!

Cardigan Lodge Labor Day Weekend—A Shameless Promotional Pitch

I'll take this opportunity to let you know about the Cardigan Lodge Labor Day Weekend trip I'm co-leading with Donna Walters. We've reserved the entire Lodge (60 beds) and we'd like nothing more than an opportunity to spend a weekend with new and old friends from the Berkshire Chapter. We've got a great weekend planned and, if it goes as well as we hope, we'll see about doing it again for Thanksgiving. In order to make it work, though, we need to fill the trip, so please reserve early and often! New members are especially welcome. We'll make every effort to show you a great time. For more info, please contact Donna or me.

Be Safe! Have Fun!

If you've been wistfully thinking that some of our activities seem interesting and that maybe you'd like to join us on a hike or paddle, please take the plunge! Come out and join us. You'll meet some great people, and you'll definitely look forward to the next event.

Fresh from observing the recent Leader Training, I have to amend my closing comments in the last edition of the *Berkshire Exchange*—Rule #1: Be Safe; Rule #2: Have Fun! And enjoy your summer!

Yours in service,
Rob Robertson
Berkshire Chapter Chair
413-549-4963

Wanted –

Children's Outdoor Gear

The Berkshire Chapter Youth Programs seeks donations of:

Fleece tops or jackets; wool sweaters; fleece or wool hats, gloves, and mittens; rain gear.

Please contact Alicia Wendolowski at 413-585-5874 or ermine3737@aol.com to make arrangements.

Handicapped-Accessible Trails and River Access Information Requested

One of our members has suggested that we develop a list of handicapped-accessible trails and post it on our website. If you know of any such trails or river access points, please e-mail info to cerobertson@comcast.net. Ideally, we'd like to have the following information: name of trail; name of venue (state park, etc.) and contact number, if possible; website URL; description of trail surface or river access; description of trail features; and any other information that seems helpful.

Community Farm Asks for Your Support

North Amherst Community Farm (NACF) is a grassroots organization created to purchase and permanently protect one of the last remaining intact farms in North Amherst: the 37.8 acre farm owned by the Dziekanowski family for generations. Once it is purchased, the farm will continue to thrive as an organic Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm that sells seasonal shares to members and operates a farm stand open to the public. NACF needs financial and volunteer assistance to make this project a success. For more information, to make a contribution, or to learn about volunteering, please contact co-presidents Deborah Evans (413-549-0722; bcdevans@aol.com) or Don Gallagher (413-549-4980), or visit their web page at www.kestreltrust.org/nacf.

Big Brothers Big Sisters

Big Brothers Big Sisters is looking for volunteers to be matched as mentors with children aged 6-14. They are wonderful children who would benefit from a little more one-to-one attention. We hope that we don't have to keep them waiting long. If you would enjoy spending a few hours a week with a child doing things like walking the dog, playing catch, going swimming, going hiking, baking cookies, fishing, or doing a crafts project, Big Brothers Big Sisters can tell you how to apply to become a volunteer. You can help the community by simply spending time with a child. Call 413-772-0915 and ask for Catherine Rogers.

MEMBERSHIP IN A BOTTLE

For the cost of your annual membership, you will receive:

A Nalgene® water bottle • A \$10 gift certificate good for AMC books, lodging, and workshops • An AMC window decal • A subscription to *AMC Outdoors* • A new member packet with your Club ID, a copy of current Chapter activities, and our quarterly newsletter, the *Berkshire Exchange*.

- AMC Berkshire Membership Form -

I wish to purchase:

- Individual "Membership in a Bottle" kits (\$50 each).
- Family "Membership in a Bottle" kits (\$75 each).
- Senior "Membership in a Bottle" kits (\$25 each, age 69 and over). Age: _____.
- Young Member "Membership in a Bottle" kits (\$25 each, up to age 30). Age: _____.

I have enclosed a check for the total amount of \$_____ made payable to Berkshire Chapter AMC.

Please mail the kits to:

Name: _____
 Street: _____
 City, State, Zip: _____
 Phone: _____
 E-mail: _____

Is this a gift membership? Yes No
 (Bottles will be sent to the address above, and the membership recorded in that name, unless you indicate otherwise.)

Note: This offer is for new members only. Not for renewals, please. Thanks.

Please mail completed form with check to:
Chris Ryan, PO Box 9369, North Amherst, MA 01059
 Questions? Contact Chris Ryan at 413-549-4124 or bottles@amcberkshire.org

It's the Annual NOBLE VIEW

Fireworks Viewing and Chicken Barbecue

Sunday, July 3. Celebrate Independence Day with a chicken barbecue and spectacular fireworks viewing. As it did in 1931, the call goes out to Chapter members to "come and view your estate." The updated Double Cottage, which many volunteers have worked on in the past several months, will be open for viewing as part of the celebration. Join in, renew old friendships, discover new friends, and bring the whole family. Gates open at 9:00 a.m. Come early for a hike to Pitcher Brook (1:00 p.m.) or sit and relax while taking in the view. Dinner served at 6:00 p.m. at a cost of \$8. Bring a dish to share for four people. Cold drinks and chicken will be provided, or come just for the fireworks display. Fireworks will be viewed at dark and will be launched from Stanley Park, Westfield, just three miles away. Bring lawn chairs or blankets for the viewing activities, and a flashlight. RSVP to Gary Forish, 413-562-6792.

Order Your Bandanamaps!

Sales to Enable Land Conservation

Buy a Bandanamap of the Connecticut River and help support land conservation! That's the gist of this fundraising effort currently under way by the Berkshire Chapter's Conservation Committee.

The bandanas feature the design of a recreation guide to the Connecticut River and a paddling motif. The vibrant colors will complement any outfit.

The bandanas are being sold for \$10 retail or \$8 wholesale (to anyone who buys 12 or more). Of the \$10 purchase price, \$5 will be earmarked for land conservation efforts, such as conservation easements, in western Massachusetts.

Every sports enthusiast knows bandanas make great fashion statements—as sweat wipers, slings, goodie-holders, mosquito swatters, and tourniquets. And this one can help you find your way on the Connecticut River! Don't leave home without one.

To order, send \$10 to AMC Berkshire, c/o CH Jones, PO Box 9303, North Amherst, MA 01059. Shipping and handling are included. (Make checks payable to AMC Berkshire.)

BERKSHIRE EXCHANGE
 Summer 2005



Berkshire Chapter
 Appalachian Mountain Club
 5 Joy Street
 Boston, MA 02108

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