

Appalachian Mountain Club Berkshire
Chapter

2012
ANNUAL REPORT



Report of the Chapter Chair

The Berkshire Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club has had a year of changes and events. Our Chapter continues to build on the strength and foundation of all the volunteers who have contributed so much in past years. We continue to provide a variety of outdoor activities, programs, and training to our members. Volunteer leaders show their dedication and passion by leading trips and training sessions, and sharing their knowledge and skill with new leaders.

This Annual Report highlights the hard work and efforts of the volunteer Executive Committee. It is their talented and dedicated that help make the Berkshire Chapter successful. Our membership can thank this group for the wide variety of activities, events, and programs that help create the positive Berkshire Chapter spirit.

In March we combined efforts with the Worcester Chapter for Leadership Training, and trained over 20 potential leaders. Unfortunately, due to personal health issues, the Training and Education Chair had to step down shortly thereafter. We are fortunate to have just elected a new Training and Education Chair by special meeting last month. He plans to continue the combined training and ensure that the leaders trained this year will be able to submit their necessary three co-leads and begin leading trips next year.

During the year, both the Chair and Vice-Chair were able to represent the chapter at the AMC Annual Meeting, Chapter Retreat, and Fall Gathering. We worked in subcommittees to promote family programs and conservation.

Noble View Outdoor Center, the AMC Volunteer-Managed Facility in the foothills of the Berkshire Mountains in western MA, has officially opened its "green" bathhouse and North Cottage, expanding its facilities. It is available for rent to members and nonmembers, and has meeting facilities for groups. To that end, Noble View offers regular SOLO WFA and First Responder training, and has begun an environmental education series. AMC Berkshire is fortunate to have such a retreat facility available in our region.

Our Annual Meeting in November was highly successful, due to advertising in several venues, a good location, great food for a reasonable cost, and, most importantly, a very popular live animal show by a rehab and zoological organization from New Hampshire. We had to increase our headcount three times, finally settling on 100 people. This showing is about twice our normal number. At that meeting, we were also able to present a well-deserved Appie of the Year award to Jim Pelletier of the AT Committee, and the first-ever Friend to the AMC award to retiring Congressman John Olver. After the meeting, several Chapter members offered to help on the Executive Committee, and are invited to serve as Members-at-Large beginning next year.

I look forward to serving as the Berkshire Chapter Chair for the next two years.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sabine Prather
Berkshire Chapter Chair, 2013-

2012 Massachusetts AT Committee Annual Report

The AT Committee had another active and productive year with approximately 190 volunteers contributing over 10,000 volunteer hours in 2011. Volunteer hours for 2012 are currently being collected. Below is some information on the major areas of our activities.

Trail Maintenance: A full roster of volunteers was maintained throughout the year with little interruption. Some trail sections required extensive brushing due to lush growth from more than usual sunlight reaching the forest floor. This is the fourth year with these conditions caused by the ice storm of 4 years ago. Cooper Brook bridge was repaired and as of the end of year, the Race Brook bridge was in process of repair. A full order of bog bridge materials were put into the field, roughly half to repair existing installations and half to new installations. AMC Teen crews continued to make significant contributions to our efforts in several important areas, such as October Mountain, Cheshire Cobble and Mount Prospect.

Trail Land Monitoring: Roughly 20% of the boundaries were maintained consistent with our 5 year maintenance program. We continue to add to the inventory of missing monuments created for the National Park Service's use and long range planning. Special Use Permits were reviewed but renewals were put on hold by the NPS while the program is reevaluated. We have encountered some problems with this process and maintaining the interest of farmers in engaging in the process.

Trail Facilities: The new roof for Noepel shelter was installed and the shelter painted completing rehabilitation of this overnight site. Moldering privies at several sites were shifted without problem and our experience with this type of privy was used in updating the ATC's Backcountry Sanitation Manual. Bear boxes were installed at Tom Leonard and Crystal Mountain overnight sites.

