

Appalachian Mountain Club Berkshire Chapter



ANNUAL REPORT 2013

Report of the Chapter Chair

In 2013, the AMC Berkshire Chapter started some new programs, continued with existing ones, and appreciated the strength and dedication of all the volunteers who have contributed so much in past years. With the collaboration of Noble View Outdoor Center, we continue to provide a variety of outdoor activities, programs, and training to our members.

This Annual Report highlights the hard work and efforts of the volunteer Executive Committee, Outings, Noble View, AT, and many other volunteer committees. It is their talented and dedication that help make the Berkshire Chapter successful.

Three times last year our newsletter, the Berkshire Exchange, continued to highlight upcoming events, past events, and information for members and visitors to our beautiful region. Our website, www.amcberkshire.org, continued to be a vital information resource for people wanting to hike the Appalachian and New England Scenic Trails, or volunteer to help with these trails. Additionally, the webmaster, Bob Bergstrom and I added news about events, trails and conservation. We look forward to having other members post information as well.

The Mountaineering Committee, headed by Sarah Long, continues to be an active presence in the AMC Berkshire community. Along with regular climbing activities, they have regular planning meetings, wintertime training sessions at a gym, climbing courses, and work parties. They often find that members of other chapters come to these activities, not finding the same resources in their own chapters. She was joined in the fall by new co-chair Ingrid Nelson.

We also had many successful paddling trips in 2013. The Quietwater paddlers benefited from having a planning meeting in late January, and from having a new leader, Charles Murray. Three rafting trips were held in the summer by Al Howcroft, as they have been for many years. The Paddle Committee, led by Connie Peterson, had several meetings throughout the year. The committee was able to sell some boats and buy some new ones, which are still located at Andy's Greenhouse barn in South Amherst. Although there are fewer whitewater paddle trips, there are now leaders who can lead Class I-II trips that might be of interest to beginners. There was also a kayak rescue workshop in June. One active member, Norm Sims, has been working on the FERC relicensing process, attending meetings and preparing documents. This will affect recreational paddling on the Deerfield and Connecticut Rivers. In the future there should be easier access for put-ins and takeouts, more overnight options, and perhaps even scheduled whitewater flows on the Connecticut near the Turner's Falls dam.

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Although we did not have an official conservation committee in 2013, I was able to apply for and receive Special Projects funds for two conservation-related events. At the first, in March 2013, we were able to host Marion Stoddard from Work of 1000. She spoke and presented the film based on her successful work rehabilitating the Nashua River. At the second, in September 2013, we paid for several members to attend a workshop on wild foraging presented by Earthwork Programs.

In March we again combined efforts with the Worcester Chapter for Leadership Training, and trained seven potential Berkshire leaders. A total of seven leaders in training completed their co-leads in 2013 and became full-fledged outings leaders. Our Training and Education Chair, Wayne Rodrigues, has many good ideas and now represents the Berkshire Chapter at the clubwide Outdoor Leadership Development Committee (OLDC). Wayne also taught a successful Map & Compass workshop in June, with 11 people in attendance, and a SOLO WFA course in the spring, with 26 people attending. With our Outings Chair Jon Hanauer, and as the Jon's final contribution, Wayne worked on a simple, fairly inexpensive way to recognize volunteer Outings leaders. Every leader got a very nice AMC patch, while those who led many trips or contributed in special ways received a cap embroidered with "Berkshire Chapter Leader". Leaders who led the most trips in each category (outings, paddling, mountaineering) also received a \$50 gift certificate to EMS.

Also in March, we had our annual potluck in a new location, a historic building in the center of Florence, MA. About 60 people came to hear a local teacher of environmental education, Nick Shaw, present a slideshow and talk about the mountains of the northeast. It was a beautiful and thought-provoking show.

In early summer, Jon Hanauer, the Outings Chair, had a subsidized dinner and planning meeting at a central location for outings leaders. In exchange for the meal, leaders planned at least one trip in the near future. Current leaders were also encouraged to co-lead trips with new leaders, who were required to co-lead three trips before becoming official leaders. A meeting was planned in the Berkshire region, but did not happen due to lack of enough response. Jon stepped down in November and Jim Helems became the new Chair. He will continue the tradition of quarterly dinner and planning meetings, and leads many hiking and snowshoe trips himself. He specializes in dog-friendly trips and has led them for some time, which is a real plus for members and guests. In the future he also hopes to lead dog-friendly paddle trips.

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 continues an environmental education

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series. AMC Berkshire is fortunate to have such a retreat facility available in our region.

Our Annual Meeting in November was very successful, due to advertising, a good location, great food for a reasonable cost, and, most importantly, a very knowledgeable speaker. Sue Morse takes photos of wildlife all over the United States and teaches in-depth and popular tracking workshops. At that meeting, we were also able to present several AMC patches and caps to deserving volunteer leaders. After the meeting, we had interest from a member interested in promoting programs for young members.

