

# **Appalachian Mountain Club Berkshire Chapter**



## **ANNUAL REPORT 2014**

## **Report of the Chapter Chair**

This report ends my two-year tenure as Chapter Chair, and it is with mixed feelings that I leave. The Chapter has had many new activities this year, but has also struggled with lack of people in key positions on the Executive Committee. In fact, as I write there is no official Chair or Vice Chair on the committee. Other members of the ExComm have agreed to share the duties for three month periods until permanent members can be found. We had several open positions besides Chair and Vice-Chair on the Executive Committee, and a few committee chairs seeking replacements. Fortunately, several of these positions have been filled as of our Annual Meeting in November. We have a new Conservation Chair, Dave Hershops, who has been very active in the conservation community in the Pioneer Valley. We are glad for his participation. Grace Ferrante, active in the Tuesday Hikers and previously Chapter Treasurer, has moved to Outings Committee Chair. Jane Glushik has agreed to begin as treasurer as of the end of the year; she has great experience. Bess Dillman has agreed to start as Social/Membership Chair, and to have some potlucks in the Berkshires! We look forward to her input.

We started the year with an Executive Committee Retreat at the Courtyard in Hadley, MA, where we went over the tools available to the Executive Committee and reviewed the annual budget. Also in January, we began our quarterly leader planning and recognition dinners, inviting outings leaders to enjoy a free meal while planning future trips. Another dinner was held in June, and a large event to reward all volunteers in October at Genesis in Westfield. I attended the AMC Annual Summit in January as well, going to the Chapters meeting to share information and updates with other chapter leadership. I attended the other 2014 Chapters Committee meetings too, at Cardigan Lodge in May and in Maine at the Fall Gathering in October.

The Quietwater paddlers began their planning sessions at a dinner at the end of January, and the whitewater paddlers began their trips in April. Also in April, I began meeting with the Worcester Paddle Committee to try to plan some collaborative training sessions. The Berkshire Paddle Committee did have a whitewater training session, advertised to current whitewater paddlers. River trips included the Deerfield, Housatonic, Connecticut, Swift, West, and Battenkill, and lakes Warner, Pierpont Meadow, and Groton.

The Family Committee Chair had several monthly outings geared towards families, including a popular rock climbing session at a Central Rock gym, ski trips and hikes, and a weekend trip to Galehead Hut in May.

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Heather Wyman has stepped down, and that position on the Executive Committee is now vacant.

We were able to use the remainder of Special Projects funds for conservation for a Wildlife Tracking workshop in March, run by Earthworks Programs. The chapter continued to participate in several conservation activities all year despite an uninvolved Conservation Committee Chair. These included river cleanups on the Housatonic in Great Barrington and the Westfield River in Westfield; water chestnut removal in Granby; and an exploratory paddle trip on a section of the Housatonic River that EPA will be beginning remediation efforts to remove heavy metals caused by General Electric.

Seven military veterans paused from their Appalachian Trail hike to rest and meet the public in a special event at the Appalachian Mountain Club's Noble View Outdoor Center and Russell VFW on July 22. The Noble View Committee and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6645 offered the veterans participating in the Warrior Hike "Walk Off the War" program a meal, showers and a rest in a real bed, 19 weeks into their six-month hike from Georgia to Maine.

AMC Berkshire also collaborated with other organizations, including Gear Commons out of Boston. Gear Commons is a gear sharing site that works with outdoor organizations to share outdoor gear for those new to the activities. AMC Berkshire also owns several pieces of equipment to share, including camp stoves, tents, snowshoes, coolers, and microspikes. Members of the Noble View Committee participated in the Pioneer Valley Outdoor Fair at Westfield State University in March. The PVOF was organized by the Naturalist Club and included all the outdoor organizations in the Pioneer Valley.

The Berkshire Chapter tried a couple of new locations for our chapter-wide meetings. In March we had our annual potluck at Genesis Retreat Center in Westfield. They were very kind and accommodating to us, and the location proved very convenient for members in Berkshire County. Russ Cohen from the MA Division of Ecological Restoration presented an interesting program on river obstacles and their conflicts with paddlers, which led to connections with paddling organizations later in the year. We explored another community in Shutesbury for our Annual Meeting in November, the Sirius Community. A beautiful but very rural location, they offered vegetarian food, a gorgeous space, and trails that connected to the New England Scenic Trail. Tom Ricardi, who rehabilitates birds of prey in the Pioneer Valley, brought several birds to demonstrate their traits and explained their lifestyles. The Berkshire Chapter is pleased to support his program. The Chapter also recognized long-time mountaineering member Edwin Daniels as Appie of the Year. We

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presented a plaque and fleece vest for him. Ed was supported and surrounded by his family and most members of the Mountaineering Committee.

Throughout the year, I and Roger Beer continued to meet with our hardworking webmaster Bob Bergstrom, in order to learn how to update information and add photos to the site. Bob would like to step down and we are searching for someone with the necessary skills to take over.

