

Appalachian Mountain Club Berkshire Chapter



ANNUAL REPORT 2016

Report of the Chapter Chair

It's been an exciting year. We began the year with a leadership challenge as the previous year we did not have a regular Chair (it was done in 3 month blocks by 4 members of the Executive committee). Plus we had several unfilled positions in the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee established 2 main goals for the year: increased communication with the members and reviewing and improving organizational issues. We made great strides in accomplishing these goals. We put out our newsletter, the Berkshire Exchange, which hadn't been published in over two years. We recruited new webmasters and cleaned up our webpage. We sent out monthly email blasts to inform members of what we offer. And we added new content to our Facebook Page. We filled several, but not all, positions on the Executive Committee and established a financial policy to guide us in the future.

But most importantly, we offered many activities for our members. During the year we offered 110 hikes, backpacks and snowshoe hikes; there were 91 events for trail work on the AT and the NET; our Mountaineering Committee offered 66 climbing activities; Paddling had 15 activities; Young Members had 16; Family Programs had 6. We also had a leadership training workshop, plus there were 4 Wilderness First Aid trainings, winter hiking workshops, and backpacking workshops.

In addition to our Annual Meeting (the Bash), we had 3 potlucks. And we had our first annual Outdoor Festival at Noble View Outdoor Center. At that event, we were able to recruit new volunteers for both the chapter and for Noble View, but more importantly, everyone who came had a great day outdoors. At all of these events we had dynamic speakers that educated and entertained us. We learned about trail work and land conservation in the Berkshires, climbing Mount Everest, introducing bald eagles to Massachusetts, and about wildlife rehabilitation.

The Outdoor Festival was a huge success. There was a large turnout. We offered several hikes, a scavenger hunt, a big barbecue, a campfire and had a great wildlife rehabilitator as a presenter. Plus we had a fiddle orchestra, a country band, and a bagpiper.

We awarded numerous scholarships for trainings including 2 advanced trainings, one in wilderness first responder and another in mountaineering school.

Berkshire Chapter, Appalachian Mountain Club

We were saddened by the death of 3 long term, active members who were on the Executive Committee this year. Gary Forish, Pat Fletcher, and Connie Peterson all died. They are all dearly missed.

Cosmo Catalano was awarded the Appi of the Year for all of his good work on the Appalachian Trail.

I attended numerous meeting during the year and met with many potential volunteers as we have no active Nominating Committee. Some of the meetings I attended include: Annual Summit in Boston, the Chapters Committee in the White Mountains and also at the Fall Gathering in Rhode Island. I attended the volunteer meeting of the AT Committee. I've been to a couple of meetings of the NET Committee. I've participated in several AMC phone meeting including finance, websites, plus others. I participated in a joint meeting with Berkshire and Worcester Chapters to set up a leadership training.

I didn't know very much when I became the Chair. But I have learned so much about the AMC and about the great work that is done by so many people.

It is a great honor to be Chair of the Chapter.

Jan Alicia Nettler
Berkshire Chapter Chair, 2016

AT Committee

The AT Committee had another active and productive year with approximately 120 volunteers contributing approximately 6,800 volunteer hours in 2015. Volunteer hours for 2016 are currently being collected. Below is some information on the major areas of our activities.

Trail Maintenance: A near full roster of volunteers was maintained throughout the year. The usual assortment of bog bridge, step stone, stone steps and the like projects were accomplished. AMC Teen crews continued to contribute to our efforts in several important areas most notably on the north side of Mt Prospect and the north side of Day Mtn. The Greenagers crew tackled the south side of Mt Everett with wood steps anchored to the steep rock faces. This type of installation was a first for us and was quite successful.

Trail Land Monitoring: Roughly 20% of the boundaries were maintained consistent with our 5 year maintenance program. The inventory of missing monuments created for the National Park Service's use and long range planning was actually reduced this year by diligent efforts to locate

missing monuments. We initiated a more formal process for documenting and followup on encroachments.

Trail Facilities: A number of small shelter, campsite and privy repairs were made over the course of the season. Most notable, a 4' X 6' hole burned in the floor at the October Mtn shelter by a careless hiker was repaired. Moldering privies at several sites were shifted without problem. Identification and removal of hazard trees remained a focus this year with additional club volunteer efforts and 3 days of professional arborist work.

Natural Resources: Projects in the Natural Resources area continued including: natural heritage monitoring (47 Rare, Threatened or Endangered plant reports submitted with 1 more to go), open area management (clearing and mowing), invasive plant management (Day Mtn south side barberry and UGP phragmites treated) and phenology monitoring.