Natural Heritage Monitoring: The Committee adjusted our approach to Natural Heritage Monitoring moving to a project based approach to monitoring while also continuing individual monitoring. Training was again provided by experts. We also engaged the New England Wildflower Society in discussions about responsibilities in this area and 2 of our volunteers qualified as Plant Conservation Volunteers under their program. Discussions are continuing and now include the NPS and ATC.

Upper Goose Pond: The cabin was opened in mid May and closed in mid October with caretakers assigned throughout the period. It was another active year at the cabin with record use by hikers. A permanent roof was installed on the cook table pavilion. One side of the cabin was painted and minor repairs made. The dock was repaired. Monitoring of American chestnut trees continued with addition of several more large trees to the inventory. Cabin security was improved with enhanced lock provisions for the cabin and caretaker access gate.

Management: The Committee completed a self assessment and follow up on the findings is underway. We continued to be active with Chapter Youth Program projects despite cancellation by the youth group on a couple of planned projects. Several project days involved work with Dalton teachers, students and parents involved in the Trail to Every Classroom initiative which included construction of a kiosk for the south end of Dalton. Three of our leaders/volunteers participated in the NPS/ATC sponsored Leadership Conference this summer at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV.

2012 Massachusetts AT Committee Annual Report

The post of Group Outreach Coordinator was added to our Committee membership and the position was filled by one of our volunteers. Filling this role has allowed us to be more aware of group use of the AT facilities, address conflicts before they happen and deploy Ridge Runners to contact groups in the field. We expect this role to further develop and give us much better management of groups on the AT in Massachusetts.

Our volunteer efforts continue to be supported by the ATC with Adam Brown from the Kellogg Conservation Center (KCC); by the AMC with Regional Trails Coordinator, Matt Moore also at the KCC; and by the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation with their project and Ridge Runner support lead by Becky Barnes. Of note: Becky has taken on a new leadership role with DCR and her post has not been refilled. We are encouraging DCR to fill this vital post every opportunity we get. Also, Matt Moore has left the AMC for a post in Utah. We are working with AMC management to quickly post and fill his position so that the support he has provided can continue uninterrupted.

Respectfully Submitted:



Jim Pelletier, Massachusetts AT Committee, Chair

Berkshire Exchange Committee

The *Berkshire Exchange* continues to be published three times per year. However, this year spring and summer editions were combined as no time-sensitive submissions were received for summer. So only two newsletters were released in 2012. Ordinarily release dates are approximately late February for spring, early July for summer, and late September for fall/winter.

Final figures were not available at the time of this report, but in 2011 the Berkshire Exchange Committee closed at approximately \$2500 spent for the year, or about \$1000 or more below budget. No software upgrade purchases were needed in 2012.

There continue to be increasingly more subscribers to the e-newsletter than there were in the previous year, mainly because Joy St. changed the default preference for all new members.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jon Hanauer
Berkshire Exchange Publisher

Canoe & Kayak Committee

Our Committee continues to offer trips in quiet water paddling (including canoes and kayaks), whitewater paddling for canoes and kayaks, sea kayaking, and whitewater rafting.

We had another successful year of quiet water trips, including three overnights and several day trips. Sabine Prather has stepped in to coordinate the Quietwater schedule, meeting all the leaders in January to plan the 2012 events. The overnight trips included two in Vermont and one on Cape Cod. A new leader has also trained as co-leader on two trips, as required, and plans to lead quickwater trips in 2013.

Marjorie Bannish and Tom Galvagni continue to lead two Stroke and Rescue Clinics in the summer. This offering primarily supports beginning and intermediate Sea Kayakers. Our Committee continues to offer full financial support to leaders who are willing to take the SOLO Wilderness First Aid course. We also offer financial support for paddling training programs that provide support to our leaders.

The whitewater program continues to offers class II, III, and IV trips for kayaks and a few open canoes. The number of trips offered each year is steadily dropping due to a decrease in the number of leaders offering whitewater trips.