This year members of the Executive Committee worked especially hard to ensure that the Chapter continued going strong. Along with the continuing efforts of trail adopters, trail maintainers, caretakers, and other volunteers, the ExComm came together either in person or via e-mail and Go To Meeting to ensure that necessary planning got done. Kudos to everyone for continuing this dedication; thanks to everyone volunteering for the Berkshire Chapter!

Respectfully Submitted,  
Sabine Prather  
Berkshire Chapter Chair, 2013-2014

### **AT Committee**

The AT Committee had another active and productive year with approximately 170 volunteers contributing approximately 8,500 volunteer hours in 2013. Volunteer hours for 2014 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. Continuing our bridge work we replaced the bridge over the Upper Goose Pond inlet stream. While some bog bridge work was done this year more extensive efforts were made with step stones and side hill work including a short reroute north of Mass Ave in North Adams. AMC Teen crews continued to make significant contributions to our efforts in several important areas most notably on the north side of Mt 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. Only a few Special Use Permits were up for review; all successfully renewed. Problems requiring our

efforts included: horseback riding on trail lands, rogue trails and gun shots near an overnight site.

**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. The patio in front of the Wilbur clearing site was rebuilt and tent pads installed or reconditioned at Wilbur Clearing and Kay Wood.

**Natural Resources:** Projects in the Natural Resources area continued including: natural heritage monitoring, open area management (clearing and mowing), invasives management and phenology monitoring. This program area is maturing nicely and is recognized trail wide as an excellent example of volunteer involvement and leadership.

**Upper Goose Pond:** The cabin was opened in mid-May, closed in late October as planned with no interruptions in Caretaker coverage. Overnight stays were at a record number (1889). Projects included: painting the east side of the cabin, removal of hazard trees/branches over the cabin and tent sites, purchase and transport of roofing materials to the cabin site (the roof will be replaced next year) and update of the propane supply regulator system. Monitoring of American chestnut trees continued with addition of several more large trees to the inventory.

**Management:** Our Committee continued to be robust with 17 members. Our partnerships with AMC, DCR and ATC remain strong. Our relationship with the Great Barrington Trails organization remains strong and we remain engaged with the Trails to Every Classroom teachers in Dalton. We look forward to another exciting year in 2015 which we will kick off with our 13 Annual Trail Volunteer Gathering early next year.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jim Pelletier, Massachusetts AT Committee, Chair

### **Berkshire Exchange Committee**

The *Berkshire Exchange* was only published twice in 2014. The Fall/Winter edition was skipped because submissions were received much too late (despite two reminders well before the deadline). Therefore, important items were instead published to the web site and/or through an e-newsletter release.

There has been little serious interest expressed by anyone in taking over (or phasing in) as a Publisher, as I've been doing this for 12 years now. It may be possible to discontinue the printed newsletter (depending on discussion outcome on the Executive Committee) as a few other chapters have done, and only publish an e-newsletter. The Berkshire Chapter may still have a lot of members who prefer a printed newsletter. Either way we

also need an E-newsletter Administrator or a Communications Chair. (Our E-newsletter Administrator, David Jones, stepped down in 2014.) There continue to be increasingly more subscribers to the e-newsletter and less to the printed newsletter than there were in the previous year, mainly because of the default preference for all new members.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jon Hanauer  
Berkshire Exchange Publisher

### **Conservation Committee**

Conservation activity was limited in 2014. (See Report of the Chapter Chair)

### **Mountaineering Committee**

We had another great year in mountaineering. We 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 trail work party at Chapel Ledges in Ashfield. We also held an Annual Skills Review for the Mountaineering trip leaders (required for trip leaders to maintain an "active" status). Over the next few weeks we ran multiple courses for beginner and intermediate climbers (Introduction to Rock Climbing and Intermediate Rock Climbing). We held an Anchor Building course in the fall.

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 and to Rumney, Whitehorse, and Cathedral in the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire. Day trips took us to climbing areas in Western Massachusetts.

We hosted a Women's Climbing Day in September, which was open to everyone, but geared towards women. It was well attended by new and longstanding members. In the fall we continued climbing on Tuesday evenings at the Central Rock Gym in Hadley.

This year we also partnered with our friends in the Western Mass Climbers Coalition to host a summer Member Appreciation BBQ and Day

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of Climbing in July. We also volunteered at their annual Rendezvous fundraiser in September, putting on a workshop called "Oops I did it again, how to get out of common climbing pickles" which taught self-rescue and safety skills.

We were very pleased that the AMC Berkshire Chapter chose to honor longtime Mountaineering member Edwin Daniels with the "Appie of the Year" award at the Berkshire Bash in November.

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

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:

Sarah Long and Ingrid Nelson, Mountaineering Co-Chairs

### **Outings Committee**

A planning meeting for Leaders took place early in the year where plans were made to hold a series of hikes on the AT. The series took place over the warmer months and was successful. A few other weekend hikes took place as well. The Tuesday hiking group continued to be active with well-attended hikes every week, weather permitting.