Upper Goose Pond: The cabin was opened in mid May (a week earlier than in previous years), closed in late October (a week later than in previous years) with no interruptions in Caretaker coverage. Overnight stays were essentially even (~2,400) with last years record number. The biggest project this year was replacement of the porch decking and repairs to the structure beneath. The remainder of the old roofing removed from the cabin last year was “barged” out of the site and taken to a disposal facility on the closing weekend in late October. This was the 35th year our volunteers have managed this facility for long distance hikers.

Use and Group Management: Use of our Group Use Notification system continued to expanded this year with 174 group overnight site stays managed by our Coordinator. Eight nights involved 2 groups at the same site on the same night. Many overnight groups continued to use the AT without using our notification system and outreach to these groups continues. The DCR and AMC seasonal Ridge Runner programs and our first year of volunteer Overnight Site Caretakers enhanced the effectiveness of our outreach to hikers on the trail, preventing and resolving many problems.

Management: Our Committee continued to be robust with only one resignation. Our partnerships with AMC, DCR and ATC remain strong. Our relationship with the the AT Communities of Great Barrington and North Adams remain sound and we have initiated a relationship with the Dalton community. Progress on renewal of our Memorandum of Understanding with the Commonwealth remains problematic. We look forward to another exciting year in 2017 which we will kick off with our 15 Annual Trail Volunteer Gathering early next year.

Respectfully Submitted for the AT Committee:
Jim Pelletier, Chair

Berkshire Exchange Committee

After two years without a newsletter, we published one this year and sent it out both by mail and electronically.

Nate Szymanski
Berkshire Exchange Publisher

Communications

I was nominated to the Communications Chair role in February. Prior to my taking the role, there had not been a communications coordinator for quite some time, which meant there was not a great deal of precedent to follow. I spent some time getting acquainted with the chapter website, email system, AMC activities database, and other tools. I also met with other committee chairs in an attempt to understand the chapter's communications needs.

We sent eleven email blasts in 2016. Most promoted at least one chapter-wide event, such as potlucks, leadership training, and our two biggest events – the Outdoor Festival at Noble View and the Berkshire Bash.

In March, I ordered nametags for Executive Committee members to wear at chapter functions. I also implemented the Eventbrite system to handle event registrations. We subsequently used the system for five different events in 2016.

The chapter held chapter-wide events in April, June, August, September and November. Most of my efforts were related to communicating about these events, and handling registrations through Eventbrite.

In September, we resumed publication of the Berkshire Exchange, our chapter newsletter. Prior to this, we had not sent a newsletter in roughly two years. We also conducted a survey of chapter members, to find out their interests and preferences. The information collected will inform planning for 2017.

I resigned from the role effective November 2016, due to relocating out of the Berkshire Chapter catchment area. I wish the chapter the very best for the future and am thankful for the opportunity to serve this year.

Sean Hanson

Family Programs Committee

2016 started off with an Executive Committee Retreat at Noble View for a day of setting goals for both our committee and as a chapter. As to Family Programs, progress throughout the year is as follows, based upon the goals set in January 2016:

Personal Goals for Your Committee up-date:

Goal 1: Form a committee of more than 1.

- YES!!! This IS happening! I have 2 people who have completed their 2-day Leadership training course and are working on becoming certified as Hike Leaders. WFA was completed by one of the LIT's and the other is finding the time to fit it in. Following that, I will begin FP Training specific to Family Programs with both.
- New Goal:
 1. Complete the Family Programs Training with any/all new Family Program Leaders; (Need: 1 full day for this)
 2. Plan 2-3 outings for 2017. (One is already in progress for school break/ Feb. 23-26, 2017 at Noble View)

Goal 2: Continue to have meetings how-ever often.

- This is challenging. I had scheduled 2 meetings: Spring and Fall. No one came. Things happen, kids get sick, schedules change, weather is bad, travel too far, etc.
- Plan: Instead of face-to-face meetings, look into Skype, email correspondence, classroom chat spaces, etc. Possibly, since folks can't make it out of their homes they could find some time to meet in a chat room or something like that.
- New Goal:
 1. Schedule 2-3 meetings in 2017.
 2. Offer Family Program Leader Training

Goal 3: Establish a Manual for Berkshire Family Programs.

- Notebooks with local area information for reference have been put together, and are available for sharing.
- Guidelines, criteria and qualifications for How to Become a Family Programs Leader has been written. Boston Chapter Family Outings Committee has been a larger support for this, reading drafts and critiquing.
- Guidelines for What is Family Programs, How is it Different than Other Programs, The Interest Inventory and Perspectives have been written, as well as other documents.

Berkshire Chapter, Appalachian Mountain Club

- New Goal:
 1. Acquire approval from the Berkshire Chapter for Family Program Guidelines, and other documents for reference and implementation.
 2. Plan a time to orient Berkshire Chapter Ex-Comm to Family Programs. (Need 1- 1.5 hours of time)

Goal 4: Gain Leadership status for Berkshire Chapter.

- YES! I have been granted Leadership status for Berkshire Family Programs by Jan Nettler (Chapter Chair) in October 2016. Thank you.

Goal 5: Plan “Stay & Play” weekend trips.

- February 23-26, 2017 at Noble View has been reserved. As of Dec. 2016, 4-5 families have signed up.

Goal 6: Acquire, or create a list of local hikes rated B-C/3-4/C-D.

- Have lots of info but have not made ‘a list’.

Goal 7: Plan ‘Family –Friendly’ Events: 1-3 in first year; 2-4 2nd year:

- Family Rock Climbing @ Central Rock Gym in Hadley, Jan.2016
- Noble View Winter Weekend, Feb. 12-14, 2016.
- Outdoor Festival, September 17, 2016: Scavenger Hunt and Camp Fire Skills with S’mores.
- Sugarloaf Mt. & Mike’s Corn Maze, Oct. 2016: Rain/canceled.
- Looking into Family Programs collaborating with Noble View for the Wood Day in Dec. 2016.
- Noble View is reserved for Feb, 23-26, 2017 (3 days on Winter Break!)

Although I will be unable to attend the Annual Ex-Comm Retreat in Dec. 2016, I wanted to submit New Goals for the Family Programs Committee:
Summary of New Goals for Family Programs, 2017:

1. Design & implement Leadership Training specific for Family Programs;
2. Certify 2-4 FP Leaders in 2017;
3. 2-3 Cyber meetings vs. face-to-face meetings, as needed;
4. Plan 2-4 trips for 2017; 3-6 trips for 2018;
5. Continue to grow Family Programs within Berkshire Chapter;
6. Continue to submit Family Program documents for Ex-Comm approval;

7. Collaborate with other Committees to bring Family Programs in to their activities.
8. Continue to keep the lines of communication open;
9. Continue to provide support/guidance for new FP Leaders and FP Committee.

Respectfully submitted, Margo Chapski
AMC Berkshire Chapter Family Programs Chair

Mountaineering Committee

2016 was another eventful year in mountaineering having offered 66 climbing related events.

We offered skiing, indoor gym climbing, winter hiking, and ice climbing trips during the winter months.

Our spring events began with our annual Skills Review for Mountaineering trip leaders.

The following weekend we held our annual trail work party at Chapel Ledges in Ashfield in partnership with the Trustees of Reservations. Over the next few weeks we ran courses for beginner and intermediate climbers (our Introduction to Rock Climbing and Intermediate Rock Climbing courses).

Later in the spring and throughout the summer we ran weekly Wednesday evening climbing trips to Chapel Ledges in Ashfield, Sunbowl in Sunderland, and Farley Ledges in Erving. Throughout the spring, summer, and fall we had weekend trips to the "Gunks" on the Mohonk Preserve in New York State and to local climbing areas in Western Massachusetts. We also offered a Women's Climbing Day in May, which was open to everyone, but geared towards women.

In the fall, we partnered with the Western Mass Climbers Coalition to teach a climbing skills clinic at their annual Rendezvous fundraiser, and held an Anchor Building course in October. We continued climbing on Wednesday evenings indoors at the Central Rock Gym in Hadley.

We celebrated the holidays with a potluck party in early December.

Our long-time Co-Chairs, Sarah Long and Bill Fogel, stepped down, Sara in order to take care of her new baby daughter and Bill in order to

Berkshire Chapter, Appalachian Mountain Club

concentrate on mountaineering training and leadership initiatives. We welcomed the return of Ingrid Nelson and Jim VanNatta as Co-chairs after the Annual Meeting in November. Thank you, Adam Jasionkowski, for the years of hard work organizing our event schedules. Deborah Cohen has taken the Secretary position on an interim basis.

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

Respectfully submitted by:
Jim VanNatta and Ingrid Nelson, Mountaineering Co-Chairs

Outings Committee

The Outings goals set for 2016 were as follows:

1. Increase participation
2. More active Leaders
3. More trip listings
4. Offer a variety of hikes such as easy hikes and low-impact hikes
5. Get help to offer workshops.

A review of the goals at years end shows that participation was increased by training and accepting several new leaders for hikes. Trip listings have remained about the same. Easy hikes have been offered through the Tuesday group. Help was forthcoming for the workshop that was held in the spring.