The year ended on a sad note, as one of our dedicated and long-term members of the Tuesday hikers passed away on the trail on December 31st. We will remember Mary Conley fondly.

I look forward to serving as the Berkshire Chapter Chair for another year.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sabine Prather, Berkshire Chapter Chair, 2012-2014

AT Committee

The AT Committee had another active and productive year with approximately 190 volunteers contributing over 10,000 volunteer hours in 2012. Volunteer hours for 2013 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. Extensive brushing continued in some areas due to lush growth from more than usual sunlight reaching the forest floor. A new bridge was constructed and installed over a backwater off the Housatonic River (a project long in the planning/permitting stage) and a BSA group replaced the bridge over Merry Brook. Another 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.

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. Only a few Special Use Permits were up for review; all successfully renewed.

Trail Facilities: A number of small shelter, campsite and privy repairs were made over the course of the season. Moldering privies at several sites were shifted without problem. Patios in front of the new Wilcox South and Noepel shelters were hardened with cement.

Natural Resources: We continued to build strength in this area with a number of initiatives. Previously known as "Natural Heritage Monitoring" the retitled Natural Resources area now includes: natural heritage monitoring, open area management, invasives management and phenology monitoring with projects and training active in all areas. No formal agreement was reached with the New England Wildflower Society but we are now aware of each other's activities. Initial discussion with The American Chestnut Foundations are underway that may lead to establishment of a blight resistant seed orchard on trail lands.

Upper Goose Pond: The cabin was opened in mid May, closed in early October under NPS order (due to the government shutdown) and briefly reopened before closing for the season in late October. Overnight stays were down ~10% from last year's record number. Projects included: painting the front side of the cabin, rehab of the toolshed, an additional bear box, and shutters for the bunk room windows. Monitoring of American chestnut trees continued with addition of several more large trees to the inventory and fungicide treatment of selected trees.

Management: Our Committee continued to be robust with 16 members and a newly added 17th At Large member. Our group was well represented at the biennial meeting in Cullowhee, NC this past summer.

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Our partnerships with AMC, DCR and ATC remain strong. We look forward to another exciting year in 2014 which we will kick off with our 12 Annual Trail Volunteer Gathering on Feb 1st.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jim Pelletier, Massachusetts AT Committee, Chair

Berkshire Exchange Committee

The Berkshire Exchange continues to be published three times per year. Release dates are approximately early January for spring, early May for summer, and mid August for fall/winter.

The Berkshire Exchange Committee closed at approximately \$1300 below budget. No software upgrade purchases were needed in 2013.

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

Conservation Committee

Although we did not have an official conservation committee in 2013, Sabine Prather was able to apply for and receive Special Projects funds for two conservation-related events:

About 20 people attended Marion Stoddart's "Work of 1000" at the Westfield Athenaeum on March 27th. Two people from Transition Westfield provided refreshments, and there was a half hour of informal discussion. Chris Lindquist, the Athenaeum Director and Board Member of Westfield introduced Marion on Weekends. She spoke briefly to introduce the film and concepts for community advocacy, then the DVD "Work of 1000" was screened. After the screening, there was about an hour of questions dealing with advocacy in general and the Nashua River in particular.

There was material provided at the table, including a sign-in sheet, post-event evaluation questions, and a community-generated questionnaire titled "How can YOU make a difference?" Questions included: volunteering time, receiving more information from the sponsor organizations, and becoming members of the sponsor organizations. The DVD "Work of 1000" was provided to the Westfield Athenaeum to include in its new category of media offerings for "sustainability" and offered in circulation to the public.

In September 2013, several AMC members were able to attend an Earthworks program on Wild Edibles. We came away with skills in correct identification of wild edibles and medicines you can find right outside your back door. We learned a bit about how and when to harvest by season and in what habitat to seek out our favorite wild edibles. Additionally, we learned how to harvest with intention; keeping in mind the importance of the responsibility we have as foragers and earth stewards.

Some of us were surprised to find that we could eat Burdock roots, which you can shred and eat like potatoes, and sumac berries for lemonade (early in the season). We trekked through the forest in search of ramps (wild garlic), and found a good patch of them to take home. We were helping to spread this good native plant, which seeds in clusters that fall while harvesting the delicious root.

After harvesting, we took turns at the hand-cranked apple press and pounded a mortar and pestle, which gave us some delicious apple and hickory nut juice. Frank Grindrod, our instructor, said at the end that it's all about connection - with neighbors, people and animals. We will be presenting a more detailed presentation about this at Noble View Outdoor Center later in the winter, and hope to bring Frank as well.

