

BERKSHIRE EXCHANGE

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outdoors.org



Summer 2014

APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB

YOUR CONNECTION TO THE OUTDOORS

VIEW from the CHAIR So Many Opportunities to Get Involved

As the Beatles said so long ago now, it's been a long, cold lonely winter. But as I write this, we're having April showers, the grass is growing, and the early woodland flowers like trillium, trout lily, Dutchman's breeches and wood anemones are finding their way to the open sky. We even have a song sparrow and robins nesting very nearby.

Thank you to all those who came to the annual potluck in March. We had over 60 people who brought delicious food and were greatly entertained by Russ Cohen from Mass. Riverways. He had instructive photos of river obstacles, and talked about the delicious fruit you can reach from your boat. For example, I highly recommend scenic Tully Lake in Athol in the summer, when delicious blueberries abound!

The Mountaineering Committee is doing their outdoor trips, and started with a work party at Chapel Ledges with the Trustees of Reservations. Interested participants were able to climb after the work was done.

The AT Committee also began their work and they'll continue every Tuesday and Saturday throughout the season. You can find out details and join them by going to http://amcberkshire.org/files/at_committee/2014_Project_Schedule.pdf. The New England National Scenic Trail also held workdays this season. It looks like the sections of the trail that had been closed were rerouted by summer, enabling us to enjoy through-hikes all the way from the Connecticut shore! See www.newenglandtrail.org for more information.

The Paddling Committee began whitewater trips, and the first quiet water trip was on Warner Pond in Hadley in mid-May. We'll have many more chances to get on the water, and even an

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Reward Yourself by Being the Berkshire Chapter Chair

by Jon Hanauer

Whenever I look back at my term as Berkshire Chapter Chair for 2007–2008, I am always so glad I did it. The rewards and benefits were well worth it. It's an experience that I will cherish and be proud of for the rest of my days. I found that being Chapter Chair is a challenge with a unique and very positive outcome.

The Chair works with the Executive Committee, setting objectives for the Chapter to maintain the good work we do as volunteers and to try to improve our programming and outreach. At the club-wide level, working with leaders of other chapters as well as AMC staff opens so many doors. During my two years as Berkshire Chapter Chair, I made many new friends. It was both enjoyable and interesting getting to know all of the other chapter chairs, as well as vice chairs, regional directors, and other staff and volunteer leaders throughout the AMC. We worked together, setting and accomplishing goals for the entire organization.

The volunteer position of Berkshire Chapter Chair is a two-year term. You'll get substantial support from the Berkshire Chapter Executive Committee, and even more from AMC staff, so you'll stay comfortable and never be left out in the cold!

I stepped up in late 2006 when I decided I would do this not just for the AMC and the Berkshire Chapter, but also for myself. Are you ready to take this step for the AMC, the Berkshire Chapter, and for yourself this November?

If you have any questions about the volunteer position of Chapter Chair, don't hesitate to contact Sabine Prather at chapterchair@amcberkshire.org or 413-949-3914, or Faith Salter at fsalter@outdoors.org or 617-391-6614.

TREE WORK AT UPPER GOOSE POND CABIN

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FALL GATHERING 2014

– see page 4 –



BERKSHIRE CHAPTER

YOUR CONNECTION TO THE OUTDOORS

AMC Adventure Travel Leadership Training

November 14–16, 2014. Visit some of the most exciting places in the world as the leader of an AMC Adventure Travel trip! This workshop provides important training to people who have AMC chapter leadership experience (no beginners) to transition from leading weekend chapter activities to more complex and longer trips, domestically and overseas. Previous outdoor leadership training is necessary. Emphasis is on planning, cost estimating, marketing, trip management, people skills, risk management, and reporting. Includes procedures and guidelines for researching, proposing, and leading AMC Adventure Travel trips. Exchange ideas, problems, and solutions with some of the AMC's most experienced and skilled leaders. Small group size assures abundant discussion and access to instructors. Cost of \$75 includes 2 nights' lodging, 2 breakfasts, 2 lunches, and Saturday dinner at White Memorial Conservation Center in Litchfield, CT. Download the registration package at <http://snebulos.mit.edu/majorexursions/training>. Please register by October 25. For details contact Registrar Merri Fox at merri.fox@pw.utc.com.

The AMC's 20th Annual Photo Contest is now open!

The AMC's Photo Contest began on August 4 and will remain open until October 1. This year's Grand Prize winner will receive a spot in an upcoming photography workshop and an accompanying stay at an AMC destination. Winners of the "Kids, Families, and Adults Outdoors," "Scenics and Nature," "AMC in Action," and "People's Choice" categories will receive great outdoor gear prizes from Deuter, Forty Below, LEKI, and Outdoor Research.

For complete rules and entry instructions, visit www.outdoors.org/photocontest. Entries will be accepted until October 1, with the winners appearing in a 2014 issue of AMC Outdoors.