Our winter program was active. In November of 2015 we presented a Winter hiking program, and that was followed by several winter hikes being offered locally and on some of new England's finest mountains through March. In addition, a winter overnight at Noble View was held by the Tuesday Hikers in January.

We held a leader meeting in the spring to plan spring and summer hikes. A summer series of day hikes on the Appalachian Trail was very popular for the second year in a row. In addition, the Trail Hopper Series included several interesting combinations of hiking locales with nearby pubs serving delicious Trail Hopper Cider.

Our Leader Training at Purgatory Chasm was again held in conjunction with the Worcester Chapter. Several Berkshire Chapter members were trained, and mentors were found to assist them with their co-leads.

Berkshire Chapter, Appalachian Mountain Club

A Backpacking Workshop was held at Noble View with the assistance of several Berkshire leaders and one Worcester leader. This was followed by a number of backpacks of varying difficulty being offered throughout the spring and summer.

New trip cards were sent from Joy Street to all leaders to assist with trail talks. Leaders were encouraged to submit Incident Reports as appropriate to Joy Street.

Inter-chapter events with the Worcester and Connecticut Chapters proved useful. Leaders from both those chapters are now approved and are posting events for our chapter. In addition, they could be available to help with workshops and inter-chapter outings.

Tuesday hikes continue to be offered each week, weather permitting, with good attendance.

Respectfully Submitted, Grace Ferrante
Berkshire Chapter Outings Chair November 2014-November 2016

Social/Membership Committee

We had three successful potlucks with speakers, two in Northampton and one in Lee.

In September, the Outdoor Festival at Noble View was well attended. Activities included hikes, a scavenger hunt, delicious BBQ, a raptor presentation and campfire with s'mores. This was the first one and we want to make it an annual event.

The annual meeting, the Berkshire Bash, in November featured mountaineer and Everest climber, Ed Webster, and was held at the Summit View House in Holyoke.

I found out that I cannot send emails to the new member list that we receive monthly. Joy Street sends them a welcome letter.

Respectfully submitted,
Bess Dillman

New England Trail Committee

In May 2016, we witnessed the passing of a trail great, Pat Fletcher, whose volunteerism, commitment, and fervent love of teaching others his work was unsurpassed in the two decades he served as Trails Chair for the AMC. In 2009, he was one of the key people whose determination saw the M & M trail become a protected National New England Scenic Trail and did much work to ensure all of the necessary reroutes were completed properly and documented in his NET guide.

Also in 2016, Josh Surette, the New England Trail Planner resigned and was recently replaced by Bridget Likely in the renamed full-time position as New England Trail Coordinator. At this time, she has been in her position for only a week or so, so more news to come in the near future as we discuss our mutual roles with the NET.

Within the last year, the NET also had funding for an annual position of Volunteer Project Assistant, and Emily Bedenkop did a bang up job. She coordinated several trail projects, made sure all maintained sections of the NET were being logged in, and demonstrated a level of communication that the volunteers truly appreciated. Her term inconveniently ended at the same time that Josh left, leaving a three-fold gap in the top tier of management at the NET office.

Heather Clish, Director of Conservation and Recreation policy for the AMC, ran our last meeting in November where we discussed some goals and projects for the committee, including something special to commemorate Pat Fletcher.

Although I did not attend other meetings, mentioned were two huge projects that the NEW Committee completed this year. The floating boardwalk through the bog was finally installed in Section 1 with over a week of hard work to pull the old materials out using the grip-hoist (see budget request), and lots of volunteer labor hours to install. I spent part of a day helping clear the path with fellow members of the Pioneer Valley Hiking Club, who maintain Section 1 and 2 of the NET.

Another project completed were major repairs to the Mount Grace Shelter on Section 17 which was reported to have “a leaky roof in need of repairs” on the web page.

Here's to looking at another productive year!

Heather E. Wyman, NET Co-Chair

Training and Education

We lost the Chair of this Committee in the middle of the year. Yet we were still able to hold a joint Leadership Training with the Worcester Chapter. That chapter did most of the work, but it did give many members of our chapter the training necessary to lead activities. Noble View hosted several sessions on Wilderness First Aid.

In addition, through the Outings Committee, we had training and education sessions on winter hiking and on backpacking. The Mountaineering Committee continually trains members of it's committee on various aspects of mountaineering.