Mountaineering Committee

We had another excellent year in mountaineering. We kicked off the New Year with a hike up Mount Monadnock in New Hampshire and ran skiing and ice climbing trips during the winter months. We started the spring by partnering with the Trustees of the Reservations to host a workday at Chapel Ledges in Ashfield. We also held an Annual Skills Review for the Mountaineering trip leaders. Over the next few weeks we ran multiple courses for beginner and intermediate climbers (Introduction to Rock Climbing, Intermediate Rock Climbing, Anchor Building, and a Gym to Rock course). We held weekly Wednesday evening climbing outings at Chapel Ledges in Ashfield, Sunbowl in Sunderland, and Farley Ledges 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 two Women's Climbing Days (open to everyone, but targeted towards women) that were well attended by new and longstanding members.

In the fall we continued climbing on Tuesday evenings at the Central Rock Gym in Hadley. We worked with the Western Mass. Climbers Coalition on their annual Rendezvous fundraiser in October, putting on a workshop called "Old School Rope Tricks." We celebrated the holidays with a Mountaineering potluck party in early December.

Lastly, we welcomed a new co-chair, Ingrid Nelson, 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 and Ingrid Nelson, Mountaineering Co-Chairs

Outings Committee

The submission of activities in 2013 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. One new leader is doing dog-friendly hikes.

A planning dinner in June at the Northampton Brewery was very successful. It was well attended and many activities were submitted as a result. Another planning dinner for September was scheduled in the Berkshires, but due to poor availability of leaders it was canceled.

I stepped down as the Outings Chair at the end of 2013. Jim Helems has taken the position for 2014.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jon Hanauer, Outings Committee Chair

Paddling Committee

New leaders: we have trained one new leader this year. Charlie Murray will be leading both Quietwater and whitewater trips. We are very excited to have him; he is both an enthusiastic leader and gobbles up every water training opportunity he can find. Also as of December, Mark Hathaway has volunteered to be trained as a leader. Three cheers.

Trips: We had a variety of trips, but the participant numbers were reduced from previous years. In 2014 we will have more trips with several old leaders leading again, as well as our two new leaders.

Equipment: We have a fair amount of new equipment, some bought and some donated from Adventure Outfitters, who sadly closed their doors after 32 years. A big thank you to Mike Zabre for the donations.

Change of Trip Posters: Tad Jackson, after many years of hard work for the cause is passing the mantle over to Jack Gill. He will be organizing trips and sending out weekly emails to those who wish to be on the whitewater list.

Safety and Accidents: Happily, no accidents to report on our trips. Along with the BK Chapter, we offer safety and first aid training to our leaders.

Miscellany: There were two new river runs for the chapter. The first was in southern Connecticut, and the second was off of the Turner Falls dam. Norm Sims has been working with FLOW and FERC to assure us releases on this section of the river and other river issues.

Many committee members helped out with equipment, scheduling, leading, organizing, etc. Thanks to all our committee members and others who worked and paddled with us in 2013!

Respectfully submitted,
Connie Peterson, Berkshire AMC Paddling Chair

Trails Committee

January started with the NET Planning Meeting on the 16th. We got a report from Josh Surette and discussed what to do during 2013.

I attended the AMC Summit on January 26 and there was much talk about DCR's planned Volunteers in Parks rules. Most people felt that the new rules as planned will inhibit volunteering by AMC and other groups that work in Mass parks. The AMC will work to implement the rules with as little impact on volunteers as possible.

On June 1st, National Trails Day, the dedication of the Memorandum of Understanding governing the Quabbin Relocation was held on a beautiful sunny day from the dam. Congressman John Olver and others were honored and given awards for all the work to make this happen with as little impact as possible.

I continued mowing at Rising Corners with the help of the Pioneer Valley Hiking club and Chip Pray, their President. We continue to work with the Town of Southwick to solve the problem of the bog bridging at this location, and we hope the money can be found. Some work was done by the club to raise the walkway, but the beavers quickly raised the level of the water; and unless we have next to no rain you will still get your feet wet to cross.

Welcome to our new volunteer adopter of Section 5 between Rt. 202 and Rt. 141.

We also held meetings with the Town of Southwick to establish a "Trails to Every Classroom" program.

We held some formative meetings with the Town of Southwick to establish the first of the Community Connections program with towns and cities.

The handicapped trail and bridge around Bray Lake at Mt. Tom was finished and dedicated. The adopter of the trail, Elbert Bowler, continues to work on the trail around the lake back to the road. He is improving the trail and moving it back up the hill to get it to higher ground and away from the water.

The new "New England Trail" web page, www.newenglandtrail.org, is up and running.