Our rafting program offers excellent trips for folks at a very reasonable cost compared to usual commercial rates. We are thankful for Al Howcroft's continued effort as the coordinator of our rafting program. He strives to lead three rafting trips each summer with the three rafts that the Paddling Committee owns.

We have a fleet of rental boats stored at Andrew's Greenhouse in South Amherst. The inventory of the boats is included in the Ferry Tales newsletter each year. Our Committee is thankful that Andrew Cowles continues providing the space for the storage of approximately 20 rental boats.

Our Committee cooperates with the larger AMC paddling community through the Inter-chapter Paddling Committee, which meets twice a year. Sabine Prather and Connie Peterson attended both sessions this year.

Respectfully Submitted,
Connie Peterson, and Sabine Prather
Canoe & Kayak Committee

Conservation Committee

Conservation continues as a committee of one, for now. We have posted articles of general conservation interest and concerns for the AMC on the Berkshire website. For Green June, we collaborated with the Transition Westfield group to screen Carbon Nation at the Westfield Athenaeum. I have also trained as a Volunteer Naturalist for the AMC lodges and huts and trained as an AMC Climate Change presenter, in order to present this to groups in the future. As this position is officially open, it is my hope to pass on the leadership to someone with the time and commitment to do what needs to be done, and continue to help the committee grow in the future.

Respectfully submitted,
Sabine Prather

Mountaineering Committee

We had another great year in mountaineering. In January and February we did local moonlight skiing and hiking trips. We held weekly Wednesday evening climbing outings at Chapel Ledges in Ashfield, Sunbowl in Sunderland, and Farley Ledge in Erving from late spring through late summer. We had weekend trips to the "Gunks" on the Mohonk Preserve in New York State, "Dacks" in Adirondack State Park in New York, and to Rumney, Whitehorse, and Cathedral in the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire. Day trips took us to climbing areas in Connecticut and New Hampshire and many closer to home in the western Massachusetts area. We hosted a Women's Climbing Day (open to everyone, but targeted towards women) that was well-attended despite being moved indoors to the climbing gym due to inclement weather. In the fall we continued climbing on Tuesday evenings at the Central Rock Gym in Hadley. We plan to celebrate the holidays with a Mountaineering potluck party in December.

Our training offerings this spring included weekend-long courses to AMC members and general public in Introduction to Rock Climbing, and Intermediate Rock Climbing, Anchor Building, and a Gym to Rock course. We also offered a technical training course for trip leaders and course instructors. This fall we offered the Intermediate Rock Climbing course again, as many climbers who attended our trips this summer had expressed interest in taking the course.

As a group, the Mountaineering Committee teamed up with the Trustees of Reservations for the annual spring workday at Chapel Ledges. We worked with the Western Mass. Climbers Coalition at their annual Rendezvous fundraiser in October, teaching a workshop about anchor building. Lastly, we welcomed three new trip leaders to our Committee this year.

We wish to thank all of the trip leaders, Committee Officers, trainers and helpers, and others who generously volunteered their time and effort in making this year's season such a great success.

Respectfully submitted by:
Sarah Long, Mountaineering Chair

Outings Committee

The submission of activities in 2012 continues to be on the light side, but steady as a number of leaders continued to lead activities on a regular basis, including hiking, overnights, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and biking.

I am keeping an eye open for a Co-Chair who can spend some time reaching out to our approved leaders. Meanwhile, the recent filling of the Training & Education Chair position is encouraging for the Outings Committee for support of its leaders and prospective leaders.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jon Hanauer
Outings Committee Chair

Public Relations Committee

In 2012, the Facebook group was changed to a Facebook page, with more functionality, and is open to all for posting. There are currently 140 “likes” on this page, and each time there is a new posting, it generates more interest. There were several posts on trail work going on in the Pioneer Valley and the Appalachian Trail, and for National Trail Day and AT Day events. Publicity seeks continuity with the AMC Berkshire website and posts there are well.

