While we are starting to get back on the trail, Covid-19 is still a threat. When volunteering, be sure to protect yourself and others by:

- Wearing a face covering, when social distancing is not possible
- Bringing hand sanitizer
- Bring your own tools if possible
- Avoid carpools with non-household members
- Maintain social distancing when working and hiking

Attached is literature on outdoor spaces throughout the phases which can be found [here](#).

When volunteering for a project, plan to register through the AMC website. While on the trail, plan to avoid structures (including privies) and plan for self sufficiency in regards to snacks and water since food sharing is not an option during Covid-19. We are excited to have everyone back helping on the trail but we must do our best to keep participants healthy.
Our first Women’s crew of the season was a huge success! We had a large turnout of ten volunteers and had a few new faces join us for the day.

The day was humid and the trail was slightly strenuous to the worksite (with a few bonus miles added in due to miscommunication) but the spirits of the group were high. The hike up was full of chatter and laughter from the crew. The crew was clearing a section of overgrown brush consisting mainly of Mountain Laurel and blueberry bushes that were making their way onto the trail. There was some light clipping to be had along the way which was too irresistible to be left to grow for some of our volunteers. So a few of our volunteers had a more leisurely hike up the trail to clip as they went.

Once at the section, everyone fanned out at began clipping away. Those behind you would often snag a branch here and there that you may have missed on the first pass making for an efficient group. Mary Ann, one of our volunteers for the day, was holding no prisoners and soon was lopping down sizeable saplings in order to ensure a clear path along the trail.

The group was able to clear a few hundred feet of trail over the course of the afternoon. We even spotted a few thru-hikers and day hikers who were appreciative of our efforts.

Due to the high turnout, we are hopeful to host more Womens’ Crews in the future.

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Part of the Women’s Crew taking a break on the Ledges. Left to Right: Natalie Passov, Alexandra Hill, Molly Heyman, Linda Warren, Grace Ferrante, and Mary Ann Siron. Photo Credit: Monica Aguilar
The idea of the Appalachian Trail was first conceived by Benton MacKaye, a resident of Shirley, Massachusetts in 1921. A Sheffield resident, Walter Eaton heard of this plan in 1922 and began to investigate and plan for a long distance trail along the Eastern Appalachian mountains. In 1926, Walter Eaton with the help of the Berkshire Hills Conference, Archie Sloper, and Franklin Couch; created a campaign for the trail. By 1931, most of the trail had been cut through private and state owned lands in Massachusetts.

The first group of volunteers in Massachusetts were a collection of faculty members of the University of Massachusetts, then known as the “Mass Aggie” who were informally maintaining the trail. Earl McWhorter, a recent retiree to volunteering with us, was one of the original members to be volunteering on the trail.

Subsequently, the trail began to naturally break down into three sections with the addition of the Berkshire Chapter AMC in the 1930’s and the Greylock Ski Club in the 1960’s. Stated in the 1982 Management plan for the Massachusetts AT “Thus during the 60’s and 70’s there were three maintaining organizations with the Berkshire Chapter Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) responsible for the section of the AT from Sages Ravine to Tyringham, the Metawampes (UMass) for the section from Tyringham north to Pittsfield Road, and the Greylock Ski Club from Pittsfield Road to the Vermont border.”

Once the National Scenic Trails Act passed in 1968 and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts authorized the acquisition of lands, there came a flurry of changes along the Appalachian Trail in order to implement the Land Acquisition Program—with the goal of getting as much of the Trail as possible off roads and into the woods. Eventually, there became a greater need for better communication between the volunteer groups, parks services, and various government agencies that the three maintaining groups consolidated into one. In 1979, the Berkshire Chapter AMC AT Committee was established. However, it was understood that the Metawampes and the Greylock Ski Club would still be responsible for maintaining their sections of the trail.

Mount Greylock’s Bascom Lodge in the winter. Photo Credit: Cosmo Catalano.
Since the 1980’s, Margaret Cahill has been an avid hiker and would frequently do excursions through the AMC. For a time, she had moved away to live in Charlotte, NC. However, once retired, she moved to the Berkshires in 2010. Leaving Charlotte, NC was an intentional decision when her and her husband retired to forgo the congested city in favor of a quieter and greener environment.

Once retired, Margaret found there are numerous opportunities in the Berkshires and for hiking and volunteering. For ten years, Margaret has held several volunteer positions at Tanglewood. She also served on the board for the Dalton Council of Aging for three years. In that role, she met Andrea Lassor. Together they shared hikes and in time with Grow Dalton they completed the process for Dalton to become an AT Community. Both Margaret and Andrea are co-Chairs, section maintainers, and shelter adoptees for the Kay Wood shelter.

When speaking with Margaret, you can tell that she has a deep love and passion for the Berkshires and its community. Dalton was not her hometown but it has become her home. She often hosts extended family and shares with them the beauty and adventure of the nature trails in Western Massachusetts. She enjoys bringing the children out and engages them by asking them to navigate through the trail by following the blazes.

Margaret is an excellent storyteller. While volunteering with us, she noticed Kay Wood’s name referenced on many occasions, often accompanied with funny stories or kind words. Margaret thought that this woman’s life and her story was one to be told. As it usually goes, it quickly became Margaret’s project since she suggested it. Through the interview process of Kay Wood’s friends and family, she was able to create a glimpse into Kay’s life and devotion to the trail and created this documentary video. Through the process, Margaret felt as if she had met Kay Wood herself.

She is an author of two novels *Five Star Fraud* and *Not Over It* and enjoys writing family stories in her free time. When she is not volunteering with us, she is often volunteering at Tanglewood, spending time with her family, or gardening (somewhat reluctantly) with her husband.

Margaret is a kind hearted individual, with never ending patience and consideration for those around her. We are truly blessed to have Margaret as a volunteer and devoted community member!

*From our 2019 AT Volunteer Gathering, Margaret Cahill is pictured on the left with Andrea Lassor on the right. Photo Credit: Andrea Minoff*
The Berkshire Chapter’s A.T. Management Committee is seeking a Corridor Monitoring Program Coordinator. The Corridor Monitoring Program Coordinator is responsible for oversight of the regular monitoring of Appalachian Trail lands by the assigned Corridor Monitors, reporting on the results of Corridor Monitoring, overseeing implementation of the Corridor Boundary Maintenance program and follow up on Encroachment Reports.

A member of the A.T. Committee, the position requires good communication skills with staff and volunteers through email and phone, an organized work style and attention to details. Primary duties involve managing a 20 person volunteer Corridor Monitor corps, planning work schedules, and connecting regularly with staff from ATC and NPS regarding Corridor Boundary issues and policies. Although this is primarily an “office” position, 4-5 field visits to projects near the A.T. are likely between April and November. Experience with land surveys, property deeds and maps is helpful but not required. An extensive and experienced mentoring system exists to assist new Coordinators.

Average estimated weekly time commitment is 2 hours, with short periods of 10 hours per week. Contact Cosmo Catalano, at@amcberkshire.org for more info.

We have begun a limited project schedule, and are adding projects on a regular basis. To see upcoming events you can follow this link:

2020 AT Projects

AMC registration links are included in the Project Schedule. Please adhere to requirements of wearing face masks, maintaining social distancing, and carrying personal hand sanitizer.

After volunteering please enter your own hours regularly. You can use this link to easily input them yourself: