



BERKSHIRE APPALACHIAN TRAIL NEWSLETTER

Issue 11: October 2020

COVID- 19 UPDATE

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 and work gloves
- 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](#). AT Overnight sites are officially closed. Volunteers should not perform maintenance on privies except in special circumstances.

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.

ATC VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy has recently launched a remote program; the Volunteer Leadership Academy. This is an excellent opportunity to brush up or learn a new skill set from the comfort of your own home. These topics were chosen as major themes that many volunteers have expressed a great interest and need for.

[Engaging New People](#), is a 7 session program which will meet on the first Monday of each month from October until April. This program is used to help discover the relationship between trail management and Justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI). Through these sessions, you will learn how to apply resources to engage new people as well as use social media as a form to welcome new members into your club. Participation is greatly encouraged in this program. You can register through the link provided above.

[Organizational Leadership Best Practices](#) is a three and a half hour session on November 14th which is open to everyone is the entry point to continue further with the series. This first session will discuss non-profit board and council management with a focus on facilitation, handbooks, and planning for the future. The second session will be a more exclusive group wherein volunteers will directly apply practices of organizational leadership with the support of their peers. You can register through the link above.

HISTORY THROUGH STORIES

Great Barrington Tornado - Memorial Day, 1995

On May 29, 1995, a tornado took shape in New York State and made its way East into Massachusetts. It was quite destructive, tearing down trees and structures, including the garage of our own George Osgood, West of Great Barrington. It damaged the cemetery and fairgrounds, south of town. It knocked down all the ski lifts at Butternut. It twisted off all the trees along about a quarter mile of Appalachian Trail on both sides of Route 23. It killed three people from Eagleton School who were in a Volkswagen Beetle, then proceeded east, where it blew itself out in Monterey.

The land on the south side of Route 23 is owned and managed by the National Park Service. Their word was that this had been an act of nature, and that the Appalachian Trail Committee was to clear the AT of down limbs and just throw the slash to the side. We put two of our chainsaws in the repair shop with the extensive cutting required.

The land north of Route 23 is managed by the Massachusetts DCR (DEM). Their idea was that this was a windfall, and that a professional logger should be brought in so that the lumber would not go to waste. It took about a year for this to happen, and in the meantime, the AT was relocated on a section of blue-blaze trail available west of the destruction site. Finally, the AT was given a new route through the DCR salvage area where it remains today.

Now (25 years later) it is hard to see any difference in the two sides of Route 23, even though the initial management was quite different. Nature heals the worst of devastation, and new growth has appeared which will eventually become a mature forest, replacing what was lost.

FPR 2000



Hubbard Brook which is a few miles south of Great Barrington. Photo Credit, unknown.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Don Fairbanks grew up in Hoosick Falls in New York. In College, he studied to become a podiatrist and started his own practice in Pittsfield, Massachusetts in 1967. Living in Pittsfield, he was often treating thru hikers and hearing their adventures along the way. Don had done a little bit of hiking before this but it had sparked an interest in him to thru hike the Appalachian Trail some day.

So, in 2006, he sold his practice, bought gear, and started his voyage at the Southern terminus in Georgia to thru hike to Katahdin. Unfortunately, Don ended his attempt in Daleville, Virginia due to a knee injury. He attempted to pick up where he left off a month later but was unable to finish. Since then, he has been section hiking the remainder of the trail and has hiked all the way up to Franconia Notch in New Hampshire. At age 80, he is still continuing his journey to finish the trail when he can!

Since hiking the trail, he had developed an appreciation for how well maintained the trails and campsites were along certain sections. When he returned from the trail, he started volunteering with us. Soon, he started volunteering as a section maintainer for about 3-4 years. Later, he was asked to take over as a Shelter Coordinator and has been in the position for about a decade now. As Shelter Coordinator, he ensures that all of the shelters and sites are well maintained, log books are stocked, and manages overnight site caretakers.

When he is not volunteering with us, Don enjoys volunteering in his community in other organizations as well as gardening around the house. Don and his wife also enjoy going for their daily bike rides around their neighborhood as well as walking around the local trails.

Originally, Don was planning on stepping down this year as Shelter Coordinator, however, he has decided to stay in the position for a time but is hoping to split it into a two person job in the future. We are so grateful to have Don volunteering with us and his continued devotion to the trail and his community!



Don Fairbanks in the foreground next to an Appalachian Trail sign installed along the trail in Cheshire. Jim Pelletier is in the background. Photo Credit, Eileen Quinn.

UPCOMING SAWYER COURSE

On October 24th and 25th, some of our trail maintainers will be attending a Sawyer Certification and retraining course at April Hill in South Egremont. This training is provided by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and will be in conjunction with a few Connecticut AT volunteers as well.

There are a few veterans and prospective new Sawyers in the group. Those that are new, will, hopefully, receive their A level certification and work under the supervision of a B Level or higher Sawyer.

In order to obtain your Sawyer Certification you must have up to date First Aid and CPR training. In this course, there is a classroom component about chainsaw safety, the technical side and discussion on chainsaw use and feeling. Additionally, there is a field work aspect where sawyers are learning to fell trees.

Having volunteers who are sawyers is imperative for maintaining and managing blowdowns on the trail. If you have done substantial trail work for us and are a trail maintainer consider joining us for the sawyer course next year!

UPCOMING EVENTS

We are winding down our project schedule for the season, and will add one or two more events before the end of the month. You can view the current schedule here:

[2020 AT Projects](#)

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

HOURS REPORT

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

[2020/2021 Hours Report](#)

CONTACT US

Email us at:

at@amcberkshire.org

Like us on Facebook at:

[Massachusetts Appalachian Trail Management Committee](#)

Check us out at:

<https://amcberkshire.org/getting-involved>