2014 started with a new Outings leader who led several dog hikes then became inactive. With the exception of the Tuesday hikers, outings were few and sporadic.

I have taken the position of Outings Chair for 2015 with the hope of increasing participation of old members and encouraging new members.

Respectfully Submitted,

Grace Ferrante, Outings Committee Chair

### **Paddling Committee**

We were excited to have several new leaders this year. We offered a number of fun, safe trips, however Mother Nature was not so kind when it came to the H2O. Several trips were canceled due to too much or not enough water

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and several canceled due to low sign-ups. Overall, 15 trips were scheduled, four were canceled, ergo 11 trips "ran," as well as three rafting trips on the Dryway section of the Deerfield, which are always popular!!!

Also, we celebrated our 32 or 33 fall *West River Farmhouse* weekend in Lovely Londonderry, VT. Participants paddled the West River on Saturday and several folks hiked a novel hike near the AT on Sunday. Good food and fun was had by all!

One item that needs follow up is the issue of *what type of kayaks* should be allowed on white water trips, and also whether "skirt-less" kayaks should be allowed. This relates to a safety issue on a Deerfield River Fife Brook trip. No one was injured, but it was felt that a boat used on the river was not appropriate for the water difficulty. This will be discussed at the *InterChapter Paddling Committee* meeting at the AMC Annual meeting in January, 2015 and also in our Berkshire Chapter paddling committee meetings.

Our goals for 2015 included scouting for more qualified leaders, resolution on the "Type of Kayak Allowed" issue, training on safety and leadership skills for leaders, and to sponsor more fun, safe trips "messing about in boats."

RIVERS PADDLED THIS YEAR included:

Porkbarrell (Westfield River)  
Knightville (Westfield River)  
Quaboag River  
Millers River  
West River (VT)  
Farmington River

Note: Saxton and the Upper Ashuelot were cancelled

Respectfully Submitted,

Connie Peterson  
Chair, AMC BK Paddling Committee

(Quietwater paddling is discussed in the Chapter Chair Section)

### **Trails Committee**

I attended the Jan. 25, 2014 trail meeting in Norwood. It was well attended and run very well.

I also attended the AT Gathering in Pittsfield Feb. 1, 2014. Great program and attendance also.

The NET had a planning meeting at the Hitchcock center on Feb. 15.

I continue to be a member of the Mt. Tom advisory committee and attend every other month.

I am working on GPS and description of the new relocation for sections 10 to 15.

The Pioneer Valley hiking club held two work days on sec. 1 & 2 this year and Chip Pray helped me mow at Rising Corners while I trim, and battle the multiflora. We did this a total of 8 times. I have a bob cat mower we use.

We are hoping for good news on replacing the bog bridges at Rising Corners this next year. The funding is looking better and it is just a matter of paper work now.

On June 7<sup>th</sup> we held a work party on Sec. 8 for National Trails Day.

On June 8<sup>th</sup> I attended the Guilford Dedication at Chittenden Pk. For the New England National Scenic trail.

We continue to work on bridges along the relocation for Quabbin, 2 down and one more to go. My understanding is that we now have final approval from DCR on forestry for sec. 14 & 15 and this should be blazed soon. I will GPS as we blaze and I will write a Description.

On Nov.10 the NET held a Basic Skills session at the Hitchcock center with an outdoor hands on section at the Notch.

We are working on a new document for Volunteer Trail Committee roles and the relationship with AMC Berkshire chapter.

We luck out and had minimal damage to the NET at Mt. Tom from a wind shear and Bill Finn the trail adopter for that section is doing an excellent job.

We lost several adopters this year and have to replace one of the two. I continue to sell the MM guide books with a description of changes to date for \$10. I have a few patches left and my hope is for a NET patch soon.

Respectfully submitted  
Patrick Fletcher  
Trail Chairman

### **Training and Education**

In 2014 there was one Leadership Training program that was offered jointly with the Worchester Chapter. The leadership Training had 6

prospective Berkshire Chapter Leaders. Five of the six leader candidates completed their 2 co-leads and are not current leaders for the Berkshire Chapter.

There were numerous scholarships that were awarded for Wilderness First Aid, Leadership Training and Leave No Trace. Unfortunately, there were no trainings being offered by the Master LNT instructor that we financed and sent to the training.

The Chair of the Training and Education committee attended the Annual Summit and continues to serve on the Outdoor Leadership Development Committee. At the Annual Summit the OLDC approved the adoption of the new Leadership Training Guidelines for the AMC. These guidelines have been posted on the Berkshire Chapter Website

The training and education committee chair met with representatives from the Springfield College Outings Club and YMCA program to discuss partnership between the AMC and Springfield College. Springfield College will be the host for the next Leadership Training Program scheduled for February in 2015.

Submitted By Wayne Rodrigues  
Training and Education Chair

### **Website Committee**

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 domain names were renewed in 2014.

Respectfully submitted,  
Roger Beer, Chapter Chair

**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	