The chapter also awarded special scholarships to two members. One completed Wilderness First Responder, and the other completed Mountain Leadership School.

submitted by Jan Nettler for the Executive Committee

Young Members

I understand that the Young Members chair position of the Berkshire Chapter was filled in the past during a time when there was a group of active Young Members in the area, but these members aged out of the category and the position was left vacant for some time. I saw an advertisement for the available Young Members chair position in an email blast at the end of 2015. I wanted to learn more about Young Members and so I attended an event that was arranged for all Young Members across AMC chapters at Joe Dodge Lodge at Pinkham Notch in the White Mountains of New Hampshire during the 2016 MLK weekend. There I learned more about AMC and the activities of Young Members, and decided that I would like to pursue the available Young Members chair position here in the Berkshire Chapter. I attended the next Ex Comm Meeting and was elected for the position.

I planned the first Young Members event as a social at Fort Hill Brewery on March 10th. I hoped to find new local Young Members, and so I advertised the social in several publications throughout Western Mass. On my way to the social I was in a car accident, and was not able to attend. I was told by those who attended the social that it went well, and they gave me a list of contact information from most of the people who attended. I sent a couple of emails to them during this year to tell them about Young Members activities being held throughout AMC.

Berkshire Chapter, Appalachian Mountain Club

I continue to suffer from post concussion syndrome from the car accident, and so I did not plan any other activities for Young Members during 2016. My symptoms have improved though, and I started to attend Ex Comm meetings again toward the end of the year. I look forward to recovering further, and I'm just starting to plan activities for Young Members again, to take place during early 2017.

The Chapter Chair's report notes that Young Members held sixteen events this year. The Young Members Chair in CT kindly cross references her events with our chapter, and she tells me that members from this area attend her hikes.

In February and March of 2017 I will plan one social in the Pioneer Valley and another in Berkshire County, in conjunction with the Young Members Chair in CT. I will attend a leadership training early on in the year and then plan hiking and biking activities. I will advertise these socials and activities in several ways to find new Young Members in the area. Hopefully some new members will also attend leadership training, and then we can look forward to expanding plans for Young Members in the future.

Nicole Dewberry

Website Committee

2016 Website Annual Report

- Managed amcberkshire.org using the Drupal 7 content management system. Performed backups and updates to Drupal core files. Renewed hosting and domains.
- Built posts, pages and image galleries corresponding to AMC chapter communications/events. Expanded Photo Album page with thumbnail galleries and image light boxes.
- Set up Views(blogs) for individual activity groups of the chapter. These are located at the bottom of activity homepages. Posts tagged with a specific subject matter pertaining to an activity will appear on homepages.
- Set up email accounts for various committee members.

Berkshire Chapter, Appalachian Mountain Club

- Attended AMC staff webinars on subjects such as email blasts, IT overview and chapter website migration to outdoors.org. Worked on prioritizing user stories for the website migration project.

Goals

- Increase participation in AMC activities by keeping current and relevant content on the website.
- Increase the amount of photo galleries on the site.

Evan Yeadon
AMC Berkshire Chapter Webmaster

Past Chairs of the Berkshire Chapter

1929–30 Edward K Allen	1969–70 Norman E Aubrey
1931 Joseph F Partenheimer	1971–72 Forrest E House
1932 Edwin W Gantt	1973–74 Margaret Rose
1933 Donald E Temple	1975–76 William T Cushwa
1934 Howard M Buffinton	1977–78 Walter L Haynes
1935 Malcolm B Ross	1979–80 John D Shuttleworth
1936 Donald McClench	1981–82 Kathryn E Burnett
1936–37 John Dickson	1983–84 S Alberta Stutsman
1938 Horace E Allen	1985 John Pritchard
1939 William K Buxton	1986 Florence Mertz
1940 Eugene E Durst	1986–87 Edward N Lewis
1941 Maynard O Saunders	1988–89 Paul Evans
1942–43 Parke W Farrar	1990–91 Sue Lewis
1944–45 Warner B Sturtevant	1992 Jean Armitage
1946–47 Carl O Chauncy	1993 William Kopel
1948–49 Harold T Daugherty	1994–95 Thomas J Leary
1950 Heinz J Sherbow	1996–97 Christopher J Ryan
1951–52 Ellis H Pritchard	1998–99 Kathryn B Leary
1953–54 Byron Chauncy	2000–01 Thomas Senuta
1955–56 George W Alderman	2002–04 Gary L Forish
1957–58 John A Saunders	2005–06 Rob Robertson
1959–60 Sidney F Law	2007–08 Jon M Hanauer
1961–62 Phyllis M Sears	2008-10 Deborah Levine
1963–64 Edith M Libby	2010-12 Dave Sauriol
1965–66 Garrison Householder	2012-14 Sabine Prather
1967–68 Charles L Kirkpatrick	

2014-15 shared by 4 members of the Executive Committee: Roger Beer,
Wayne Rodrigues, Grace Ferrante, Patrick Fletcher
2015-16 Jan Alicia Nettler