AMC events such as the new member potluck in March and the Annual Meeting in November were also posted in local online and paper venues, which drew in people from the community. Because the Annual Meeting also included a live animal show that appeals to children, there were over 100 people signed up coming from up to 200 miles away. At least one trip was also advertised on the event page of the Naturalist Club, another local organization.

In the next year, I hope to continue this general publicity to promote local outdoor opportunities in western Massachusetts and to illustrate the importance of the AMC in the region and in New England, and collaborate with other organizations with similar vision.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sabine Prather
Public Relations Committee Chair

Trails Committee

Projects on the New England National Scenic Trail:

1. Northfield cabin finish work
 - (a) Work on tent platforms
 - (b) Dedication June 3rd
2. Repair of bog bridges at Rising corners - Two work days by Pioneer Valley Hiking club
3. Continued mowing grass every month at rising Corners
4. Upgrade of maps at kiosk at Rising Corners, on southern end of NET.
5. Meetings on New England National Scenic trail for new web page.
6. Handicapped accessible trail and Bridge at Bray Lake with DCR Trailways grant of \$10,500 - 80% completed. Over 800 volunteer hours of work.
7. Continued negotiations with Quabbin DCR about relocation of trail.

Respectfully submitted
Patrick Fletcher
Trails Chair

Website Committee

The Website Committee has had a productive year, moving forward with the update of the Chapter website. The intention behind this move was to give the website a more modern look. Earlier this year a Berkshire Chapter member offered to help with the re-write. In May the long talked about website update began. Since there has been very little interest shown by the other committees of the chapter in changing the content of their pages it was decided, where it was appropriate, to port most of the data from the old site and make it live as soon as possible. The first showing of the website was available at the Berkshire Chapter Annual Meeting on Nov 3RD, 2012. Although the website is now live, the process of adding to the content is ongoing.

We continue to host our website on Dreamhost using Drupal software. The hosting package includes one free domain name and we have purchased two others that have 2+ years remaining at the time of this writing. The hosting package itself is no charge since we are a non-profit organization. It is expected that the Website Committee budget will once again be minimal, no anticipated expenses.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert Bergstrom

Website Committee Chair

Past Chairs of the Berkshire Chapter

1929-30	Edward K Allen	1967-68	Charles L Kirkpatrick
1931	Joseph F Partenheimer	1969-70	Norman E Aubrey
1932	Edwin W Gantt	1971-72	Forrest E House
1933	Donald E Temple	1973-74	Margaret Rose
1934	Howard M Buffinton	1975-76	William T Cushwa
1935	Malcolm B Ross	1977-78	Walter L Haynes
1936	Donald McClench	1979-80	John D Shuttleworth
1936-37	John Dickson	1981-82	Kathryn E Burnett
1938	Horace E Allen	1983-84	S Alberta Stutsman
1939	William K Buxton	1985	John Pritchard
1940	Eugene E Durst	1986	Florence Mertz
1941	Maynard O Saunders	1986-87	Edward N Lewis
1942-43	Parke W Farrar	1988-89	Paul Evans
1944-45	Warner B Sturtevant	1990-91	Sue Lewis
1946-47	Carl O Chauncy	1992	Jean Armitage
1948-49	Harold T Daugherty	1993	William Kopel
1950	Heinz J Sherbow	1994-95	Thomas J Leary
1951-52	Ellis H Pritchard	1996-97	Christopher J Ryan
1953-54	Byron Chauncy	1998-99	Kathryn B Leary
1955-56	George W Alderman	2000-01	Thomas Senuta
1957-58	John A Saunders	2002-04	Gary L Forish
1959-60	Sidney F Law	2005-06	Rob Robertson
1961-62	Phyllis M Sears	2007-08	Jon M Hanauer
1963-64	Edith M Libby	2008-10	Deborah Levine
1965-66	Garrison Householder	2010-12	Dave Sauriol