"Water Jewels," by Ashok Boghani, Boston Chapter. Winner of the 2013 Grand Prize.

Berkshire Chapter Executive Committee

– 2014 –

CHAPTER OFFICERS

Chair: Sabine Prather

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Vice Chair: OPEN!

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Young Members Committee: OPEN!

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BERKSHIRE EXCHANGE

– August 2014 –

All issues of the Berkshire Exchange (back to 2003) can be downloaded at <http://amcberkshire.org/berkex/archives>

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Tree Work at Upper Goose Pond Cabin *by Cosmo Catalano*

They say there's nothing that Appalachian Trail volunteers can't accomplish. While I have seen the truth in this statement, maybe there are still some things we shouldn't undertake...

Upper Goose Pond Cabin is set on a hillside overlooking Upper Goose Pond, one of the last sizable ponds in Massachusetts that does not have any houses built on it. Thanks to the efforts of the National Park Service and local donors, the entire shoreline of the pond is part of the AT Corridor. The cabin sits in an "oak and laurel" forest surrounded by mature White Oak trees that are approaching 100 feet tall. The thing with oaks

is that as the tree grows, the lower branches naturally die off, and eventually fall to the ground—or the roof of the cabin, or onto tent platforms.

When I say "lower" branches, I'm talking about branches that are 30 feet up the trunk, impossible to access from the ground in this remote area. At your house, you'd call the tree company and they'd roll up in their bucket truck and take the branches down in a few hours. Upper Goose Pond Cabin is about a mile from the nearest road; so you phone an arborist—a guy that climbs trees, hauls up his chainsaw, and cuts off the dead branches and lowers them to the ground.

We called on Caleb Turner, an experienced

arborist from the southern Berkshires. Earlier, on a very cold January day, we met to assess the work. We picked several trees with dead or aging branches that were over the cabin and tent platforms at the two adjacent campsites. While ordinarily hikers are responsible for their own safety in choosing a tent site, because we provide platforms—"forcing" them to camp in specific locations—it's incumbent on us to remove any known hazards.

So, how do you get up 30 feet of branchless trunk? You toss a small line with a weighted bag up into the tree, catching a branch that's strong enough to hold your weight while climbing—similar to hanging a bear bag. Then use that small line to pull up your climbing line, and climb the rope using a prussic knot for a handhold and grabbing the rope with your feet and pushing up a foot or two at a time.

Once you're up the tree, just hang on and cut off the branches. Then it's just a question of lowering them down where we're waiting to cut them up for firewood.

After clearing the branches, it's only a quick slide down the rope and onto the next tree. While we had a crew on site, we also felled two other trees that were overhanging the privy. Now there's plenty of firewood available for next year, and a safer campsite in the next big storm.



From the Chair, *continued from page 1*

instruction session for those who want to take the next step in advancing skills for the exciting, "fluffy" water sections of the Deerfield, West, Millers, Farmington, and Housatonic Rivers. If you're up for it, there will even be whitewater on the Connecticut at times this summer!

At least ten of us did our now-traditional Easter hike up Monument Mountain in Great Barrington, which is a nice way to work your way back into form if, like me, you've been doing other things this winter like skiing and escaping to Costa Rica! You really feel you've gotten somewhere, even with a three-mile loop. Thanks to Jon Hanauer for leading this, and for turning us on to the Barrington Brewery for some welcome food and refreshments afterward!

But, more seriously, I've been thinking a lot about all the opportunities some of you are missing by not getting involved more with the Berkshire Chapter. By planning with the Executive Committee, you get

to see how the visions of conservation, recreation, and education all come together for our region. You can actually make a difference in the growth and development of the Chapter—an awesome opportunity. And...I even get to go away for the weekend every Spring and Fall to Mohican or Cardigan Lodge with folks from other chapters, networking and having some fun outside (in between planning). It's great to chat with enthusiastic volunteers and staff, and hear more about their adventures and challenges. Won't you join us? Even an hour a month could change your life!

Respectfully,
Sabine Prather
Berkshire Chapter Chair
chapterchair@amcberkshire.org

Don't forget to check in at home...

amcberkshire.org

Summer 2014



AMC'S FALL GATHERING 2014

Hosted by the Maine Chapter

October 17-19, 2014

Camp Wavus, Damariscotta Lake, Jefferson, Maine



HIKING • PADDLING • BICYCLING • NATURE WALKS

Gear up for some great AMC fun this October when AMCers from all Chapters will gather for three days of exciting outdoor activities and socializing along the Maine coast! Grab your friends and make plans now to join us in Jefferson, Maine, near the waterfront town of Damariscotta.

Events for all ages including families, groups, and singles.

Come enjoy this club-wide event hosted by the Maine Chapter!

REGISTER BY OCTOBER 1, 2014.

Lodging/Tenting options and Day Rate available, including meals, activities, and registration fee.
For more information or to register, visit amcmaine.org/fall.