We worked on a bridge at Atherton Brook on one of the new sections. We will do two more bridges on the new sections in 2014. The final connection is being held up by paperwork with the DCR, but for the most part up to Cooleyville can be hiked.

Our Artist in Residence Barbara Bosworth displayed her show "To Be at the Farther Edge, Photographs along the New England Trail", at various locations at Connecticut and Massachusetts colleges this year.

Submitted by

Patrick H. Fletcher, Berkshire Chapter Trails Chairman

Training and Education

General Year in Review: This was the first year that Wayne Rodrigues served as the Chair for the Education and Training Committee for the Berkshire Chapter Executive Committee. In the absence of information from the previous Training Chair, Wayne worked closely with the Outings Chair to get oriented to the position. He also worked collaboratively with the Worcester Chapter's Leadership Chair in developing new leadership guidelines and programming. Wayne volunteered and was appointed to the Outdoor Leadership Development Committee as the Chapter representative. In September, Wayne actively participated in the OLDC Leadership Summit for AMC leadership trainers. This was a very informative and inspirational weekend training opportunity. Wayne also attended the AMC Annual Summit.

During his first year, changes were made to the scholarship and subsidies program. Leaders who have completed the leadership Training may now be reimbursed in full for basic training programs such as Leadership Training and Wilderness First Aid. Active leaders, who have been leading for the Berkshire Chapter for one year, may be reimbursed for more advanced training such as Mountain Leadership School, Wilderness First Responder, Map & Compass, Leave No Trace, Mountaineering and Paddling programs.

In collaboration with the outings chair, Wayne instituted a leadership awards program to recognize all of the active leaders. Active leaders were given patches, hats and gift certificates based upon the number of events that they led for the Berkshire Chapter.

Education and Leadership Training Programs: In the Spring of 2013, the Berkshire Chapter in conjunction with the Worcester Chapter held a successful Leadership Training program. There were seven Berkshire Chapter members in attendance. In the fall of 2013, the Berkshire/Worcester leadership training scheduled to take place was cancelled due to low enrollment. The Worcester and Berkshire Education and Training Committees came to an agreement that they would offer 2 Leadership Training programs per year. The Worcester Chapter will host a Fall LT program and the Berkshire Chapter will host a Spring LT program. The next LT program will take place at Noble View Outdoor Center 3-22 to 3-23-14.

During the spring of 2013, Wayne taught a successful SOLO Wilderness First Aid course sponsored by the Noble View Committee. There were 26 participants in attendance.

During the summer of 2013, Wayne collaborated with Ed Poyer of the Narragansett Chapter to teach a Map/Compass & Navigation weekend

course at Noble View. There were 11 participants in attendance, including just one Berkshire Chapter leader.

Converted to Leadership Status this year:

Renee Mackey – Mountaineering
Donna Breton – Outings – Tuesday Hikers
Karen Daniel – Outings-Tuesday Hikers
Carole Dupont. Outings – Tuesday Hikers
Peter Thieme – Outings – Tuesday Hikers
Jim Helems – Outings
Roger Beer – Outings

2014 Training and Education Goals

1. Add two new members to Training and Education Committee.
2. Offer 2 Leadership Training Programs in conjunction with the Worcester Chapter.
3. Develop & institute new outings leadership requirements.
4. Track all scholarships and subsidiaries for basic and advanced training programs.
5. Train a Berkshire Chapter Leader to become a Leave No Trace Master Instructor and have them teach one LNT course.
6. Train ten new leaders and convert them to full leadership status (Including Young Members).
7. Coordinate Leadership Awards Program with committee chairs.
8. In collaboration with Mountaineering, Outings, and Paddling Committees, review and edit leadership guidelines and requirements in line with the new OLDC guidelines.
9. In collaboration with the Outings Chair, provide leadership enrichment programs during trip planning meetings.
10. In collaboration with the Springfield College YMCA Professional Studies Program, Outing Club and Colleen Yout of the AMC, provide AMC membership and leadership training for college students.

Submitted By Wayne Rodrigues
Training and Education Chair

Website Committee

Early in the year the update of the Chapter website reached a point of stagnation. Content ported from the old site constituted the majority of content that was used. There are still a number of menu selections with minimal content, despite the efforts of the chapter chair and myself. The Appalachian Trail Committee was the most active in supplying information about upcoming events. They were also the only committee that made any useful suggestions about content changes to their pages.

The most represented group utilizing the website appears to be the hiking community, the AT and NET/MM pages have the largest hit counts historically. This in spite of the fact that the information relating to the NET/MM trail descriptions are not being updated in a timely manner, even as the trail is being re-routed.

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 roughly one year 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. Next year the renewal of two of the domain names will need to be factored into the budget for 2014.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert Bergstrom, Webmaster & 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